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Four Early Studies from Pater's *The Renaissance*: The Aesthetics for a Humanist Myth

William H. Sullivan

The Renaissance and *Marius the Epicurean* assure Walter Pater's place in the history of modern English literary development. Whether he is criticizing fifteenth-century Italian art or writing of a spiritual quest in Antonine Rome, his real subject is the condition of modern man, particularly the artist, and his task is to evolve an aesthetics and create an art form equal to that condition. As a critic of Renaissance art, Pater defines the modern condition as existential freedom in a natural world of unceasing change. As a novelist of the contemporary man, he seeks an art form that will answer to that view of things. Several recent studies of Pater have recognized his highly sophisticated novelistic technique,¹ but the common philosophical basis and the formal similarities of his criticism and fiction have not, to my mind, been adequately explained. They do not represent a failure in generic distinction, but a success in symbolic method. All that Pater writes is an expression of himself as an artist, *The Renaissance* no less than *Marius*. Unless we understand both these writings as symbols of himself, we must be content with remarks about the deficiencies of impressionism and subjectivity. Such observations are not wrong, but they leave off where they should begin: It is a given of Pater's aesthetic that all modern art is biographical.

The basis for this belief is a cultural-psychological theory of history depicting Western man as having fallen from a pristine unity with himself into a frustrating complexity. The overall cultural crisis, as Pater defines it, is distinguished by the conflict between metaphysical Christian myth and modern scientific epistemology; but the aesthetic reaction is personal and unique. The artist can prevail over the circumstances of the crisis, by a unique aesthetic definition of some part of his environment; and to the extent that he is free, that definition is made in terms of himself. Technically, the special mode of definition is style, the impress of personality on the artifact. By Pater's reasoning, therefore, style accurately reflects the maker's attitude toward his subject. Art, thus determined, is public without

being institutional, subjective without being transparently autobiographical. Pater's critical method is not technical in the usual sense but aesthetic. He uses objective data but modifies their status with an interpretation that subsumes them under his own intention. Technical explanation gives way to some fact of cultural history that accords with Pater's own development. He is more interested in what follows the artifact as a *fait accompli* in his mind than in objective exegesis. His method is to manipulate a highly selective body of data in order to present a desired impression. What is subjective is the impression, the overall critical image, not the various data that comprise it. Pater's obligation, therefore, is not to technical reportage nor to accuracy, but to the rationale of his own account. Neither his inclusion of dubious historical information nor, for that matter, the occasional error jeopardizes his final achievement; for *The Renaissance* is not to be read as a contribution to art history, but as a document of the author's own aesthetic development.

While all the *Renaissance* essays are germane to the mature aesthetic program Pater implemented in his novel, the first four comprise a highly unified statement about the necessity of a humanist myth for the modern artist. Written in successive years from 1867 to 1870, "Winckelmann," "Poems by William Morris," "Leonardo da Vinci," and "Botticelli" reveal the basis of Pater's secular humanism and illustrate his aesthetic techniques. In the first three, Pater's development is presented against the background of a miniature aesthetic history of Western culture, criticism of a contemporary poet, and a prolonged psychological study of the subject. Despite the apparent superfluity, however, they note the need for a new art form for the contemporary world, display Pater's sophistication as an image-maker, and offer a prototype for the modern symbol. In my judgment, however, "Botticelli" offers the most sustained portrait of the modern artist, for, unlike the preceding essays, it has no other ostensible purpose than the presentation of the modern artist's task. Accordingly, I shall

1. See especially, James Hafley, "Walter Pater's 'Marius' and the Technique of Modern Fiction," *Modern Fiction Studies*, III (1957), 99-109; Billie Inman, "The Organic Structure of *Marius the Epicurean*," *Philological Quarterly*, XLI (1962), 475-91; R. T. Lenaghan, "Pattern in Walter Pater's Fiction,"

Studies in Philology, LVIII (1961), 69-91; Gerald Cornelius Monsman, *Pater's Portraits: Mythic Patterns in the Fiction of Walter Pater* (Baltimore, 1967); Jean Sudrann, "Victorian Compromise and Modern Revolution," *ELH*, XXVI (1959), 425-44.

comment on pertinent sections of the first three essays and then offer a more detailed analysis of "Botticelli."

The first of those essays, "Winckelmann" (1867), concluded that the historical evolution of modern secular culture requires a new art form to respond adequately to contemporary attitudes. Winckelmann defined "the eternal problem of culture — balance, unity with one's self," and resolved it "in a passionate life, in a personality."² But Winckelmann's resolution is a rarity, reserved to genius, and Pater would have us know that the problem has become general: Western man has come to a cultural impasse, where the artist alone has the sympathy and breadth of vision to recognize an overall disunity in experience, and to heal, however transiently, that malaise by reunifying intellection and sensibility.

Pater approached that sense of need with an acute awareness of its historical recurrence, and defined it with a modernity that is still topical. As always, what is required is formal accommodation of a definitive and general condition. "We have seen," he writes, "that the development of the various forms of art has corresponded to the development of the thoughts of man concerning humanity, to the growing revelation of the mind to itself" (p. 230). Disabused of mythic and doctrinal imperatives, contemporary man enjoys unprecedented freedom; but, at the same time, he faces the possibility of imprisonment within his own personality. If through physical science man has explained the world about him, he is still, perhaps now more than ever, left with the mystery of himself. The next prominent art form, Pater knew, would have to engage that mystery with a different frame of reference to all that lies without.

Pater's writings prove that he did not achieve the form equal to his perceptivity regarding its need. But it is highly probable that the latest American or European novel is yet another attempt to answer to the sense of need Pater so compellingly defines. The problem of the contemporary artist is the problem of the contemporary man: existential freedom in a natural world:

What modern art has to do in the service of culture is to rearrange the details of modern life, so to reflect it, that it may satisfy the spirit. And what does the spirit need in the face of modern life? The sense of freedom. That naive, rough sense of freedom, which supposes man's will to be limited, if at all, only by a will stronger than his, he can never have again. The attempt to represent it in art would have so little verisimilitude that it would be flat and uninteresting. (pp. 230-31)

The single existent outside ourselves is the natural world. It is the only nonhuman claimant in our existence: "Natural laws we shall never modify, embarrass us as they may; but there is still something in the nobler or less noble attitude with which we watch their fatal combinations" (p. 231). Nobility in this world comes not as the gracious indulgence of a separate will, but as the result of individual responsibility. Through that "dialogue of the mind with itself," we have achieved a maturity which insists that we assume total responsibility for ourselves:

For us, necessity is not, as of old, a sort of mythological personage without us, with whom we can do warfare. It is rather a magic web woven through and through us, like that magnetic system of which modern science speaks, penetrating us with a network, subtler than our subtlest nerves, yet bearing in it the central forces of the world. (p. 231)

To regard this as no more than a summary of romantic preoccupation would be a critical oversight. It is that — the historical assumptions are a résumé of the romantic revolt from rationalism and institutional mandates. But the closing passages of "Winckelmann" reveal that Pater's sound historicism and highly critical intelligence enabled him to intuit the vital art form for a natural world of existential freedom: the humanist myth of the self.

Since myth provides a universal system of reference, the myth of the self is possible only if everything is subject to individual control, only if all elements of one's existence may be referred to some formative mode of apprehension. In the year following the Winckelmann essay, Pater published a review of William Morris' poems (1868)³ which ended with a short passage later to become the famous "conclusion" to *The Renaissance*. Here may be seen another advance in Pater's thought as he continues to formulate his ideas about an aesthetics and an art form for his time. Principally, he urges an education of the heart by a humanist aesthetics; but equally important, he announces an aesthetic accommodation of time and change. The forces of time and change that he accepts as the basis of his world view are subject to control only through interpretation and assigned value, that is, subjectivity. An informative approach to his thought should reveal simultaneously his major ideas and the symbolic technique common to both his criticism and his fiction. This access is afforded by Pater's best known, and most overly quoted, image — the "hard gemlike flame." Pater writes, "To burn always with

2. Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (London, 1910), p. 228. Further references to this work will be cited in the text.

3. "Poems by William Morris," *The Westminster Review* (American Edition), XC (October 1868), 144-49.

this hard gemlike flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life."

The renowned flame image is, foremost, an imaginative description of a human condition, the metaphorical equivalent of a psychological state. We note, too, that the mental condition it represents is particularly individual. Ecstasy, whether experienced sensuously as rapturous delight or spiritually as mystic beatitude, is a uniquely personal phenomenon. The choice of ecstasy emphasizes Pater's fundamental stress upon the individual and his special concern with a mental experience associated with the artistic and religious personalities. They are particularly appropriate types to dominate his writings, for both the artist and the religious make the highest use of symbolic systems and both are constants in the human experience. Pater's secular aesthetic is, however, more catholic than the religious dialectic of the historical Church; his system, dedicated only to itself and tested by its service to humane ideals, is unimpeded by historical accidents of form or doctrine. With his symbolic techniques he may include anything in himself, make himself the referent for anything. In his Heraclitean world of time and passage, Pater is a talented survivalist — the flame image explains how.

Few images could typify more vividly the *primum mobile* of Pater's thought, the idea of flux. Fire exists only in motion; despite its static appearance, a hard gemlike flame moves with impressive local intensity. A fortunate similitude between pyrophysics and symbolic method further enhances Pater's choice of the flame image, for a flame perfectly exemplifies a composite phenomenon. Physically, several elements fuse to create a compound, made of, but different in its new state from, its components. Fuel and atmosphere respond to the proper temperature and create fire. Aesthetically, one acknowledges change and allies himself with it by the sympathetic recognition of new combinations. Unlike components merge to produce a new image; dissimilar elements respond to an imaginative union by the artist to create a new aesthetic unity, a metaphor, a symbol, a myth. In both instances the formal result is something new, generated by disparate elements perfectly adjusted in a novel combination. The image, symbol, and so on, introduce a new attitude toward the combining elements by juxtaposing them.

Thus Pater's aesthetic method applies the dynamics of his world view: change is universal and constant, and all things are subsequently redefined by new relationships. In brief, his artistry and epistemology are conditions of each other. Pater, like all artists, symbolized the world as he understood it. His aesthetic method, by disclosing unsuspected affinities, presupposes a world where each thing may become a symbol of every other thing, in time. The meta-

phor, or symbol, or myth, formally acknowledges the diverse components, but all are unified in an autonomous composite identity. As symbol-maker, Pater affirms a world where all things change, all is relative, and all things may describe each other.

A symbol for the modern world was offered in the study of "Leonardo da Vinci" (1869). Associating himself with the problem he believed Leonardo to have experienced, Pater makes his and the painter's imagistic successes coincide in the *Mona Lisa*. His statement of that dilemma might have been written about a poet today: "His problem was the transmutation of ideas into images" (p. 112). This idea determines Pater's psychological concept of his subject and the rhetorical organization of his essay. His choice of the *Mona Lisa* as Leonardo's highest imagistic achievement governs the selection and interpretation of support data, and accounts for the famous commentary at the climax of the piece. To quote it has almost become an embarrassment, and to paraphrase it has always been an impertinence. So I shall do as little of either as possible. These celebrated paragraphs present, with poetic compression and force, a theory of contemporary art, what it must accomplish to survive in the modern world. Pater believes *La Gioconda* to be Leonardo's greatest success, for with this enigmatic lady he expanded his art to modern symbolic proportions.

The cumulative series of diverse elements that distinguishes "Leonardo" is compacted rhetorically into a paragraph, and imagistically into the portrait of *La Gioconda*. All the unlikely pairs and contrasting combinations converge in a complementary association. Whether they unite in mutual accommodation or in productive conflict is irrelevant; the effect is available only as a totality, only because the separate elements combine to form a unique image. *La Gioconda* is Leonardo's highest symbol of cultural accretion: she is a part of all that she has met, and she has met everything. She has experienced all the past, human history and mythic history, and known the souls of all ages, animalism, lust, mysticism. The sacred and the profane have been as one to her, Leda, Helen, Saint Anne, Mary: "All this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes, and lives only in the delicacy with which it has moulded the changing lineaments, and tinged the eyelids and the hands" (p. 125). She is the bearer of the consciousness of the race, and her image, which "is expressive of what in the ways of a thousand years men had come to desire," holds it in abeyance, that all may avail themselves of it for a fortunate moment. The racial memory does not, however, rest weightless upon her; lacking the naïveté of "those white Greek goddesses or beautiful women of antiquity," she nonetheless achieves an equal poise. Although "the eye lids

are a little weary," *La Gioconda* is not so nearly overcome as the madonnas and the Venus of Botticelli; for she has accomplished what they are on the verge of initiating. She reflects the source to which all else must ultimately be referred, the source of her salvation — herself. Her existence is her auto-salvation. Again, Pater's "art criticism" is a statement of his own development.

In his imagistic rendition of the portrait, Pater judges her to be the analogue of Leonardo's philosophic thought and aesthetic technique, and as a verbal portrait, she is, of course, an analogue of his thought and technique. Her type of beauty is the sort that haunted Leonardo, a beauty "so exotic that it fascinates a larger number than it delights, and seems more than that of any other artist to reflect ideas and views and some scheme of the world within" (p. 99). And in the identical way that the artifact is "an end in itself — a perfect end" (p. 117), she is her own referent. All things that occur or exist in time are tangential to her, for she, like them, exists in time. But unlike them, she does not pass out of it: "Like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave" (p. 125). She is not solipsistic, however, for she registers all values, but she is dedicated only to her existence. *La Gioconda* represents a new attitude toward data, and a new way of evaluating them. All different things exist uniquely as themselves. In any combination they establish their individual value, yielding or acceding to a given position only in relation to each other. The combining agent makes all elements available indifferently, for comparison and for mutual definition. Leonardo, perhaps, and Pater, certainly, believed the most effective catalyst is art, for art is the most likely agent to suspend all loyalties while it makes a case for any combination of elements. To be able to make all values available, art must enjoy total freedom and universal appeal. The incidental beneficiary of the aesthetic experience is, of course, humanity; whatever debases the human destroys value, and whatever edifies the human creates value. These are the conditions Pater envisioned for the contemporary artist; he saw it all in a single image, and that is why he could write:

The fancy of a perpetual life, sweeping together ten thousand experiences, is an old one; and modern philosophy has conceived the idea of humanity as wrought upon by, and summing up in itself, all modes of thought and life. Certainly Lady Lisa might stand as the embodiment of the old fancy, the symbol of the modern idea. (pp. 125-26)

A final word must seem an addendum, but Pater's creative achievement in the *Mona Lisa* passage cannot be ignored. He adds new meaning to an established symbol by redescribing it. The technical inadequacy of his account is

made irrelevant by its artistic accomplishment, assimilation of the graphic and verbal images. Convinced that the supreme contemporary art form is the written word (p. 230, et passim), Pater transformed *La Gioconda* into a kind of mythic logograph. He achieved this by implementing an attitude which is dynamically analogous to the dialectics of all symbolic method: The imaginative power of his mind discovers unusual relationships between things and arranges the names of them in a verbal structure that gives new pleasure and new value. And since the same principle is at work in Pater's alleged historical criticism as in his more obvious symbol-making, we are ready to see how his study of Botticelli (1870) is a statement about the historical formation of the ideology he believed necessary for the modern artist, and how that ideology generates new myth out of older myth.

To Pater the distracted beauty of the Botticellian woman symbolized a crisis affecting the painter's art, religion, and philosophy. Botticelli's style suggested to him an evolution toward secularity, opposition to the Marian legend, redefinition of the nativity myth to accord with modern life, and the formation of a humanist philosophy. Accordingly, he envisions Botticelli's career as an ongoing rejection of conventional practices and values, and of their replacement with personal standards. "In the middle of the fifteenth century he had already anticipated much of the meditative subtlety, which is sometimes supposed peculiar to the workmen of its close" (p. 50). He had left the "simple religion" of Giotto and "the simple naturalism which had grown out of it, a thing of birds and flowers only, [and] he sought inspiration in what to him were works of the modern world, the writings of Dante and Boccaccio, and in new readings of his own of classical stories" (p. 50).

Botticelli has a more intense awareness than many of his contemporaries of the external world and of his imaginative control of it. His "alert sense of outward things" enables him to become the illustrator of Dante, an unlikely achievement, Pater maintains, for one not thoroughly oriented toward the natural world:

Giotto, and the followers of Giotto, with their almost childish religious aim, had not learned to put that weight of meaning into outward things, light, colour, everyday gesture, which the poetry of the *Divine Comedy* involves, and before the fifteenth century Dante could hardly have found an illustrator. (p. 52)

But even though Botticelli is equal to the technique demanded of Dante-esque illustration, "he is far from accepting the conventional orthodoxy of Dante . . . referring all human actions to the simple formula of purgatory, heaven, and hell" (p. 54). Instead he reshapes the material of his art to accord with his own ideological inclinations; when

he painted religious incidents, he "painted them with an undercurrent of original sentiment, which touches you as the real matter of the picture through the veil of its ostensible subject" (p. 50). His acute sensitivity to outward things does not, however, preclude a larger view, for "this was not enough for him; he is a visionary painter" (p. 53). But it is a vision worked by the transforming power of his inner self, and this is what distinguished him from his predecessors:

The genius of which Botticelli is the type usurps the data before it as the exponent of ideas, moods, visions of its own; in this interest it plays fast and loose with those data, rejecting some and isolating others, and always combining them anew. (pp. 53-54)

An essential difference has evolved between the medieval Giotto and the emergent modern, Botticelli. For Giotto, the image, the controlling motive for his art, is without; whatever remains in his art of himself is accidental and fortuitous. With Botticelli, however, the aesthetic occupation has become more than skillful reportage: the art he creates is uniquely his; the image is possible only in terms of himself. The external world "comes with all its incisive and importunate reality; but awakes in him, moreover, by some subtle law of his own structure, a mood which it awakes in no one else, of which it is the double or repetition, and which it clothes, that all may share it, with visible circumstance" (p. 54). When he has given proof of his vision through his art, he becomes something greater than a mere maker of pictures: he is the creator of value.

Realization, or perhaps only intimation, of this function by Botticelli determines his style and explains the slightly vacant attitude of his madonnas and his Uffizi Venus. Pater selects only those pieces prominent for an indeterminate lassitude, with an expression so little obligated that his account of it hardly seems subjective in context. With a sort of erroneous consistency, he incorrectly ascribes to Botticelli a picture hinting a secular indifference to Christian history. The common quality of all pictures interpreted by Pater is the subject's uneasy awareness, delicately wavering between fatigue and agony, that a choice has been made which frees him from external directives and places his fate in his own hands. Specifically, it is a rejection of the Church, and the subsequent necessity to rely upon purely human means. More broadly, it is the evolution of existential freedom in a natural world, a historical analogue to the evolution of Pater's own mind.

The order of Pater's examples is significant. It hardly

seems chance that he begins with an anecdote of suspect authenticity, interprets the madonnas humanly, and concludes with a classical subject. One picture, now tentatively ascribed to Botticini,⁴ "had the credit or discredit of attracting some shadow of ecclesiastical censure" (p. 54). The objectionable aspect was the portrait of its donor, Matteo Palmieri, appended or included in a manner that Pater does not make clear. His presence in (or about) the picture was stigmatic, for he "was the reputed author of a poem . . . *La Città Divina*, which represented the human race as an incarnation of those angels who, in the revolt of Lucifer, were neither for Jehovah nor for His enemies" (p. 54). The possibility of metaphysical indifference to the subject of the picture is especially important, for it represents the Assumption of the Virgin. Palmieri's proximity had the doctrinal effect of desecration, "and the chapel where [the picture] hung was closed." A more lenient attitude might have found the juxtaposition only impertinent or, at most, ironic. In any case, the combination suggested to contemporary churchmen — and to Pater — a mute antagonism, a tacit opposition to an essential tenet of Mariolatry. Whether Botticelli informed himself of Palmieri, as he did of Dante and Savonarola, Pater will only hazard that he "may well have let such theories come and go across him" (p. 55). Either way the result is the same:

True or false, the story interprets much of the peculiar sentiment with which he infuses his profane and sacred persons, comely, and in a certain sense like angels, but with a sense of displacement or loss about them — the wistfulness of exiles, conscious of a passion and energy greater than any known issue of them explains, which runs through all his work with a sense of ineffable melancholy. (p. 55)

By Pater's interpretation, Botticelli's art redescribes one of the superior myths of his culture, questioning thereby its high significance and simultaneously creating the need for an alternative of similar status.

A Botticelli madonna is not the offering of an anonymous devotee. It is rather an image wrought out of its maker, necessarily and inevitably bearing his imprint: "He has worked out in them a distinct and peculiar type, definite enough in his own mind, for he has painted it over and over again, sometimes one might think almost mechanically, as a pastime during that period when his thoughts were so heavy upon him" (p. 56). He changes and she changes with him. She is not the sweetly adoring mother of Raphael, but is "peevisish-looking . . . mean or abject even."

4. Pater, *The Renaissance*, ed. Kenneth Clark (Cleveland, 1961), p. 72, n. 9.

Even so, she is compelling and often comes back to you "when the Sistine Madonna and the Virgins of Fra Angelico are forgotten" (p. 56). Pater would have it that she returns again and again to remind us of a new possibility in the human condition: "For with Botticelli she too, though she holds in her hands the 'Desire of all nations,' is one of those who are neither for Jehovah nor for His enemies; and her choice is on her face" (pp. 56-57). She does not revolt against God, she wishes simply to be rid of his demands, and her attitude announces a diminished claim on her. She rejects the myth that binds her to whatever is not human and of this world:

Her trouble is in the very caress of the mysterious child, whose gaze is always far from her. . . . Once, indeed, he guides her hand to transcribe in a book the words of her exaltation, the *Ave*, and the *Magnificat*, and the *Gaude Maria*, and the young angels, glad to rouse her for a moment from her dejection, are eager to hold the inkhorn and to support the book. But the pen almost drops from her hand, and the high cold words have no meaning from her, and her true children are those others, among whom, in her rude home, the intolerable honour came to her. (p. 57)

Of Botticelli we cannot be certain, but Pater's actions are clear. He has redescribed the image, so that Mary is secular. The movement is away from the supernatural and toward the independent human entity. Mary reflects the burden of her decision, but she does not define her new role. That function belongs to the last major example, the Botticellian equivalent of the more famous Mona Lisa.

The heavy realization of a wish to be free of imposed myth is surpassed in its gravity only by the knowledge that one must be his own myth. We have seen how the muted rejection of the infant fixes the madonna "with a sentiment of ineffable melancholy." But this is not exclusively a Marian quality. Pater writes, "What is strangest is that he carries this sentiment into classical subjects, its most complete expression being a picture in the *Uffizi*, of Venus rising from the sea" (pp. 57-58). In the order of Pater's examples, the Venus is Botticelli's highest symbolic achievement. Without offense to dogma, Pater relegates Mary to secondary status in the Christian story; she is not the primary symbol of the myth she wishes to be free of. The opposite is true of Venus: she is her own myth, and the central symbol of it. In his portrayal, Botticelli is inspired by "the Hellenic spirit":

And in the passion, the energy, the industry of realisation, with which Botticelli carries out his intention, is the exact measure of the legitimate influence over the human mind of the imaginative system of which this is perhaps the central myth. (p. 59)

The imaginative system is, of course, the Olympian religion, and its probable central myth, the birth of Venus. As a generic nativity myth, it announces a new force in cultural and world history. But the common attitude of Venus with the madonna arises from a different motive: Mary is sad for her wish, Venus for her certainty. Mary's tacit rejection of the infant places her in a symbolic limbo; her older mythic association is past, and her new mythic possibilities lie ahead. The time of Venus is upon her: "Men go forth to their labours until the evening; but she is awake before them, and you might think that the sorrow in her face was at the thought of the whole long day of love yet to come" (p. 59). She is "awake" before the generality of mankind, bearing Botticelli's awareness of what lies in store for modern man, "and what is unmistakable is the sadness with which he has conceived the goddess of pleasure, as the depositary of a great power over the lives of men" (pp. 59-60).

As an achieved symbol, Venus is superior to the madonna, for she represents fulfillment of the profane Marian wish. In her own person, without appeal beyond her integrity, she wields "a great power over the lives of men." She is totally free and completely responsible, and the awareness of this makes her thoughtful. She symbolizes the birth of the modern consciousness.

In its overall impact, Botticelli's art symbolizes to Pater a culture relieving itself of domination by one body of myth. One demand among many of a society undergoing that kind of transition will be for an art combining "the old fancy" and "the modern idea." Whatever the image or symbol or myth, it must have a contemporary function. The older symbolism is not to be discarded in the face of this need, but put to new use, redefined as the means to a new vision. Although the artist may appropriate the traditionally sacred for secular purposes, he will succeed only if his art persuades the audience to an aesthetic suspension of the ethical:

[Botticelli] thus sets for himself the limits within which art, undisturbed by any moral ambition, does its most sincere and surest work. His interest is neither in the untempered goodness of Angelico's saints, nor in the untempered evil of Orcagna's *Inferno*. (p. 55)

Disabused of a compulsive reverence for the Christian legend, Botticelli is nonetheless saved from the sacrilege of Palmieri by his greater subtlety. The plea of his madonnas "in unmistakable undertones for a warmer, lower humanity" epitomizes Pater's concept of him. His distinction is the artistic and ideological fulfillment of what that plea exacts in human effort. His success enables him to become, to borrow a term from Wallace Stevens, the modern "man of capable imagination."

Botticelli's indifference to metaphysical imperatives is not an overt assault on established religion, but a diminished obligation in favor of a larger human interest, an interest with "men and women, in their mixed and uncertain condition, always attractive, clothed sometimes by a passion with a character of loveliness and energy, but saddened perpetually by the shadow upon them of the great things from which they shrink" (pp. 55-56). This interest is the sum of his personality, impressed on his art as style. The aesthetic analogue of himself is a symbol capable of conveying and unifying all aspects of that personality:

The peculiar character of Botticelli is the result of a blending in him of a sympathy for humanity in its uncertain condition, its attractiveness, its investiture at rarer moments in a character of loveliness and energy, with his consciousness of the shadow upon it of the great things from which it shrinks, and that this conveys into his work somewhat more than painting usually attains of the true complexion of humanity. (p. 60)

Botticelli is the capable symbolist, for without distorting his subject, he employs a communal myth to tell a unique human story, and regenerates the myth as he uplifts humanity. He is also the complete humanist, acknowledging his freedom and answering to that responsibility with compassion for his fellows: "His morality is all sympathy; and it is this sympathy, conveying into his work somewhat more than is usual of the true complexion of humanity, which makes him, visionary as he is, so forcible a realist" (p. 56).

Combining realism with vision, he is able to see the most diverse things describing each other: Judith, the biblical heroine, is associated with Simonetta, the mistress of Giuliano de Medici. Physical resemblance between pictorial subjects of widely disparate associations is more than the similarities of a given style; it is but another manifestation of a largesse which enabled Botticelli to intuit a crisis in human history, and to project a viable solution through his art. By making his art a successful analogue of his ideology, Botticelli created a symbolism that resolved for him "the eternal problem of culture — balance, unity with one's self" (p. 228). But the unity of experience he attained is unique and personal, the general situation is uneasy, and

the readjustment has only begun. "In studying his work," Pater writes, "one begins to understand to how great a place in human culture the art of Italy had been called" (p. 62). In studying Pater's account of the Renaissance, one may also begin to understand the task he was setting for his later novelistic art.

Pater's "Studies in Art and Poetry" of the Renaissance evolve the ideology and aesthetics of his own art, and reveal a great intellectual excitement underlying the reputed blandness of his outward life. His criticism reads out of — or into — Renaissance art a paradigmatic study of the modern artist, who acknowledges through his art that he is completely free in a natural world of unceasing change. Having become the universal mythographer, he must redefine the myths to accord with his own culture, and tell a contemporary story. The trials of this condition are best met with a morality that is all sympathy, love. It is the only motive equal to the unrelenting reality of the modern world, and to the farthest visionary reaches of the human mind. The compassionate reasoning of "Botticelli" follows logically the proposal for a humanist myth four commodated his aesthetic technique with modern relativist years earlier in "Winckelmann." In the interim Pater accepted epistemology, and illustrated the alliance in the "conclusion" to his review of Morris' poems. The incorporation into *The Renaissance* of "Winckelmann" and the conclusion of the Morris essay signifies Pater's idea that cultural rebirth is not statically historical but recurrent and psychological. *The Renaissance* is generally, therefore, the history of a long era of related cultural crises responsible for the rise of modern secular humanism. Specifically, it is an account of biographical crisis in the individual artist and his efforts to regain equilibrium through his art. The result is a formal, aesthetic revolution in which the shaping force of the artifact becomes the personality of its maker: art becomes subjective, the artist romantic, and the artifact an analogue, a symbol of its creator. I have tried briefly to outline the aesthetic program of Walter Pater's *The Renaissance*; in its fullness that program is most thoughtfully and beautifully realized in *Marius the Epicurean*.

University of Stirling

Art Amidst Revolution: Ruskin in 1848

Edward Alexander

IN THE YEARS BEFORE 1848, the silence of John Ruskin on social and political questions is so nearly complete as to offer evidence for the frequent accusation that literary men, although they are bored by the tasks of reform, adore revolution; that they ignore the despair of their fellow men until it turns into rage and violence; and that they are disinclined to speak of society at all until they can shriek with Byron that "revolution/Alone can save the earth from hell's pollution."¹ The period from 1840 on had been, in England, the "hungry 'forties," a period of sharp class conflict brought on by new industrial conditions. The new poverty and the miseries it engendered became the subject of Carlyle, in *Chartism* (1840) and *Past and Present* (1843), of Engels in *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, and of Benjamin Disraeli, the future prime minister, in *Sybil* (1845).

University men in their early twenties have, after all, been known to pay some heed to social questions, yet before 1848 the writings, private and published, of Ruskin are virtually bare of such references. Traveling in Italy in 1840, he had viewed the Italian poor mainly as objects of aesthetic distaste: "Beggars all day intolerable, — howling, dark eyed brats of children, to be got rid of by a centime, however. . . ." ² In 1845 he told his father he could not become a real poet because of the great chasm that separated him from the distresses of common life: "I don't see how it is possible for a person who gets up at four, goes to bed at ten, eats ices when he is hot, and beef when he is hungry, gets rid of all claims of charity by giving money which he hasn't earned, and those of compassion by treating all distresses more as picturesque than as real: I don't see how it is at all possible for such a person to write good poetry. . . ." ³

To some extent, Ruskin's seeming indifference to social questions during these years was a function of his conception of art. If the artist's vocation was to be a worthy substitute for the clergyman's, which he had forsaken, then the artist must be possessed of what Arnold would many years later call high seriousness: "Art, properly so called, is no recreation; it cannot be learned at spare moments, nor be pursued when we have nothing better to do. It is no

handiwork for drawing-room tables, no relief of the ennui of boudoirs; it must be understood and undertaken seriously, or not at all" (IV, 26). This pledge of seriousness comes at the outset of the second volume of *Modern Painters* (1846) and is part of an attempt by Ruskin to justify to himself and to others, "from a moral point of view," the utility of the artistic enterprise. For like Newman in his university discourses a few years later, Ruskin was obliged — just as Bentham had said that all opponents of the principle of Utility are eventually obliged — to justify the liberal activity of art as really more useful than so-called "useful" activities.

Ruskin announces that his purpose is nothing less than "to summon the moral energies of the nation to a forgotten duty, to display the use, force, and functions of a great body of neglected sympathies and desires." Few activities could seem more useful, and yet because "men in the present century understand the word Useful in a strange way," Ruskin must remind them that man's use and function are "to be the witness of the glory of God" and to spread that glory by obedience and happiness. It is the baneful influence of the "men who insolently call themselves Utilitarians" that leads Ruskin's contemporaries to speak and think as if food, clothing, and shelter were alone useful. In fact, warns Ruskin, the long continuance of peace and prosperity are national dangers which induce spiritual illness, and an abundance of bread, water, and peace may cause men to forget their dependence on God. Ruskin's outlook in 1846 was thus hardly one that conduces to sympathy with those men who happen to lack bread, water, and peace; but it is to Ruskin's credit that in the second (1848) edition of this volume he appended a note to the paragraphs just cited in which he remarked that "recent events have turned them into irony" (IV, 28-29, 31n.).

The events of 1848 burst on Ruskin like a thunderbolt and nearly unsettled the foundations of his being. Compared with, say, Matthew Arnold's, Ruskin's reaction to the continental upheaval of February 1848 may seem belated since it is not even mentioned in his published correspondence until April. But 1848 was also the year of Ruskin's disastrous marriage (on April 10, the day of the great

1. *Don Juan*, canto VIII, stanza 51.

2. *The Diaries of John Ruskin*, 3 vols., ed. Joan Evans and John Howard Whitehouse (Oxford, 1956), I, 104. See also I, 117, 118.

3. *The Works of John Ruskin*, 39 vols., ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London, 1903-1912), IV, xxxiv. Future references to the *Works* will be cited in the text.

Chartist rally in London) to Euphemia Chalmers Gray. At first, therefore, European revolutions enter his consciousness only as an irritating obstacle to a European honeymoon: "I don't think a prison would do for us at all, my love," he told Effie, "— a cavern — or a desert island, are very well and a desirable family property — but a mere cell, with a sentinel before the door and nothing before the window but a flower pot or two . . . would be perhaps something too sober a way of passing the honeymoon."⁴ But Ruskin was very quickly to recognize that far more than his honeymoon was imperiled by the revolutions. He had always believed that contentment was necessary for his work and his enjoyment, "for discontent not only makes us unhappy in the dwelling on the privation we particularly lament, but it shuts out all the pleasures which are waiting round about us to come in, if we would let them."⁵ But now, suddenly, he found his contentment removed. The revolutions, once they penetrated his consciousness, nearly overwhelmed him, for they threatened the destruction not merely of the old order but of European civilization itself and of his sacred occupation along with it. The work whose seriousness he had so recently proclaimed had now been rendered precarious and even frivolous in his eyes:

I should be very, very happy just now but for these wild stormclouds burstings on my dear Italy and my fair France, my occupation gone, and all my earthly treasures . . . perilled amidst "the tumult of the people," the "imagining of vain things." . . . But these are thoughts as selfish as they are narrow. I begin to feel that all the work I have been doing, and all the loves I have been cherishing, are ineffective and frivolous — that these are not times for watching clouds or dreaming over quiet waters, that more serious work is to be done, and that the time for endurance has come rather than for meditation, and for hope rather than for happiness. (XXXVI, 86-87)

The doubts about his artistic occupation, which religious earnestness had first instilled in Ruskin, were now aggravated by the social and political turmoil of Europe. Whereas earlier in life he had feared that art might obscure his duty to God, now he feared that the vocation of art critic was incompatible with his duty to man. On May 1, 1848, revolutionary events in distant Italy caused Ruskin to write in despair from the family home at Denmark Hill to the painter George Richmond: "When will you come and see me, and tell me whether it is of any use to write or think about painting any more, now, or whether there will be no painting to be loved but that 'which more becomes a man than gilt his trophy'? I feel very doubtful whether I am

not wasting my life, and very sad about all. Alas poor Milan, and my beloved spire, and now Verona in the thick of it" (XXXVI, 88). These are certainly not the sentiments of someone who has all at once become passionately concerned with the plight of his fellow men and who feels his own fate, safe and secure though he be, to be wrapped up in theirs; rather, they express the private dilemma of someone whose attention has been diverted from its natural course to the troubled world outside of himself and who fears that the course of history tends more and more to render his occupation obsolete. It is not primarily the Italians Ruskin mourns for — he was soon to assert that they were only being punished for their sins (XXXVI, 104) — but himself.

Nevertheless, Ruskin's growing awareness of society does coincide with his increasing interest in architecture at the expense of painting. As early as the continental tour of 1846, his diary began to be filled with as many notes on architecture as on painting. But it was not until his sense of vocation had been unsettled by a new awareness of social questions that he decided to undertake a book-length study of architecture, an eminently social form of artistic expression. In August of 1848, Ruskin left for a tour of Normandy where he studied French architecture and also a people and society in the midst of revolution. For perhaps the first time in his life his researches in art proceeded hand in hand with a sensitive observation of social conditions and human relations. Writing to his father from Lisieux in August he was more than ever delighted with the beauty of the country and its buildings, yet "more disgusted than ever with its inhabitants" despite the fact that most people he met with deplored the recent tumult and disorder (XXXVI, 90). But Paris and Rouen, which he visited in October, moved him not only to disgust at their gloom and hideousness, but to pity for their people's sufferings, to the fear that the workmen would shortly resort to violence to relieve their distress, and to the desperate hope that the country might be saved if the upper classes could bring themselves to acknowledge their common humanity with the lower:

Vagabonds and ruffians — undisguised — fill the streets, only waiting — not for *an* opportunity but for *the best* opportunity of attack. And yet even from the faces of these I have seen the malice and brutality vanish if a few words of ordinary humanity were spoken to them. And if there were enough merciful people in France to soothe without encouraging them, and to give them some — even the slightest — sympathy and help in such honest efforts as they make — few though

4. Sir William James, *John Ruskin and Effie Gray* (New York, 1947), p. 93.

5. *Diaries of Ruskin*, I, 352 (entry for July 30, 1847).

they be — without telling them of their Rights or their injuries — the country might still be saved. (VIII, xxxii-xxxiii)

Immediately upon his return from France, in the winter of this momentous year of revolution, Ruskin set himself to the composition of *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, a statement of the principles of architecture illustrated mainly by examples of Gothic and Italian Romanesque work. The book, published in May 1849, was, indeed, an attempt to enumerate the principles of success in architecture. But it was also a continuation of Ruskin's exploration of the difference between liberal and utilitarian enterprises and of his attempt to discover and then justify his vocation of art critic in a time of social strife and revolutionary upheaval.

Unlike earlier propagandists of Gothic like Pugin, Ruskin did not set out with a violent prepossession against the whole of modern civilization. This was already evident in his championship of Turner and the Moderns and in his frequent insistence on the compelling interest of modern subjects in literature. Yet in the Preface to *Seven Lamps* he points out that two forces are at work in the modern world destroying the very subjects of his book. He tells his readers that he has been forced to postpone the completion of *Modern Painters* because it was imperative that he record his impressions of all the "medieval buildings in Italy and Normandy, now in process of destruction, before that destruction should be consummated by the Restorer, or Revolutionist." In "The Lamp of Memory" he speaks at length of the importance of preserving, "as the most precious of inheritances," the architecture of past ages. But preservation is not to be confused with restoration. Restoration, he argues, is a contradiction in terms, and means really, "the most total destruction which a building can suffer." Great buildings can no more be "restored" without the breath of life of the artists and the society which created them than dead men can be resurrected (VIII, 3, 225, 242).

But if part of the hateful work of destruction was carried out by those with a misguided zeal for the past, the other part was carried out by those who liked to identify themselves with the immediate needs of the present, the revolutionary mob. Having chastized the restorers, Ruskin says, "Of more wanton or ignorant ravage it is vain to speak; my words will not reach those who commit them, and yet, be it heard or not, I must not leave the truth unstated, that it is again no question of expediency or feeling whether we shall preserve the buildings of past times or not. *We have no right whatever to touch them.* They are not ours. They belong partly to those who built them, and partly to all the generations of mankind who are to follow us." The mob whose indifference to both past and future Ruskin deplors

is not only the mob that overthrew Louis Philippe; rather, "the people who destroy anything causelessly are a mob, and Architecture is always destroyed causelessly" (VIII, 245-46). Yet it was certainly the political events of 1848 that sharpened Ruskin's sense of the growing incompatibility between his work and the immediate needs, or supposed needs, of the world springing up about him and invading his consciousness.

The Introduction to *The Seven Lamps* and its first chapter, "The Lamp of Sacrifice," offered an apologia for the disinterested activity of mind at a time when human distress and political turmoil seemed to call for more practical and utilitarian endeavor. Ruskin begins by saying that failure in art is more often attributable to "a confused understanding of the thing actually to be done" than to "insufficiency of means or impatience of labour." In other words, an obsession with means obscures the ends, and the artist becomes so concerned with what is practicable that he grows oblivious of "goodness and perfection in themselves." Nor is it only in art that men too readily satisfy themselves with what they think can be done instead of pondering what should be done: "As far as I have taken cognizance of the causes of the many failures to which the efforts of intelligent men are liable, more especially, in matters political, they seem to me more largely to spring from this single error than from all others, that the inquiry into doubtful, and in some sort inexplicable, relations of capability, chance, resistance, and inconvenience, invariably precedes, even if it does not altogether supersede, the determination of what is absolutely desirable and just" (VIII, 19-20).

Thus does Ruskin announce at the outset that it is not only in art but in the management of the state that free, disinterested speculation on ends is ultimately more useful than short-sighted calculation of expedient means. His own inquiries into the principles of success in both areas therefore can and will be conducted simultaneously. "What is true of human polity seems to me not less so of the distinctively political art of Architecture" (VIII, 20).

In architecture, as in other realms which require the harmonious cooperation of technical with imaginative powers, of body with soul, of doing with thinking, Ruskin maintains that it is the unfortunate tendency of the modern age and of "the necessities of the day" to submerge the higher part and to elevate the lower, materialistic part. These supposed necessities cannot even be numbered, for "they rise, strange and impatient, out of every modern shadow of change." We must respond to them not by asserting the inviolability of principles based merely on past practice, nor by dealing piecemeal with the new requirements and new abuses, but by determining "some constant, general, and irrefragable laws of right" based upon man's nature and

thus immune from changes due to increase or decrease in man's knowledge. These laws, which are but particular versions (Ruskin cannot stress this too often) of the laws of all human action, shall, he says, be called the Lamps of Architecture (VIII, 21).

What, Ruskin finally asks in his Introduction, is to be our estimation of the man who, in a time of revolutions abroad, of hunger and Chartist turmoil at home, devotes himself to the elucidation of such laws? His own justification is, and must be (Ruskin is writing of himself) that in the disinterested pursuit of the true laws of any branch of human work one is discovering the unity of all human exertion and thus celebrating the power and majesty of God. The rules of aesthetics and the laws of ethics are the same. In recommending any action, he says, "we have choice of two separate lines of argument: one based on representation of the expediency . . . of the work . . . the other based on proofs of its relations to the higher orders of human virtue, and of its acceptableness . . . to Him who is the origin of virtue." Ruskin himself has chosen always to take "the higher line of argument" not only because it is the best road to ultimate truth but because no other mode of treating a subject, no other justification of a man's vocation, is adequate to the present moment of history:

The aspect of the years that approach us is as solemn as it is full of mystery; and the weight of evil against which we have to contend, is increasing like the letting out of water. It is no time for the idleness of metaphysics, or the entertainments of the arts. The blasphemies of the earth are sounding louder, and its miseries heaped heavier every day; and if, in the midst of the exertion which every good man is called upon to put forth for their repression or relief, it is lawful to ask for a thought, for a moment, for a lifting of the finger, in any direction but that of the immediate and overwhelming need, it is at least incumbent upon us to approach the questions in which we would engage him, in the spirit which has become the habit of his mind, and in the hope that neither his zeal nor his usefulness may be checked by the withdrawal of an hour, which has shown him how even those things which seemed mechanical, indifferent, or contemptible, depend for their perfection upon the acknowledgment of the sacred principles of faith, truth, and obedience, for which it has become the occupation of his life to contend. (VIII, 25)

Having made this eloquent plea for the very temporary attention of the good man whose time and energy are mainly devoted to practical exertions for the relief of hu-

man misery, and having promised that "neither his zeal nor his usefulness" will be checked by his study of *The Seven Lamps*, Ruskin proceeds, paradoxically, to argue in Chapter I, "The Lamp of Sacrifice," that it is precisely *uselessness* that distinguishes Architecture from mere building. Architecture "concerns itself only with those characters of an edifice which are above and beyond its common use"; it adds just those arches, trefoils, cable mouldings, "which are useless" to good building. The Lamp of Sacrifice is exactly the antiutilitarian principle which had already been championed in *Modern Painters*. It is the name Ruskin uses for the generous and religious spirit in man, and in the architect, that moves him to "the offering of precious things merely because they are precious, not because they are useful or necessary." Ruskin, in making himself the audacious champion of this spirit of contempt for economy and utility, was setting himself against "the prevalent feeling of modern times, which desires to produce the largest results at the least cost." Three years before Newman in his *Discourses on University Education* eloquently defended intellectual culture as a good in itself and its own end, Ruskin was challenging the principle of utility and, implicitly, the reigning political economy. The objects of his attack quickly capitalized on the terminology of the debate and joined the *Economist* in labeling Ruskin "this expounder of a useless art."⁶

Following a line of argument that will recur in his later work — most notably in the attack on utility in *Unto This Last* — Ruskin argues that sacrifice must be conceived of as a good in itself, irrespective of its consequences. The worthiness of an activity is not measurable by its result. Men should, for example, sacrifice their wealth to the decoration of God's house instead of their own; yet "it is not the church we want, but the sacrifice . . . not the gift but the giving" (VIII, 39-40). The principle of intrinsic value here asserted was dear to Ruskin's heart; yet, like the preacher he never quite became, he could not resist undermining the principle by asserting, much as he had already done in *Modern Painters*, II, that in the long run the Lamp of Sacrifice is more expedient than expediency itself:

. . . it may be well to observe, that there is a lower advantage which never fails to accompany a dutiful observance of any right abstract principle. While the first fruits of his possessions were required from the Israelite as a testimony of fidelity, the payment of those first fruits was nevertheless rewarded, and that connectedly and specifically, by the increase of those pos-

6. *The Economist*, May 26, 1849, p. 585. Many years later, when he was teaching art at Oxford, Ruskin warned students: "I wish it at once to be known that I will entertain no question of the saleability of this or that manner of art; and

that I shall steadily discourage the attendance of students who propose to make their skill a source of income" (*Works*, XXXIII, 391).

sessions. Wealth, and length of days, and peace, were the promised and experienced rewards of his offerings, though they were not to be the objects of it.

Thus, although religion may not need the service of the arts, "the arts will never flourish until they have been primarily devoted to that service" (VIII, 42-43).

Ruskin is here writing about the vocation of architect, not that of art critic; but Ruskin was a writer peculiarly incapable of separating his personality from his work, and it is not, I think, extravagant to see in the practical lessons enjoined on the architect by the Lamp of Sacrifice the principles by which Ruskin justified to himself a vocation in which he never felt easy. The critic, like the architect, should always do his best, should put forth all his strength without thought of getting "money's worth"; and the critic, like the architect, should consider that the beauty of his work is enhanced by its visible evidences of great, disinterested labor. For Ruskin, like those "good men" whom he had called from the vineyard, wanted some assurance that "useless" work would ultimately prove the most useful work of all.

Yet between the opening chapter on the Lamp of Sacrifice and the concluding chapter on the Lamp of Obedience we hear relatively little about the social or humanitarian function of the critic of architecture. The main impulse at work is aesthetic or naturalistic rather than humanitarian or moral. Readers of Ruskin or of his critics have become familiar with the book's often quoted assertions about works that anticipate *The Stones of Venice*, and yet through most of *The Seven Lamps* the distinctions enforced are aesthetic ones, and it is assumed that, as Ruskin remarks in "The Lamp of Beauty," the ugly and the unnatural are one (VIII, 175).

Questions of art's utility and of the responsibility of the artist to society do appear on the peripheries of the discussion in the five chapters separating the first and the last. There is, for example, in "The Lamp of Truth," the emphasis on reuniting "the arts and all other subjects of human intellect, as matters of conscience." There is also the assertion that majestic art sympathizes "with the effort and trouble of human life." Above all, there is the famous injunction in "The Lamp of Life," to "ask, respecting all ornament . . . Was it done with enjoyment — was the carver happy while he was about it?" (VIII, 59, 138, 218).

But a careful reading even of these passages shows that their moral emphasis, although genuine, is qualified by, if not subordinate to, an aesthetic standard which is naturalistic rather than moral. All architectural beauty, Ruskin asserts in "The Lamp of Power," "is imitated from natural forms." Noble buildings sympathize with "the vast controlling powers of Nature herself." The principle of Or-

ganic Form afforded to Ruskin in 1848 and 1849 a kind of temporary refuge from the demands of a utilitarian and mechanical society. As yet unwilling to make social utility the standard of art and life, he looked to a nature that sought beauty through order as an ultimate standard.

The Seven Lamps of Architecture represents a transitional stage rather than a revolution in Ruskin's career. The turmoil of 1848 has not made him forsake his vocation of art critic, but it has made him question this vocation. He is not as yet primarily interested in social and political problems, but they have invaded his consciousness to the point where he feels obliged to justify his own vocation in relation to that of men who have joined in worldly struggle, and to explain his apparent detachment from that struggle. His argument is still primarily with himself, for he does not as yet know where his true vocation and his true existence lie. In "The Lamp of Life" he states the dilemma in terms very like those Arnold was shortly to use in "The Buried Life":

. . . when we begin to be concerned with the energies of man, we find ourselves instantly dealing with a double creature. Most part of his being seems to have a fictitious counterpart, which it is at his peril if he do not cast off and deny. Thus he has a true and false (otherwise called a living and dead, or a feigned or unfeigned) faith. He has a true and a false hope, a true and a false charity, and, finally, a true and a false life. His true life is like that of lower organic beings, the independent force by which he moulds and governs external things; it is a force of assimilation which converts everything around him into food, or into instruments: and which . . . never forfeits its own authority as a judging principle, as a will capable either of obeying or rebelling. His false life is, indeed, but one of the conditions of death or stupor, but . . . is not always easily known from the true. It is that life of custom and accident in which many of us pass much of our time in the world; that life in which we do what we have not proposed, and speak what we do not mean, and assent to what we do not understand; that life which is overlaid by the weight of things external to it . . . which instead of growing and blossoming under any wholesome dew, is crystallised over with it, as with hoar-frost, and becomes to the true life what an arborescence is to a tree, a candid agglomeration of thoughts and habits foreign to it, brittle, obstinate, and icy, which can neither bend nor grow, but must be crushed and broken to bits, if it stand in our way. All men are liable to be in some degree frost-bitten in this sort; all are partly encumbered and crusted over with idle matter; only, if they have real life in them, they are always breaking this bark away in noble rents, until it becomes, like the black strips upon the birch tree, only a witness of their own inward strength. (VIII, 191-92)

The trouble was that Ruskin did not yet know which of

his antithetical impulses represented his true, and which his false, life. We have already seen in his letters of this period a fear that what he had for some time supposed to be his own true life and occupation had been rendered frivolous and futile by the new world that was being conceived in violence. In "The Lamp of Life" he concluded his argument against the mechanical and utilitarian conceptions of work by asking, albeit uneasily, whether many occupations in life were not actually intended to be useless: "Perhaps all that we have to do is meant for nothing more than an exercise of the heart and of the will, and is useless in itself" (VIII, 219). But in the final chapter of *The Seven Lamps* he again tried, almost desperately, to justify his own calling in the very terms of social utility that he had rejected in his first chapter.

"The Lamp of Obedience," more than any other chapter of *The Seven Lamps*, indicates Ruskin's awareness of a need to relate his own work to the revolutionary events of 1848. Although he has been pursuing "a subject that at first appeared to bear but slightly on the grave interests of mankind," Ruskin has in fact been drawing a great political lesson from his investigation into the conditions requisite to great architecture. For his investigation has furnished him and his readers with conclusive proof "how false is the conception, how frantic the pursuit, of that treacherous phantom which men call Liberty." What men need is not Liberty but Law, and the visible embodiment of Law is work. Turning to those accusing critics — and they are but echoes of the self-accusing voices of John Ruskin — who question the immediacy of dissertations on architecture in the wake of revolutions, Ruskin launches into an exposition of the good social effects that submission to national architectural laws and a uniform inculcation of those laws through education would have. These would include fellowship, patriotism, social sympathy, and public-spiritedness among the first consequences. There would also be increased economy, greater domestic comfort, more sightly and more harmonious streets and buildings. But before articulating these consequences in any detail, Ruskin brings himself up short:

I have suffered myself too long to indulge in the speculative statement of requirements which perhaps we have more immediate and more serious work than to supply, and of feelings which it may be only contingently in our power to recover. I should be unjustly thought unaware of the difficulty of what I have proposed, or of the unimportance of the whole subject as compared with many which are brought home to our interests and fixed upon our consideration by the wild course of the present century. But of difficulty and importance it is for others to judge. I have limited myself to the simple statement of what, if we desire to

have architecture, we MUST primarily endeavor to feel and do: but then it may not be desirable for us to have architecture at all. (VIII, 260)

Perhaps, after all, he has fallen into the common error of overestimating the importance of his own vocation. Nevertheless, he is at least certain of the need for architecture as a national employment, and he is "confirmed in this impression by what [he sees] passing among the states of Europe at this instant." All the horror, tumult, and misery which now oppress the nations of Europe "are traceable, among the other secondary causes through which God is working out his will upon them, to the simple one of their not having enough to do." Ruskin does not deny the hardships suffered by the workers nor the recklessness of their revolutionary leaders, nor the absence of moral character in the governing classes, but he maintains that underlying them all is "the commonest and most fruitful cause of calamity in households — idleness." Men, of whatever class, are not to be bettered, Ruskin now maintains (he was soon to alter this view) by education — "the chief thing they need is occupation" (VIII, 261).

Thus does Ruskin justify his obsession with architecture in a period of revolution. The true philanthropist will be he who ceases merely to warn potential revolutionaries that — what is indeed true — they are fools who will in the end make themselves and others miserable, and who instead finds them "some other employment than disturbing governments." Ruskin's prescription of an occupation as the outlet for the idle energy that otherwise expresses itself in revolution is less important as an anticipation — though it is that too — of "The Nature of Gothic" than as an indication of Ruskin's two obsessive concerns at the time he composed *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*: his own choice of an occupation and his justification of that choice at a time of revolution, when nothing seemed less needed than disinterested inquiry into the causes of a past greatness which was fast being swept out of the world:

I have paused, not once nor twice, as I wrote, and often have checked the course of what might otherwise have been importunate persuasion, as the thought has crossed me, how soon all Architecture may be vain, except that which is not made with hands. There is something ominous in the light which has enabled us to look back with disdain upon the ages among whose lovely vestiges we have been wandering. I could smile when I hear the hopeful exultation of many, at the new reach of worldly science, and vigour of worldly effort; as if we were again at the beginning of days. There is thunder on the horizon as well as dawn. The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. (VIII, 265-66)

University of Washington

John Ruskin and the Nature of Manliness

David Sonstroem

IN HIS ESSAY "The Nature of Gothic" from *The Stones of Venice*, John Ruskin's summary advice for recognizing good Gothic is, "See if it looks as if it had been built by strong men. . . ." ¹ In the mind of Ruskin the nature of Gothic is repeatedly related to the nature of manliness. The relationship between Gothic architecture and manliness is sometimes embarrassing in the sexual concerns that it apparently unconsciously reveals. But, in its working out, the relationship is also an expressive confession of his attitudes toward his own masculinity. In dealing confidently with the problems of his un-Gothic age, he is also dealing tentatively with the problems of his sexual nature. The two areas are necessarily related: A sexually inadequate man who echoes his age in holding the word "manly" to be a term of highest approbation must somehow justify to himself his approval of manliness and his position as a leader of that age. In this short study I venture to intimate that certain of Ruskin's social and aesthetic conceptions may be meaningfully seen as extensions of his sexual predicament. Of course Ruskin's true scope stretches volumes beyond "The Nature of Gothic" and his achievement beyond mere sexual projection. But "The Nature of Gothic" does at least suggest a new way toward understanding him.

According to Ruskin, the Gothic gained its character from the wildness and roughness of the terrain north of Italy where it was born, and where "the earth heave[s] into mighty masses of leaden rock" (p. 186). Here he observes a

mountain brotherhood between the cathedral and the Alp; this magnificence of sturdy power . . . this out-speaking of the strong spirit of men who may not . . . bask in dreamy benignity of sunshine, but must break the rock for bread, and cleave the forest for fire, and show, even in what they did for their delight, some of the hard habits of the arm and heart that grew on them as they swung the axe or pressed the plough. (p. 188)

The words "brotherhood" and "spirit of men" reveal explicitly what we read into the adjectives "sturdy," "strong," and "hard," the nouns "power" and "rock," and the verbs "break" and "cleave" — let alone swinging of axes and pressing of ploughs, sexually freighted activities associated with what northern men "did for their delight." The mas-

culine landscape determines the essentially masculine architecture.

That sexuality is an extremely important element in Ruskin's appreciative concept of Gothic is perhaps most apparent in his discussion of the fifth definitive characteristic that he ascribes to Gothic architecture — "rigidity":

. . . I mean, not merely stable, but *active* rigidity; the peculiar energy which gives tension to movement, and stiffness to resistance, which . . . is as much seen in the quivering of the lance as in the glittering of the icicle. . . . Egyptian and Greek buildings stand, for the most part . . . one stone passively incumbent on another; but in the Gothic vaults and traceries there is a stiffness analogous to that of the bones of a limb, or fibres of a tree; an elastic tension and communication of force from part to part. . . . And, in like manner, the Greek and Egyptian ornament is either mere surface engraving, as if the face of the wall had been stamped with a seal, or its lines are flowing, lithe, and luxuriant; in either case, there is no expression of energy in the framework of the ornament itself. But the Gothic ornament stands out in prickly independence, and frosty fortitude, jutting into crockets, and freezing into pinnacles; here starting up into a monster, there germinating into a blossom; anon knitting itself into a branch . . . or writhed into every form of nervous entanglement; but, even when most graceful, never for an instant languid, always quickset; erring, if at all, ever on the side of brusquerie. (pp. 239-40)

I suppose that no one can mention Gothic spires and the rest, let alone their "rigidity," without employing what could be interpreted as phallic symbolism.² But Ruskin invites such an interpretation even in the *secondary* qualities that he ascribes to Gothic rigidity: its activity, its "peculiar energy," its "elastic tension," its "communication of force from part to part," its "nervous entanglement," its ability to "germinate." The more obvious phallic images and activities speak for themselves.

Furthermore, similarly charged passages occur throughout the essay. At one point Gothic buildings are described as "creatures of ungainly shape and rigid limb, but full of wolfish life" (p. 187). At another we read that Gothic architecture can

1. *The Works of John Ruskin*, eds. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols. (London, 1903-1912), X, 268. All citations are from volume X unless otherwise specified.

2. Mindful of this fact, I do not rest my argument on the sheer number of sexually suggestive passages that I am able to adduce, but rather on the meaningful order into which they consistently fall.

shrink into a turret, expand into a hall, coil into a staircase, or spring into a spire, with undegraded grace and unexhausted energy . . . subtle and flexible like a fiery serpent, but ever attentive to the voice of the charmer. (p. 212)

Our momentary uncertainty as to whether "into," in its several appearances, is to be taken to indicate either entering or becoming encourages the sexual suggestiveness of the passage. And it is hard to ignore the slang association that looms through the word "charmer" — principally a fakir, of course, but also, perhaps, a temptress.

It seems clear that Ruskin associated Gothic architecture with sexual potency, and came to admire Gothic largely because it represented this quality.

Other cultures and their architectures are measured against the Gothic standard of masculinity. For example, classical culture and architecture, which Ruskin directly opposes to the Gothic, are described as effeminate. The basking posture, which Ruskin, in a passage quoted earlier, finds foreign to the Gothic man, is an example of the attitude that Ruskin attributes to the Mediterranean regions — the lands of classical culture — whose very geography is described in feminine terms, and from whose people we are to expect the feminine or epicene. The Mediterranean is described as "lying beneath us," its promontories "sleeping in the sun" (p. 186). Like the sea, the buildings, too, bask, "one stone passively incumbent on another" (p. 240). Southern mountains do not heave into phallic masses, but are described instead as metalwork jewelry, "bossy beaten work of mountain chains" (p. 186). A typical inhabitant of the south is "that fallen Roman, in the utmost impotence of his luxury" (p. 185). Classical architecture requires that its workmen be either "entirely subjected to the intellect of the higher" or, "to a certain point, emancipated and independent, having a will of [their] own, yet confessing [their] inferiority and rendering obedience to higher powers" (p. 188) — in either case exhibiting effeminate servility that the heartier medieval northerner would not tolerate in himself. The very designs that the Mediterranean craftsman is compelled to execute are, in Ruskin's phrases, highly suggestive of the female genitals or breasts: "The Greek could stay in his triglyph furrow, and be at peace . . ." (p. 214); "what ornament [the Greek master workman] appointed to be done by those beneath him was composed of mere geometrical forms, — balls, ridges, and perfectly symmetrical foliage. . . ." (p. 189).

When Ruskin turned to the England of his own time, he found a third culture, neither virile like the Gothic nor effeminate like the classical, yet one to which sexual terminology is nevertheless most appropriate. In contemporary England he saw a culture basically powerful and masculine,

but rendered impotent by the machine. His descriptions of England's industrial ills are governed by metaphors of castration:

But to smother [men's] souls with them, to blight and hew into rotting pollards the suckling branches of their human intelligence, to make the flesh and skin . . . into leathern thongs to yoke machinery with, — this is to be slave-masters indeed. . . . (p. 193)

Laborers' products are described as miniature phallic objects that are then segmented:

It is not, truly speaking, the labour that is divided; but the men: — Divided into mere segments of men — broken into small fragments and crumbs of life; so that all the little piece of intelligence that is left in a man is not enough to make a pin, or a nail, but exhausts itself in making the point of a pin or the head of a nail. . . . And the great cry that rises from all our manufacturing cities . . . is . . . that we manufacture everything there except men. . . . (p. 196)

The phallic imagery provides an inner logic that powerfully supports the last assertion. In another striking passage there is a strong suggestion of self-castration, with an attendant suggestion of guilty masturbation leading to disease: Glass beads

are formed by first drawing out the glass into rods; these rods are chopped up into fragments of the size of beads by the human hand, and the fragments are then rounded in the furnace. The men who chop up the rods sit at their work all day, their hands vibrating with a perpetual and exquisitely timed palsy, and the beads dropping beneath their vibration like hail. Neither they, nor the men who draw out the rods or fuse the fragments, have the smallest occasion for the use of any single human faculty; and every young lady, therefore, who buys glass beads is engaged in the slave-trade, and in a much more cruel one than that which we have so long been endeavouring to put down. (p. 197)

The cruelty of "every young lady," then, is felt in part to be sexual cruelty, in depriving these workmen in some way of their sexual faculty. Ruskin advises his England to regain a Gothic glory by ceasing its perverse, enervating behavior, and returning to a healthier, manlier way of life.

Thus Ruskin differentiates and evaluates all three cultures and their artifacts — the Gothic, the classical, and the contemporary English — according to the criterion of manliness, manliness being envisioned primarily but indirectly as sexual potency.

Ruskin's sexual failings are no secret, either to us or (within a few years of his writing this essay) to his contemporaries, and it is pitiful to see such an unfortunate man yet abide by a concept of excellence that he could not emu-

late in the management of his own existence. Why he should choose to admire manliness may be explained in another sexually suggestive passage, which reads like an oblique confession: "the precipice and the mountain peak are not intended to be seen by all men, — perhaps their power is greatest over those who are unaccustomed to them" (p. 238). The attitude is very different from the earlier bravado that marks the misty ejaculations of the first volume of *Modern Painters*, where he can declare that "few people have had the opportunity of seeing the sea [in a storm] . . . and when they have, cannot face it. To hold by a mast or a rock, and watch it, is a prolonged endurance of drowning which few people have courage to go through" (*Works*, III, 571) — and can include himself among those manly few. In "The Nature of Gothic" we find instead justifications, and perhaps personal confessions, of imperfection, as in the following poignant passage:

And in all things that live there are certain irregularities and deficiencies which are not only signs of life, but sources of beauty. . . . All things are literally better, lovelier, and more beloved for the imperfections which have been divinely appointed, that the law of human life may be Effort, and the law of human judgment, Mercy. (pp. 203-4)

Ruskin's sexual uneasiness may also be evident in passages that modify the essential manliness of Gothic in such a way as to accommodate it somewhat to his own nature. At one point we find the nature of Gothic described incongruously as thwarted rather than satisfied, feverishly frustrated rather than joyfully productive: He remarks upon

that strange *disquietude* of the Gothic spirit that is its greatness; that restlessness of the dreaming mind, that wanders hither and thither among the niches, and flickers feverishly around the pinnacles, and frets and fades in labyrinthine knots and shadows along wall and roof, and yet is not satisfied, nor shall be satisfied. . . . the work of the Gothic heart is fretwork still, and it can neither rest in, nor from, its labour, but must pass on, sleeplessly. . . . (p. 214)

This passage presents no manly Gothic; it suggests instead the ineffectual "fretwork" of the sexual weakling.

A more deliberate qualification of the predominantly manly nature of Gothic is Ruskin's allowance for "a softer element," by which its "rudeness" is "soothed and satisfied" (p. 236): "The affectionate observation of the grace and

outward character of vegetation is the sure sign of a more tranquil and gentle existence . . ." (p. 237). The "roughness, and largeness, and nonchalance" of Gothic, its "massy power," is "mixed in places with the exquisite tenderness which seems always to be the sign-manual of the broad vision" (p. 268). Thus did Ruskin tone down his own "broad vision," obscuring the discrepancy between the basic nature of Gothic as he saw it and his own nature, and rendering his ideal into less of a reproach to him.

The essay, sweeping and authoritarian in its dealing with the nature of peoples of several eras as revealed through their artifacts, and with the principle of social well-being, is, as we have seen, yet tentative, inconclusive, and highly qualified with respect to the nature of manliness. Ruskin had solved the public matters, but not the personal ones. He had yet to come to terms with his sex.

Seven years later, in "The Roots of Honor" (*Unto This Last*, Essay I, 1860), there are indications that Ruskin had so come to terms. Although the topic discussed is once again the plight of the worker in the machine age, the essay is not mined with sexual suggestiveness, as is the earlier work. Its buoyant confidence is not crossed by resistant imagery. A reason for Ruskin's new clear-heartedness is revealed in the next-to-last section:

. . . the merchant or manufacturer is invested with a distinctly paternal authority and responsibility. In most cases, a youth entering a commercial establishment is withdrawn altogether from home influence; his master must become his father, else he has, for practical and constant help, no father at hand . . . so that the only means which the master has of doing justice to the men employed by him is to ask himself sternly whether he is dealing with such subordinate as he would with his own son. . . . And as the captain of a ship is bound to be the last man to leave his ship in case of wreck . . . so the manufacturer, in any commercial crisis or distress, is bound to take the suffering of it with his men, and even to take more of it for himself than he allows his men to feel; as a father would in a famine, shipwreck, or battle, sacrifice himself for his son. (*Works*, XVII, 41-42)

The sexual paragon has been superseded by the father (specifically, the foster-father) as Ruskin's ideal man — an ideal to which Ruskin can aspire. The new ideal still allows for power, creativity, "sternness," and even heroism.³ But it does not require the brute functions, and finds room for the

3. Three years earlier, in "The Political Economy of Art," later reissued with additions as "A Joy For Ever" (see *Works*, XVI, 3-139), Ruskin's concept of paternalism was already being developed: The French "have at least stated one true principle, that of fraternity or brotherhood. Do not be alarmed; they got all wrong in their experiments, because they quite forgot that this fact of fraternity implied another fact

quite as important — that of paternity, or fatherhood" (p. 24). The "real type of a well-organized nation must be presented, not by a farm cultivated by servants who wrought for hire, and might be turned away if they refused to labour, but by a farm in which the master was a father . . ." (p. 25). He refers to paternalism as the "first grand principle" of political economy (p. 27).

softer virtues of gentleness, generosity, affection, and self-sacrifice.

In fact Ruskin had been groping toward this new ideal for at least a decade. For example, he had "fathered" several artists in the fifties, without noteworthy success, his "sons" tending to waywardness (Millais had taken his patron's wife, and Rossetti, resenting Ruskin's officiousness, had come to treat him callously). But in spite of individual failures, and in spite of the fact that he never abandoned completely his "Gothic" notion of manliness,⁴ Ruskin did finally evolve an ideal of manhood to which he could genuinely aspire — an ideal that influences his later concepts, informed with paternalism, as decidedly as his "Gothic" man had shaped his earlier views.⁵

This brief study is intended as a gesture toward repaying in understanding what is owed Ruskin for the undeniable, morbid fascination afforded by "the Ruskin scandal." I come to the following tentative conclusions: First — what should astonish no one — Ruskin's sexual concerns permeate his pronouncements on art and society. Second, and more surprising, the sexual concerns would seem not only

to have fastened themselves to the artistic and social conceptions, but actually to have largely determined, shaped, and controlled them. This matter surely deserves a more comprehensive examination, as well as integration with other, recognized factors that also contributed to the shape and movement of his ideas: his manic-depressive tendencies, for example, his religious proclivities, his social conscience, and parental pressure, not to speak of "accidental" influences, like Turner and Carlyle. Third, and most gratifying, we find not simply an unconscious *betrayal* of deep-seated sexual problems, but indeed signs of an active, powerful, persistent, and ingenious *grappling* with those problems. The impulse is upward: toward sanity, toward recognition of personal limitations, toward a functional reconciliation between his nature and the manly ideals of his age. The active working out of the discrepancies between his inadequate nature and his lofty impulses reveals Ruskin to be deserving of a respect that our own age has not been quick to grant him.

University of Connecticut

The Verdict in Whistler v. Ruskin

Francis L. Fennell

"THE WHOLE THING was a hateful affair," wrote Edward Burne-Jones to Dante Gabriel Rossetti in late November of 1878. "I try not to think of it all more than I can help."¹ The "hateful affair" that annoyed Burne-Jones so much was the recent trial of John Ruskin on the charge of libel brought against him by James McNeill Whistler. Burne-Jones had appeared as a reluctant witness on behalf of the defendant and we can understand his discomfiture. But his frustration was typical of the reactions of all those who were involved in this famous trial, from Ruskin, who expected beforehand that the case would be "nuts and nectar to me," to Whistler, who had looked forward to "a lark."

Their disappointment owed much of its intensity to the seemingly inconsistent verdict: Ruskin's charge that Whistler's "Nocturne in Black and Gold" demonstrated "ill-educated conceit," "wilful imposture," and "cockney impudence" was declared to be indeed a libel, but a libel that was worth only a farthing damages. Whistler had been guilty, according to Ruskin, of "flinging a pot of paint in the public's face"; it seemed now that the public was returning Whistler the compliment and for good measure adding a generous quantity of scorn for the critic.

For almost a century the trial has been a cynosure for critics, biographers, and literary historians. Yet despite this

4. The concept of what I have called the Gothic man reaches far beyond Gothic architecture, as we see in the following passage from Ruskin's "Notes on the Turin Gallery," from his diary for 1858: "Certainly it seems intended that strong and frank animality, rejecting all tendency to asceticism, monachism, pietism, and so on, should be connected with the strongest intellects. . . . Homer, Shakespeare, Tintoret, Veronese, Titian, Michael Angelo, Sir Joshua, Rubens, Velasquez, Correggio, Turner, are all of them boldly Animal. Franchia and Angelico, and all the purists, however beautiful, are poor weak creatures in comparison. I don't understand it; one would have thought purity gave strength, but it doesn't. A good, stout, self-commanding, magnificent Animality is the

make for poets and artists, it seems to me" (*Works*, VII, xl).

5. Although it is true that there is no radical break between Ruskin's earlier aesthetic writings and his later economic or sociological writings, it is also true that there is a shift in emphasis. And the shift corresponds exactly with his shift in emphasis from the "Gothic" man to the foster-father. It is also worth mentioning incidentally that there is a latent incompatibility between the two ideals of manliness. One wonders how gracefully rugged Gothic individualists would submit to paternalistic dominion.

1. *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, ed. G[eorgiana] B[urne]-J[ones] (London, 1906), II, 88.

attention there has been both an absence of dispassionate analysis and a reluctance to examine the original documents of the case. Everyone seems content to agree with Professor James Dearden that the trial was a "Gilbertian farce"² and to dismiss the jury as "ridiculous" and "obtuse."³ Paradoxically, the consensus of opinion has also been that this same muddle-headed jury were correct when they found Ruskin guilty — Horace Gregory refers to "Ruskin's obvious mistake"⁴ — and that the only betrayal of justice was in the award of damages.

Furthermore, the verdict in *Whistler v. Ruskin* has been used as evidence of the ignorance of the Victorian public about art. The jury's refusal to award more than contemptuous damages has been considered proof of their philistinism and their indifference to the important issues which the trial raised. Bernard Shaw remarked acidly that Whistler's plea for his artistic conscience "could only raise a farthing — that being all conscience is worth in the eyes of the law."⁵ The verdict has been taken to show that "the jury had had enough talk of art"⁶ and that "a British court thought it a lot of fuss about nothing."⁷

However, an examination of unpublished material on the trial in the Pennell-Whistler Collection of the Library of Congress, as well as of legal precedents and complete trial transcripts, makes it clear that such generalizations about the trial are unfounded. It will be demonstrated that the jury's decision was based on points of law rather than aesthetics and reflected their confusion about obvious legal inconsistencies rather than their insensitivity to art or art criticism. Their verdict can therefore be seen as a rational if arguable conclusion about a complex legal question. Because *Whistler v. Ruskin* was such a cause célèbre, it is important that we understand the grounds on which we make judgments about it.

On petition of both plaintiff and defendant, *Whistler v. Ruskin* was tried before a special jury. Special juries were composed of jurors who were higher in rank than esquire or who met certain professional or property qualifications.⁸ Although these restrictions did not guarantee the compe-

tence of any given juror, they at least had the practical effect of ensuring a jury that was better educated and perhaps more leisured than average: in short, a jury which was better qualified than most to assess complex legal questions and more likely than most to have an understanding of and appreciation for art.

The legal issue on which this jury was being asked to pass judgment was ill defined. Libel law has always been an intricate matter, compounded as it is of statute and social mores. The law itself seemed clear: "A defamatory statement is a statement which, if published of and concerning a person, is calculated to expose him to hatred, contempt, or ridicule, or to convey an imputation on him disparaging or injurious to his trade, business, profession, calling, or office."⁹ Ruskin's allegation that Whistler's art was "wilful imposture" and that his price of two hundred guineas was an example of "cockney impudence" belonged within that definition. But even if what he had written was technically defamatory, the law provided that a defendant could establish his innocence in two ways: either he could plead justification (the statement while defamatory was essentially true) or, putting aside the question of the truth of the statement, he could claim the critic's privilege (the statement was a fair comment on works offered to public scrutiny). The first defense was much harder to adopt in a case of this kind, since it required the defendant to prove that he was *right* in what he said. A defense of fair comment required only that he prove his statement to be "the honest expression of the opinion which the defendant held upon the facts truly stated, and was in the opinion of the jury warranted by the facts, *in the sense that a fair-minded man might upon those facts bona fide hold that opinion.*"¹⁰ In other words, one simply had to establish that his opinion could be shared by other competent and temperate judges, whether or not his judgment was in the abstract "correct."

Although fair comment was the easiest approach for Ruskin's lawyers to take, when the trial began his defense was hampered by an apparent confusion over tactics. Ruskin was represented in the courtroom by the Attorney

2. James S. Dearden, ed. *The Professor: Arthur Severn's Memoir of John Ruskin* (London, 1967), p. 113.
3. See, for example, Judge Parry, "Whistler v. Ruskin," *Cornhill Magazine*, n.s., L (1921), 21; Derrick Leon, *Ruskin, the Great Victorian* (London, 1949), p. 525; Hesketh Pearson, *The Man Whistler* (London, 1952), p. 78; John D. Rosenberg, *The Darkening Glass: A Portrait of Ruskin's Genius* (New York, 1961), p. 207.
4. *The World of James McNeill Whistler* (London, 1961), p. 143; for similar opinions, see Henry James, unsigned column, *The Nation*, XXVII (1878), 385; E. T. Cook, *The Life of John Ruskin* (New York, 1911), II, 429; Elizabeth and Joseph Pennell, *The Whistler Journal* (Philadelphia, 1921), p. 319; James Laver, *Whistler* (London, 1930), p. 182.

5. Quoted in Pearson, *The Man Whistler*, p. 86.
6. Gregory, *World of Whistler*, p. 144.
7. William Gaunt, *The Aesthetic Adventure* (New York, 1945), p. 113; for similar judgments see James, p. 385; Cook, II, 429; Pearson, p. 86; Dearden, p. 114.
8. The Right Honourable the Earl of Halsbury et al., eds. *The Laws of England*, XVIII (London, 1911), 260-61. The eligible jurors included bankers, merchants, and property-holders each of whose property (with various adjustments) had a tax-assessed valuation in excess of £100.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 606.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 711, italics added.

General, Sir John Holker, and by Charles Bowen. Their questioning should have been designed merely to demonstrate that Ruskin's opinion about Whistler was shared by other art critics and was therefore "fair." The "Statement of Defense" and the "Defendant's Brief," legal documents prepared before the trial by Robert Fulford, a solicitor for Walker, Martineau, and Company, both show that this was the planned course of action and make no mention of a plea of justification.¹¹ In fact Ruskin had urged his solicitors to insist that "the description of his [Whistler's] work and character is accurately true so far as it reaches"; but Bowen had written an opinion in which he argued that a jury "never could or would decide on that," and the solicitors apparently heeded the advice of the junior counsel.¹²

But the British judicial system that separates the functions of preparing and trying the case caused Ruskin's defense to suffer. Sir John Holker as senior barrister apparently either did not understand the solicitor's brief and the opinion of his colleague or, perhaps because of pressing duties elsewhere, did not have time to give them sufficient attention. In any event he directed almost all of his questioning to Whistler's alleged incompetence. His speeches and cross-examinations were given over to unnecessary and irrelevant attempts to prove that Ruskin had been fully "justified" in what he had said. Holker's most common device for establishing Ruskin's justification was ridicule of Whistler:

Let them examine the nocturne of blue and silver said to represent Battersea Bridge. What was that structure in the middle? Was it a telescope or a fire escape? Or perhaps it was the tubular bridge sent from the Menai Straits to span the Thames. Was it like Battersea Bridge? What were the figures on the top of the bridge? and, if they were horses and carts, how in the name of fortune were they to get off? . . . There was the blackness of night, with a falling star or some fireworks coming down from the top, and a sort of blaze at the bottom — perhaps a bonfire. That was all; but Mr. Moore [the painter Albert Moore] said it was very beautiful. Mr. Whistler did not see things as other people did; but he saw strange fantastical things, especially in what followed in the train of a rocket falling down. . . . If Mr. Whistler's reputation as an artist was to be founded on these pictures he was a pretender to an accomplishment he did not possess, and was worthy of the name of coxcomb.¹³

Holker was demanding that art be representational. According to that narrow standard, Whistler of course was judged a failure, and Holker could proclaim that Ruskin's denunciation was wholly warranted. (Actually Holker was misrepresenting his client: Ruskin's objection had been against Whistler's workmanship rather than his impressionism, and those in the courtroom who had read the first volume of *Modern Painters*, in which Ruskin had defended Turner's later paintings against the strictures of critics who held to standards similar to Holker's, must have appreciated the irony that Ruskin's defense offered.)

Holker's aim was to prove that Ruskin had been substantially "correct." Under the guise of a defense of fair comment, and without avowing his intent, Holker was conducting what amounted to a defense of justification. In so doing he spent valuable time developing an unnecessary and misleading argument. At the same time, by displaying his own philistinism, Holker made himself an excellent butt for Whistler's famous barbed wit:

How long do you take to knock off one of your pictures? — Oh, I knock off one possibly in a couple of days. (Laughter.)

And that was the labour for which you asked 200 guineas? — No; it was for the knowledge gained through a lifetime. (Applause.) . . .

The Attorney-General: What is the peculiar beauty of that picture? — It is impossible for me to explain to you the beauty of the picture, any more than for a musician to explain to you the beauty of harmony in a particular piece of music if you had no ear for music.¹⁴

Holker left the courtroom after making an opening speech on the second day of the trial, and the rest of the defense was undertaken by Charles Bowen. Although he could not unravel the confusion brought by Holker's digressions, Bowen quite properly reverted to a defense of fair comment. He produced three witnesses, Burne-Jones, William Frith, and Tom Taylor, all of whom concurred with Ruskin's opinion of Whistler. Then in his summation Bowen parted company with his absent colleague by deliberately setting aside the dangerous question of justification:

. . . the issue was not what were the merits of Mr. Whistler's pictures, not whether they thought the Nocturne worth 200 guineas, or whether they were serious

11. Pennell-Whistler Collection, boxes 26-27. The "Statement of Defense" makes no mention of justification and contents itself with stating simply: "The alleged libel is privileged as being a fair and bonâ fide criticism upon a painting which the plaintiff had exposed for public view."

12. Ruskin's letter and Bowen's opinion are quoted in the "Defendant's Brief," Pennell-Whistler Collection, box 27.

13. *London Daily Telegraph*, November 27, 1878, p. 2. In addition to a summary in *The Times*, three daily newspapers —

the *Daily Telegraph*, *Morning Post*, and *Standard* — provided verbatim transcripts of the trial. These accounts differ only on one important point — whether Baron Huddleston censured or exonerated Ruskin for not supplying the court with his own views of the trial. However, since one paper will supply details that the others missed or condensed, I cite portions from all three.

14. *Daily Telegraph*, November 26, 1878, p. 2.

works of art or mere extravagancies. He had called Mr. Burne-Jones, Mr. Frith, and one of the most famous critics of the present day, with a view to showing that persons who had a serious knowledge of art disapproved of the pictures, in order that they might see how an art critic might honestly have been led to express such an opinion as that given by Mr. Ruskin. . . . All he [Ruskin] had done was to express an opinion on Mr. Whistler's pictures — an opinion to which, be he right or be he wrong, he adhered.¹⁵

By stressing the rights of fair comment Bowen emphasized that the case to be decided was a question of law, not of aesthetics or preferences in art.

Bowen's defense of Ruskin on the basis of fair comment was certainly more prudent than building a case for justification. But even fair comment was a complicated matter. The court precedents established prior to 1878 showed that there were two schools of opinion about what was permissible under the fair comment privilege. The stricter school held that no comment was fair that seemed, in the words of Judge Crompton in *Campbell v. Spottiswoode* (1863), to "impute base and sordid motives."¹⁶ Ruskin's charge of "wilful imposture" might well fall within that provision. But for understandable reasons Bowen offered to the jury a more liberal interpretation of fair comment. Cases like *Wason v. Walter* (1869) and *Henwood v. Harrison* (1872) seemed to imply that there were no special exceptions and that within limits one could say what one pleased so long as the plaintiff could not prove that the defendant was actuated by party zeal or personal aversion. This difference of opinion over the interpretation of fair comment culminated in *Merivale v. Carson*, which considered the issue of whether the judge's summation should emphasize the rights of fair comment (could any fair man, however prejudiced, have said what the defendant has said?) or should stress the imputation of base motives. Although the court in *Merivale v. Carson* held the latter view, this case was not decided until 1888 and it is easy to understand the doubt which the lawyers and the judge (much less the jury) experienced a decade earlier.

The havoc caused by this legal conundrum is apparent in the charge to the jury given at the end of the trial by Baron Huddleston, the presiding judge in *Whistler v. Ruskin*. On the one hand he seemed to invite the jury to

acquit Ruskin if they found his criticism honest: "Mr. Ruskin undoubtedly called a spade a spade, and, indeed, called it something stronger; and the question was, whether he expressed honest convictions. His language might not be that which they themselves might make use of, but if he honestly believed what he wrote he (the learned judge) would be very much inclined to give full license to it."¹⁷ Moreover Huddleston excluded the words "cockney" and "coxcomb" from the jury's consideration, and he pointedly reminded them that "if the critic honestly felt that he was dealing with an imposter or a charlatan, he had a right to make strong observations with reference to the works about which he was writing."¹⁸ These words seemed to authorize Bowen's interpretation of fair comment.

But at the same time, perhaps because he sensed that he might appear to be overstepping his prerogatives by directing the verdict,¹⁹ or perhaps because he had been confused by the court precedents or the inconsistencies of the defense, Huddleston made other stipulations which muddied the legal waters. He cautioned the jury to find for the plaintiff if they felt Ruskin had used his position merely as the "veil for personal censure" or had laid down his anathemas "for the purpose of showing his power."²⁰ The latter criterion, which seemed to penalize the critic for being influential and which required an assessment of Ruskin's motives, was simply unworkable. But the former was to cause the jury considerable difficulty. Huddleston's other remarks had implied that honesty was a sufficient defense, but he now seemed to be holding to the stricter view of fair comment, namely that no comment was fair which seemed to impute base motives. Thus the instructions to the jury tended to be contradictory from the beginning.

Then, ignoring the thrust of Bowen's summation, Huddleston went even further and requested that the jury consider Whistler's ideas about art. "Still the question was, did those ideas justify the language used by Mr. Ruskin?"²¹ By raising again the issue of justification Huddleston seemed to be encouraging the jury to become art critics — to express their own opinion on a matter of genuine critical dispute. In his attempt not to prejudice their deliberations the judge shifted the whole legal grounds of the case and asked the jury to slay a hydra of Huddleston's own making.²² No longer was it simply a question of whether Ruskin

15. *Standard*, November 27, 1878, p. 2.

16. Quoted in A. P. Stone, ed. *The Law Reports: Queen's Bench*, XX (London, 1888), 280.

17. *Daily Telegraph*, November 27, 1878, p. 2.

18. *Morning Post*, November 27, 1878, p. 3.

19. Horace Gregory's claim (*World of Whistler*, p. 144) that Huddleston directed the verdict is erroneous, as the newspaper reports clearly show; a judge had the right to dismiss frivo-

lous cases, but otherwise he could not interfere in the deliberations (cf. *Laws of England*, XVIII, 654-55).

20. *Morning Post*, November 27, 1878, p. 3.

21. *Standard*, November 27, 1878, p. 2.

22. Another explanation for Huddleston's confusion may be found in a pencil note among the trial papers in box 5 of the Pennell-Whistler Collection; the note, in the handwriting of Whistler's solicitor Alexander Rose, says simply: "Huddleston drunk."

could have said what he had said fairly and honestly; it seemed now that the jury might accept the invitation to decide whether he was right in what he said.

The jury was closeted for almost two hours, a lengthy deliberation for a trial which took only some four or five hours to conduct. At the end of that time their foreman reported a deadlock. They could agree that Ruskin's remarks were honestly made, and they wished to know if this was sufficient grounds for acquittal. Their confusion undoubtedly arose from the implied contradiction between Huddleston's statements about deciding whether Ruskin "honestly believed what he wrote" and the judge's later insistence that they examine the issue of personal censure. The jury further reported that the focus of their discussion was the phrase "wilful imposture," a proper concern since that phrase was the most violent language in the *For's Clavigera* article on which the suit was based.

The jury's report is especially valuable in showing that they had wisely set aside the issue of justification and devoted their attention to the privileges of fair comment. Despite Holker's obfuscations and Huddleston's misleading charge, they had resisted the opportunity to pass judgment on Whistler's art and Ruskin's aesthetics. Their report is evidence of their ability to define the important issues in the case and of their clear perception that the case was to be decided by law and not by their taste in art.

Huddleston replied that a conviction of Ruskin's honesty was insufficient, and he instructed them to decide whether "wilful imposture" applied to Whistler as a man or Whistler as an artist. The jury retired in what must have been complete confusion. They had been told that what they believed might be grounds for acquittal were not grounds at all — in other words that their initial inclination to acquit Ruskin because he was honest was "unacceptable." Furthermore, they had been asked to judge a question that involved among other things Romantic theories about the inseparability of the artist and his art. Their dilemma was perplexing: they believed Ruskin meant what he said about Whistler's charlatanism, and they had been told that a charge of imposture was legally permissible; but it was equally true that to call a man an imposter was inevitably to asperse his character, and they had been told that a critic must not engage in such personal criticism.

"Man" and "artist" was a false legal distinction. The language of the law had not yet taken into account the language of post-Romantic aesthetics. The law assumed that the artist was like Henry James' character Clare Vawdrey — two separate individuals, the Clare Vawdrey who sits alone in his room grappling with the problems of his art and the other Clare Vawdrey who presides downstairs in the drawing room. The law said that you could castigate the one but not the other. Even Ruskin, who had insisted in the third volume of *Modern Painters* that great art proceeded from the great soul of the artist, could have shown that such a distinction was untenable.

The jury found that like Solomon they could render justice only by splitting the baby with sword. After ten minutes they returned with their famous verdict, a verdict which satisfied neither side because the legal contradictions left them no choice but to offer some reward and some rebuke to both parties.

Unable to come to a decision because of the inadequacy of the choices offered to them, the jury reached a "compromise" that in fact represented a hung jury. Most commentators on this trial seem to have been unaware that returning a verdict of guilty and then assessing nominal damages was a common way for juries to escape the onus of being deadlocked. The appeals courts in such cases as *Springett v. Balls* (1866) and *Falvey v. Stanford* (1875) had been asked to overturn similar verdicts that were "a species of compromise, and, in fact, no true verdict at all."²³ Although Whistler seriously contemplated challenging the jury's decision,²⁴ *Whistler v. Ruskin* was never appealed and this particular compromise was allowed to stand. Baron Huddleston implicitly recognized that the jury had refused to pass judgment on the case when he asked each side to pay its own costs.

The jury's verdict is evidence, not of their frivolousness or philistinism, but rather of the puzzlement with which they approached a delicate and ultimately insoluble legal dilemma. They were not expressing their taste in art, nor were they insulting Whistler or Ruskin. Seen in its proper context this famous trial shows no villains — only victims.

Loyola University (Chicago)

23. J. R. Bulwer, ed. *The Law Reports: Court of Queen's Bench*, X (London, 1875), 57. The words are Judge Quain's in *Falvey v. Stanford*.

24. The itemized bill that Alexander Rose presented to Whistler

(Pennell-Whistler Collection, box 26) mentions two long letters written immediately after the trial in which Rose discussed an appeal and counseled that "the matter should be allowed to rest where it did."

William Morris and the Tannhäuser Legend: A Gloss on the Earthly Paradise Motif

Barbara Fass

IN THESE DAYS of proliferating criticism, *The Earthly Paradise* has received surprisingly little attention, perhaps because it has gotten caught in the midst of William Morris' unusual (and one would think unlikely) reputation as both an aesthete and Marxist socialist. Readers have generally been content to take the poet at his word when he apologizes for being an idle singer of an idle day, the kind whose mood is conveyed by Henry James' enthusiastic appreciation: "To sit in the open shade, inhaling the heated air, and, while you read these perfect fairy tales, these rich and pathetic human traditions to glance up from your page at the clouds and the trees, is to do as pleasant a thing as the heart of man can desire."¹ The early reviews of the work, however, were scornful of its remoteness from contemporary life,² a view that in more benign form can be found in Douglas Bush's pronouncement that in Morris "the attenuation of romanticism is complete," although he goes on to add that "the divorce between poetry and life [is] especially paradoxical, for he was not, like Rossetti, a secluded high-priest of estheticism."³

This mild bewilderment is perhaps all the man of letters need feel when trying to adjust his reading of *The Earthly Paradise* to his knowledge of Morris' political beliefs; but for the Marxist, the poem is an embarrassment. The need to defend it can be inferred from what is to date the most elaborate published analysis of the work, that by Jessie Kocmanova who must redeem *The Earthly Paradise* as art without diminishing Morris' political stature.⁴ She correctly points out that in Morris' famous "Apologie" the poet is self-critical, but her main thesis, that the work is a summation of the romance tradition that allows Morris to leave it behind, is questionable. It is true that in the "Epilogue" Morris bids his work adieu and asks it to "let us go our ways, / And live awhile amid these latter days!"

(VI, 329).⁵ But to make such a plea grounds for defending Morris would be ironic and reveal mainly that his dilemma as artist has been inherited by his interpreters. What Miss Kocmanova's critique says, in effect, is that Morris had to get this kind of writing out of his system so that he could go beyond it. Hardly a starting point for a profound analysis of the work!⁶

If Miss Kocmanova's study reveals the dangers of a Marxist approach to *The Earthly Paradise*, one that proceeds from the assumption that Morris is an aesthete is probably even more fraught with dangers, since it could encourage an almost purely formal analysis, one already discouraged by a very long (and, alas, frequently tedious) work that is a priori assumed to lack enough substantive content to make the task worthwhile. It may be for just this reason that Morris' best critics, who while recognizing in the dichotomy between artist and man of action a crucial dialectic rather than a puzzlement, have not taken pains to analyze *The Earthly Paradise*. But there is a way of looking at the work without being forced to decide between aesthete and political being, and that is to consider that on the whole the poem's content is not escapist so much as it is *about* escape. Such a view, which, indeed, a close reading of the "Prologue" encourages, is rewarding on more than one count. First, it reveals that the subject of *The Earthly Paradise* is related to a major Victorian concern, the perils of dwelling in a palace of art. Secondly, and relatedly, the famous "Apologie" would take on a more descriptive function: an introduction by way of explanation to the whole book.

There is not enough room in a short essay to examine each of the sections of *The Earthly Paradise* to see whether all exemplify what is being suggested, that Morris is exploring the implications of his own aestheticism. And it is

1. "The Poetry of William Morris," *Views and Reviews* (Boston, 1908), p. 71.
2. See Oscar Maurer, Jr., "William Morris and the Poetry of Escape," *Nineteenth-Century Studies*, ed. Herbert Davis (Ithaca, 1940), pp. 247-77.
3. *Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry* (New York, 1963), p. 326.
4. "The Poetic Maturing of William Morris: From 'The Earthly Paradise' to 'The Pilgrims of Hope,'" *Brno Studies in English* (Czechoslovakia), V, 1964. The study is a monograph. See also her review of E. P. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (New York, 1961): "Some Remarks on E.

P. Thompson's Opinion of the Poetry of William Morris," *Philological Pragensia*, III (1960), 168-78.

5. Citations are to *The Collected Works*, 24 vols. (New York, 1966). Reprinted from 1910-1915.
6. Although I admire much that Miss Kocmanova does with *The Earthly Paradise*, that she sees the theme of the "justification of love" as the focus of "The Hill of Venus" is one of the pieces of evidence that for me marks the limitations of her approach. As I hope to demonstrate, the tale has wider significance which can be arrived at only if *The Earthly Paradise* is seen as more than a manifestation of the romance tradition.

likely that consistency would have to be forced in an all-encompassing analysis, for some of the tales probably do exist for their own sake and in no way gloss the themes of the "Apologie" and "Prologue." The last of the narratives, however, seems to deserve special attention. The Tannhäuser legend, of which "The Hill of Venus" is a little-known version, epitomizes the theme of the earthly paradise, not just Morris' conception of it but in general. Therefore it is appropriate that although he had not originally intended to do so, Morris placed it at the end. It virtually summarizes and climaxes the concern introduced in the "Prologue" about the dangers of a search for an earthly paradise. It also, and perhaps more crucially, dramatizes and renders more vivid the central dilemma of the "Apologie":

Dreamer of dreams, born out of my due time,
Why *should* I strive to set the crooked straight?
(III, 1, italics added)

A brief summary of the Tannhäuser legend will indicate why it in particular can dramatize Morris' question. A knight dwells for a time as paramour of the Goddess of Love. He decides to leave the Venusberg and return to earth, and, after some difficulty in extricating himself, seeks in Rome absolution for his sins. The Pope, horrified by Tannhäuser's experience, scornfully responds that only when his own wooden staff bears flowers shall the knight be forgiven. Hopelessly, Tannhäuser returns to Venus, and when the miracle occurs and the staff blossoms, he cannot be found. With the exception of Swinburne's "Laus Veneris," which picks up the story after Tannhäuser's return to the Venusberg from Rome, most versions begin at the point where the knight decides to leave his Goddess and return to the world. Originally, the motive for the return was purely religious: the knight fears for his immortal soul. It was Heine who with brilliant psychological insight and caustic wit introduced the theme of ennui: his Tannhäuser is sated with the pleasures of the Venusberg. Wagner tripled the motive, which at once involves religion, boredom, and a longing for the natural world as relief from the artificial splendor of Venus' realm. What is being stressed in this summary is precisely the need to supply a motive at the crucial point in the story where it usually begins. Why should Tannhäuser, living in an earthly paradise of unending pleasures, long for a more painful existence? In a canceled passage, Morris' Venus asks her restless lover why he wants to leave:

I am the thing that thou didst cry to have,
That rest and refuge from dull common pain
For which within the world thou didst so crave.
(VI, xxii)

And why, indeed, should Morris, independently wealthy

and thus able to indulge himself as an idle singer, emerge from his palace of art, his Venusberg? It is striking that his question, "Why should I strive to set the crooked straight?" can be found echoed in what he writes when his own Tannhäuser decides to leave Venus. Although memories of his love "Blinded his eyes, and wrung his heart full sore,"

Yet grew his purpose among men to dwell,
He scarce knew why. (VI, 307)

This question of the knight's motivation, or lack of it, dominates the tale.

The "Prologue" to *The Earthly Paradise* helps us understand "The Hill of Venus" for it focuses on Morris' (and his Tannhäuser's) predicament, contrasting the quest for paradise with the virtues of common life. We meet in the Wanderers old men who have spent their lives fleeing death and trying to locate a fabled land of immortality. Having come to a place of rest after years of fruitless travel, they spend their remaining lives there, alternating with the Elders of that place in telling stories. But at the outset, Morris confronts us with the futility of their search:

Masters, I have to tell a tale of woe,
A tale of folly and of wasted life,
Hope against hope, the bitter dregs of strife,
Ending, where all things end, in death at last. (III, 6)

The Wanderers provide self-judgment by admitting they sacrificed what was worthwhile to chase illusions:

We are as men, who cast aside a feast,
Amidst their lowly fellows, that they may
Eat with the king, and who at end of day,
Bearing sore stripes, with great humility
Must pray the bedesmen of those men to be,
They scorned that day while yet the sun was high.
(III, 39)

Although at the end of *The Earthly Paradise* Morris challenges the reader to fail to understand what drove them to search for the perfect life, there is little question but that the "Prologue" is a warning for those who turn their eyes away from the real world.

It is a world, however, in which Walter (the name Morris gives his Tannhäuser) can find little joy and less meaning. Like the existentialist hero confronted with an absurd universe, he suffers a general malaise resulting from his inability to discover significance in what he does. Why he travels to the Venusberg is hardly more comprehensible than why he finally leaves it. His uncertainty is reflected by the narrator, who tells us that "why he journeyed there/ Nought tells the tale, but Walter doth him name,/ And saith that from the Kaiser's court he came" (VI, 282). The knight, having heard both of the wonders of the Hill of Venus and the torments later faced by those who venture

there, is ready to risk such pain for a "little taste/Of the king's banquet" (VI, 283), thus echoing the Wanderers' metaphor but not their realization that those who wished to dine with the king would eventually long for readmission to the company of ordinary men. Walter, also thirsting for the ideal, despises the ordinary world and the women in it who fail to satisfy his need to discover some purpose in everyday life:

But dimly might he see their forms, and still
Some lack, some coldness, cursed them all, and none
The void within his straining heart might fill;
For evermore, as if against his will,
Words of old stories, turned to images
Of lovelier things, would blur the sight of these.
(VI, 284)

Like the Wanderers, he pursues these images, lost to the world, but believing it a "world made to be lost —/A Bitter life 'twixt pain and nothing tossed!" (VI, 285) It is not he who is deluded at the threshold of Venus' realm, but those who have turned away, afraid to venture inside

because within their souls yet lay
Some hope, some thought of making peace at last
With the false world. (VI, 285)

Or so he thinks. But once within the Venusberg, Walter remains dissatisfied, because the quest for meaning that had led him there remains frustrated. And here we can be grateful to May Morris for providing us, as clues to Morris' intentions, passages her father wrote but finally excluded from "The Hill of Venus." In an earlier version he gave Venus a more active role and assigned to her some speeches, one of which, significantly, concerns her indifference to the questions that plague her lover:

Whence came I, where I wend, what things shall save
My beauty from the swift decay of earth
I know not; but my heart is full of mirth. (V, xxii)

In the final version, Venus never speaks and seems almost a projection of Walter's imagination, a phantom who cannot answer his queries. Her silence creates a vacuum that cannot be filled by her caresses, and thus the reason for Walter's departure is prepared:

Then a great longing would there stir in him,
That all those kisses might not satisfy;
Dreams never dreamed before would gather dim
About his eyes and trembling would he cry
To tell him how it was he should not die;
To tell him how it was that he alone
Should have a love all perfect and his own. (VI, 297)

Just such matters, as we have seen, left Venus unperturbed. For a time physical bliss leads to quietude, but soon unhappy thoughts cause joy to diminish. And no more than

he could answer his own question can Morris explain why the knight is restless. Two of the three reasons he provides are trivial. First, Walter wonders about Venus' past lovers and their eventual fate. In Keats's "La Belle Dame sans Merci," the question of the faery's past victims, if indeed they are more than a projection of the knight's fears, provides the poem with its central ambiguity. But in "The Hill of Venus," Walter seems merely jealous and his curiosity can hardly be taken seriously. Secondly, and true to the legend, he worries about his immortal soul; but, again, religion plays no significant role in the tale and, once more, this motivation for leaving the Venusberg is not convincing. Finally, without clear reason, he is seized with longing for the real world and asks himself, "Is there no love amid earth's sorrowing folk?" The narrator adds, "So flared the dreadful dawn — and thus it broke" (VI, 299).

Walter's return to the world involves him in a hope for another kind of earthly paradise, this one created by a change in social conditions. He muses about a prophesy he has heard:

That now so far did wrong and misery reach,
That soon belike earth would be visited
At last with that supreme day of all dread;
When right and wrong, and weal and woe on earth,
Should change amid its fiery second birth. (VI, 310)

Morris' Judgment Day concerns not the harrowing of hell but the rebirth of man into a new era of justice and material well-being. But within the framework of the poem, that revolution that would justify Walter's departure from the Venusberg does not seem at hand, and the "hopeless" fairness of Venus is only countered by the hopeless misery of human life. And because he is looking for the earthly paradise, otherworldly religion fails to provide him with satisfactory alternatives to what he perceives as reality. Thus, in Morris' treatment of the legend, it is the knight who rejects the Church ("Therefore what help in them," [VI, 316]) and not the Pope who spurns him. The world he had initially fled has not changed after all, and so he concludes that he belongs to Venus and returns to her hill.

The narrator ends the story with the complete despair of the knight:

And what more would ye hear of him? Meseems
It passes mind of man to picture well
His second sojourn in that land; yet gleams
There might be thence, if one had heart to tell,
In sleepless nights, of horrors passing hell,
Of joys by which our joys are misery;
But hopeless both, if such a thing may be. (VI, 323)

Both human and supernatural joys are hopeless, because alone neither can satisfy man, nor can they be reconciled. Thus this final tale of *The Earthly Paradise* both justifies

the quest of the Wanderers and points to the emptiness of their goals, for even if in their flight from bleak reality they found their longed-for land, as Walter did the Hill of Venus, it could not answer their needs. Man must do more than achieve immortality and everlasting bliss, or even an antidote for human misery; he must achieve some understanding of that which from within or without governs his destiny. He must, in short, know why he should "strive to set the crooked straight," or remain, like Walter, trapped in hopeless misery.

This reading of "The Hill of Venus" would remain highly abstract were it not for the role consciousness plays in Morris' utopian vision of a world in which improved social conditions inspire a rebirth of arts both popular and of the highest quality. To understand this socialist-aesthetic dream and Morris' conception of the false quest that leads his own time away from its realization, a brief glance at that archetypal earthly paradise, Eden, will be instructive. The loss of the garden resulted in, among other things, the necessity for man to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. For Morris this "curse of labor," as he knows it is generally held to be, is the consequence not of the fall but of a competitive society that divides men into servants and masters. And thus the quest for the overwhelming majority is an existence in which leisure replaces work. In one of the essays Morris delivered on his "Hopes and Fears for Art," he muses on the assumption behind a speech lately given to a group of workmen: that "no man would work if it were not that he hoped by working to earn leisure" — an assumption taken to be "a self-evident truth."⁷

Morris believed that a world of pure leisure, could it be achieved, would be analogous to Walter's Venusberg, in which the workmen-turned-Tannhäusers of England would lack a fundamental *raison d'être* that would rescue their lives from meaninglessness. For him the ideal society would witness not the disappearance of labor but its transformation. What will happen, he asks, when "the blare of the heralds' trumpets . . . have proclaimed the new order of things, what shall we turn to then, what *must* we turn to then?"

To what else, save to our work, our daily labour? With what, then, shall we adorn it when we have become wholly free and reasonable? . . . Shall all we can do with it be to shorten the hours of that toil to the utmost, that the hours of leisure may be long beyond what men used to hope for? and what then shall we

do with the leisure, if we say that all toil is irksome? Shall we sleep it all away? — Yes, and never wake up again, I should hope, in that case.⁸

What Morris is doing in this passage is rousing his audience to that consciousness that finally plagues Walter and makes it impossible for him to rest content in the Hill of Venus. This emphasis on consciousness can be found throughout these lectures that Morris delivered scarcely more than a decade after publishing *The Earthly Paradise*, the last tale of which foreshadows his later views. He is sure that if cultivated people began to consider the arts in their present condition, "they would be startled into discomfort by the thought that civilisation as it now is brings inevitable ugliness with it."⁹ His world emphasizes cheap luxuries (cheap in the qualitative sense), and either denigrates the arts or ignores them as the exclusive province of a very few, and, he claims, "both wronged and wrongers have been wholly unconscious of what they were doing. Wholly unconscious — yet, but we are no longer so: there lies the sting of it, and there also the hope."¹⁰

Hope characterizes the tenor of these essays, although the world Morris describes seems as hopeless as the one that drives Walter back to the Venusberg, and although Morris himself admits that he does not quite know how those few aroused to consciousness will rouse the masses and convince them to turn away from the false values that lure them to the deceptive earthly paradise they seek. What then stirs his optimism? Ultimately, its source is identical with the metaphor he uses to express it, and, strikingly, the metaphor itself can be traced back to the Tannhäuser legend. The legend concludes on a less pessimistic note than Morris' final comments on Walter's second sojourn in the Hill of Venus, for the Pope's bare staff does blossom, promising the eventual redemption of the erring knight. Morris employs the imagery of this miracle to prevent *The Earthly Paradise* from ending with the total futility otherwise provided by "The Hill of Venus."

Each pair of the twenty-four stories in *The Earthly Paradise* is narrated in a month about which a lyric poem is supplied. "February" is the frame for "The Hill of Venus," and in this bleak winter month the Pope's bare staff has its counterpart in the image of "leafless elms" (VI, 175). But a "change has come at last" (VI, 176), and in the very winds that blow is a bidding to "turn away/From this chill thaw to dream of *blossomed* May" (VI, 176, italics added). The image is continued in another lyric passage not itself

7. "Architecture in Civilisation," *Hopes and Fears for Art: Five Lectures . . . 1878-1881* (London, 1883), pp. 201-2.

8. "The Art of the People," *Hopes and Fears*, pp. 45-46.

9. "Architecture in Civilisation," p. 173.

10. "The Beauty of Life," *Hopes and Fears*, p. 80.

part of the February poem but immediately preceding "The Hill of Venus":

The happy birds were hurrying here and there,
As something soon would happen. Reddened now
The hedges, and in gardens *many a bough*
Was overbold of buds. (VI, 279, italics added)

And right after the tale is completed, the old men, leaving the younger folk to discuss the implications of the Venusberg legend, walk outdoors "To watch the blossoms budding on the wall" (VI, 326).

The Pope's flowering staff is reflected in these intimations of coming spring. And in the story itself, when Walter first wonders if love might not be found on earth as well as in the Venusberg, the narrator comments that this thought "Bloomed . . . a weak flower of hope within his heart" (VI, 299). Hope, however weak, is symbolized by the Pope's staff, hope not only for the knight trapped in the Venusberg, but for all who desire a better world. For the old Wanderers it is too late, but some of the young folk who hear Walter's story hold in their hands the "first starred yellow blossoms of the spring" (VI, 279).

In Morris' lectures on art, the cyclical metaphor merges with Marxist dialectics so that the very ills of society become the source of optimism, and he speaks of "a system which is drawing near now I hope to its perfection, and therefore to its death and change."¹¹ In the dialectical process, however, what is summer for the privileged is winter for the masses and those like Morris, who in this February of his times must look for signs of spring: "That faith [that man will waken to his condition] comforts me, and I can say calmly if the blank spaces must happen, it must, and amidst its darkness the new seed must sprout."¹² In true cyclical fashion, the society he looks forward to actually revives an earlier time when there was no split between art and life, the artist and the common man:

Time was when the mystery and wonder of handi-

crafts were well acknowledged by the world, when imagination and fancy mingled with all things made by man; and in those days all handicraftsmen were *artists*, as we should now call them. . . . This was the growth of art: like all fruitful growth, it grew into decay: like all decay of what was once fruitful, it will grow into something new.¹³

It was because of this expectation, perhaps as illogical as the miracle of the staff, that Morris directed his efforts to the amelioration of the world about him, hoping that in the socialist future the arts would again flourish.

The juxtaposition of the hopeless tale of "The Hill of Venus" and the hopeful frame Morris places around it returns us to the beginning of this discussion and the dichotomy between aesthete and socialist. The hopelessness of a sustained aestheticism can be found in some lines from the *Life and Death of Jason*, a work originally intended for inclusion in *The Earthly Paradise*:

Minstrel shall we die,
Because thou hast forgotten utterly
What things she taught thee that men call divine?
Or will thy measures but lead folk to wine,
And scented beds, and not to noble deeds? (XIV, 193)

Would Morris' poetry be but a lure to the Venusberg? The need to stand in relation to the world as did spring to men wearied by a long winter spared Morris that paralysis of will that characterizes his hero, who, because he could not find an unequivocal reason for dwelling with men, turned his way back to the Hill of Venus. It is not then that Morris had to get the romance tradition out of his system, but that this tradition itself supplied potential allegories that allowed him to explore and describe the earthly paradise to uncover the illusory hopes that attract those who would flee the world. Thus his supposed aestheticism paradoxically leads back to reality, uniting the artist and the man of action in a common vision of a regenerated world.

Queens College, City University of New York

11. "Architecture in Civilisation," p. 175.

12. "The Lesser Arts," *Hopes and Fears*, pp. 13-14.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Recent Publications: A Selected List

Arthur F. Minerof

JANUARY 1971 — JULY 1971

I

GENERAL

- BIBLIOGRAPHY.** Fredeman, William E. "The Bibliographical Significance of a Publisher's Archive: The Macmillan Papers." *Studies in Bibliography: Papers of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia*, Vol. XXIII, 1970, pp. 183-91. Contents and history.
- Szladits, Lola L. "New in the Berg Collection: 1965-1969." *Bulletin of The New York Public Library*, January, pp. 9-29. Including material by Mrs. Browning and Gissing.
- Tobias, R. C. "The Year's Work in Victorian Poetry: 1969." *Victorian Poetry*, Autumn 1970, pp. 219-60.
- Wise, Thomas James. *The Ashley Library*. 11 vols. Dawsons of Pall Mall. Reprint. Rev. *TLS*, 25 June, p. 744.
- CRITICISM AND LITERARY HISTORY.** Findlay, Leonard M. "Swinburne and Tennyson." *Victorian Poetry*, Spring-Summer, pp. 217-36. Reciprocal influence.
- Fulford, Roger. "Ruskin's Notes on Carlyle." *TLS*, 16 April, p. 453. Revealing notes Ruskin wrote in the margin of his copy of Carlyle's *Letters and Early Letters* in 1889.
- James, Louis. "The Rational Amusement: 'Minor' Fiction and Victorian Studies." *Victorian Studies*, December 1970, pp. 193-99. Review-article.
- Millett, Kate. "The Debate over Women: Ruskin Versus Mill." *Victorian Studies*, September 1970, pp. 63-82. The realism of sexual politics in Mill's *Subjection of Women* and its romance in Ruskin's "Of Queen's Gardens."
- Monsman, Gerald. "Pater, Hopkins, and Fichte's Ideal Student." *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Summer, pp. 365-76. Pater's "Germanism" and Hopkins' objections.
- Paul, C. Kegan. *Memories*. Routledge and Kegan Paul. Reissue of autobiography first published in 1899.
- Reed, John R. "Mixing Memory and Desire in Late Victorian Literature." *English Literature in Transition*, Vol. XIV, No. 1, pp. 1-15. Admiration of the past and hope for the future were often by-products of the concern of late nineteenth-century writers with fashioning the self.
- Rowell, George, ed. *Victorian Dramatic Criticism*. Methuen. Selections. Rev. *TLS*, 18 June, p. 712.
- Simmons, James C. "The Novelist As Historian: An Unexplored Tract of Victorian Historiography." *Victorian Studies*, March, pp. 293-305. The historian-novelists satisfied critical demands for both intellectual substance and scholarly accuracy and also gave the public the popularized historical narrative it wanted.
- Steig, Michael. "Barnaby Rudge and Vanity Fair: A Note on a Possible Influence." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, December 1970, pp. 353-54. The possible influence of Dickens on Thackeray in *Vanity Fair*.
- Vicinus, Martha. "The Study of Nineteenth Century British Working Class Poetry." *College English*, February, pp. 548-62. Working class literature was both a reminder of a traditional heritage and a socializing force within the new industrial society.
- Wilkinson, D. R. M. "Carlyle, Arnold, and Literary Justice." *PMLA*, March, pp. 225-35. Protests the raising of a Carlyle above an Arnold.
- ECONOMICS AND POLITICS.** Davis, R. W. "Buckingham, 1832-1846: A Study of a 'Pocket Borough.'" *Huntington Library Quarterly*, February, pp. 159-81. The term "pocket borough" may not be appropriate.
- Hawke, G. R. *Railways and Economic Growth in England and Wales, 1840-1870*. Oxford. Rev. *TLS*, 26 February, p. 245.
- Iliasu, A. A. "The Cobden-Chevalier Commercial Treaty of 1860." *Historical Journal*, March, pp. 67-98. The objective of the treaty was largely political.
- Tholfsen, Trygve R. "The Intellectual Origins of Mid-Victorian Stability." *Political Science Quarterly*, March, pp. 57-91. The importance of ideas and beliefs derived from the Enlightenment and the evangelical revival.
- von den Steinen, Karl. "The Harmless Papers: Granville, Gladstone, and the Censorship of the Madagascar Blue Books of 1884." *Victorian Studies*, December 1970, pp. 165-77. The willingness of Granville and Gladstone to deceive their critics.
- HISTORY.** Bourne, Kenneth. *The Foreign Policy of Victorian England 1830-1902*. Oxford. Rev. *TLS*, 8 January, p. 35.
- Duff, David. *Victoria Travels*. Muller. Sixty-one of the Queen's journeys.
- Gammage, R. G. *History of the Chartist Movement*. Merlin. Reprint of 1894 edition. Rev. *TLS*, 19 February, p. 215.
- Jones, Ray, *The Nineteenth-Century Foreign Office*.

- Weidenfeld and Nicolson. Rev. *TLS*, 25 June, p. 728.
- Richardson, Joanna. "Queen Victoria As a Writer." *History Today*, March, pp. 163-69. The Queen was an effective writer.
- Royle, Edward. "Mechanics' Institutes and the Working Classes, 1840-1860." *Historical Journal*, June, pp. 305-21. The Institutes did help to improve the condition of the working man.
- Seth-Smith, Michael. *Lord Paramount of the Turf*. Faber and Faber. Biography of George Bentinck. Rev. *TLS*, 11 June, p. 680.
- Wilson, Alexander. *The Chartist Movement in Scotland*. Manchester University. Rev. *TLS*, 23 April, p. 473.
- RELIGION. Anderson, Olive. "The Growth of Christian Militarism in Mid-Victorian Britain." *English Historical Review*, January, pp. 46-72. The interconnection between the growth of militarism and certain features of religious life.
- Chapman, Raymond. *Faith and Revolt*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. Essays on the literary influence of the Oxford Movement. Rev. *TLS*, 5 February, p. 165.
- Crowther, M. A. *Church Embattled*. David and Charles. Mid-Victorian religious controversy. Rev. *TLS*, 2 April, p. 401.
- Marcham, A. J. "A Question of Conscience Clause: The Church and the Conscience Clause, 1860-70." *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, July, pp. 237-49. The Church bowed to the conscience clause in the elementary education act because intransigence was no longer practicable.
- Reardon, Bernard M. S. *From Coleridge to Gore: A Century of Religious Thought in Britain*. Longman. Rev. *TLS*, 25 June, p. 742.
- SCIENCE. Marshall, A. J. *Darwin and Huxley in Australia*. Hodder and Staughton. Rev. *TLS*, 2 July, p. 787.
- Peel, J. D. Y. *Herbert Spencer: The Evolution of a Sociologist*. Heinemann. Rev. *TLS*, 14 May, p. 569.
- SOCIAL. Beames, Thomas. *The Rookeries of London*. Cass. Reprint of revised 1852 edition. Rev. *TLS*, 19 February, p. 215.
- Bolt, Christine. *Victorian Attitudes to Race*. Routledge and Kegan Paul. Rev. *TLS*, 16 April, p. 436.
- Conway, Jill. "Stereotypes of Femininity in a Theory of Sexual Evolution." *Victorian Studies*, September 1970, pp. 47-61. The persistence of sexual stereotypes has prevented serious thought on the subject of sex differences for almost a century.
- Delgado, Alan. *Victorian Entertainment*. David and Charles. Rev. *TLS*, 2 July, p. 790.
- Erickson, Arvel B., and Fr. John R. McCarthy. "The Yelverton Case: Civil Legislation and Marriage." *Victorian Studies*, March, pp. 275-91. The influence of the case on changes made in the marriage legislation of the British Empire.
- Hill, Octavia. *Homes of the London Poor*. Cass. Reprint of revised 1883 edition. Rev. *TLS*, 19 February, p. 215.
- Hilts, Victor L. "William Farr (1807-1883) and the 'Human Unit.'" *Victorian Studies*, December 1970, pp. 143-50. The importance of the English sanitary movement as a cause for the shift in emphasis from moral factors to biological factors.
- Himmelfarb, Gertrude. "Mayhew's Poor: A Problem of Identity." *Victorian Studies*, March, pp. 307-20. The problem of identifying the class or classes of people being described by Mayhew.
- Mearns, Andrew. *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*. Cass. Reprint of 1883 edition. Rev. *TLS*, 19 February, p. 215.
- Peterson, M. Jeanne. "The Victorian Governess: Status Incongruence in Family and Society." *Victorian Studies*, September 1970, pp. 7-26. The relationship between the closed job market for women and the position of the governess.
- St. John, James Augustus. *The Education of the People*. Woburn. Reprint of 1858 edition. Rev. *TLS*, 19 February, p. 215.
- Showalter, Elaine, and English Showalter. "Victorian Women and Menstruation." *Victorian Studies*, September 1970, pp. 83-89. Lack of information and misinformation in Victorian times.
- Thompson, E. P., and Eileen Yeo, eds. *The Unknown Mayhew: Selections from the 'Morning Chronicle' 1849-1850*. Merlin. Henry Mayhew's articles on labor and poverty. Rev. *TLS*, 4 June, p. 642.

II

INDIVIDUAL AUTHORS

- ARNOLD. Alexander, Edward. "A Note on the Date and Meaning of 'The New Sirens.'" *Victorian Poetry*, Winter 1970, pp. 347-48. The poem was not composed as early as has often been supposed.
- McCarthy, Patrick J. "Reading Victorian Prose: Arnold's 'Culture' and Its Enemies." *University of Toronto Quarterly*, Winter 1971, pp. 119-35. The importance of reading Victorian prose on its own terms.
- Middlebrook, Jonathan. "'Resignation,' 'Rugby Chapel,' and Thomas Arnold." *Victorian Poetry*, Winter 1970, pp. 291-97. Different views of the father by the son.
- Super, R. H., ed. *God and the Bible*. Michigan. The seventh volume of Arnold's prose works. Rev. *TLS*, 14 May, p. 572.
- GEORGE BORROW. Herbert, Lucille. "George Borrow and the Forms of Self-Reflection." *University of Toronto Quarterly*, Winter 1971, pp. 152-67. Borrow's work is a radical kind of subjective narrative, revealing the process by which its form is generated.

- BRONTËS. Harkness, Bruce. "Charlotte Brontë: *Jane Eyre*, Jane Jack and Margaret Smith, eds." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, December 1970, pp. 355-69. Review-article.
- Krupat, Arnold. "The Strangeness of *Wuthering Heights*." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, December 1970, pp. 269-80. How the book works to make readers think it so strange.
- Ohmann, Carol. "Emily Brontë in the Hands of Male Critics." *College English*, May, pp. 908-13. *Wuthering Heights* has suffered from sexual bias or prejudice.
- Peterson, William S. "Henry James on 'Jane Eyre.'" *TLS*, 30 July, pp. 919-20. James' detailed observations on *Jane Eyre* are embedded in an essay by Mrs. Humphrey Ward.
- Sonstroem, David. "*Wuthering Heights* and the Limits of Vision." *PMLA*, January, pp. 51-62. The author presents all her characters as blind to the world as others see it.
- Vargish, Thomas. "Revenge and *Wuthering Heights*." *Studies in the Novel*, Spring, pp. 7-17. The revenge motive provides a source of aesthetic and psychological strength in the novel.
- BROWNING. Adams, Laura. "Browning's Rings and Posies." *Victorian Poetry*, Winter 1970, pp. 346-47. Explication of the key line involving posy and ring.
- Cramer, Maurice B. "Maisie Ward and Browning Biography: A new Era." *Modern Philology*, February, pp. 294-300. Review-article.
- Drew, Philip. *The Poetry of Browning*. Methuen. Rev. *TLS*, 19 February, p. 220.
- Haight, Gordon S. "Robert Browning's Widows." *TLS*, 2 July, pp. 783-84. Prospective Mrs. Brownings after the death of Elizabeth Barrett.
- Hart, Nathaniel. "Browning's 'The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church.'" *Explicator*, January 1971, No. 36. The Bishop's vain attempts to avoid his fate — the dissolution of the body in death.
- Jack, Ian, ed. *Browning: Poetical Works, 1833-1864*. Oxford. Rev. *TLS*, 19 February, p. 220.
- Kintner, Elvan, ed. *The Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett, 1845-1846*. Harvard. 2 vols. Rev. *TLS*, 19 February, p. 220.
- McNally, James. "Browning's Political Thought." *Queen's Quarterly*, Winter 1970, pp. 578-90. Browning's articulation of the aspiration for human freedom.
- Meyers, Joyce S. "'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came': A Nightmare Confrontation with Death." *Victorian Poetry*, Winter 1970, pp. 335-39. Roland is not telling an objective tale but is narrating a psychological experience.
- Monteiro, George. "The Apostasy and Death of St. Praxed's Bishop." *Victorian Poetry*, Autumn 1970, pp. 209-18. The importance of the several references that are ecclesiastical and scriptural as well as naturalistic or aesthetic.
- Paroissien, David. "Mrs. Browning's Influence on and Contribution to *A New Spirit of the Age* (1844)." *English Language Notes*, June, pp. 274-81. Mrs. Browning's part was greater than Richard Horne indicated.
- Peterson, William S. *Interrogating the Oracle*. Ohio University. Account of the Browning Society. Rev. *TLS*, 19 February, p. 220.
- Phipps, Charles T., S.J. "The Bishop as Bishop: Clerical Motif and Meaning in 'The Bishop Orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's Church.'" *Victorian Poetry*, Autumn 1970, pp. 199-208. The main irony of the poem is the fact that the central figure is a bishop.
- CARLYLE. Chalmers, E. B. "Mrs. Carlyle's Letters to John Stodart." *TLS*, 25 June, pp. 739-41. Background and text.
- Sanders, Charles Richard, ed. *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*. 4 vols. Duke University. Rev. *TLS*, 25 June, p. 741.
- Tarr, Rodger L. "Mary Aitken Carlyle: An Unpublished Letter to Her Son." *English Language Notes*, June, pp. 281-83. The letter, dated 1845 when she was 74, shows the kind of god-fearing person she was.
- JOHN CLARE. Frosch, Thomas R. "The Descriptive Style of John Clare." *Studies in Romanticism*, Spring, pp. 137-49. Clare's ways of describing are the gestures of a dramatic situation.
- COLLINS. Caracciolo, Peter. "Wilkie Collins's 'Divine Comedy': The Use of Dante in *The Woman in White*." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, March, pp. 383-404. The *Divine Comedy* was an important source of the novel's imagery.
- DICKENS. Christensen, Allan C. "A Dickensian Hero Retailed: The Carlylean Apprenticeship of Martin Chuzzlewit." *Studies in the Novel*, Spring, pp. 18-25. Dickens shows a Carlylean impatience with the surfaces of reality.
- Collins, Philip. "'Sikes and Nancy': Dickens's Last Reading." *TLS*, 11 June, pp. 681-82. Background.
- , ed. *Dickens: The Critical Heritage*. Routledge and Kegan Paul. Criticism by Dickens' contemporaries. Rev. *TLS*, 5 March, pp. 269-70.
- Dobie, Ann B. "Early Stream-of-Consciousness Writing: *Great Expectations*." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, March, pp. 405-16. The novel seems to have many of the characteristics of the stream-of-consciousness technique.
- Dunn, Richard J. "Dickens and Mayhew Once More." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, December 1970, pp. 348-53. Possible use by Dickens in *Bleak House* of Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor*.
- Flibbert, Joseph T. "Dickens and the French Debate over Realism: 1838-1856." *Comparative Literature*, Winter 1971, pp. 18-31. French criticism during this period was uncomplimentary because of Dickens' "realism."
- Ford, George H. "Leavises, Levi's, and Some Dickensian Priorities." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, June, pp. 95-113. Review-article.
- Kelley, Alice van Buren. "The Bleak Houses of *Bleak House*." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, December

- 1970, pp. 253-68. The title encompasses several major aspects of the book.
- Partlow, Robert B., Jr., ed. *Dickens the Craftsman*. Southern Illinois. Critical essays. Rev. *TLS*, 5 March, pp. 269-70.
- Robison, Roselee. "The Several Worlds of 'Great Expectations.'" *Queen's Quarterly*, Spring, pp. 54-59. The four worlds of the novel help to develop the governing themes of selfishness, ingratitude, guilt, and retribution.
- Smith, Annie G. M. "The Ironmaster in *Bleak House*." *Essays in Criticism*, April, pp. 159-69. The future is represented most forcibly in Rouncewell the Ironmaster.
- DISRAELI. Mitchell, Paul. "The Initiation Motif in Benjamin Disraeli's *Coningsby*." *Southern Quarterly*, January 1971, pp. 223-30. This motif is the major unifying force in the novel.
- ELIOT. Benvenuto, Richard. "At a Crossroads: The Life and Thought of George Eliot." *Studies in the Novel*, Fall 1970, pp. 355-61. Review-essay.
- Carroll, David, ed. *George Eliot: The Critical Heritage*. Routledge and Kegan Paul. Criticism between 1857 and 1885. Rev. *TLS*, 9 July, p. 805.
- Haight, Gordon S. "A New George Eliot Letter." *TLS*, 12 February, p. 187. Letter to Charles Bray in 1846 reprinted.
- Jones, R. T. *George Eliot*. Cambridge. Critical. Rev. *TLS*, 9 July, p. 805.
- Mason, Michael York. "Middlemarch and History." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, March, pp. 417-31. One plausible way to regard *Middlemarch* is as a historical novel.
- . "Middlemarch and Science: Problems of Life and Mind." *Review of English Studies*, May, pp. 151-69. The use of science is related to the book's deep concerns.
- Sealy, R. J. "Brunetière, Montégut — and George Eliot." *Modern Language Review*, January, pp. 66-75. Brunetière was indebted to Eliot for his concept of literary sympathy.
- JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE. Grosskurth, Phyllis. "James Anthony Froude As Historical Novelist." *University of Toronto Quarterly*, Spring, pp. 266-75. Review-article.
- GASKELL. Sharps, John Geoffrey. *Mrs. Gaskell's Observation and Invention*. Centaur. Study of Mrs. Gaskell's nonbiographic works. Rev. *TLS*, 26 February, p. 251.
- W. S. GILBERT. Ellis, James, ed. *The Bab Ballads*. Harvard. Complete edition. Rev. *TLS*, 9 July, p. 798.
- Stedman, Jane W. "From Dame to Woman: W. S. Gilbert and Theatrical Transvestism." *Victorian Studies*, September 1970, pp. 27-46. Gilbert did create from the transvestite dames feminine characters with sufficient identity to seem women in their own right.
- HARDY. Atkinson, F. G. "Thomas Hardy in 1916 — A New Letter." *Review of English Studies*, May, pp. 172-73. To Quiller-Couch. Text.
- Bailey, J. O. *The Poetry of Thomas Hardy*. North Carolina. Handbook and commentary. Rev. *TLS*, 18 June, p. 703.
- Bath, M. E. "New Light on Hardy's 'Panthera.'" *Library Review*, Winter 1970, pp. 417-19. Hardy's background reading on the Panthera legend is important in understanding the poem.
- Benvenuto, Richard. "The Return of the Native as a Tragedy in Six Books." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, June, pp. 83-93. Book VI is an integral part of the tragedy.
- Benzing, Rosemary. "In Defence of 'Tess.'" *Contemporary Review*, April, pp. 202-4. The novel's fine and subtle characterization.
- Casagrande, Peter J. "The Shifted 'Centre of Altruism' in *The Woodlanders*: Thomas Hardy's Third 'Return of a Native.'" *ELH*, March, pp. 104-25. The novel's kinship to *Greenwood Tree* and *The Return of the Native*.
- Eggenschwiler, David. "Eustacia Vye, Queen of Night and Courtly Pretender." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, March, pp. 444-54. Hardy deliberately presents Eustacia from two opposing points of view.
- Gregor, Ian. "Hardy's World." *ELH*, June, pp. 274-93. The basic structure of a Hardy novel lies in a tension between the ideas of "series" and "seemings."
- Hassett, Michael E. "Compromised Romanticism in *Jude the Obscure*." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, March, pp. 432-43. Jude and Sue's Romanticism is compromised in practical application.
- Hyde, William J. "Hardy's Spider Webs." *Victorian Poetry*, Autumn 1970, pp. 265-68. The spider image in Hardy's work.
- Kramer, Dale. "Revisions and Vision: Thomas Hardy's *The Woodlanders*." *Bulletin of The New York Public Library*, April, pp. 195-230; May, pp. 248-82. Detailed examination of changes made by Hardy.
- Reiss, T. J. *Toward Dramatic Illusion: Theatrical Technique and Meaning from Hardy to "Horace"*. Yale. Rev. *TLS*, 25 June, p. 743.
- Robinson, Roselee. "Desolation in *Far From the Madding Crowd*." *Dalhousie Review*, Winter 1970-1971, pp. 470-79. The novel contains one of Hardy's major preoccupations: the paradoxically close relationship between love and desolation.
- Squires, Michael. "Far from the Madding Crowd as Modified Pastoral." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, December 1970, pp. 299-326. Hardy used realistic details to modify the pattern of the traditional pastoral.
- Steig, Michael. "Political Caricature and *The Dynasts*." *English Language Notes*, June, pp. 287-93. Hardy devoted some attention to political caricature of the period in the course of his research on the Napoleonic era.
- HOPKINS. Fike, Francis. "Gerard Manley Hopkins' Interest in Painting after 1868: Two Notes." *Victorian Poetry*, Winter 1970, pp. 315-33. Hopkins' interest in painting emerges in his own poetry.
- Mellown, Elgin W. "Hopkins and the Odyssey." *Vic-*

- torian Poetry, Autumn 1970, pp. 263-65. The influence of *The Odyssey* on two poems: "Rest" and "I must hunt down the prize."
- Thomas, Alfred. "G. M. Hopkins: Two Bibliographical Discoveries." *Review of English Studies*, February, pp. 58-61. A prayer and a poem.
- . "Hopkins's 'Felix Randal': The Man and the Poem." *TLS*, 19 March, pp. 331-32. New facts on the background of the poem.
- White, Norman. "The Probable Identity of Hopkins' 'Two Beautiful Young People.'" *English Language Notes*, March, pp. 206-8. Suggests Ursula and Leo Wheble.
- HOUSMAN. Wight, John "A Source of A. E. Housman's 'The Land of Biscay.'" *Victorian Poetry*, Winter 1970, pp. 341-44. Possible source in Jean Ingelow's "Requiescat in Pace."
- T. H. HUXLEY. Gardner, Joseph H. "A Huxley Essay As 'Poem.'" *Victorian Studies*, December 1970, pp. 177-91. "On the Physical Basis of Life" reveals Huxley to be a poet.
- MACAULAY. Fong, David. "Macaulay: The Essayist as Historian." *Dalhousie Review*, Spring, pp. 38-48. Macaulay's essays are a series leading up to the *History*.
- MEREDITH. Graber, Terry H. "'Scientific' Education and Richard Feverel." *Victorian Studies*, December 1970, pp. 129-41. The System reflects mid-nineteenth-century ideas, most forcibly expressed by Spencer.
- Perkus, Gerald H. "Toward Disengagement: A Neglected Early Meredith Manuscript Poem." *Victorian Poetry*, Autumn 1970, pp. 268-72. "Pass we to another land" is an early stage in Meredith's imaginative disengagement from his unhappy marriage.
- Reed, John R. "Systematic Irregularity: Meredith's *Ordeal*." *Papers on Language and Literature*, Winter 1971, pp. 61-71. The importance of the digestive metaphor.
- MILL. Mill, Anna J. "John Stuart Mill and the Picturesque." *Victorian Studies*, December 1970, pp. 151-63. Mill was an assiduous student of the picturesque.
- Remnant, Peter. "The Relevance of Mill." *Queen's Quarterly*, Winter 1970, pp. 513-29. Mill is still relevant.
- MORRIS. Hollow, John. "William Morris and the Judgment of God." *PMLA*, May, pp. 446-51. Man's relationship to God in several of Morris' early stories and poems.
- NEWMAN. Vargish, Thomas. *Newman: The Contemplation of Mind*. Oxford. Rev. *TLS*, 8 January, p. 48.
- PATER. Evans, Lawrence, ed. *Letters of Walter Pater*. Oxford. Rev. *TLS*, 26 February, p. 230.
- Monsman, Gerald. "Pater's Aesthetic Hero." *University of Toronto Quarterly*, Winter 1971, pp. 136-51. One must go back to Pater to find the original and most attractive description of the aesthetic hero.
- ROSSETTIS. Arinshtein, Leonid M., and William E. Fredeman. "William Michael Rossetti's 'Democratic Sonnets.'" *Victorian Studies*, March, pp. 241-74. Background and history.
- Holberg, Stanley M. "Rossetti and the Trance." *Victorian Poetry*, Winter 1970, pp. 299-314. The importance of the dream-state in Rossetti's poetry.
- Surtees, Virginia. *The Paintings and Drawings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882)*. Oxford. Plates and text. Rev. *TLS*, 7 May, p. 526.
- RUSKIN. Harris, Wendell V. "The Gothic Structure of Ruskin's *Praise of the Gothic*." *University of Toronto Quarterly*, Winter 1971, pp. 109-18. Ruskin's Edgeworthian manner of approaching a problem.
- Maidment, B. E. "'Only Print' — Ruskin and the Publishers." *Durham University Journal*, June, pp. 196-207. Ruskin's father was a major influence on both the manner and the matter of his early works.
- STEVENSON. Warner, Fred B., Jr. "The Significance of Stevenson's 'Providence and the Guitar.'" *English Literature in Transition*, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 103-14. Stevenson shaped a story that answered the question of what he was to do with his life.
- TENNYSON. Adey, Lionel. "Tennyson's Sorrow and Her Lying Lip." *Victorian Poetry*, Autumn 1970, pp. 261-63. Explication of lines in Section III of *In Memoriam*.
- Alaya, Flavia M. "Tennyson's 'The Lady of Shalott': The Triumph of Art." *Victorian Poetry*, Winter 1970, pp. 273-90. The poem becomes less paradoxical when one makes the distinction between intent and performance.
- Cannon, Garland. "'The Lady of Shalott' and 'The Arabian Nights' Tales.'" *Victorian Poetry*, Winter 1970, pp. 344-46. Possible source in the tale recited by Scheherazade.
- Gray, J. M. "The Purpose of an Epic List in 'The Coming of Arthur.'" *Victorian Poetry*, Winter 1970, pp. 339-41. The mode and ordering of the names is ultimately ironic.
- . *Doppelgänger: Balin and Balan*. The Tennyson Society. Rev. *TLS*, 25 June, p. 727.
- Hunt, John Dixon. "The Symbolist Vision of *In Memoriam*." *Victorian Poetry*, Autumn 1970, pp. 187-98. The poem may be read as an early symbolist document.
- Shaw, W. David. "*In Memoriam* and the Rhetoric of Confession." *ELH*, March, pp. 80-103. The poem can be correctly interpreted if viewed as an Augustinian confession.
- Sinfield, Alan. *The Language of Tennyson's "In Memoriam"*. Blackwell. Rev. *TLS*, 25 June, p. 727.
- SWINBURNE. Baird, Julian. "Swinburne, Sade, and Blake: The Pleasure-Pain Paradox." *Victorian Poetry*, Spring-Summer, pp. 49-75. The influence of Sade and Blake on *Poems and Ballads*.
- Cook, David A. "The Content and Meaning of Swinburne's 'Anactoria.'" *Victorian Poetry*, Spring-Summer, pp. 77-94. The sexual content has a symbolic level of meaning as well as a purely sensuous one.
- Greenberg, Robert A. "Gosse's Swinburne, 'The Tri-

- umph of Time,' and the Context of 'Les Noyades.'" *Victorian Poetry*, Spring-Summer, pp. 95-110. Swinburne's "disappointment" in love as distorted in the life and symbolically rendered in the poetry.
- Hyder, Clyde K., ed. *Swinburne: The Critical Heritage*. Routledge and Kegan Paul. Rev. *TLS*, 16 July, p. 836.
- Lougy, Robert E. "Thematic Imagery and Meaning in *Atlanta in Calydon*." *Victorian Poetry*, Spring-Summer, pp. 17-34. The importance of recurrent image patterns in shedding light on the problem of character motivation and theme.
- Mathews, Richard. "Heart's Love and Heart's Division: The Quest for Unity in *Atlanta in Calydon*." *Victorian Poetry*, Spring-Summer, pp. 35-48. The importance of the simultaneous impulses toward unity and division in the poem.
- McGann, Jerome J. "'Ave atque Vale': An Introduction to Swinburne." *Victorian Poetry*, Spring-Summer, pp. 145-63. The poem expresses some of Swinburne's most important poetic ideas and illustrates some of his most characteristic poetic techniques.
- McSweeney, Kerry. "Swinburne's 'A Nympholept' and 'The Lake of Gaube.'" *Victorian Poetry*, Spring-Summer, pp. 201-16. Similarities.
- Panter-Downes, Mollie. *At the Pines*. Hamish Hamilton. Swinburne and Watts-Dunton. Rev. *TLS*, 23 April, p. 470.
- Raymond, Meredith B. "'The Lake of Gaube': Swinburne's Dive in the Dark and the 'Indeterminate Moment.'" *Victorian Poetry*, Spring-Summer, pp. 185-99. Swinburne expresses his experience of the primary moment of poetic impulse by means of the poetic recollection of an actual swim in his youth.
- Ridenour, George M. "Swinburne on 'The Problem to Solve in Expression.'" *Victorian Poetry*, Spring-Summer, pp. 129-44. Swinburne's work reveals at least five ways of dealing with the implications of his view of the nature of things.
- Stuart, Donald C. "Swinburne: The Composition of a Self-Portrait." *Victorian Poetry*, Spring-Summer, pp. 111-28. In his best poetry Swinburne relates his personal experience to a broader Romantic tradition.
- Sypher, Francis Jacques, Jr. "Swinburne and Wagner." *Victorian Poetry*, Spring-Summer, pp. 165-83. The influence of Wagner on the composition of several of Swinburne's poems.
- Wilson, F. A. C. "Fabrication and Fact in Swinburne's *The Sisters*." *Victorian Poetry*, Spring-Summer, pp. 237-48. The play illuminates Swinburne's relationship with his father.
- . "Swinburne's Prose Heroines and Mary's *Femmes Fatales*." *Victorian Poetry*, Spring-Summer, pp. 249-56. In the "Kirklowes Fragment" the character resembling Mary Gordon is similar to the fictional ego-projections in Mary's own novels.
- Wymer, Thomas L. "Swinburne's Tragic Vision in *Atlanta in Calydon*." *Victorian Poetry*, Spring-Summer, pp. 1-16. The poem is an attempt at confrontation, not escape.
- THACKERAY. Mauskopf, Charles. "Thackeray's Concept of the Novel: A Study in Conflict." *Philological Quarterly*, April, pp. 239-52. The conflict between the novelist as social historian and parson was not always successfully resolved in Thackeray's own novels.
- Sutherland, John. "*Henry Esmond* and the Virtues of Carelessness." *Modern Philology*, May, pp. 345-54. The novel was written without lengthy foreplanning and revision.
- WILLIAM HALE WHITE. Haley, Sir William. "William Hale White: Alias Mark Rutherford." *Contemporary Review*, January, pp. 38-42. Rutherford was a storyteller who wrote fine prose.
- WILDE. Beckson, Karl. "A New Oscar Wilde Letter." *English Language Notes*, June, pp. 284-87. Dated 1893, to Elisabeth Marbury.

PROJECTS — REQUESTS FOR AID

- CHARLES DICKENS. Philip Collins wishes to know the whereabouts of any manuscripts or proofs of Dickens' journalistic and minor writings (excluding novels and Christmas books) for an edition. *TLS*, 30 April, p. 512.

Staten Island Community College
City University of New York

English X News

A. THE CHICAGO MEETING

Chairman, David J. DeLaura, *University of Texas*
Secretary, John F. Stasny, *West Virginia University*

I. Business

II. Papers and Discussion

1. "Mrs. Gamp as the Great Mother: A Dickensian Use of Archetype," Veronica M. S. Kennedy, *St. John's University (Jamaica)*.
2. "Rossetti's Changing Style: The Revisions of 'My Sister's Sleep,'" Herbert Sussman, *Northeastern University*.
3. "Is Guido Saved? The Meaning of Browning's Conclusion to *The Ring and the Book*," Robert Langbaum, *University of Virginia*.

Program Chairman: Norman Kelvin, *City College, City University of New York*.

Bibliography Committee: Chairman, Ronald E. Freeman, *University of California (Los Angeles)*; Allan C. Christensen; Lawrence G. Evans; Ward Hellstrom; Edward S. Lauterbach; David Paroissien; Robert C. Schweik; Robert C. Slack; Richard C. Tobias.

Editor, THE VICTORIAN NEWSLETTER: William E. Buckler, *New York University*.

Executive Committee: Chairman, Ronald E. Freeman, *University of California (Los Angeles)* (1970-1973); John D. Rosenberg (1969-1971); U. C. Knoepfmacher, Michael Timko (1969-1971); G. B. Tennyson, Richard C. Tobias (1970-1972); Flavia Alaya (1971-1973).

1972 Officers: Chairman, John F. Stasny, *West Virginia University*; Secretary, Michael Timko, *Queens College, City University of New York*.

(Nominations to be voted on.)

B. AUTOBIOGRAPHY REAL AND FICTIONAL, 1830-1900

The subject this year will be "Swinburne in the 1870's," with Professor Robert A. Greenberg (Queens College, City University of New York) offering introductory comments. The meeting will be held from 10:30 to 11:45 A.M. on Monday, 27 December, in PDR 4, Palmer House. Please write to Professor Michael Timko, Queens College, Flushing, N.Y. 11367, for admission.

C. THE VICTORIAN LUNCHEON

The 1971 Victorian Group luncheon will be held 27 December in the Palmer House, with cocktails at 11:45 in Parlor A and luncheon at 1:15 in the Crystal Room. For reservations, please send a check for \$6.60 to Professor Lawrence Evans, English Department, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois 60201, by 15 December.