

# The Victorian Newsletter

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Cover: Philip Gough's Humpty Dumpty

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## The Sources of Ruskin's *Golden River*

Suzanne Rahn

The *King of the Golden River* was written to amuse a little girl; and being a fairly good imitation of Grimm and Dickens, mixed with a little true Alpine feeling of my own, has been rightly pleasing to nice children, and good for them. But it is totally valueless, for all that. I can no more write a story than compose a picture.<sup>1</sup>

Time has not vindicated Ruskin's gloomy judgment; *The King of the Golden River* has proved itself, at the very least, the most lastingly popular of all his works. "Nice children" still enjoy it. For students of Ruskin it has value as an early and characteristic articulation of his social and economic philosophy. But it is also of special interest as not only one of the first literary fairy tales for children but one of the first to demonstrate how such a tale can express highly individual beliefs and concerns through motifs, characters, and images drawn from folk material. It is this quasi-alchemical transmutation of the universal to the personal that I would like to explore.

In his brief account in *Praeterita* Ruskin tells something of the inception of *The King* and the influences, both literary and personal, that shaped it. These influences are worth another look. How closely, for example, did Ruskin "imitate" Grimm, and what did he find in Dickens that became part of his fairy tale? What part did Ruskin's "true Alpine feeling" come to play in the finished work? But some influences he does not mention are equally or even more interesting, more intimately related to the meaning of the story and to the process through which it came into being: Ruskin's religious upbringing, his concept of nature, and (surprisingly) *The Arabian Nights*—like Grimm's tales a source of folk material, but one that operated at another and deeper level.

The outward story of *The King of the Golden River* began, like many another children's classic, with a child. In the summer of 1841, Effie Gray—the future Mrs. Ruskin—was thirteen. She was visiting her distant relatives the Ruskins at Herne Hill, and at some point during her stay she challenged John to write a fairy tale for her.<sup>2</sup> A few weeks later, convalescing at Leamington, Ruskin obediently began *The King*. As he writes in *Praeterita*,

Under these peaceful conditions I began to look carefully at cornflowers, thistles, and hollyhocks; and find, by entry on Sept.

15th, that I was writing a bit of the *King of the Golden River*, and reading Alison's *Europe* and Turner's *Chemistry* (35-303).

However, *The King* was not actually published until 1851, though Ruskin's parents read it before sending it on to Effie, and Ruskin's father was even then interested in its possibilities (Dearden, 35-36). It is this ten-year lag that has tended to conceal how innovative the story actually was. In 1841 the literary fairy tale for children was still a very rare and somewhat suspect species in England. Robert Southey's name had been attached to "The Three Bears" in 1834 (although it is now certain that it was a folk tale, only retold by him [see Lexau]), and Catherine Sinclair had included "Uncle David's Nonsensical Story about Giants and Fairies" in *Holiday House* in 1839; such seems to have been the full extent of the genre at this time. And the influence of such authorities as Mrs. Trimmer and Samuel G. Goodrich, who had condemned the old folk tales as "immoral," "atrocious," and "full of romantic nonsense," was still very strong.<sup>3</sup> The climate even for such a moral fairy tale as *The King* was far from hospitable, and—aside from Ruskin's own low opinion of the story, which he seems to have held from the first—it was wise for a young and still unknown writer to wait and make his name in some more respected field of literature.

Ten years later, things had changed. Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales had been translated into English in 1846; the next year, he had toured the country as a celebrity (see Bredsdorff, 186-7). In addition, a fair number of English writers—among them, a rector (Francis Paget) and the first editor of *Punch* (Mark Lemon)—had experimented with original fairy tales for children.<sup>4</sup> Ruskin himself, now married to Effie, had become well-known as an art critic, and it would not have been difficult to interest a publisher in a fairy tale by the author of *Modern Painters*. Judging from the evidence of his publisher's Advertisement, however, Ruskin was no more eager to see *The King* in print than he had been in 1841:

The Publishers think it due to the Author of this Fairy Tale, to state the circumstances under which it appears.

*The King of the Golden River* was written in 1841, at the request of a very young lady, and solely for her amusement, without any idea of publication. It has since remained in the possession of a friend, to whose suggestion, and the passive assent of the Author, the Publishers are indebted for the opportunity of printing it.<sup>5</sup>

1. John Ruskin, *Praeterita*, 35:303. Citations of Ruskin's works will be identified in text by name, vol. and page.
2. Evans 67, 81. More than one commentator has been misled by Chick's use in *The King of the Golden River* (twelve) into stating that Effie was twelve during this visit.
3. Sarah Trimmer was the editor of the *Family Magazine* (1778-1789), the first periodical to review children's books; its aim was to "counteract the pernicious influence of immoral books," among which she included *Mother Goose*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and such folk tales as "Cinderella." Her later *Guardian of Education* continued along the same lines; in 1803, for example, it castigated a collection of folk tales as "full of romantic nonsense. . . only fit to fill the heads of children with confused notions of wonderful and supernatural events, brought about by the agency of imaginary beings." For the *Family Magazine*, see Meigs 72;

for *The Guardian of Education*, see the excerpts printed in Pruckett and in Haviland.

Samuel G. Goodrich was the author of the highly informative "Peter Parley" books. Denouncing a number of folk tales by name, he charged in his autobiography that "much of the vice and crime in the world are to be imputed to those atrocious books put into the hands of children." His own books were intended to substitute history, geography, natural history, and biography for "fables and giants and nyers monsters of the imagination" (2:168-9).

4. Francis Paget's *The Hope of the Kutzelsopfs* was written in 1844, Mark Lemon's *The Enchanted Doll* in 1849. Other children's fantasies of the 1840's included Heinrich Hoffmann's *Der Struwwelpeter* (1844, translated into English in 1848) and Richard Henry Home's *Memoirs of a London Doll* (1846).
5. Works 1:310. The Advertisement appeared on the reverse of the title page.

The "friend," suggests James S. Dearden, was probably Ruskin's father, who was fond of seeing his son's work in print and had arranged for the publication of his early poems only the year before (37-39). The passively assenting Ruskin still did not allow his name to appear on the title page of either the first or the second edition of *The King*, though it was being advertised as his by 1853 (Dearden 43-44). But the little book, with its lively and imaginative illustrations by Richard Doyle, was an immediate success. It was translated into German in 1859, and since then has appeared in Italian, Russian, Welsh, Latin, Japanese, Afrikaans, and Kikuyu (Dearden 48-49).

This is the outward story of *The King*. The inward begins with a child as well – but this time the child is the young John Ruskin himself, the only child of undemonstrative and Puritanically religious parents. Denied much in the way of amusement, he does not seem at least to have been denied fairy tales, and here he would have found the magic, color, excitement, violence, and romance so conspicuously absent from his own life. To the German translator of *The King* he wrote that he had "received the chief enjoyments of my childhood from German story." (in Dearden 48) for the German folktales in the Grimm brothers' collection seem to have been especially important to him. He had his own copy of the first English translation, *German Popular Stories* (1823-26), and one of his earliest artistic endeavors was an attempt, at eleven (1829), to copy Cruikshank's masterful illustrations (see Evans 31). Saturated with these stories from an early age, he would have found it natural to model his own fairy tale after them, using a basic folktale pattern and various folktale motifs, yet without following the plot of any specific tale.<sup>6</sup>

A fairly detailed summary of *The King* is necessary at this point to clarify the general influence of the Grimm collection and to conjecture which tales in particular may have inspired certain of its features:

The story is set in German Stiria, in a valley surrounded by steep mountains and known for its fertility as the Treasure Valley. The valley belongs to three brothers, Schwartz (German "black"), Hans, and Gluck (German "luck"); Schwartz and Hans, known as the "Black Brothers," are ruthlessly avaricious, but their younger brother Gluck is "not above twelve years old, fair, blue-eyed, and kind in temper to every living thing."<sup>7</sup>

One stormy day Gluck allows a strange-looking little old gentleman to come into the house to dry himself, and even feeds the old man his own slice of mutton. Schwartz and Hans, returning home, drive the old man away and punish Gluck severely. But that night the storm worsens; their bedroom door bursts open with a crash, and the little gentleman reappears, riding "an enormous foam globe, spinning round, and bobbing up and down like a ball" (*King* 323), to inform them ominously that this will be his "last visit." By morning the valley has been utterly devastated by floods. The old gentleman has left a calling card on the kitchen table which identifies him as "South-West Wind, Esquire"; true to his promise, he never

visits the valley again, and it becomes an unwatered desert, "a shifting heap of red sand" (*King* 325).

Having nothing left of their fortune but a few pieces of gold plate, Schwartz and Hans move to the city, taking Gluck with them, and become dishonest goldsmiths. They force Gluck to melt down his dearest treasure, a gold mug shaped like the head of a bearded man. In the crucible the mug is transformed into a little golden dwarf who announces himself as the King of the Golden River, which flows from the mountains surrounding the Treasure Valley. The King then provides Gluck with some valuable information:

Whoever shall climb to the top of that mountain from which you see the Golden River issue, and shall cast into the stream at the source, three drops of holy water, for him, and for him only, the river shall turn to gold. But no one falling in his first, can succeed in a second attempt; and if any one shall cast unholy water into the river, it will overwhelm him, and he will become a black stone. (*King* 331)

First Hans, then Schwartz, attempts to win the gold for himself. Hans simply steals some holy water from a church, but Schwartz takes the precaution of buying his from "a bad priest" (*King* 340). Each brother, as he climbs the mountain, is so tormented by thirst that he drinks most of his water, while refusing it to the parched creatures he sees lying at intervals across his path. And each, as he casts the remaining water into the Golden River, is changed into a Black Stone. Finally Gluck sets out, with holy water given him by a priest.<sup>8</sup> Instead of quenching his own thirst, he gives some of his water to an old man, some to a little child, and the last five or six drops to a dying dog. The dog instantly turns into the King of the Golden River, who gives Gluck a white Lily hung with three drops of dew. When Gluck casts the dew into the River, the waters change course underground and begin pouring into the Treasure Valley.

And thus the Treasure Valley became a garden again, and the inheritance, which had been lost by cruelty, was regained by love.

And Gluck went, and dwelt in the valley, and the poor were never driven from his door: so that his barns became full of corn, and his house of treasure. And, for him, the river had, according to the dwarf's promise, become a River of Gold. (*King* 347)

Our consideration of the influence of *German Popular Stories* on *The King* will be limited to the stories in that work (by no means a complete translation of the Grimms' collection), as this is the version that Ruskin knew as a child.

One of the motifs used by him is so universal that it cannot possibly be traced back to a particular folktale: the despised youngest son who eventually triumphs over his brothers and inherits a kingdom. Generally, as in *The King*, there are three brothers in all, so that the audience witnesses two failures before the third son is successful, and very often this success

6. Filstrup argues that "The Water of Life" is the prototype for Ruskin's story. As I shall show, however, it is unlikely that this or any other specific folktale played such a central role.

7. *Works* 1:315. Henceforth all quotations from this story will be taken from this edition.

8. The original manuscript version of *The King*, note Cook and Wedderburn, was "less sympathetic to the priest: 'So he went to the priest and gave him all the money he had saved, and the priest gave him some holy water.'" *Works* 1:343.

follows from an act of kindness or courtesy to some insignificant or helpless creature; in "The Golden Bird," for example, the creature is a fox, in "The Water of Life" a dwarf, and in "The Queen Bee" an ant-hill, some ducks, and a bees' nest. This, then, is the basic, traditional pattern on which the plot of Ruskin's *King* is built. Ruskin combines with it a motif that might be called the "double-edged gift," that of a magical gift earned by the protagonist which becomes a curse in the wrong hands, as in "The Golden Goose," or "The Crows and the Soldier," or the ending of "The Three Golden Hairs."

In many stories of the youngest son type (including "The Golden Bird" and "The Waters of Life"), the hero's success is followed by an episode in which the unsuccessful brothers then betray him, but Ruskin makes their defeat far too final for that. Instead, he lengthens his basic story in the other direction, with the South-West Wind episode that precedes it. In a folktale such an episode might be a story in itself, one whose theme would be service given or refused, and its consequences; an example from *German Popular Stories* is "Mother Holle," although Ruskin must also have known the Greek myth of "Baucis and Philemon," in which (as in *The King*) the strangers who are refused or given hospitality turn out to be the gods themselves. In effect, Ruskin has stitched two stories together, involving two separate tests of Gluck and his brothers, and the traditional reward for hospitality which Gluck earns in his first test is put off, as it were, until the second has been completed.

The structural patchwork does not quite succeed in making a single, unified whole. It seems unsatisfactory that South-West Wind never repays Gluck's kindness to him, or even reappears in the second half of *The King*. And having two mysterious little dwarfs with long whiskers is confusing, especially to children, who may assume (I did) that the second dwarf must be the first in disguise. Possibly Ruskin wished to symbolize the close relationship between two natural forces, those of wind and water, but if so, he never makes this clear. It may well be this fundamental structural awkwardness in *The King* to which he refers in his later judgment, "I can no more write a story than compose a picture."

The characters of *The King* as well as its plot are strongly influenced by the folktales Ruskin knew. His three brothers are modeled directly on the three brothers of the folktale, only (as we would expect from a literary rather than an oral fairy tale) characterized a little more fully and distinctly. Good and evil are revealed not only through action but through physical appearance, which the folktale would probably not even mention; the two older brothers are ugly, with "small, dull eyes" (315), while Gluck is blue-eyed and fair. The two dwarfs are also derived from folktale models. Similar dwarfs – small imaginary beings, of course, not stunted humans – play crucial roles in a large number of the *German Popular Stories*. They may be magical servants (as in "The Blue Light"), helpers of the virtuous (as in "The Water of Life" and "Snow-Drop"), or dangerous antagonists (as in "Rumpelstiltskin"). Again, Ruskin has described the individual physical appearance of his dwarfs and identified them with specific powers of nature, but their basic characteristics – mysterious power, unpredictable, often irascible behavior – are entirely traditional.

Some other elements in *The King* may also have been inspired by these German folktales. In "The Water of Life," we find combined magical, life-giving water (though here the water is the end of the hero's endeavor rather than the means) and a dwarf who helps the youngest son procure it, and in "The Queen Bee" the unsuccessful older brothers are turned into stones. But Ruskin had another source for the water and the stones, which, as we shall see, united both in a single tale. It does seem likely, however, that the title of his story was inspired by one of the least-known of the *German Popular Stories* – "The King of the Golden Mountain." There is a dwarf in this story, too, though he is not himself the King, and a restorative potion called "the water of life" plays a minor part (Grimm 173); otherwise there is no significant resemblance between the folktale and Ruskin's *King*. Obviously, as I suggested in connection with plot, Ruskin's familiarity with the German folktale enabled him to draw freely among the characters, images, and magical devices that he found there.

The influence of Dickens on *The King* is less pervasive, yet it too can be identified. As Ruskin himself points out in his brief account of *The King* in *Praeterita*, he knew Dickens, too, from a very early age:

Anent the *King of the River*, I remorsefully bethink me no word has been said of the dawn and sunrise of Dickens on us; from the first syllable of him in the *Sketches*, altogether precious and admirable to my father and me; and the new number of *Pictures* and following *Nickleby* looked to, through whatever laborious or tragic realities might be upon us, as unmix'd bliss, for the next day. . . . (Works 35:303)

In 1833, when Dickens first began publishing the articles which make up *Sketches by Boz*, Ruskin was an impressionable fourteen. His influence on Ruskin's fairy tale seems mainly stylistic, though the two dwarfs may well owe something to the grotesque characters of *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-39), *Oliver Twist* (1838), and *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841) – the last-named especially, with its jovially menacing dwarf-villain, Quilp. But it is the tone of much of Ruskin's story that strikes the reader as noticeably Dickensian – brisk, informal, jocular – unlike either the grave impersonality of the folktale or Ruskin's own formal, somewhat archaic style. It is most conspicuously so in the scenes with the two dwarfs; the description of South-West Wind, for example, even borrows Dickens's way of using metaphor and detail (especially about clothes) animistically to create an impression of personality:

He had a very large nose, slightly brass-colored; his cheeks were very round, and very red, and might have warranted a supposition that he had been blowing a refractory fire for the last eight-and-forty hours; his eyes twinkled merrily through long silky eyelashes, his moustaches curled twice round like a corkscrew on each side of his mouth, and his hair, of a curinus mixed pepper-and-salt color, descended far over his shoulders. . . .

To do the little gentleman justice, he was wet. His feather hung down between his legs like a beaten puppy's tail, dripping like an umbrella; and from the ends of his moustaches the water was running into his waistcoat pockets, and out again like a mill stream. (*King* 317)

The tone of *The King*, however, is by no means consistent, and Ruskin employs a voice unmistakably his own to describe the mountainous setting of his story:

Far above, shot up red splintered masses of castellated rock, jagged and shivered into myriads of fantastic forms, with here and there a streak of sunlit snow, traced down their chasms like a line of forked lightning; and, far beyond, and far above all these, fainter than the morning cloud, but purer and changeless, slept, in the blue sky, the utmost peaks of the eternal snow. (*King* 335)

Here is what Ruskin calls in *Praeterita* "a little true Alpine feeling of my own." Such vividly pictorial descriptions of scenery and weather give *The King* a distinct sense of place that is one of its most recognizably Ruskinian features and can be traced directly to personal experience. Only the winter before (1840-41), Ruskin had traveled through the Alps to Italy with his parents, and his descriptions of setting in *The King* are similar to several of the diary entries from that journey, both in style and in the type of thing described.<sup>9</sup> The Alpine setting, moreover, had a more than aesthetic significance for him. He had been depressed and listless throughout most of the journey, but recovered his spirits as he re-crossed the Alps once more on the way home; one particular Alpine valley witnessed his most marked renewal of vitality, and the description of this valley in his diary seems particularly akin to that just-quoted description from *The King*:

I woke from a sound sleep in a little one-windowed room at Lans-le-hourg, at six of the summer morning, June 2nd, 1841: the red aiguilles on the north relieved against pure blue – the great pyramid of snow down the valley in one sheet of eastern light. I dressed in three minutes, ran down the village street, across the stream, and climbed the grassy slope on the south side of the valley, up to the first pines. I had found my life again – all the best of it. What was good of religion, love, admiration or hope, had ever been taught me, or felt by my best nature, rekindled at once; and my line of work, both by my own will and the aid granted to it by fate in the future, determined for me. (Quoted in Evans 79)

Here are the same sharply pointed rocks, their red contrasted in the same way with the white of snow and the blue of sky. We may conjecture, then, that to Ruskin the mountain setting of *The King* was associated with this joyful experience of personal rebirth, and that something of his rekindled religion, love, admiration and hope, and of his new sense of purpose also, may have been expressed in the fairy tale written only three months later.

This seems all the more likely because the setting of *The King* does not merely frame or decorate the story but plays as active a part as any of the characters. It responds to human behavior, repaying evil with barrenness, good with lavish fertility. And as the quest for the Golden River is enacted by each brother in turn, rock and weather reflect each moral choice like a spiritual barometer. For Hans and Schwartz the setting grows more threatening with each resisted appeal to mercy:

"Water, indeed," said Schwartz, "I haven't half enough for my-

self," and on he went.

Then again the light seemed to fade from before his eyes, and he looked up, and, behold, a mist, of the colour of blood, had come over the sun; and the bank of black cloud had risen very high, and its edges were tossing and tumbling like the waves of the angry sea. And they cast long shadows, which flickered over Schwartz's path. (*King* 341-2)

For Gluck, the way is made pleasanter, with each act of kindness. Physically weaker than his brother, he has far more difficulty in crossing the glacier; emotionally more vulnerable, he is "very much frightened at the strange noises under the ice" (*King* 343). After his first gift of water to the old man, however, "the path became easier to his feet, and two or three blades of grass appeared upon it, and some grasshoppers began singing on the bank beside it; and Gluck thought he had never heard such merry singing" (*King* 344). After his second gift to the child, moss and flowers and butterflies begin to brighten the path, "and the sky sent down such pure light, that Gluck had never felt so happy in his life" (*King* 345).

Here we have come to one of the unmentioned inward influences on *The King* – Ruskin's own beliefs about the relationship between nature, man, and God. Nature, in Ruskin's ecology, is not morally neutral, but (as we have seen) an expression of the divine Will. Thus, man's relationship with nature depends upon his obedience to God. Selfish greed – the primary sin in this story – destroys the natural balance and is ultimately punished by natural disaster. Hans and Schwartz, for example,

... killed everything that did not pay for its eating. They shot the blackbirds, because they pecked the fruit; and killed the hedgehogs, lest they should suck the crows; they poisoned the crickets for eating the crumbs in the kitchen; and smothered the cicadas, which used to sing all summer in the lime trees. They worked their servants without any wages, till they would not work any more, and then quarrelled with them, and turned them out of doors without paying them. (*King* 314)

These methods seem well-calculated to make them rich – in the short run. But the same greed is equally heedless of ecological and spiritual consequences, and when they refuse food and shelter to what seems like a helpless old man, the natural forces of wind and water turn against them and wipe out their riches overnight:

The inundation had swept away trees, crops, and cattle, and left in their stead a waste of red sand and grey mud. The two brothers crept shivering and horror-struck into the kitchen. The water had gutted the whole first floor; corn, money, almost every movable thing had been swept away. . . . (*King* 324)

Through greed, the Black Brothers have so disrupted their relationship with nature that they can no longer make a living by "natural" means. The deceptive character of their wealth is further underlined by the fact that, even as goldsmiths, they adulterate their gold with copper and attempt to cheat their customers (*King* 326).

In *Unto This Last* (1860), as in *The King*, Ruskin is concerned with re-defining wealth in a way which can differentiate true wealth from false. Here he states explicitly that true wealth

9. See, for example, quotations in Evans, pp. 77, 79, and 80.

benefits not merely the few but the many: "That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings" (*Works* 17:105). In *The King* the distinction is implicit in the story itself. The wealth of the Black Brothers is false, literally built on sand; Gluck's wealth at the end of the story is true, for it nourishes the poor as well as himself.

Ruskin symbolizes the two kinds of wealth in terms of water. For the Black Brothers water becomes a destructive force – first flood, then drought – for Gluck, a River of Gold. Water and wealth are metaphorically associated in *Unto This Last* as well. In one famous passage in particular, Ruskin rebuts those *laissez-faire* economists who, comparing natural supply and demand to the free-flowing waters of the world, insist that neither can be subjected to human control:

The course neither of clouds nor rivers can be forbidden by human will. But the disposition and administration of them can be altered by human forethought. Whether the stream shall be a curse or a blessing, depends upon man's labour, and administering intelligence. For centuries after centuries, great districts of the world, rich in soil, and favoured in climate, have lain desert under the rage of their own rivers; nor only desert, but plague-struck. The stream which, rightly directed, would have flowed in soft irrigation from field to field – would have purified the air, given food to man and beast, and carried their burdens for them on its bosom – now overwhelms the plain and poisons the wind; its breath pestilence, and its work famine. (60-61)

In *The King* Ruskin's metaphor comes to life. The selfish actions of Hans and Schwartz create such a desert as this; Gluck's unselfishness "rightly directs" the Golden River into a new course, which brings wealth to all the Treasure Valley. Thus, *The King* anticipates Ruskin's later views on political economy to a remarkable degree. As more than one critic has noted, it is in this children's story that he first expresses his concern for social injustice, his insistence on the social responsibility of the individual, and his view of nature as "man's moral testing place."<sup>10</sup> Even its symbolism was to be incorporated into Ruskin's later work.

*The King* is also typically Ruskinian in that one cannot disentangle its religious aspect from this social one. True wealth and harmony with nature are achieved by obedience to God's "Do unto others," and through nature's positive or negative reactions to human behavior Ruskin's social beliefs are shown to have divine sanction. But the influence on *The King* of Ruskin's lifelong religious training and reading is also worth considering in itself.

The basic story of *The King*, for example, can be seen as a parable of the fall of man, and man's redemption through selfless love. The Treasure Valley at the beginning is a kind of Eden, where the forces of nature are entirely beneficent to man, but these same forces transform the garden into a wilderness when the Black Brothers commit the final sin against them

and God. It remains for Gluck not to restore the original relationship with these forces, but through acts of generosity to create a new one. In his humble way, he is a figure of Christ, redeeming his brothers' sins with his own selflessness and bringing a renewal of life to hungry multitudes. The Golden River may represent the waters of baptism – of spiritual rebirth – as well as the true wealth of the previous interpretation.

At certain points in the story, especially toward the end, Ruskin's language underlines this theological level of meaning. When each of the Black Brothers throws the flask into the river, the sentence rhythms take on something of a Biblical cadence (for example, with the repeated "And's"), mingling with an imagery of fire, blood, and darkness to evoke a powerful vision of damnation:

And a sudden horror came over Schwartz, he knew not why; but the thirst for gold prevailed over his fear, and he rushed on. And the bank of black cloud rose to the zenith, and out of it came bursts of spiry lightning, and waves of darkness seemed to heave and float between their flashes, over the whole heavens. And the sky where the sun was setting was all level, and like a lake of blood; and a strong wind came out of that sky, tearing its crimson clouds into fragments, and scattering them far into the darkness. And when Schwartz stood by the brink of the Golden River, its waves were black, like thunder clouds, but their foam was like fire; and the roar of the waters below, and the thunder above met, as he cast the flask into the stream. As he did so the lightning glared into his eyes, the earth gave way beneath him, and the waters closed over his cry. And the moaning of the river rose wildly into the night, as it gushed over the

TWO BLACK STONES.

(*King* 342)

Again, in the last sentences of *The King*, the lost "inheritance" "regained by love" suggests the eternal inheritance won by Christ for all men (as in Hebrews 9:15), while "according to the dwarf's promise" recalls II Peter 3:13: "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Beyond the central theme of universal fall and redemption, Ruskin seems interested in demonstrating what might be called the mechanism of damnation and salvation through the fates of the three brothers. By noting which doctrines he emphasizes, one may gain some sense of his religious beliefs at this time – entirely orthodox, yet already moving toward individuality, as in his stress on the divine authority behind natural forces that makes ecology a moral territory for him. Again, despite his evangelical upbringing, Ruskin makes salvation dependent on works rather than on faith. The criterion for judgment is unimpeachably Scriptural – "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40) – but for the nature-loving Ruskin "my brethren" is not exclusively human; Gluck's final test comes

10. I have summarized the views of three critics in particular: Francelia Butler discusses how the story reveals Ruskin's early interest in social injustice and relates it to his later involvement with St. George's Guild and the Ruskin Commonwealth.

Patricia Miller points out how *The Cricket on the Hearth* and *The King* "share the Victorian concern for social responsibility which is a fundamental component of earnestness"; in both stories individual actions

"echo throughout society" (14).

John W. Griffith and Charles H. Frey note that "Many of Ruskin's interests appear seminal" in *The King*, including his view of nature as "man's moral testing place. Those who, like the wicked brothers Schwartz and Hans, exploit nature for their own gain are condemned ultimately to fail" (203).

in canine form. A distinctly Protestant touch is his insistence that the power of "holy water" depends entirely on the holy behavior of its user; Schwartz buys his quite legally, but it does not keep him from being turned into a black stone, any more than the purchase of indulgences could save his soul.

For Ruskin the possibility of irrevocable damnation is real. Yet he also emphasizes the complete free will of the individual and the long-suffering patience of God. Not one single sin, like Adam's, calls down on Hans and Schwartz the vengeance of South-West Wind, but only the last of innumerable acts of selfishness. Even then, they are given another series of chances in their journey up the mountain. Each brother sees three creatures dying for lack of water: Hans sees first a dog, then a child, then an old man; Schwartz the child, the old man, and his own brother Hans last of all. In an unpublished epilogue to the manuscript (supposedly explaining the "misty conjectures" of the local inhabitants), Ruskin spells out the divine logic operating here, at the climax of his story:

But the current opinions are, that the King of the Golden River did himself assume the shapes which were seen on their journey by the brothers, that he in each instance assumed shapes more and more calculated to excite their pity – that it was not without three *appeals* of increasing strength, and all useless, that the doom of death was inflicted on the two elder brothers – nor without three *diminishing* in their claims that the full reward was bestowed on Gluck. I have also heard it eagerly maintained by imaginative disputants that had the elder brothers yielded to even the last of the appeals made to them, they would not have perished, though their rejection of the first rendered it impossible for them to receive reward, and that had little Gluck passed even by the *dog* without pity, he would not have succeeded in his design, although his previous charities might have preserved him from death. (*King* 348)

Something like perfection is demanded of him who would save others as well as himself.

As a five-year-old, Ruskin began a course of intensive Bible study with his mother that lasted until he was fourteen. Together they read aloud from the first verse of Genesis to the last of Revelations; Ruskin was also required to learn verses by heart (Evans 26-27). No wonder that the cadences of the King James version and the imagery of the Apocalypse found their way into his story-telling, or that the story itself is permeated with Christian themes of sin and charity, damnation and redemption. But again, the complexity of *The King* cannot be accounted for by any single interpretation, and there is yet another influence, and a highly important one, to be considered, which gives the story a highly personal meaning as well.

The golden water of the river and the brothers transformed into black stones – why did Ruskin choose these particular images for the climax of his story, and where did he find them? The German folktales, as we have seen, mention the "water of life" and brothers turned into stones, but do not assign colors to either. There are Biblical images, too, with an affinity to Ruskin's; in Revelation 22:1 a "river of water of life" proceeds from the throne of God, and the familiar story of Lot's wife, who looked back at Sodom and became, not a stone, but a

pillar of salt (Genesis 19:26), has a family likeness to that of Gluck's brothers. Clearly these images are universal in basic concept, yet we can also find them in the exact forms which Ruskin adopted and infused with personal meaning – in a story from *The Arabian Nights*.

This great collection of reworked folk material had played a unique role in English literature since its first translation in 1705-8 (see Stone 24-26); to children especially it supplied a rare strain of fantasy during the utilitarian decades of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Into the world of children's literature, says Harry Stone,

for the most part so literal and chilling, came magic lamps, all-powerful genies, fairy-tale palaces, incredible treasures, sinuous dancing girls, bold robbers, mythical kingdoms, veiled maidens, ingenious strategies, and magical transformations. . . . *The Arabian Nights* was alien and liberating. (25)

These very qualities made *The Arabian Nights* acutely suspect to parents and educators, and many a child less strictly raised than Ruskin was forbidden to read them, even in thoroughly expurgated versions. As with the Grimms' tales, however, the young Ruskin (like Dickens and the Brontë children) seems to have had free access to this great reservoir of pure imagination.

One story from this collection seems to have been particularly important to him; in "Passages Intended for *Dilecta*, Volume III" (1888) he says that it "is a quite favourite story with me, and has had an immense power over my own life," adding later that the story "for general instruction is quite the most precious in the old series" (Appendix, *Works* 35:638-41). It is called, in the Richard Burton edition, "The Two Sisters Who Envied Their Cadette" (that is, their younger sister)<sup>11</sup> but for Ruskin its name is "Golden Water." In "Passages" he begins retelling it, in an attempt to show what it means to him. Like most *Arabian Nights* stories, it is really several stories entangled into one, and Ruskin begins with the Cadette's children, a girl and two younger boys, who have been brought up in happy seclusion. However, a strange old woman who visits them tells them there are three things still missing from their home: the Talking Bird, the Singing Tree, and the Golden Water. Because his sister decides that they must have them, the older brother rides forth in search of them. He meets a dervish who warns him that no one has ever returned from this venture, but gives him a ball "and tells him, arriving at such and such a place, to throw it before him, and that it will roll on till it guides him to the foot of a steep hill, up which there is a straight path marked out by multitudes of black stones on each side" (Appendix, *Works* 35:640).

Tantalizingly, Ruskin breaks off at this point with "I pass to the interpretation of the tale," but from *The Arabian Nights* we can fill in the remainder of the plot. The dervish also warns the older brother that as he climbs the hill, he will be assailed by mocking and threatening voices, but that he must not look behind him, or he will be transformed into a black stone. The boy disregards this warning through fear of the voices, and his younger brother, who follows him, through anger at them; both

11. In *Supplemental Nights to the Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night*, 491-549.

are turned into stones. Finally, their sister, the Princess Perizadeh, undertakes the quest. Wiser than her brothers, she stops her ears with cotton and so safely reaches the top of the hill. Here she finds the Talking Bird; it tells her how to find the Singing Tree and the Golden Water close by, and how a few drops of the Water sprinkled on each black stone will restore it to human form. Rejoicing, the brothers and sister ride home again, accompanied by a train of unenchanted warriors, to install the Bird, the Tree, and a fountain of Golden Water in their own garden.

Why did this story have such "immense power" over Ruskin's life? It is unfortunate that his "interpretation" in "Passages" is such a muddled one. As far as I can make out, the Talking Bird represents for him something like communication with nature ("to all persons who look faithfully for guidance to the aspects and powers of Nature, distinct help and grave warning will be given by the voice of birds, which could be received in no other way" [641]), while the Singing Tree is "a part of Humanity, put expressly in our charge, planted and tended and grafted and guided, as animals, even domestic ones, cannot be." Here Ruskin breaks off again before interpreting the Golden Water, and this time for good; one suspects that he does not really want to tell anyone else about it after all, perhaps because it was so personal to him. My own guess is that the Water had a kind of religious significance for him. If Nature and Humanity are two of the things we need to make our "homes" — our selves — complete, then the third may well be the Divine, which alone can restore the dead to life. But in its allegorical fashion, this interpretation accounts only for the three objects of the quest; it does nothing to explain the story as a whole, or why Ruskin should have borrowed it to create the climax of *The King*.

Lacking a clear or complete interpretation from the author himself, we can perhaps deduce one by examining what use Ruskin makes of the story and how he changes it. The common element is the quest for the Golden Water — and the solitary figure climbing the mountain, past the black stones. But in *The King* the mocking voices are gone, and the prohibition is no longer against looking back, but against throwing unholy water into the river. In fact, turning back has become the right thing to do, when it means succouring the helpless; Gluck must finally renounce his ambition to turn the river into gold before the charm can be fulfilled. Finally, even the golden water cannot re-transform the black stones into brothers again; they are stones for good.

The meaning of these changes becomes clearer if we examine another instance of Ruskin's use of the *Arabian Nights* story. In his influential 1851 essay "Pre-Raphaelitism" the central scene becomes a metaphor to describe the hostile reaction of other artists to the "vast revelation" of Turner:

Shrieking rose from all dark places at the same instant, just the same kind of shrieking that is now raised against the Pre-Raphaelites. Those glorious old Arabian Nights, how true they are! Mocking and whispering, and abuse loud and low by turns, from all the black stones beside the road, when one living soul is toiling up the hill to get the golden water. Mocking and whispering, that he may look back, and become a black stone like themselves.

Turner looked not back, but he went on in such a temper as a

strong man must be in, when he is forced to walk with his fingers in his ears. (*Works* 12:378-9)

Ruskin has made one very significant change in the story. In the original, there is no suggestion that the black stones produce the mocking and threatening voices; Ruskin has transformed the victims into villains and thus conveyed a far more cynical view of human nature. Those who have tried and failed resent the man who proves greater than themselves and actively try to hinder him. The artist must be (as we would say) entirely inner-directed if he is to succeed in realizing his vision. Yet for those who know the *Arabian Nights*, the metaphor implies that there still may be hope even for the lesser artists. The original Golden Water had life-giving power and could transform stones into men. If the golden water sought by Turner represents the highest inspiration of which art is capable — perhaps, inspiration of divine origin — it may have the power to restore his fellow artists to life through direct influence, once he has found it himself.

A further link between the *Arabian Nights* story and the visual arts is a water-color painting called "Golden Water" by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, which was at one time owned by Ruskin (it is now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge). Executed by one of the most prominent Pre-Raphaelite painters in 1858, not many years after "Pre-Raphaelitism," it reinforces Ruskin's suggestion in that essay, that the Pre-Raphaelites might be the true successors of Turner. The painting shows the Princess Perizadeh on her return from the mountain: she is carrying the Golden Water in a little barrel under one arm, while in the background one sees the Singing Tree with the Talking Bird in its branches.

In "Pre-Raphaelitism" Ruskin uses the *Arabian Nights* story to symbolize the predicament of the gifted individual. Knowing that he himself felt thwarted in his youth by his parents' uncongenial ambitions for him and by his own uncertainty of vocation, we may guess at one reason why the story may have had such "immense power" for him. Perizadeh and Turner succeed because they have the strength of dedication to their quest to ignore the mocking and threatening words of others; Ruskin knew that he too must have the strength to pursue his own artistic goals.

This would make sense of one change that Ruskin makes from the original in both "Pre-Raphaelitism" and *The King*. The underlying theme of the original story is steadfast family loyalty and love. The brothers risk their lives to gratify their sister's wishes; later she, in turn, risks her own life to save them. Turner, on the other hand, incurs only hostility from his "brother" artists. Gluck's brothers are consistently cruel to him, and although he feels sorry for them after they have been turned into stones, he can do nothing to redeem them. In both his own versions of the story, Ruskin emphasizes the isolation of the gifted individual from those who should be supporting him but spitefully do not. Whatever anger at his parents he felt at this time but could not openly express, Ruskin may thus have expressed symbolically in his retelling of "Golden Water."

*The King of the Golden River* was written at a crucial moment of transition in Ruskin's life. During the trip to Italy he had become convinced that he was not to be a painter, and had conceived the idea of *Modern Painters* — of writing about



Turner rather than emulating him (Evans 77-78). On the way home through the Alps he experienced that renewal of inner life that gave him hope for the future, but he still had not decided whether to direct his main energies toward the ministry (as his mother had always intended for him) or into writing. During his stay at Leamington, and while writing *The King*, he was still struggling with this decision.

A letter of September 22nd to his tutor, the Reverend Thomas Dale, shows that his main uncertainty lay in whether or not his talents justified his adopting a literary vocation. The primary duty of both priest and layman, he argues, is identical – to lead others to salvation. Everyone, he says, “who believes in the name of Christ is called upon to become a full and perfect priest,” when “we have every reason for supposing that the far greater part of those who die daily in our sight depart into eternal torment.”<sup>12</sup> (We need not wonder, then, that two out of three brothers are doomed to eternal stonehood!) But then, there is more than one way of helping others heavenward:

Was not the energy of Galileo, Newton, Davy, Michael Angelo, Raphael, Handel, employed more effectively to the glory of God in the results and lessons it has left, than if it had been occupied all their lifetime in direct priestly exertion . . . ? Yet . . . can the same be said of those who follow their footsteps, with the average intellect of humanity? Are not the lives of the greater number of men employed in the arts and sciences, as regards their chief duty, wasted? And is it right for any one deliberately to choose such a pursuit as the chief occupation of his life, and abandon the plain duties in which *all* can be of effective service on the very slender chance of becoming a Galileo or a Raphael? (397)

This was the dilemma of conscience and self-evaluation that found symbolic form in the climax of *The King*, embodied in the powerful imagery of “Golden Water.” And in his story Ruskin works out one possible solution. Like Gluck (and Turner), he must follow his own path up the mountain, toward his own chosen goal. Yet – and here, because he does not doubt Turner’s gifts as he does his own, the meaning of the image in “Pre-Raphaelitism” differs from that in *The King* – he must not allow that goal to become more important to him than the needs and sufferings of his fellow creatures, or he will be (effectively) transformed into stone and eventually damned for his hard-heartedness. If necessary, he must rather abandon his goal, trusting that this very abandonment may enable him to achieve it in some fashion known only to God. If he does finally achieve it, and without polluting it by his own selfishness, it may – like the gifts of Galileo and Raphael – serve multitudes. This, more or less, was in fact his decision: to become a writer rather than a clergyman, to write *Modern Painters* (which becomes a fellow seeker of the Golden Water), but later to turn aside from the aesthetic path and give what water he had to the needy in *Unto This Last*.

At the same time, he expresses in *The King* the renewed interest and purpose of his life – a life that had for a while

seemed to him as desolate as the Treasure Valley when South-West Wind (the wind of inspiration?) vowed to visit it no more. If Ruskin “is” Gluck, he is also the Valley, brought back to life by the Golden River from the mountains. And so he sets his story amid those same Alpine peaks where the certainty of recovery first came to him.

Thus, in *The King of the Golden River* the traditional and universal became the vehicle for the immediate and personal. The form of the folktale, learned from the Grimms, gave Ruskin the structure and characters which enabled him to express ideas through story.<sup>13</sup> The central, catalyzing image came from another source of folk material, *The Arabian Nights*. Indeed, we can see – not only from *The King*, but from “Pre-Raphaelitism” and “Passages Intended for *Dilecta*” – how such an image can be perceived and used in different ways by different authors, and even by the same author at different points in his life.

We can also see how such magical and universal images help to make possible an extraordinary complexity of meaning within a straightforward, sequential narrative and simple characterization modeled on those of the folktale. *The King* can be regarded as a socio-economic parable concerned with the meaning of true wealth, as a Christian story of damnation and salvation, or as a purely personal symbolic expression of a turning-point in Ruskin’s life; in fact, it is all three simultaneously and without strain. Even as Ruskin was writing *The King* at Leamington, Hans Christian Andersen had already discovered that the children’s fairy tale could embody ideas of interest to adults as well – and not only ideas but complexes of ideas, like the nests of exquisitely carved and independently moving balls that the Chinese used to carve from a single, solid cube of ivory. But Ruskin found it out on his own.

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12. “Three Letters and an Essay by John Ruskin, 1836-1841. Found in His Tutor’s Desk.” *Works* 1:395-6.

13. It is interesting to compare *The King* with Ruskin’s other major work for young people, *The Ethics of the Dust* (Vol. 18 in *Works*, 1865), which is not based on the folktale form. A strange combination of moral instruction and crystallography, it is a series of dialogues between the

Old Lecturer (Ruskin) and a group of girls aged nine to twenty, his young friends at Winington Hall. Its combination of rambling formlessness, meaninglessly complex symbolism, and a style alternating between turgid and coy makes it very nearly unreadable. Clearly – at least when writing for children – Ruskin benefited from the discipline of the well-defined folktale. For the background of *Ethics*, see Burd.

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## Prelude and Finale to *Middlemarch*

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When *Middlemarch* was "done — except for a small Finale, which I prefer reserving a little" (*Letters* 5:309), George Eliot departed with Lewes for a holiday abroad, taking with her the proofs for the novel and the job of writing "the comparatively easy pages of winding up," as Lewes described them to John Blackwood (*Letters* 5:308). Comparatively easy they must have been, for within two weeks George Eliot had written them, mailed them to Blackwood and received, corrected and returned the proofs. They cannot have been entirely satisfactory, however, for contrary to her custom George Eliot revised the closing paragraphs considerably in proof, and made further changes two years later for the 1874 edition (Beaty, "Text"). Readers and critics have shared her dissatisfaction with the Finale, usually expressing it as disappointment with Dorothea's after-history. The real difficulty with the Finale, however, is the confusion it creates in the closing paragraphs about Dorothea's "sacrifice" and her effect on "the growing good of the world," neither of which bears much visible relation to the Dorothea whose character we have watched unfold. Indeed, considering that the climax of the novel is Dorothea's happiness in love with Will, it is puzzling even to discover what her "sacrifice" might have been. Much is explained, however, by the manner in which this Finale was composed.

In writing the Finale, George Eliot confronted the last, and comparatively minor, artistic problem posed by the stages of *Middlemarch's* composition. The finished novel, which she was re-reading at the time in order to correct the proofs, contained the signs of three distinct beginnings which have gone into its creation. The earliest was the novel "Middlemarch," projected in January 1869 and begun in July of that year, centering around the story of Tertius Lydgate, of which traces are preserved in the current chapters 10 through 16 (Beaty, *Middlemarch* 24-36). The second was the story "Miss Brooke," begun in late November of 1870, "a subject that has been recorded among my possible themes ever since I began to write fiction, but will probably take new shapes in the development" (*Letters* 5:124). The earliest version of this "theme" is its statement in the Prelude, and its development in "Miss Brooke" constitutes the first nine-and-a-half chapters of *Middlemarch*. George Eliot's recognition of the potential connection between these two stories, at the beginning of January 1871, led to the elaborate work of joining them and the new writing for the

new novel *Middlemarch*. Although this seam is less conspicuous than the others, it makes itself felt in a new conception of Dorothea when she appears for the first time since "Miss Brooke" as Mrs. Casaubon on her wedding trip in Rome. The organic growth of the ideas and characters of this novel offers tremendously interesting insight into the creative process; but for the task of composing a Finale, it created the difficulty of reconciling different initial conceptions.

The actual after-histories of the characters, including Dorothea, seem to have given George Eliot no trouble. The fates of Mary, Fred, Tertius, and Rosamund had been decided long ago in the planning of the earlier novel "Middlemarch," and the Finale contains no surprises in terms of that beginning. The initial plan for Dorothea, as it is set out in the Prelude and in Chapter One of "Miss Brooke," projected a special brand of tragedy for Dorothea, whose nature was "likely to seek martyrdom, to make retractions, and then to incur martyrdom after all in a quarter where she had not sought it" (I, 1) — presumably a forecast of her marriage to Casaubon, her inevitable revulsion from him, and her renunciation of her love for Will, perhaps on the very grounds for which she renounces him temporarily in *Middlemarch*. When she was included in the larger life of *Middlemarch*, her story took on rather a different shape than George Eliot had anticipated in the Prelude. By the time of her earliest chapter sketches for Book V, however, George Eliot had already planned Casaubon's death and the "Drama of Will & Dorothea advanced," as the entry in the *Quarry for Middlemarch* (II, 55) indicates (11). Even before she had begun writing of Casaubon's ill health, let alone of his death and will, George Eliot had entered "Second marriage of Dorothea" in a list of "Elements for Books VII and VIII" (24) (*Quarry* 55). Two nearly consecutive notes, both entered before Book VI was written, dispel any doubts that the marriage with Will was not long foreseen. "Dorothea in her second married life (in London?)" is the first entry for an "Epilogue" (30); and the following page, indicating "How to End the Parts" for the final three books, notes: "VIII. Epilogue of reconciliation with Dorothea's family" (31) (*Quarry* 58).

The Prelude, however, which both demanded the Finale and dictated its form, had undertaken considerably more than to set up Dorothea's story and introduce her character. Dorothea's desire for martyrdom and an epic life was emphasized as contributing to her pending tragedy, along with the inadequacies of women's education and the damaging effects of what George Eliot was to call in Lydgate's case "neighbors" — you and me. The ironic parallel with St. Theresa was established. In the

course of George Eliot's "experimenting" in the early chapters of "Miss Brooke," the story did in fact "take new shapes," and by the time the author had discovered new dimensions and possibilities in Dorothea that caught her up with and connected her to the abandoned novel "*Middlemarch*," the initial intent, stated in the Prelude, was altered. With Dorothea's removal from the central focus, the interest shifted from the conditions and characteristics peculiar to her to those relevant to the larger common life of *Middlemarch*. Among the issues that dropped out of sight were martyrdom, the special lot of women, women's education, and St. Theresa.

One might wonder why in that case the Prelude was retained. At least one of George Eliot's contemporary readers questioned it: the ever-perceptive Joseph Munt Langford, who after reading the manuscript of Book One had written to Blackwood, "I do not like the 'Prelude,' and if I had my way I would omit it. . . (Letters 5:207). Perhaps George Eliot, in whose imagination Dorothea had been evolving gradually, did not yet perceive the degree to which the Dorothea of *Middlemarch* had deviated from her earlier conception as the heroine of "Miss Brooke." Certainly in none of her novels thus far had she dispensed with the aid of some kind of introduction. Perhaps Langford's suggestion was not made to her. In any case, the Prelude stood and was printed in the first issue of *Middlemarch*.

In the meantime a new, and I believe unexpected, development occurred as a result of Dorothea's evolution for the diagram, represented in the parallel with St. Theresa, to the picture. This was a radically new insight into the nature of tragedy. Despite her long preoccupation with tragedy, predating even her earliest fiction-writing, there is no previous sign in George Eliot's work of the discovery of ordinary tragedy contained in the famous passage describing Dorothea weeping on her wedding journey. It appears to be an insight generated spontaneously by her contemplation of Dorothea, whom she was encountering freshly in her new role as heroine of *Middlemarch* for the first time since the two incipient novels had been joined.

Nor can I suppose that when Mrs. Casaubon is discovered in a fit of weeping six weeks after her wedding, the situation will be regarded as tragic. Some discouragement, some faintness of heart at the new real future which replaces the imaginary is not unusual, and we do not expect people to be deeply moved by what is not unusual. That element of tragedy which lies in the very fact of frequency, has not yet wrought itself into the coarse emotion of mankind; and perhaps our frames could hardly bear much of it. If we had a keen vision and feeling for all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence. (II.20)

The intimate connection between this inspiration and Dorothea herself is surely one of the most wonderful instances of the mysterious phenomenon of a character coming alive and instructing its author. It alters our understanding of Dorothea from this point forward.

1. Susan Meikle argues that George Eliot's changing attitudes towards women's rights and women's education caused her successive revisions of the Finale. These may have contributed to the form those changes took, but the real source of the problem was surely artistic.

Apparently it did not, however, alter George Eliot's conscious ideas about tragedy as a literary form. That element of tragedy which "has not yet wrought itself into the coarse emotions of mankind" had also not yet wrought itself in George Eliot's mind into a formal literary shape. Neither in the rest of *Middlemarch* nor in her subsequent work did she single out this notion for special attention or development, and when she came to write the Finale, she did not draw on it. In fact, she seems to have been confused by a dislocation in her perception of Dorothea's life as "tragic." To get on with the "small Finale," she did not undertake to identify this change and bring it to closure, but rather returned to the Prelude and attempted to make ends meet. It is evident from the parallels between the Prelude and the last paragraph of the Finale that she composed it in a manner reflected in her warning to Sara Hennell, 22 November 1872, just before the last part of *Middlemarch* was to appear: "Expect to be immensely disappointed with the close of '*Middlemarch*.' But look back to the Prelude" (Letters 5:330).

There for the first time since the earliest pages of Book One St. Theresa reappears and the notion of martyrdom, since abandoned except for brief ironic uses by Will and Sir James, is reintroduced as a shaping force in Dorothea's story. The theme of women's education, long superfluous, is recapitulated, as is the responsibility of us "insignificant people [who] with our daily words and acts are preparing the lives of many Dorotheas, some of which may present a far sadder sacrifice than that of the Dorothea whose story we know." Well may the reader who has just finished the final chapter of *Middlemarch* wonder how this applies.<sup>1</sup> George Eliot too must have felt the displacement, and anticipated criticism in a form amusingly close to the form it would actually take: "Many who knew [Dorothea], thought it a pity that so substantive and rare a creature should have been absorbed into the life of another, and be only known in a certain circle as a wife and mother. But no one stated exactly what else that was in her power she ought rather to have done . . ." George Eliot's writing and rewriting of the final paragraphs is evidence of her uneasiness, and her final version fails to resolve the difficulty.

It is a mistake, therefore, to attach too much significance to those final paragraphs, or to search in them too closely for what George Eliot had learned about tragedy. They were composed separately from the rest of the novel — how separately, the change in handwriting and color of ink in the manuscript reveals — and in haste, to be superficially compatible with statements of her earliest ideas on tragedy, dating back to when she first began to write fiction. Inevitably, they are confused by the more mature conception of tragedy that unfolds in the course of *Middlemarch*, especially in the character of Dorothea. We may as well recognize them for what they are,<sup>2</sup> in much the same spirit as George Eliot did when she wrote to Alexander Main a few weeks after completing the Finale:

2. This is not to argue that the Finale is unskilled or carelessly crafted. Marianna Torgovnick's assessment of the Finale as the work of a careful and practiced novelist is certainly correct. In this case, however, craftsmanship may have enabled George Eliot to overlook an underlying artistic problem.

I have finished my book and am thoroughly at peace about it – not because I am convinced of its perfection, but because I have lived to give out what it was in me to give and have not been hindered by illness or death from making my work a whole, such as it is. (*Letters* 5:324)

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## Eothen Again

Charisse Gendron

Recently in an article in *The New York Times Book Review*, a number of publishers confessed to the most regrettable judgments of their careers; rejections of manuscripts that, eventually brought out by others, became recognized works of genius or at least commercial successes (*James*). André Gide, who flipped through and passed over *Swann's Way*, was cited as an example of the talented editor with an occasional blind spot. More commonly, though, publishers active in the mid-twentieth century confessed to rejecting manuscripts that they knew were good but which they feared would incur financial or legal risks. *Lolita*, for example, bounced from one enthusiastic editor to another whose publisher viewed the prospective book as an invitation to a pornography suit.

These wary publishers had at least one Victorian forebear, John Murray, who turned down *Eothen*, Alexander Kinglake's narrative of his youthful travels in the Middle East from 1834-35. "[T]hat wicked spirit of jesting at everything," Murray explained to the author, "which forms the essence of the book, might, I feared, have raised a clatter."<sup>1</sup> Published in 1844 by Kinglake's friend John Ollivier, *Eothen's* irreverent spirit did raise eyebrows, but also made the author famous. English tourists en route to Cairo, Thackeray reports, tussled over the ship's one copy of the book, which "charmed all," from "our great statesman" to "our polished lawyer" to "our young Oxonian, who sighed over certain passages that he feared were wicked. . . ." (639). To youths *Eothen* offered the apparent wickedness of Kinglake's gallantry, exultant egotism, and independent opinions; to adults, the amused tolerance, in an age of moral partisanship, by which they recognized the author as a "sinner" like themselves (see, for example, Gordon 71). *Eothen* went through six editions during the author's life alone; the prudent Murray had by then obtained the copyright.

Our own view of *Eothen*, until quite recently, tended to be

of a nineteenth-century relic, once cherished by public school boys, now known only to those omnivores of British literature who read "travel classics." Certainly Kinglake's devil-may-care brush with "the splendour and havoc of the East" enchanted Victorian and Edwardian adolescents.<sup>2</sup> "Read, borrowed, handed round, [*Eothen*] is devoured and discussed with fifth form presumption," reminisces a near-contemporary of the author (Tucknell 20).<sup>3</sup> But the book's first and last audience is not an adolescent one. Kinglake originally wrote for the same London set – including Thackeray, Monckton Milnes, and such wits and women of letters as Caroline Norton and Lady Lucie Duff Gordon – who fostered the satire of *Vanity Fair* and *Punch*. A hundred and more years later, veterans of English letters E. M. Forster and V. S. Pritchett wrote, not of receiving *Eothen* at school, but of the permanent brilliance of the author's self-portraiture and prose style (Forster 288-89, Pritchett vii-xv).

Within the past two years, two reprints of *Eothen* have appeared, with introductions by those sophisticates of modern literary travel, Jonathan Raban and Jan Morris. These paperback copies, minus the freight of notes on the Eastern Question supplied by earlier twentieth-century editors,<sup>4</sup> make their appeal to a savvy contemporary audience who reads for neither vicarious adventure nor historical information, but to enjoy good writing. Prepared in part by Paul Fussell's entertaining study of the twentieth-century travel book, *Abroad*, and in part by an increasing critical relish for odd-ball narrative forms, we are ready once again to savor Kinglake's sins: to delight in watching him "walk the tightrope between 'fiction' and 'non-fiction,'" as Raban says, showing our own writers "how to be clever funny and true" (viii).

Kinglake took ten years to write *Eothen*; not until he hit on the pretense of addressing his memoir to the ear of his intimate friend Eliot Warburton was he able to shape his travel materials into memorable entertainment. He completed his "scrawl," as he calls it, when he was in his mid-thirties, deftly exploiting the distance between the event and the writing, between a past

1. Letters to A. W. Kinglake, 18 September 1843, A. W. Kinglake Papers, Add. 7633, Cambridge Univ. Library, Cambridge, England. The author wishes to thank the Cambridge University Library and John Murray Publishers for permission to quote from Kinglake's and Murray's letters.

2. *Eothen*, introd. V. S. Pritchett, p. 1. Further references will be to this edition and will be noted in the text.

3. As recently as 1949 an edition was published for use in schools (*Notes and Questions* by John W. Oliver, No. 237 of the Teaching of English Series [London: Nelson]).

4. For example, the editions with introductions and notes by D. G. Hogarth and Robin Fedden. Morris does provide a general introduction and "Cast of Characters," pp. iii-xxi.

and present self. A member of "the industrial class" and a product of the "highly respectable" English vale of Taunton, Kinglake mines the prosaic sensibilities of that class and vales as ore for his gentle satire, whether he is describing the "thin, thoughtful, canting cocks, and serious, low-church-looking hens" of Cyprus (94) or evoking in his own adventures the thrill, for a well-brought-up youth, of delving into new sensations. Deeds that are so daring in the Taunton context are quietly revealed as mock-heroic in the author's larger view.

The self-ironic twist to many of Kinglake's adventures, though, does not dispel his essential "wickedness," which, as Murray knew, is a matter less of adolescent deeds than of mature tone. Detachment, from both social custom and his own youthful ego, is the author's true unregenerate trait. To urbane Victorians weary of public morals and improving literature, Kinglake's detachment was perhaps his most exquisite sin;<sup>5</sup> but for readers of less subtle tastes, his aloofness is overlaid with seemingly more sensational tendencies.

One such sensational trait is Kinglake's gallantry, which is nothing like Dickens's idealization of young womanhood but instead resembles Byron's mingled admiration and skepticism in *Don Juan* or "Beppo." Kinglake is no rake; his wry tone, rather than any explicit, Byronic act, looks back to a racier age. Yet even though his gallant rhetoric is ultimately mock-heroic, it reads like heady stuff. Particularly convincing is his description of the "ronping girls of Bethlehem":<sup>6</sup>

[N]earer and nearer the timid flock will gather round you with their large burning eyes gravely fixed against yours, so that they see into your brain; and if you imagine evil against them they will know of your ill thought before it is yet well born, and will fly and be gone in the moment. But presently, if you will only look virtuous enough to prevent alarm, and vicious enough to avoid looking silly, the blithe maidens will draw nearer and nearer to you; and soon there will be one, the bravest of the sisters, who will venture right up to your side, and touch the hem of your coat in playful defiance of the danger, and then the rest will follow the daring of their youthful leader, and gather close round you, and hold a shrill controversy on the wondrous formation that you call a hat, and the cunning of the hands that clothed you with cloth so fine; and then, growing more profound in their researches, they will pass from the study of your mere dress to a serious contemplation of your stately height, and your nut-brown hair, and the ruddy glow of your English cheeks. And if they catch a glimpse of your ungloved fingers, then again will they make the air ring with their sweet screams of delight and amazement, as they compare the fineness of your hand with the hues of your sunburnt face, or with their own warmer tints. Instantly the ringleader of the gentle rioters imagines a new sin, with tremulous boldness she touches, then grasps your hand, and smoothes it gently betwixt her own, and pries curiously into its make and colour, as though it were silk of Damascus or shawl of Cashmere. And when they see you, even then, still sage and gentle the joyous girls will suddenly, and screamingly, and all at once, explain to each other that you are surely quite harmless and innocent — a lion that makes no spring — a bear that never hugs; and upon this faith, one after the other, they will take your passive hand,

and strive to explain it, and make it a theme, and a controversy. But the one — the fairest and the sweetest of all, is yet the most timid: she shrinks from the daring deeds of her playmates, and seeks shelter behind their sleeves, and strives to screen her glowing consciousness from the eyes that look upon her. But her laughing sisters will have none of this cowardice; they vow that the fair one shall be their *complice* — shall share their dangers — shall touch the hand of the stranger; they seize her small wrist and drag her forward by force, and at last, whilst yet she strives to turn away, and to cover up her whole soul under the folds of downcast eyelids, they vanquish her utmost strength, they vanquish her utmost modesty, and marry her hand to yours. The quick pulse springs from her fingers and throbs like a whisper upon your listening palm. For an instant her large timid eyes are upon you — in an instant they are shrouded again, and there comes a blush so burning, that the frightened girls stay their shrill laughter as though they had played too perilously and harmed their gentle sister. A moment, and all with a sudden intelligence turn away and fly like deer; yet soon again like deer they wheel round, and return, and stand, and gaze upon the danger, until they grow brave once more. (207-210)

The quasi-dangerous sensations, the blushing cheeks and racing pulses, the whole sentimental approach to travel here recall Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* (Jewett 95-98), a once hugely popular book whose suggestiveness, in spite of its protested innocence, entirely put off the Victorians. This same audience, however, found irresistible Kinglake's "bear who never hugs," his virile young Englishman equally disarmed by delicacy and by his sense of the ludicrous.

The episode of the Christian girls of Bethlehem, presented not as fact but as a likely elaboration of Kinglake's Eastern experience, fails to appear in a letter to his father written in the course of his travels. Dated 1 April 1835, the letter describes Kinglake's journey from Cyprus to Lebanon, the Holy Land, and Cairo, from where he would soon return to Syria and finally Europe. He very likely used this letter in writing the Cyprus-to-Cairo section of *Eothen*; the basic itinerary and even the habit of homely comparison, as of the Jordan to the Thames and the expanse of the great pyramid to his father's ten-acre field, appear in the earlier document. But if *Eothen* is a sly book, as Jonathan Raban warns, the filial letter is equally sly, masking behind allusions to military and religious history, typical of a nineteenth-century traveler and a pious son, both the dangers Kinglake braved and his own iconoclastic views. The letter to his father is a measure, not simply of the inevitable maturity Kinglake gained in ten years, but of the aesthetic freedom he achieved when he decided, as he explains in the Preface to *Eothen*, to forget "the Royal Statistical Society," "the Public," and "any other respectable Aggregate" (presumably including his family) and write as if for Warburton's ear alone.

Possibly in April 1835 Kinglake had not formulated the independent views elaborated in *Eothen*, and we can only surmise whether some of the remarks addressed to his father represent lamblike innocence or tactful hypocrisy. He knew, though, as the funeral processions that streamed below his

in which he had revealed the susceptible bachelor, although they had excited some amusement, and one, that concerning the shy Bethlehem girls, even adverse criticism."

5. Kinglake's Preface, pp. six-xvii, breezily disclaims the intent to proffer any such "display of sound learning and religious knowledge."  
6. Hogarth, p. x, notes that while in successive editions Kinglake polished the style of *Eothen*, he "preserved unchanged the scenes and reflections

window carried off half the population of Cairo, that he was in the midst of the plague. His sparing his parents this news suits the heroic side of Kinglake's nature; he states merely:

Being now anxious for various reasons to turn homeward, I had intended to go from this place to Alexandria, and thence to embark for some European port; but I find that insuperable objections [probably the quarantine restrictions that again caught up with him off Cyprus] will prevent the execution of this plan: I must therefore turn my face again to the burning desert and retrace my steps to Syria. . . .<sup>7</sup>

Compared to the panic of other Europeans, who fled, locked themselves in their houses, or transacted business with metal tongs, Kinglake's admission of anxiety "for various reasons to turn homeward" is consummately cool.

In *Eothen* we discover, along with the past fact of Kinglake's danger, a sublime literary egotism of which the letter gives no hint. For all the nineteen days he was in Cairo, Kinglake concedes in a footnote (244), he carried at the back of his mind an apprehension of his peril. Believing, though (according to a curiously modern theory), that panic led directly to infection by the plague, he suppressed his fear under sheer "bravado." The sole European in the market place, he rides through the streets preceded by the shouts of his donkey boy: "O virgin, O old man, get out of the way on the left, — this Englishman comes, he comes, he comes!"<sup>8</sup>

The narrow alley which these shouts cleared for my passage made it possible, though difficult, to go on for a long way without touching a single person, and my endeavors to avoid such contact were a sort of game for me in my loneliness. If I got through a street without being touched, I won; if I was touched, I lost, — lost a deuce of a stake according to the theory of the Europeans; but that I deemed to be all nonsense, — I only lost that game, and would certainly win the next. (260-261)

Bravado served him well. He caught a cold, but escaped the plague.

Yet just as *Childe Harold* probably contributed more than *Don Juan* to the myth of Byron's dangerousness, I suspect that Kinglake's bravado raised more eyebrows than his gallantry. Defying quarantine measures, bearding the very plague, Kinglake's underlying theme is exultant selfhood — a theme out of tune with the Romantic disillusion, the rededication to public and domestic life, of the early Victorian period. In what became the tradition of the eccentric British traveler, Kinglake paints himself as the jubilant escapee of "the wearisome ways of society" and as the master of his own fate: "now, at last, I

was here in this African desert, and I myself, and no other, had charge of my life. I liked the office well . . ." (290). Given the social context into which it entered, *Eothen's* egotistical sublime was bound to excite some mild *ad hominem* criticism. Thus in his review of the book Eliot Warburton, perhaps betraying the confidence placed in him as the author's "dear ally," warns readers of a "bold originality, and daring indifference to the prejudices of society, which are seldom misinterpreted as indications of secluded habits."<sup>9</sup>

Even today, however, in an entirely different context, Kinglake's self-sufficiency has provoked censure. Edward Said, in *Orientalism*, correctly if biliously identifies Kinglake with that form of British individualism which so often, in the years of empire, reduced the Orient to a *mise-en-scène* for the traveler's fancy (193). The egotism of many of the best British literary travelers — from Kinglake to Charles Doughty to Robert Byron — is certainly linked to the notorious national condescension. More innocently, however, egotism, or at least egocentrism, is an essential feature of the travel book form itself, wherever it attempts to depict not geography but states of mind.<sup>9</sup> Kinglake is no swaggerer, and Said, like Warburton, misses in *Eothen* the droll detachment that continually undercuts both youthful pride and "pride of race," as in his account of his approach to Cairo: "There then before me were the gardens and the minarets of Egypt, and the mighty works of the Nile, and I (the eternal Ego that I am!) — I had lived to see, and I saw them" (243).

In his review, Eliot Warburton admires the impressionistic brilliance of *Eothen*, but sagely distances himself from its insouciant description of Jerusalem at "the 'height of the season,'" the arrival of the Easter pilgrims (187-205).<sup>10</sup> Adopting the pose of "a man about town" whose "club is the great Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where everybody meets everybody every day," Kinglake travesties the worldliness of the Holy Land: at the church door the commerce of pilgrim "money changers," seemed to be almost as brisk, and lively as if they had been *within* the Temple, while at Easter services one's hosts, the monks, urged one to "fight for us" in bloody battles between Latin and Greek Christians.<sup>11</sup> Actually, Kinglake's incredulity derives from Protestant prejudices that somewhat take him by surprise. In a footnote to the chapters in which he is obliged to mention the historical location, according to Latins and Greeks, of minute Biblical events, he disclaims either belief or disbelief in these traditions, knowing that his stricter readers will deny them "as utterly fabulous" (133-34). The disclaimer was not strong enough to prevent his reputation as a "Nothingarian."<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, just as *Eothen* generally helped to revamp the documentary travel account to

7. Letter to William Chapman Kinglake. A. W. Kinglake Papers.

8. Unsigned rev. of *Eothen*, *Quarterly Review*, 75 (Dec. 1844): 56. P. H. Newby, in his *Introd.* to *Eothen*, pp. viii-ix, encapsulates Warburton's own hypocrisy "in that sadly complacent and superficial book of his, *The Crescent and the Cross* (1845)," in which he prices the "comeliest" female slaves in the market: "Such bargains! he seems to be saying before recollecting his company, gathering his robes about him and raising an index finger to heaven: 'Nothing can palliate the crime of slavery!'"

9. See Kinglake's defense in his Preface of the literary traveler's "shameless and obtrusive" egotism.

10. Warburton (57), "with reluctance," and "by no means wish[ing] to espouse the cause of religious sentimentalism," protests against "a reckless disregard for popular opinion — we mean in the better sense of the phrase," and "the spirit in which [the author] has spoken of matters that should have claimed his forbearance, if unhappily for himself he could not grant them his respect."

11. Robert Curzon, much influenced by *Eothen*, in *Visits to Monasteries in the Levant* (196-202), describes a riot in the church of the Holy Sepulchre, resulting in the deaths of several pilgrims, on Good Friday of the year previous to Kinglake's visit.

12. Indeed, Kinglake merely preferred the English Church as "the most harmless going" (Tuckwell, 103-04).

a form of literary entertainment, so in particular its satiric approach to *Terra Santa* provided a model for subsequent British writers "mazed" at holy spectacles, from Kinglake's contemporaries Thackeray, Robert Curzon, and Lucie Duff Gordon, to Evelyn Waugh and Robert Byron in the 1930s, to Raban, Morris, and the adoptive Briton V. S. Naipaul today.

Kinglake's religiosity does seem sadly to have declined in the decade after his journey. He writes to his father that Lake Tiberias, "combining great natural beauty with the recollection of our Savior's habitual presence in it's [sic] neighborhood, was to me, the most interesting feature in the Holy Land." In *Eothen* he recalls his mental effort to conjure the associations proper to the sight - "But once more - Tiberias . . . the deep, low tones of the Savior's voice . . ." (150-51) - but it's no good; the smiling face of the lake bewitches him with memories of England.

At least once, Kinglake succumbed to the mysteries of faith, but, most of all his adventures, this surrender was calculated to shock the congregation of Taunton vale. While staying at a convent in Nazareth, he hints in the letter to his father, "I . . . embraced the sacred shrines with feelings of which few would suspect me." Particularly he embraced the shrine of the Virgin Mary, whose cult, from the Protestant point of view, was an especial mark of the sensual, unregenerate, foreign Church of Rome. In *Eothen* he describes in greater detail his emotion in the Sanctuary:

The mystic air was so burnt with the consuming flames of the altar, and so laden with incense, that my chest laboured strongly and heaved with luscious pain. There - there with beating heart the Virgin knelt, and listened: I stroved to grasp, and hold with my riveted eyes some one of the feigned Madonnas; but of all the heaven-lit faces imagined by men, there was none that would abide with me in this the very sanctuary. Impatient of vacancy, I grew madly strong against nature; and if by some awful spell, some impious rite, I could - Oh, most sweet religion, that bid me fear God, and be pious, and yet not cease from loving! Religion and gracious custom commanded that I fall down loyally, and kiss the rock that blessed Mary pressed. With a half consciousness - with the semblance of a thrilling hope that I was plunging deep, deep into my first knowledge of some most holy mystery, or of some new, rapturous and daring sin, I knelt, and bowed down my face till I nist the smooth rock with my lips. One moment - one moment - my heart, or some old pagan demon within me woke up, and fiercely bounded - my bosom was lifted, and swung - as though I had touched her warm robe. One moment - one more, and then - the fever had left me. I rose from my knees. I felt hopelessly sane. The merc world reappeared. The good old monk was there, dangling his key with listless patience; and as he guided me from the church, and talked of the refectory and the coming repast, I listened to his words with some attention and pleasure. (136-137)

Kinglake's fervent language brilliantly evokes the temptation to the innocent Englishman of the forbidden Latin Church,

with its mingled promise of mystical transport and voluptuous knowledge. Indeed, while the young Kinglake's "sin" lies in touching his lips to the rock, the *author's* sin occurs in the language of luscious labors and plunges deep, that mock-confessional tone which equals in audacity the satire of holy commerce in Jerusalem. Yet Kinglake never grows coarse, never loses control of the tone, which, at the episode's end, characteristically swerves to self-irony at the young Englishman's inevitable return to his senses.

Kinglake's trick of Romantic deflation, as neat in its way as Byron's, makes him "a bear that never hugs," a satirist who never insists on the tearing down of social norms. How many Victorian readers Kinglake's detachment convinced of his harmlessness and how many it persuaded of his ultimate skepticism would be hard to say; even the canny Murray misjudged the ultimate effect of that tone. Today, the subtle relation between the author Kinglake, his youthful self, and the Orient he describes continues to intrigue and perhaps mislead; I cannot follow Raban, for instance, when he describes Kinglake's narrator as a mere satirical portrait of the Englishman abroad: "a distinctly callow and nasty piece of work," coldly charming, morally indifferent, telling "a cad's tale" (vi-vii). If the portrait is detached and satirical it is also autobiographical and lyrical, Kinglake's artful homage to youthful fancy. This disparity of interpretation, however, underscores the interest of *Eothen* and of the travel book generally to us today;<sup>13</sup> it intrigues us by creating art and ambiguity without the use of pure invention. *Eothen* is a consummate example of the form.

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13. As evidence of a renewed popular and critical interest, Dover, Oxford, Penguin, and Century have recently reprinted series of travel classics,

while writers such as Raban, Morris, Naipaul, Bruce Chatwin, and Paul Theroux make renewed use of the form.

## Dorothea and Her Husbands: Some Autobiographical Sources for Speculation

Sara M. Putzell-Korab and Martine Watson Brownley

Several years ago, Richard Ellmann's "Some Biographical Speculations" initiated a lengthy controversy in *TLS* over George Eliot's sources for "Dorothea's Husbands" in *Middlemarch* (16 Feb. 1973: 165-8). After evaluating Mark Pattison, Herbert Spencer, Dr. Brabant, Jacob Bryant, Robert William Mackay, and George Eliot as a complex of biographical models for Dorothea Brooke's first husband, the ineffectual scholar Edward Casaubon, Ellmann then suggested Eliot's own husbands, George Henry Lewes and John Cross, as well as herself, as models for Dorothea's second husband, aesthete and later politician Will Ladislaw.

Ellmann's judicious consideration of these sources drew a number of replies. John Sparrow defended Mark Pattison as the model. Margaret Maison proffered Meredith Vyner in Lewes's novel, *Rose, Blanche, and Violet* (1848) as a literary source for Casaubon and suggested the unknown artist who proposed to Eliot in 1845 as a biographical source for Ladislaw (*TLS*, 16 Mar. 1973: 296). After Ellman responded to these and other letters (*TLS*, 30 Mar. 1973: 352-3), Leon Edel criticized his view of the relation of biography and art (*TLS*, 11 May 1973: 579). Phillip Collins then argued for Dr. Strong in *David Copperfield* as a source for Casaubon (*TLS*, 18 May, 1973: 556-7), while Gordon Haight entered the fray to dispute the resemblances between Pattison and Casaubon, pointing out that both Victorian life and literature offer numerous examples of marriages involving men like Pattison, who were old enough to have been their wives' fathers (*TLS*, 1 June 1973: 616-7). Although the debate simmered for a few more weeks, these have remained the major sources for speculation about Dorothea's husbands.

In focusing primarily on biographical sources, scholars have neglected a major contextual parameter of the source problem: the social conditions which made Dorothea's consecutive marriages of interest to Eliot and her readers. Different as these two marriages are, neither allows Dorothea to fulfill her ardent nature in the kind of epic national service which she had desired and which Eliot suggests that in another age she might have achieved. This failure, far more than any specific characteristics of the two husbands, lies at the crux of the novel and hence should be taken into account in any speculation about Eliot's sources for them.

By the time she wrote *Middlemarch*, Eliot had already displayed interest in the limitations on women's lives in her essays, poems, and novels (Zimmerman). Moreover, the *Prelude to Middlemarch* addresses the novel not to the readers of romance, but to those who "care much to know the history of man." It pointedly contrasts the historic life of St. Teresa of Avila to the seemingly unhistoric ones of women like Dorothea, who find "for themselves no epic life wherein there was a constant unfolding of action; perhaps only a life of mistakes, the offspring of a certain spiritual grandeur ill-matched with the meanness of opportunity" — a "meanness of opportunity" created by

a society in which such marriages as Dorothea's constituted an educated woman's sole vocation. If modern readers and critics have often separated the problem of Dorothea's potential for an epic life from the problem of her husbands, Eliot's contemporaries did not. Although critical of the degree to which Eliot fulfills her announced aims in the novel, Victorian reviewers recognized her intention of showing how society limits the scope of women's achievement by depicting Dorothea's marriages in the context of provincial life forty years earlier (see, for example, the *Spectator* 7 Dec. 1872: 1554-6; *Saturday Review* 7 Dec. 1872: 733-4; *Fortnightly Review* 19 Jan. 1873: 142-7; *Nation* 23 Jan. 1873: 60-2 and 30 Jan. 1873: 76-7.)

The problem that Eliot treats through Dorothea's marriages was a timely one; the decade prior to the publication of *Middlemarch* (1871-72) was full of earnest debate in popular journals, as well as serious literature, over the role of women in society and history. For nearly two years a significant part of this debate had centered around the life of an eighteenth-century woman noted, like Dorothea, for her intelligence, her passion, her potential, and her failure to achieve anything grand. The woman was Samuel Johnson's friend and confidante, Hester Lynch Salusbury Thrale, later Mrs. Piozzi. Thrale had drawn considerable journalistic attention — and fire — in her own lifetime, and she received almost as much half a century later, when in 1861, Alexander Heyward's two editions of her *Autobiography, Letters, and Literary Remains* appeared. *Fraser's Magazine*, for example, commented that "all the ancient interest" in her marriages and in her final quarrel and break with Dr. Johnson had been "successfully renewed" (63 [Mar. 1861]: 368).

Much as the Victorians admired Heyward's presentation of a complex woman through excerpts from her own writings, they were also seriously disturbed by the disparity between Thrale's capacities and her achievements. One reviewer remarks, for example, that in her "expressive eyes," which the newspapers celebrated, "sat a soul" capable of higher things than the world gave her to do" (*All the Year Round*, 5 [20 April 1861]: 85). That by the next century the world still offered no "higher things" to a woman with such a soul is, of course, a primary contention of *Middlemarch*. Eliot emphasizes this point in the *Finale*, commenting of her heroine: "Many who knew her, thought it a pity that so substantive and rare a creature should have been absorbed into the life of another, and be only known in a certain circle as a wife and mother. But no one stated exactly what else that was in her power she ought rather to have done." The fact that Dorothea's history addresses precisely the problem that disturbed Victorian readers of Thrale's life, together with the remarkable resemblances between the fictional heroine's and the real woman's marriages, suggests Thrale's life as yet another important source for *Middlemarch*.

That Eliot could have had Thrale in mind while writing about Dorothea is very likely, given her lifelong interest in Dr.



Johnson. As a schoolgirl, Eliot was so familiar with Johnson's dictionary and style that Haight remarks on her imitation of Johnsonian diction (11). George Henry Lewes described the lawyer Dempster in Eliot's early novella "Janet's Repentance" as "Dr. Johnson turned rascal, or rather dissolute" (*Letters* II: 351) – a judgment supported by the following etymological outburst: " 'Don't contradict me sir,' stormed Dempster. 'I say the word presbyterian is derived from John Presbyter, a miserable fanatic'" (Ch. 1). Shortly after the last book of *Middlemarch* appeared, Eliot was rereading Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, and in 1875 she was rereading *Rasselas*, which she quotes in *Middlemarch* (epigraph, Ch. 61). In 1873, when Alexander Main proposed writing a new life of Johnson, Lewes encouraged him by saying that such a work "would surely succeed" if it included "not only all the truly good bits of Boswell, but also those of Mrs. Thrale etc.," adding that "Mrs. Lewes and I both hope you will find this an agreeable and profitable bit of work" (*Letters* V: 396, 297). Eliot's references to Johnson in her essays show familiarity not only with his life but also with his long connection with Thrale. Eliot mentions his Latin verses to her ("Lord Brougham's Literature," *Leader* 7 July 1855) and quotes his advice to Hannah More from Thrale's *Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson* (1786). These *Anecdotes* also appear in *Middlemarch* when Eliot describes Mary Garth, one of the more exemplary characters, "in her usual corner, laughing over Mrs. Piozzi's recollections of Johnson" (Ch. 25).

Not only did Eliot's idea for *Middlemarch* originate at a time when Thrale's *Autobiography* and her experiences were being widely discussed, but the substance of Thrale's life as well as the questions raised by it are contained in a review that Eliot most surely read. Although Eliot did not begin work on *Middlemarch* until 1869, she wrote then that "various elements of the story have been soliciting my mind for years – asking for a complete embodiment" (*Letters* V: 16). That same year, she refers in her journal to what was not yet *Middlemarch* but "Miss Brooke" as "a subject which has been recorded among my possible themes ever since I began to write fiction" (*Letters* V: 124). The "subject" of the "Miss Brooke" section of the novel is explicitly raised in a review essay, "The Lives of Two Ladies," which appeared in the 23 April 1862 issue of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* or "Maga," as Eliot familiarly called it. The same issue contained a review by Lewes, which Eliot had discussed with him and which she mentions in a letter to Sara Hennell as appearing "in the April (this current) number of *Blackwood*" (*Letters* IV: 25). In "the Lives of Two Ladies," *Blackwood's* reviewer poses the problem that Eliot would subsequently address in her novel: the worth of a woman's "unhistoric" life.

Much as Eliot distinguishes Dorothea's life from St. Teresa's, *Blackwood's* reviewer distinguishes the lives of his "Two Ladies" – Mrs. Delany (Mary Granville) and Mrs. Thrale – from those of "women whose hard lot lies in the heat of the life-battle and whose hands are burdened with the heaviest labors and responsibilities proper to a man's career in the world." He presents Delany and Thrale as products of a "smaller and daintier hemisphere where – altogether independent of act and deed, possessors of a more ethereal reputation," they belong

among "those women who have outlived contemporary applause and received encoffment into the homage of the world" (401-2). Despite their lack of heroic achievements, they are, he continues, "as well known to us as if they had been country neighbours or fellow-townsfolk of our immediate sphere" (402). The question he raises is why such women had and continue to have such power to attract interest.

Other reviewers were similarly puzzled. As *Fraser's* reviewer had remarked only a year before, "But for Johnson, it is pretty clear that the memory of Mrs. Thrale Piozzi would require no defense, and . . . there would be little memory of her at all"; he thus found it "difficult at first to understand the enormity of the lady's crime [remarriage], or the commotion excited by it among her friends and in the polite world of the time" (March, 1861: 368). While admitting that "neither reasoning nor gallantry will . . . prevail over the world's prejudice against unequal marriages," the *Edinburgh Review* similarly asserted that "the question is, was the union such as to justify her real friends in their earnest opposition to it, and excuse their bitterness afterwards" (April 1861: 265). *All The Year Round* deplored the "public gossip" that surrounded her to the extent that Mr. Thrale "was hardly buried before the papers began to consider with the public how long she could remain a widow, and to appoint for her a round dozen of second husbands" (5 [20 April 1861]: 83). Such public gossip from a society that offers no real understanding or assistance for an intelligent young widow is, of course, a major feature of *Middlemarch*, and is exemplified most memorably by Mrs. Cadwallader's discussion of Dorothea's prospects:

It will be well for her to marry again as soon as it is proper, if one could get her among the right people . . . I see clearly a husband is the best thing to keep her in order. If we were not so poor I would invite Lord Triton. He will be marquis some day, and there is no denying that she would make a good marchioness. (Ch. 54)

If *Blackwood's* and other reviewers found the same disparity between capacity, celebrity, and achievement in Thrale's life as Eliot was to describe in Dorothea's, *Blackwood's* reviewer, at least, takes the opposite position from Eliot. He condemns such unearned reputations. Yet, while comparison of the characters of the twice-married ladies focuses on the emptiness of their celebrity, it is notable in that it contains many of the qualities with which Eliot was to endow her heroine:

The one [Delany] is the spotless princess of English domestic life, a woman whom we could scarcely believe to do wrong even if our eyes saw her do it; the other [Thrale] all imperfect and reprehensible, naturally to be found in all kinds of mistakes and mishaps, a universal woman of every country, possessing no such exemption. Neither of them have done anything worth preserving for half a century . . . yet there they shine, bright non-productives, possessors of a celebrity which neither genius nor labour has purchased. (423)

This brief description first juxtaposes what are essentially the two views held by the Middlemarchers about Dorothea: on one hand, the "substantive and rare" creature whom Sir James Chettam feels should have been a "queen"; on the other, the myopic, impulsive woman whose feelings "often take the aspect

of error," so that those who have not known her observe "that she could not have been 'a nice woman'" (Ch. 54, Finale). Secondly, the comparison raises the question of why the history of a "bright non-productress," or as Eliot says in her Prelude, a "foundress of nothing," should be remembered. Finally, the commentary constitutes an implicit challenge to explain the continuing effect of such women's lives, a challenge specifically directed elsewhere in the review to the nineteenth century.

In making the transition from Delany's history to Thrale's, *Blackwood's* reviewer asserts:

To think of any Mrs. Foker now, however brilliant or interesting, rousing the common mass of her country folk into excitement and vituperation, because she chose to bestow herself in the ripe maturity of her charm upon anybody whatsoever, had it been her butler, or his assistant greengrocer, is simply inconceivable. The time when such a thing was possible proves itself a time when public opinion was in the hands of a much limited circle, and when, in fact, the bulk of the people who read newspapers were still in society, or lingering on its outskirts, competent to, or ambitious of, taking a part in its decisions. (412)

What *Middlemarch* demonstrates is precisely the opposite, that such interest *could* still be aroused in the nineteenth century, both in a provincial town of the 1830's, where public opinion is in the hands of a not so limited circle, and in England of the 1870's, where readers speculated about and judged Dorothea's marriages. Eliot not only answers the review by showing that a charming widow's second marriage could still elicit considerable comment in the nineteenth century, she also confronts the larger issues of why such a woman's life deserves to be remembered. In the Finale to *Middlemarch*, she blames "an imperfect social state" for Dorothea's blunders, warns that "we insignificant people with our daily words and acts are preparing the lives of many Dorotheas," and affirms that "the growing good of the world is partly dependent on [their] unhistoric acts." *Middlemarch* thus pays tribute to the value of women's "unhistoric" marriages and lives, while reminding readers that they are shaped by and themselves shape such lives.

It is not only the major questions raised by the *Blackwood's* review which tie Dorothea's history to it. *Middlemarch* contains other more specific similarities to and reflections of "The Lives of Two Ladies." Although the most significant parallels are with Thrale's life, certain details from the review of Delany's autobiography also seem to have informed the novel. Eliot may well have had the second courtship of Mrs. Delany in mind when she composed Casaubon's letter of proposal to Dorothea. Casaubon's letter has been compared with that of Mark Pattison to his wife and to a mock proposal Eliot wrote from Professor Bücherwurm to herself in 1846 (*Letters* VIII: 13-14); however, the antique seriousness of Dr. Delany's proposal to Mary Granville must surely have amused the creator of Professor Bücherwurm. Addressing the young widow as "not a stranger to my present unhappy situation," Dr. Delany explains, "I feel a sad void in my breast, and am reduced to the necessity of wishing to fill it." Although *Blackwood's* reviewer found this proposal "gentle and tender," Dr. Delany's having been "reduced" to seeking a wife to fill his "void" reflects the same lack of romantic and sexual passion that Casaubon displays in his letter

to Dorothea and later during their brief marriage. Compare his equally sedate but far more tortuous expression of his need: "I am not, I trust, mistaken in the recognition of some deeper correspondence than that of date in the fact that a consciousness of need in my own life had arisen contemporaneously with the possibility of becoming acquainted with you" (Ch. 5). Both men's letters offer quiet marriages, away from the world. Delany hopes that "a retirement at this time of life, with a man whose turn of mind is not foreign from your own . . . a man who knows your worth, and honours you as much as he is capable of honouring anything that is mortal - might not be altogether abhorrent." Likewise, Casaubon temperately writes, "Our conversations have, I think, made sufficiently clear to you the tenor of my life and purposes: a tenor unsuited, I am aware, to the commoner order of minds. But I have discerned in you an elevation of thought and a capability of devotedness," that would make acceptance of the proposal "the highest of providential gifts."

Several minor details from *Blackwood's* review of Mrs. Delany's life further suggest that Eliot may have had it in mind while writing *Middlemarch*. Mrs. Delany's genteel feminine society is described as turning on "Kitty's letters" and being "as little abstract or philosophical as could be desired" - in other words, a society much like that which surrounds Dorothea's sister Celia, nicknamed Kitty, at Chettam Park. In addition, references are made to Mrs. Delany's acquaintance with "the Lady Harriets and Bettys of the Bulstrode nursery." Eliot gives the name Bulstrode to the hypocritical banker in *Middlemarch*; his wife is Harriet.

Even more suggestive similarities are apparent between Dorothea's and Thrale's lives. Both women had unsettled childhoods, and, partially in consequence, erratic educations. Uncles rather than fathers were the dominant male figures in their early lives. Dorothea's "at once narrow and promiscuous education" is provided by her "bachelor uncle," her guardian from the time that she was orphaned at the age of twelve. Because Thrale's often absent father was improvident and irresponsible, as a girl she led "a shifty life with her parents from one uncle's house to another," in the course of which "she seems to have picked up some learning and many accomplishments" (*Blackwood's* 414). Perhaps to compensate for unsatisfactory paternal relationships, both women were attracted to older men with scholarly leanings. Thrale's early attachment to an elderly tutor suggests that of Dorothea to Casaubon. Although suitors were paraded before her, she preferred Dr. Collier, her "preceptor in Latin, Logic, Rhetoric, &" (*Blackwood's* 414); the *Edinburgh Review* attributes her "proficiency in classics and philosophy" to her falling in "school-girl fashion . . . very much in love with her old tutor" (257; cf. *Fraser's*: 370). It is just such a tutor that Dorothea seeks, of course, in Casaubon, who she hopes will "illuminate principle with the widest knowledge" while she can become useful to him by learning "to read Latin and Greek aloud to [him], as Milton's daughters did to their father" (Chs. 2, 7). Later in life, Thrale found exactly this kind of relationship with Johnson, whose *Dictionary of the English Language* represents the monumental achievement of synthesis toward which Casaubon vainly aspired with his *Key to All Mythologies*. Johnson molded Thrale's mind, chal-

lenging her intellectually, and she in turn was happy to assist him in minor literary projects and to serve occasionally as his amanuensis.

The most significant resemblances between the two women emerge in connection with their marriages. Thrale's first marriage, like Dorothea's, is to a cold older man who does not appreciate her. So much does her married life contrast with "her former regnant position" among admiring friends and relatives that Thrale appears to have been crushed by "the cold, careless, and impartial criticism and custody of her new husband, who never pretended to be in love with her" (*Blackwood's* 415). Similarly, the admiration of Dorothea's family and of her suitor Sir James Chetam are replaced by the frigid courtesy of a husband who welcomes neither her tenderness nor her assistance. Even on their honeymoon, Casaubon repels Dorothea's ardor, indicating that "he regarded these manifestations [of feeling] as rather crude and startling" (Ch. 20).

Despite these marital rejections, each woman conscientiously performed her duties to her spouse. Each, for example, sets aside her own unhappiness in order to look after her husband's interests after he falls ill. When Mr. Thrale collapses in the midst of a financial crisis, Mrs. Thrale forgets "all her wrongs" and goes "forth impulsive and generous to the rescue of the brewhouse and her husband's credit" (*Blackwood's* 415-6). She functioned similarly several times in supporting his political career. After Casaubon's heart condition has been diagnosed, Dorothea masters her repulsion at his coldness and assists him with his work, reading to him, making extracts, and even preparing to promise that she will continue his work after his death. Thrale's and Dorothea's rewards for their dutifulness are insulting prohibitions against their remarrying. Mr. Thrale's will provides that his wife must forfeit £800 a year if she marries again, while Casaubon executes a codicil disinheriting Dorothea of £700 a year should she marry his cousin Will Ladislaw.

The second husbands of both women bear particularly striking resemblances to each other. Dorothea's Will Ladislaw and Thrale's Gabriel Piozzi are both foreign, and although their origins concern neither of their future wives, the women's friends object in various ways to the putative suitors' backgrounds. Thrale's circle was horrified that she would consider allying herself with an Italian Catholic. Although Ladislaw is half-Polish, he is known as that "Italian with white mice," thanks to the sharp-witted and sharp-tongued Mrs. Cadwallader. Taken together with other local gibes about Ladislaw's Jewish grandfather, Mrs. Cadwallader's phrase reflects the community's distaste for Ladislaw's foreignness.

Both suitors are young and handsome men connected with the arts; Ladislaw tries painting and other pursuits before turning to a career in politics, while Piozzi was an accomplished musician. Their artistic endeavors produce humorous misunderstandings at each couple's first meeting. In the year before Mr. Thrale died, Mrs. Thrale met Piozzi for the first time when he was engaged to sing at an evening party of Dr. Burney's, the unfortunate gathering which Fanny Burney described in her diary and which Virginia Woolf recreated so vividly in one of her essays (3: 132-46). Although she later invited Piozzi to teach her daughter, the irrepressible Thrale on this occasion

grew so bored during his singing that she stole behind him and "ludicrously began imitating him" (Heyward, Intro.: 150). Dorothea does not thus intentionally ridicule Ladislaw at their first meeting, but he believes that she does. As Casaubon is showing her the grounds of her future home, they come upon his cousin sketching. Dorothea coldly refuses to judge his work, because she can "never see the beauty" of those pictures her uncle has told her are praiseworthy. Ladislaw takes "her words for a covert judgment" and believes she is "laughing at both her uncle and himself" (Ch. 9).

Despite these unpropitious beginnings, romances develop that provide the passion and the emotional gratification so conspicuously absent in both women's first marriages. Although Dorothea and Will discuss art and ethics, their relationship is predominantly emotional rather than intellectual. Similarly, with Piozzi, Thrale could discuss music, but he lacked entirely the literary and intellectual interests which she had shared with her former friends in the Johnson circle. In both cases, the romances evolve during precisely that period in their lives when each woman consciously asserts that she does not need a husband. Aware that "all the world" expected her to remarry quickly, Thrale assured herself that with her income and her personal assets she need not do so. Her diary records her feeling that she "has a right to think herself any man's equal, and has nothing to seek but return of affection from whatever partner she pitches on. To marry for love would therefore be rational for one who wants no advancement of birth or fortune, and *till I am in love I will not marry, nor perhaps then*" (quoted in *Blackwood's* 418). Like Thrale, Dorothea requires "no advancement of birth or fortune"; unlike her, she does not even entertain the possibility of remarrying. Unconscious "that it was Love who had come to her briefly" in her meetings with Ladislaw, the widowed Dorothea announces to her friends and relatives "that no question can be more indifferent and impersonal to me than second marriage" (Ch. 55).

When love does come, each woman strives to renounce it, Dorothea before she is conscious of it as love, and Thrale after her family and friends have vehemently opposed it. Thrale explains heatedly in her journal that Piozzi is not, as others claim, "beneath" her, because, although his "birth" and "fortune" are inferior to hers, his "virtue" and "understanding" are above her own (*Blackwood's* 418). Nevertheless, she suffered through various painful renunciations and vacillations until her eldest daughter, warned by doctors that her mother's emotional state was endangering her life, finally sanctioned the marriage. Similarly, Dorothea defends Ladislaw to herself when Middlemarch looks down on him for his birth and his apparent fortune hunting (or social climbing). In contrast to Thrale, she cares little for others' opinions of the relationship, but Casaubon's insulting codicil leads her to renounce Ladislaw's friendship out of a delicate concern for his pride until, their mutual love discovered, she rejects all barriers.

Finally, the most important similarity between the choices the two women make in committing themselves to their second husbands lies in the freedom of self-determination that they signify. When Celia complains that, in deciding to remarry, Dorothea has forgotten all her "plans" when she "might have

gone on all [her] life doing what [she] liked," her sister replies: "On the contrary . . . I never could do anything that I liked. I have never carried out any plan yet." Agreeing that she "might have done something better, if [she] had been better," Dorothea for the first time in the novel asserts herself as a mature person: "this is what I am going to do. I have promised to marry Mr. Ladislaw; and I am going to marry him" (Ch. 85). Compare *Blackwood's* comment on Thrale's joyful record of her marriage to Piozzi: "She had got her will for the first time in her life" (421). In the second marriages, both women find the power to live their own lives more fully and freely than ever before.

It may not seem much for a woman to discover and to act on her own will. Certainly, to *Blackwood's* and other reviewers it was not. To Eliot it was. Whereas *Blackwood's* could dismiss the explosions of feeling that shook Mrs. Delany's and Mrs. Thrale's societies "as leaving only a little smoke and smell of gunpowder" and scarcely "disturb[ing] the common composure of nature for one day" (423), Eliot was keenly conscious that far larger issues depend on the feelings and subtle effects of such women. In her last novel, *Daniel Deronda* (1876), she would return to the question that *Blackwood's* asks and that *Middlemarch* in many ways answers: "Could there be a slenderer, more insignificant thread in human history than this

consciousness of a girl, busy with her small inferences of the way in which she could make her life pleasant?" Her reply? "They are the Yea or Nay of that good for which men are enduring and fighting. In these delicate vessels is borne onward through the ages the treasure of human affections" (Ch. 11). *Blackwood's* reviewer concludes his comments on the two "unhistoric" ladies' autobiographies by refusing to "venture to explain, but only to point out this female pre-eminence, which is in its way something more ethereal than actual fame" (423). Eliot closes *Middlemarch* by explaining that the apparently "ethereal" is fundamental reality, and, that, although the effect of a Dorothea is "incalculably diffusive," nevertheless, the fact that "things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs" (Finale).

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## *The Pilgrims of the Rhine:* The Failure of the German *Bildungsroman* in England

Edwin M. Eigner

Perhaps the most thoroughly neglected work of an influential writer who has been generally neglected is Bulwer-Lytton's *The Pilgrims of the Rhine* (1834).<sup>1</sup> As a work of art, its oblivion has been well-deserved, but this book of connected tales is nevertheless an important document in the history of English fiction. It provides one explanation for the tendency among some novelists of its period to slight the genre which it exemplifies.

Bulwer, like Dickens after him, enjoyed writing short fiction. He said of *The Pilgrims of the Rhine* that "various reasons have conspired to make this the work, above all others that I have written, which has given me the most delight (though not unmixed with melancholy) in producing, and in which my mind for the time has been most completely absorbed" ("Advertisement to the First Edition"). But though he continued to write occasional short stories throughout his career, this early work is his last attempt at a collection of unified and connected tales,<sup>2</sup> and, as with Dickens' *Master Humphrey's Clock*, it becomes something else even before its conclusion. Dickens turned from his project because the *Clock* was running down — its circulation had fallen drastically — and he felt the publication could be stimulated by expanding "The Old Curiosity Shop" from a tale into a novel. I shall try to show how Bulwer's work was also turned into a novel, but for artistic rather than

financial considerations.

At its beginning, *The Pilgrims of the Rhine* promises to be a kind of Canterbury pilgrimage. Gertrude Vane, her doctor, her father, and her fiancé make a voyage up the Rhine in an unsuccessful attempt to save Gertrude's life by curing her consumption. Along the way, naturally, they tell stories to one another, stories suitable to the countryside through which they are passing.

German tales were very popular during this period and had been so since the turn-of-the-century plagiarisms of M. G. Lewis. *Werther* had gone through at least seven full English translations and ten English imitations between 1779 and 1812. *Blackwood's* had published frequent tales "from the German" since its inception in 1817. More recently, in 1826, collections of German stories had been offered to the English by Holcroft, Roscoe, Gillies, and others. As one scholar comments, "The demand for German stories in England about this time seems to have been insatiable" (Stockley 250).

Carlyle's *German Romance* (1827) was not merely an attempt to cash in on the popularity of German literature. Rather it was a genuine piece of missionary work. Because he considered German fiction superior, more serious than the literature being produced at home, Carlyle wanted to introduce his countrymen to the best of the German short story writers — especially

1. *The Pilgrims of the Rhine* was completed in 1832, but its publication was delayed until suitable steel engravings could be made for the illustrations.

2. *The Student* (1835) is a collection of previously published essays and tales with no connecting matter and no attempt at unity.

Hoffmann, Tieck, and Richter. Bulwer, as Carlyle himself said, was the second most influential of the British apostles of Germany,<sup>3</sup> and he felt much of the same missionary zeal. Consequently, *The Pilgrims of the Rhine* tried to do with imitations of German short fiction what *German Romance* had attempted with its introductions and translations.

The imitations are not so much of specific authors, although there is some of this; rather Bulwer tries to present the various types of German tales. And his aim, as usual with him, was thoroughly systematic. E. G. Bell lists the phases of German literary activity illustrated in *The Pilgrims of the Rhine* as "the domestic, the philosophical, the chivalrous, the poetic, the daring, the weird, and the fabulous" (102). It is a good representative anthology.

But the book contains much more besides the stories. First of all, there are two separate sets of frames, one to introduce the bulk of the tales, and another, a parallel Rhine pilgrimage of a group of elves, intended "to bring before the reader a rapid phantasmagoria of the various beings that belong to German superstition so that the work may thus describe the outer and the inner world of the Rhine" (*Pilgrims* 95). Frames, of course, may be regarded as requirements for a work of connected tales, but these frames are extremely elaborate, far beyond the example even of Chaucer, and they include matter which oftentimes seems to lead us directly away from the stories. Bulwer was proud, for instance, that his book had been adopted as a popular guide in Germany.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, when the characters are not admiring the scenery, they often take more time out from their story-telling to discuss matters of philosophy, psychology, theology, education, and literary criticism. And then, as the book progresses, what we have regarded as its major frame element – the story of the death of Gertrude Vane and the grief of Albert Trevelyln – begins to eclipse the short stories until the tales are abandoned altogether nine full chapters before the ending.

Described so, *The Pilgrims of the Rhine* appears to be a hopeless jumble of confused intentions. But such a judgment is unfair to Bulwer, who always worked for strict artistic unity, although usually of a complicated sort. Indeed one of the literary discussions of *The Pilgrims* includes a criticism of German literature for its lack of "taste," i.e., "a quick tact into the harmony of composition, the art of making the whole consistent with its parts, *the concinnitas*." He prefaces this statement, however, with a caution which perhaps he meant also for judges of his own book: one must "not govern a Goethe, or even a Richter, by a Boileau" (132). And thirty years later he wrote that a novel should strive not for Aristotelian but for thematic unity, according to the model of *Wilhelm Meister* ("Caxtoniana"). Nor would it take a very ingenious critic to demonstrate that all the parts of *The Pilgrims of the Rhine* – the tales, the guide-book stuff, the discussions, even the fairies – are thematically relevant to a Goethean concern with the hero's *Bildung*.<sup>5</sup>

Bulwer must certainly have meant us to think not only of

Chaucer's pilgrimage but, given the Rhineland setting, also of Childe Harold's. His Byronism is thoroughly Victorianized (three years before the Queen's accession) – tenderly sentimental and, though earnestly troubled, essentially at peace with both nature and society. Bulwer's pilgrim, unlike Byron's, brings his fiancée along – indeed he travels for the sake of *her* health – and when she dies, he returns to England to become a great success as a writer, a politician, and a gentleman. These differences of attitude, however, are matters largely of closing one's Byron and opening one's Goethe,<sup>6</sup> and the basic form of *The Pilgrims of the Rhine* was to some extent justified by the example of both masters.

Nevertheless, when we apply Kenneth Burke's more universal criterion that "a work has form in so far as one part of it leads a reader to anticipate another part, to be gratified by the sequence" (124), it becomes clear that for all its possible thematic coherence, *The Pilgrims of the Rhine* fails a most fundamental test of unity. It promises to be a book of short stories, and it ends up as a novel. Throughout the final chapters, the reader turns pages looking for another tale which never appears. In Chapter XXVI Bulwer seems indeed on the verge of satisfying this expectation, but he forgoes the tale at the last because, as he explains, "my story will not brook the delay" (213). Therefore, what begins the pilgrimage as the vehicle turns into the passenger, and Bulwer found no way of preparing the reader for his radically changed procedure.

But why, in the first place, should Bulwer so have changed his book? The frame story is not particularly compelling. Why didn't he simply go on with his German tales? The answer lies, I believe, in a direction towards which we have already glanced – in Bulwer's lifelong preoccupation with the *Bildungsroman* and with his possession of two diverse traditions of this form, one English and the other German. Both traditions seemed in 1834 to justify the combination of material and the shift in procedure which characterize *The Pilgrims of the Rhine*. In fact, Bulwer was justified only by his German models, which, to complicate matters, he understood rather imperfectly.

The English tradition, more commonly called the novel of development, had its roots in the picaresque romance. It chronicles an originally faulty hero's education in the school of some personal ordeal. The best eighteenth-century examples of this type of fiction – *Tom Jones* and *Peregrine Pickle* – both contain famous interpolated episodes. But although Dickens used the story of the Man of the Hill and the "Memoirs of a Lady of Quality" to justify the interpolation of Miss Wade's narrative in *Little Dorrit*, most readers have regarded these episodes unfavorably as interruptions, causally unconnected to the experience which is forming the hero. According to English, common-sense theories of education, a man learns from his own mistakes, not from the mistakes of others. Thus episodes, as Bulwer ultimately realized, are out of place in the English novel of development, and they were eventually purged away. Even the eighteenth-century masters seem to have used episodes moderately when we compare their practice with that of Con-

not seen the Rhine until after he wrote the book.

3. See Escott. Even credits Bulwer with having established the English cult of Schiller, which virtually canonized the German poet. Susanne Howe claims Bulwer as one of the most dedicated and influential of Goethe's disciples in England.

4. "1849 Preface," *Pilgrims*, ix. He was especially proud because he had

not seen the Rhine until after he wrote the book.

5. Bell, for instance, explains how "each tale strips from the future some fancied glory." (102).

6. According to Susanne Howe, Bulwer's *Pelham* made this command "as distinctly as Sartor" (139).

tinental predecessors like La Sage and Aleman.

German Bildungsromane, however, are much more mystical than English novels of development. They contain relatively little personal ordeal and a high percentage of narrated side-stories or episodes, which serve, I believe, very much like the stations of a ceremonial initiation. The main business of Goethe's Wilhelm or Novalis' Heinrich is to move from one of these episodes to the next until he has been put through all the degrees of a mystical fraternity and has achieved his *Bildung*. Such a conception of the form is, of course, more than hospitable to the inclusion of tales. The tale or the episode is the *modus operandi* of the German Bildungsroman.

Bulwer, as I have said, was in possession of both traditions — Fielding was just as important to him as Goethe — but he seems not to have understood that there was a basic difference between them. He appears not to have understood, in fact, what Goethe was doing, for in a fragment of an unpublished and undated essay he writes, "Wilhelm Meister is not a Novel — for in a Novel construction of a plot and the conduct of narrative are elements so essential that without them a work can be more than a Novel, a Novel, no real artist can call it."<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, Bulwer appropriated *Wilhelm Meister's* mystical theme for *The Pilgrims of the Rhine*, and, since Goethe "interpolated" tales in his Bildungsroman, so did Bulwer in his. The difference is that in *The Pilgrims of the Rhine* the stories are only stories, and Albert Trevelyen's development in good English fashion, cannot begin until they are over with. The stories are thematically relevant, some of them are even charming, but they clearly impede the progress.

Because he could not understand the relevance of the stories in *Wilhelm Meister* to the process of Wilhelm's *Bildung*, Bulwer felt forced to make a choice between the two elements he had derived from Goethe, the technique and the theme. As was usual with him, the theme won out. Through all his long career, from *Pelham* (1828) to *Kenelm Chillingly* (1873), no matter what kind of fiction he began — society novel, crime story, historical romance, domestic narrative, or supernatural thriller — it always ended up as a Bildungsroman, with a disillusioned and aimless hero finding at last his true direction in life through

some sort of magical redemption. Usually, Bulwer was so ingenious at adapting these diverse forms to his single idea that no seam of changed intention or procedure is visible. Bulwer has many literary sins to answer for, but artistic unity was generally considered to be his great virtue. It is ironic, therefore, that he should have achieved his greatest failure in this direction by trying to fit a technique to the theme of the very work from which the technique was derived. But it is no wonder that he never repeated the experiment, and that he went back instead to Fielding's modes of development, marring them by throwing in a little German magic at the last critical moment.

The Bildungsroman, partly through Bulwer's influence, became the dominant mode of the Victorian novel at least until Trollope. But more and more it tried to express German ideas with unsuitable English tools. This is one of the reasons many readers find Dickens' sudden, mystical conversions unconvincing. In 1834 Bulwer was, at least by default, the major British novelist. He was certainly the most popular serious author of fiction, and attention was strongly focused on him. If he had succeeded with his experiment in *The Pilgrims of the Rhine*, then the history of English prose fiction might have been significantly altered.

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## No Wragg by the Ilissus? A Note on Matthew Arnold's "Wragg is in custody."

Charles Swann

"A shocking child murder has just been committed at Nottingham. A girl named Wragg left the workhouse there on Saturday morning with her young illegitimate child. The child was soon afterwards found dead on Mapperly Hills, having been strangled. Wragg is in custody."

Nothing but that; but, in juxtaposition with the absolute eulogies of Sir Charles Adterley and Mr. Roebuck, how eloquent, how suggestive are those few lines! "Our old Anglo-Saxon breed, the

best in the whole world!" — how much that is harsh and ill-favoured there is in this best! Wragg! If we are to talk of ideal perfection, of "the best in the whole world," has any one reflected what a touch of grossness in our race, what an original shortcoming in the more delicate spiritual perceptions, is shown by the natural growth amongst us of such hideous names, — Higginbottom, Stiggins, Bugg! In Ionia and Attica they were luckier in this respect than "the best race in the world;" by the Ilissus there was no Wragg, poor thing!

7. In the Lytton collection at Hertford, Hertfordshire. Printed with the kind permission of the Hertfordshire County Record Office and the owner of the collection, Lady Hermione Cobbold.

And "our unrivalled happiness;" – what an element of grimness, bareness, and hideousness mixed with it and blurs it; the workhouse, the dismal Mapperly Hills, – how dismal those who have seen them will remember; – the gloom, the smoke, the cold, the strangled illegitimate child! "I ask you whether, the world over or in past history, there is anything like it?" Perhaps not, one is inclined to answer; but at any rate, in that case, the world is very much to be pitied. And the final touch, – short, bleak, and inhuman; *Wrugg is in custody*. The sex lost in the confusion of our unrivalled happiness; or (shall I say?) the superfluous Christian name lopped off by the straightforward vigour of our old Anglo-Saxon breed! . . . Mr. Roebuck will have a poor opinion of an adversary who replies to his defiant songs of triumph only by murmuring under his breath, *Wrugg is in custody*, but in no other way will these songs of triumph be induced gradually to moderate themselves, to get rid of what in them is excessive and offensive, and to fall into a softer and truer key.<sup>1</sup>

This, as readers will hardly need to be told, is a well-known and important passage from "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" – important if only because it clinches the movement of Arnold's argument from literary to cultural (not, of course, political), criticism. It remains open, however, whether it should not be a notorious rather than a famous passage. Is Arnold here really attempting to see the object as in itself it really is? Is Arnold's argument adequate? Is this the free play of intelligence – or the tactics of the higher journalism?

It is understandable that the inanely smug declamations of Adderley and Roebuck should get an irritated rebuke. It is regrettable that it should take this form both because it is inadequate and because it is a tactic which can recoil on the critic. I don't mean to ally myself with Fitzjames Stephen in *The Saturday Review* (December 3rd, 1864, 684):

Criticism ought to show that Wrugg should have been castrated (say) Fairfax; and that instead of saying "Wrugg is in custody," the brutal journalist should have said, "And so, on that cold November night, the door of Nottingham goal was shut behind our sinful sister." . . . To the general public this way of putting it may not seem to make much difference, but Mr. Arnold thinks otherwise. . . . We do not envy the higher criticism if it has to go about "murmuring *Wrugg is in custody*," till all after-dinner speeches rise to the level of ideal beauty.

Even a brutal journalist might have resisted alliteration and reported that Elizabeth Wrugg was imprisoned in September, and even I can recognize that Arnold would not have cared for the style that Stephen pretends to think that Arnold would have felt was appropriate for humane reporting. Nevertheless, Stephen however crudely and roughly makes a valid point. It is an odd moment to turn to assertive aestheticism. Whether the ugliness of English names is really central to any point at issue is rather more than doubtful. (Is it even in good taste? It reads as though it was designed to raise either a smile or a curl of the lip from the original audience). While we must deplore the desexing, dehumanizing brutality of the report, it must be questioned whether there was (except insofar as euphony is relevant) "no Wrugg beside the Ilissus." Was there no Medea

(say), no Niobe?

The entry on the Ilissus in Lemprière is brief: "A small river of Attica, falling into the sea, near the Piraeus. There was a temple on its banks sacred to the Muses" – and we are referred only to *Stat.Theb.* 4.V.52. Presumably the mention of this insignificant river is intended to evoke a whole set of values – "the grandeur that was Greece" perhaps. But Arnold seems to have forgotten that Clio is not the most unimportant of the muses. The use of an imaginary past to criticize the self-congratulatory rhetoric of the present is either unfortunate or unscrupulous. We can agree that the climate of Greece is more pleasant than that of the Midlands. And who would argue that factory smoke does not disfigure the Midland landscape? One admits that ancient Greece lacked industrialism. But further one can hardly go on accepting Arnold's implied definition here of the superiority of the Greek way of life. Arnold had read the *Republic* – where Socrates (speaking not so far from the banks of the Ilissus) is quite clear:

The offspring of the good, I suppose, they will take to the pen or creche, to certain nurses who live apart in a quarter of the city, but the offspring of the inferior, and any of the other sort who are born defective, they will properly dispose of in secret, so that no one will know what has become of them. (V.460.e. Jowett's translation)

And Aristotle may be less ruthless but is equally clear in the *Politics*:

With regard to the choice between abandoning an infant or rearing it let it be lawful that no cripple child be reared. But since the ordinance of custom forbids the exposure of infants merely in order to reduce numbers, there must be a limit to the production of children. If contrary to these arrangements a copulation takes place and a child is conceived, abortion should be procured before the embryo has acquired life and sensation. . . . (Book VII, chapter 16. J. A. Sinclair's translation)

It can hardly be objected that Plato and Socrates are only referring to their Utopias. W.E.H. Lecky's learning may have been wide rather than deep – but on this issue at least he is reliable enough and writing at much the same time as Arnold; he gives an account of what was generally known:

If we pass to the next stage of human life, that of the new-born infant, we find ourselves in presence of that practice of infanticide which was one of the deepest stains of the ancient civilization . . . Infanticide, as is well known, was almost universally admitted among the Greeks, being sanctioned, and in some cases enjoined, upon what we should now call "the greatest happiness principle," by the ideal legislations of Plato and Aristotle, and by the actual legislations of Lycurgus and Solon. Regarding the community as a whole, they clearly saw that it is in the highest degree for the interests of society that the increase of population should be very jealously restricted, and that the State should be as far as possible free from helpless and unproductive members; and they therefore concluded that the painless destruction of infant life, and especially of those infants who were so deformed or diseased that their lives, if prolonged, would probably have been a burden to themselves,

1. R.H. Super (ed.), *Lectures and Essays in Criticism*, Vol. III of *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*, (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1962): 273-4. All subsequent references will be placed parenthetically

in the text. As with every other reader of Arnold I owe a considerable debt of gratitude to Super's exemplary work.

was on the whole a benefit. The very sensual tone of Greek life rendered the modern notion of prolonged continence wholly alien to their thoughts, and the extremely low social and intellectual condition of Greek mothers, who exercised no appreciable influence over the habits of thought of the nation should also, I think, be taken into account, for it has always been observed that mothers are much more distinguished than fathers for their affection for infants that have not yet manifested the first dawning of reason. (*History of European Morals* London: 1869. 2 vols, vol. 2: 26, 27-8).

Lecky, perhaps, overplays the ancient Greeks as modern utilitarians and underplays the private family element (the fact that, when a child was born, it was a matter for the *father's* decision whether it was to be reared or exposed). But Arnold is hardly suggesting that it is the absence of paternal authority that matters in the case of Elizabeth Wragg any more than he is suggesting that exposure is preferable to strangulation or that she did the right thing from the Greek point of view. What can be seen is that Elizabeth Wragg and her child have been converted into a rhetorical stick to beat Roebuck's after dinner speech – while at the same time a fictive, unhistorical aestheticized ancient Greece is being deployed as an ideal (or, rather, idealized) standard. This may be no more than the selective amnesia that so often afflicts nineteenth-century liberals when appealing to ancient Greece – and especially Athens. The strange case of the absent slave when democracy was discussed is a notorious

example of that amnesia. The problem remains, however, whether that amnesia is to be attributed to Arnold or whether he hopes to induce it in his spell-bound audience.

It is indeed "a very subtle and indirect action which" Arnold is "thus prescribing for criticism." Whether it is the "only" or at all the "proper work of criticism" seems something that should be radically questioned. It is open to Roebuck and Addersley to murmur or bawl back at Arnold that we at least condemn infanticide, to suggest that Arnold is hardly arguing – is he? – that the poor woman should have been set free or recommending the totalitarianism of the *Republic* where the unwanted child becomes mysteriously an unperson. Arnold of course still has his response to much of such an attack but it still remains true that the appeal to Greece is either immoral, irresponsible or ignorant. As Arnold himself says of Colenso

It is unfortunately possible for a man in pursuit of truth to write a book which rests on a false conception. Even the practical consequences of a book are to genuine criticism no recommendation of it, if the book is, in the highest sense blundering. (278)

Exactly. I fear we have a choice either to accuse Arnold of *suppressio veri* or, at best, to quote his beloved Joubert against him: "Ignorance, which in matters of morals extenuates the crime, is itself, in intellectual matters, a crime of the first order" (277).

University of Keele

## Hardy's "Mute Opinion": An Interpretation

Laurence Perrine

### MUTE OPINION

I  
I traversed a dominion  
Whose spokesman spake out strong  
Their purpose and opinion  
Through pulpit, press, and song,  
I almost failed to note there  
A large-eyed few, and dumb,  
Who thought not as those thought there  
That stirred the heat and hum.

II  
When, as a Shade, beholding  
That land in lifetime trode,  
To learn if its unfolding  
Fulfilled its clamoured code,  
I saw, in web unbroken,  
Its history outwrought  
Not as the loud had spoken,  
But as the mute had thought.

from *The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Samuel Hynes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982) 1: 162.

In Thomas Hardy's "Mute Opinion," first published in 1901, the year of Queen Victoria's death, the speaker considers two

bodies of opinion existent in his lifetime: the "clamoured" popular opinion promulgated "strong" and "loud" through "pulpit, press, and song" and the unspoken minority opinion of a "large-eyed few, and dumb." In the poem's second stanza, the speaker reports from the realm of the dead that history has confirmed the truth of the minority opinion.

Nowhere in the poem does Hardy identify either opinion or even hint at their identity. Does the poem say no more, then, than that, at any given time, the prevailing popular opinion is likely to prove wrong? Few readers, I suspect, will be satisfied with such a solution. Hardy must have had something more definite in mind. But what?

Before I propose an answer, let me suggest three major conditions which I think a viable solution must fulfill. First, the issue must be one sufficiently general or even "obvious" (at least to an English reader in 1901) that Hardy might think perceptive readers could guess his meaning. Second, the issue must be one on which Hardy himself is in the minority and about which he feels deeply. Third, the proposed solution must provide the closest possible fit with the details and language of the poem itself and with the poem's immediate context in the book in which it was published (*Poems of Past and Present*).

With these conditions in mind, let me propose that the



"clamoured code" expressed through "pulpit, press, and song" was the optimistic Victorian belief that life is good and is steadily getting better. Few characteristics are more distinctive of the period (ending nominally in 1901 but more pertinently in 1914) than its prevailing belief in the reality of social progress. The Victorians were confident that the conditions and quality of life in nineteenth-century England were not only superior to what they had been in the past, but that human society (especially in England) was steadily, even rapidly, advancing toward some ideal perfection in the future. In 1848 Macaulay, in the third paragraph of his famous *History of England*, wrote: "The history of our country during the last hundred and sixty years is eminently the history of physical, of moral, and of intellectual improvement." Tennyson, in his earlier poetry, celebrated the creed of progress in "Locksley Hall" (1842), whose protagonist has a vision of the future in which "battle-flags" are "furled / In the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World," and when "the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe, / And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapped in universal law." He returns to the subject in *In Memoriam* (1850), wherein the progress of man in this life and the continued existence of the soul in a future life are the two beliefs he finds necessary to justify life and death for him after the death of Arthur Hallam. Herbert Spencer, in his own time regarded as one of the period's most important philosophers, argued from an evolutionary premise that progress is inevitable, whether man wills it or not. "The ultimate development of the ideal man," Spencer wrote in a chapter entitled "The Evanescence of Evil" in *Social Statics* (1851), "is logically certain — as certain as any conclusion in which we place the most implicit faith; for instance, that all men will die. . . . Progress, therefore, is not an accident but a necessity. . . . As surely as there is any efficacy in educational culture, . . . so surely must the things we call evil and immorality disappear; so surely must man become perfect."

In his excellent history *The Idea of Progress* (1920), J. B. Bury shows that the idea of progress is relatively recent in the history of human thought. Unknown to the ancient and medieval worlds, prepared for but not conceived during the Renaissance, it did not emerge as a clearly defined concept until the eighteenth century. In the eighteenth century the property of advanced thinkers only, it became common property in the nineteenth century. Fostered by the growth in scientific knowledge, it was seemingly confirmed by the enormous expansion of productive power during the Industrial Revolution, and, in England, was given further impetus by the extensions of democracy and the triumph of the Middle Class (made manifest in the Reform Bills of 1832 and 1867), and by the extensions of British power which, by the end of the century, secured to Queen Victoria, in Kipling's words, "Dominion over palm and pine" ("Recessional," 1897) — an empire in which the British beneficently ruled over "lesser breeds without the Law" for their own good. In sum, the belief in Progress blossomed in the Victorian period, and did not perceptibly begin to wilt until the anguish of the First World War. It was a prevailing belief in 1901, when Hardy published "Mute Opinion."

In the atmosphere created by this optimistic social belief, it was inevitable that Hardy's writings, in both prose and verse,

should be condemned as "pessimistic." This charge against his writings was made so frequently both by critics and the public that Hardy grew increasingly sensitive to it, and in the "Apology" prefixed to *Later Lyrics and Earlier* (1922) he defended his poems somewhat testily: "What is today, in allusions to the present author's pages, alleged to be 'pessimism' is, in truth, only . . . the exploration of reality, and is the first step towards the soul's betterment, and the body's also." He quoted from his poem "In Tenebris II" (in the same volume as "Mute Opinion"): "If way to the Better there be, it exacts a full look at the Worst," arguing that his poems, by exploring and frankly recognizing reality, prepared a way to "the best consummation possible: briefly, evolutionary meliorism." But, if "pessimism" be defined as a belief that the sum total of human misery in this life far outweighs that of human happiness, and that such a condition is likely to change little in the foreseeable future, Hardy's poetry is quite properly labeled pessimistic. And, if Hardy, late in life (most of the somewhat meager evidence is found in poems published subsequent to 1901), came to believe in the possibility of human betterment over time, it was to belief in a very slow process indeed, having little relation to the optimistic creed trumpeted in Victorian sermons, journals, and poems. His attitude toward *this* creed is pungently expressed in his epigram "Christmas 1924":

"Peace upon earth!" was said, We sing it.  
And pay a million priests to bring it.  
After two thousand years of mass  
We've got as far a poison-gas.

"Mute Opinion" is divided into two stanzas. In the first the speaker reports on the division of opinion existing during his lifetime between a vocal majority and a silent minority. In the second, at some indefinite time after his death, he reports that the history of his country "outwrought" confirms that the minority opinion was correct. In a sense Hardy, in the second stanza, like the speaker in "Locksley Hall," has "a vision of the future," though with an altogether different content. Unlike the speaker in "Locksley Hall," however, the speaker in "Mute Opinion" is not a living person dreaming of the future but a dead person looking back on the past. Hardy thus gives him the authority of confirmed knowledge as opposed to unconfirmed speculation. Moreover, there can be little doubt that the speaker in "Mute Opinion" speaks *for* Hardy (though he cannot be equated with Hardy since the speaker is dead while the poet is alive).

In line 1 of the poem the word "dominion" helps to identify England as the "land" which the speaker "trode" during his lifetime but (by echoing Genesis 1:26-28 and Kipling's "Recessional," published four years earlier) connotatively enlarges it in scope to Great Britain, which held dominion over land and sea. In lines 2-4 the attribution of both "purpose and opinion" to the "spokesmen" is relevant, for while it was their *opinion* that life was getting better and better, it was also their *purpose* to enlist man's active participation in the process. Though for a few of them (notably Spencer) progress was automatic, proceeding inevitably toward perfection regardless of human effort, most believed that progress, though undeniably real, was carried out through human agency. Social improvement was

not possible without moral improvement. Thus Tennyson's protagonist in "Locksley Hall" urges us onward: "Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range"; and in *In Memoriam*, section 118, the poet exhorts us:

Arise and fly  
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;  
Move onward, working out the beast,  
And let the ape and tiger die.

Three earlier commentators on "Mute Opinion," if I read them right, all interpret the poem as concerned with the desirable triumph of an initially unwelcome, unpopular, vilified scientific truth or social cause. Ruth A. Firor, for instance, refers to the minority opinion holders as the "mutely great," and J. O. Bailey relates the poem to the triumph of Darwin's opinions on evolution and John Stuart Mill's on women's suffrage.<sup>1</sup> Such an interpretation has, *prima facie*, two counts against it. First, the champions of revolutionary scientific truths or social causes can rarely, if ever, be accurately described as "mute." (Thomas Huxley, "Darwin's bulldog," barked loudly at Bishop Wilberforce's heels, and the suffragettes were often strident in making their voices heard.) Second, such an interpretation – celebrating the triumph of truth over error, or of liberation over repression – would call for an exultant tone which is not found in the poem. One may sense at the poem's conclusion, perhaps, some satisfaction on the part of the speaker in being proved right, but it is a sad satisfaction; it is not accompanied by the blowing of trumpets or the ringing of bells. The poem is better read as concerning the exposure of illusion rather than the triumph of truth. The "spokesmen" of the first stanza are engaged, not in denouncing a "heretical" belief that proves to be true, but in proclaiming an established belief that proves to be unfounded.

In line 6 of the poem, if the persons referred to were intended to represent the "mutely great" (or specifically Darwin and Mill), one might expect the qualifying adjective to be "keen-eyed" or "sharp-eyed." The adjective "large-eyed," especially when coupled with "dumb" and "mute," projects, for this reader at least, an image of silent suffering rather than of far-seeing acuity, particularly since the adjectives "dumb" and "mute" are the only ones among the many which Hardy might have chosen (e.g., *silent, unspoken, unvoiced, unstated, unexpressed, unuttered, quiet, still*) which often mean incapacity for speech, not just absence of it.

Stanza 2 provides additional reason for thinking that the "loud" opinion discredited by the speaker is the belief in progress, for, to determine the truth or untruth of the belief, the

speaker must see the history of his land "outwrought" and "in web unbroken"; that is, *entire*; presumably, from the first appearance of man within its borders in pre-historic times to an indeterminate time in the future. For the testing of anything less than the belief in progress, so long a span would hardly be needed, nor would it be necessary that the web be "unbroken." To confirm whether Darwin's ideas had been rejected or accepted, or whether the cause of women's suffrage had succeeded, only two cross-sections of time would be necessary – one taken, say, in the 1860's and one some seventy years later (British women did not attain full suffrage until 1928, the year of Hardy's death). But for Hardy progress could not have been measured by counting women's votes or the number of textbooks accepting Darwin's theories; it could be measured only by measuring the depth and extent of human misery – a difficult task, especially when the sufferers are "mute." But, supposing it could be done by some instrumentality available after death, would there be found less misery in the world (in proportion to the population) in 1930 than in 1830? or 1530? or 430? Hardy thought not.

Final support for the thesis that "Mute Opinion" reaches a cheerless conclusion may be found in the poems with which it is placed in Hardy's book. (Hardy always took care in arranging his poems.) The three poems immediately preceding "Mute Opinion" are "God-Forgotten" – in which, in a dream, the speaker complains to God about the "pangs," the "strife, and silent suffering [italics mine]" of men on earth, only to discover that God has forgotten ever having created this "tiny sphere"; "The Bedridden Peasant" – in which the speaker, also God-forgotten, speaks of his "helpless bondage" to "Time and Chance"; and "By the Earth's Corpse" – in which, all life having now ceased on earth, God repents having ever created it and grieves for "the wrongs endured" by "Earth's poor patient kind." The poem immediately following "Mute Opinion" is "To an Unborn Pauper Child" – in which the poet advises the child not to be born, for "The Doomsters heap / Travails and teens around us here."

Like his younger contemporary, A. E. Housman, Hardy believed that "the world has still / Much good, but much less good than ill." "Mute Opinion" is Hardy's rejoinder to the optimistic Victorian assertion that "all is well" (*In Memoriam*, 127), to the belief that life is steadily getting better and better, and to the criticisms against his own work that it painted the world in too dark colors.

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1. Ruth A. Firor, in *Folkways in Thomas Hardy* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1931): 79, writes: "The poet is permitted in a vision to see the past, not as voiced by the historians, the orators, the prophets, but as the mutely great had thought, and he is awed indeed by the contrast in the two patterns."

J. O. Bailey, in *The Poetry of Thomas Hardy: A Handbook and Commentary* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1970): 151, states in part: "The poem seems to represent Hardy in his sixties looking back upon the world he knew in his twenties. In the 1860's, 'spokesmen' for popular opinion 'spoke out strong' against Darwin's theory of evolution and against J. S. Mill's *The Subjection of Women*, while Darwin, continuing research in his laboratory, remained 'mute' in the controversy. By 1901, the theory

of evolution was generally accepted, and ultimate victory for the suffragettes . . . was a foregone conclusion." – Why Hardy in his sixties should look back upon the world he knew in his twenties or how he could expect the reader to know that this was what he was doing or why in 1901 he should resort to knowledge obtained after death to prove the outcome of battles already won are matters left unexplained.

F. B. Pinion in *A Commentary on the Poems of Thomas Hardy* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1977): 45, writes that "Hardy seems to agree with Thomas Hobbes, who wrote, 'heresy signifies no more than private opinion' (*Leviathan*). It is always so: 'It is the customary fate of new truths to begin as heresies and to end as superstitions,' wrote T. H. Huxley."

## The Waif at the Window: Emily Brontë's Feminine *Bildungsroman*

Annette R. Federico

In their study of nineteenth-century women writers, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue persuasively that because the story of *Wuthering Heights* is built around a central fall—generally understood to be Catherine and Heathcliff's anti-Miltonic fall from hell to heaven—"a description of the novel as in part a *Bildungsroman* about a girl's passage from 'innocence' to 'experience' (leaving aside the precise meaning of these terms) would probably be widely accepted" (253-54).

This is an interesting interpretation, and brilliantly demonstrated. But like other views of *Wuthering Heights* as a feminine *Bildungsroman*, the focus of development is Catherine, and by association her male doppelgänger Heathcliff.<sup>1</sup> The emphasis upon the first generation of the Heights is, of course, important, and certainly Catherine and Heathcliff suffer their own peculiar rites of passage in their search for identity and wholeness. And yet it is curious that the tortured first generation of *Wuthering Heights* fail to develop a mature understanding of themselves and others—in fact, Catherine and Heathcliff actually shrink from full participation in adult life, regressing into the adolescent preoccupation with self and the desperate need to feel loved. Catherine, especially, is not so much struggling to grow up as she is struggling not to: it is significant that it is the "waif" not the woman who appears in Lockwood's terrifying dream.

So the critical view of Catherine and Heathcliff as *Bildungsroman* protagonists neglects these characters' inability to interpret experience realistically and face the limitations of adulthood. In fact, in terms of the first generation, *Wuthering Heights* is not a *Bildungsroman* at all, but an *Entwicklungsroman*, a novel of mere physical passage without psychological development. Catherine and her male soul-mate remain stubbornly adolescent from beginning to end; granted, they are triumphant, rebellious, passionate characters, and Emily Brontë is obviously celebrating the untamed and undisciplined spirit of adolescent love. But in view of this first generation, *Wuthering Heights* is less a novel of development than a novel of arrested childhood. It is actually with Catherine's death in childbirth that Brontë's *Bildungsroman* begins. In fact, the

second half of *Wuthering Heights* and the concern with young Cathy is a fascinating variation of the prototypic novel of female education in the nineteenth century,<sup>2</sup> a dramatization of the struggle to relinquish childhood for the duties of womanhood in the most traditional, romantic capacity: marriage with man of one's choice. Cathy emerges from a relatively happy childhood and a lonely adolescence as an assertive, sharing, and contented adult who is prepared to accept the responsibilities and limitations of marriage.

Cathy's marriage to Hareton is in a sense a revision of her mother's unsuccessful marriage to Edgar Linton, and a significant role reversal of the traditional feminine *Bildungsroman* in which a woman can achieve intellectual and social advancement only through marriage.<sup>3</sup> For example, the elder Catherine looks at marriage as a means of achieving outward sophistication, as well as an escape from mental and emotional stagnation: Edgar is the man who will define her, who will shape her identity and give her status—"He will be rich, and I shall be the greatest woman of the neighborhood, and I shall be proud to have such a husband," she tells Nelly Dean (70). Catherine's selfish and short-sighted attitude toward marriage is not only indicative of her childish sensibilities, but underscores the traditional theme of the feminine *Bildungsroman*—that is, the woman must seek knowledge by attaching herself to a knowledgeable male. Brontë varies this theme in her description of young Cathy's courtship with Hareton; instead of marrying to be advanced, Brontë's true female *Bildungsroman* protagonist marries in order to advance the intellectual and moral status of the male. In young Cathy, Brontë gives us a woman whose acquired humility, patience, and affection yield what promises to be a satisfying marriage and a mutual broadening of experience. More than her mother, Cathy represents a successful passage through the difficult rites of adolescence: the search for self, and the sharing of self with others.

If one looks closely at the novel, it becomes clear that Cathy and Hareton are not merely watered down versions of Catherine and Heathcliff, as Richard Chase suggests (468). Although the strange, transcendental love of the first generation of the Heights is more stirring, more piquant than the settled affections

1. See especially Goodman. Pratt also discusses Catherine and Heathcliff's double *Bildungsroman* with emphasis upon the "green-world lover" archetype.  
2. Baruch makes this distinction between the male and female novel of development: "But if the central theme of the *Bildungsroman* is the education of the hero who is brought to a high level of consciousness through a series of experiences that lead to his development, then many of the great novels that deal with women treat similar themes. From *Emma* to *Jane Eyre* to *Madame Bovary* to *Middlemarch* to *Anna Karenina* to *The Portrait of a Lady* to *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and beyond, the novel presents a search for self, an education of mind and feelings. But unlike the male *Bildungsroman*, the feminine *bildungs* take place in or on the periphery of marriage. That is its most striking characteristic." Baruch also emphasizes the fact that "the heroine longs for a marriage that will increase her knowledge, often in some wide experiential sense," or, at

least, in a social and economic sense. Catherine Earnshaw is typical.  
3. Annis Pratt distinguishes between "the novel of development" and "the novel of marriage" as separate archetypes, but admits that in the nineteenth century the two forms frequently overlap: "The supreme goal of these novels of development is to groom the young hero for marriage, and whereas younger girls are given tests in submission in a general way, their older sisters are provided with models of behavior appropriate for success in the marriage market" (14). Likewise, Spacks writes that "Marriage, obviously, is the 'normal' conclusion, the orthodox way for a girl to declare herself an adult" (114). Spacks' chapter on "The Adolescent as Heroine" includes an important discussion of *Wuthering Heights*, and devotes more attention to young Cathy's development than some other studies. Spacks describes Catherine Earnshaw as an "anti-heroine, in every respect opposed to her century's ideal prototype of the adolescent woman" (134).

of Cathy and Hareton, it is only because their type of frenzied passion is so rare – and so typical of adolescence. It is well to ask why Catherine marries Edgar at all, considering her feelings for Heathcliff; her naive belief that she can have both Edgar – who represents culture and security – and Heathcliff, who is the embodiment of sexual and natural energy, proves her complete inability to understand reality outside of her own narrow perspective. When Nelly Dean suggests that by marrying Edgar, Catherine will lose Heathcliff, she is incredulous: "Oh, that's not what I intend – that's not what I mean! I shouldn't be Mrs. Linton were such a price demanded! He'll be as much to me as he has been all his lifetime. Edgar must shake off his antipathy and tolerate him, at least. He will when he learns my true feelings. . . ." (73). It is obvious that Catherine is entering marriage with the stubborn adolescent sensibility that she can have her cake and eat it, too. Of course, this has been her spoiled way of looking at life all along; many times in the novel Brontë portrays Catherine as a selfish, demanding, manipulative child. "I demand it!" is, in fact, Catherine's favorite expression, and completely consistent with the adolescent determination to have everything.

By contrast, young Cathy gradually develops a sensitivity towards the feelings and needs of others. This is most explicit in her devotion to her father, Edgar Linton – and a complete contrast to Catherine's "naughty delight" in provoking Mr. Earnshaw. The young Cathy tells Nelly, "I fret about nothing on earth except papa's illness. . . . And I'll never – never – oh, never, while I have my senses, do anything to vex him. I love him better than myself. . . ." (187). Cathy's comparatively happy childhood has certainly influenced her idealized view of Edgar Linton, and she is naturally submissive to patriarchal authority. But Cathy is not without spirit; she exhibits the typical adolescent preoccupation with love intrigues, and shares her mother's rebelliousness and scorn for those who interfere with her plans. The important difference between the two generations is in the nature of the rebellion; Catherine's disregard for others – all others, except her other-self, Heathcliff – has a cruel, manipulative quality that takes pleasure in deceitfulness and in "punishing" others for their lack of devotion to her. Her many melodramatic "scenes" illustrate Catherine's acting talent in the service of narcissism: as a child, after an argument with Edgar Linton, she says to him, ". . . get away! And now I'll cry – I'll cry myself sick!" and she proceeds to deliver a perfect fit of weeping which softens poor Edgar's heart. Catherine never outgrows these willful displays of mad emotion, and by feigning a fit to arouse her husband's concern, she ultimately brings about her own death. She begs Nelly to tell Edgar she is "in danger of being seriously ill. . . . I want to frighten him. . . . Will you do so, my good Nelly? You are aware that I am in no way blameable in this matter" (100-101). Catherine often uses Nelly Dean as an instrument for her guile: ". . . and remind Edgar of my passionate temper verging, when kindled, on frenzy" (101). Certainly Catherine's last performance is magnificent, if unsuccessful, for even Nelly is startled by "the

aspect of death" her mistress is able to assume. This undisciplined and domineering child – the little girl who wanted her father to bring her a whip from Liverpool – fails to mature at all because she never learns to control her perverse egotism. That in her last breath Catherine looks to Nelly "like a child reviving" aptly suggests the adolescent spirit of the woman's rebellion, a fatal result of Catherine's last scene of "mad resolution."

Unlike her mother's obsessiveness, young Cathy's rebellion is actually a healthy curiosity about her relatives at Wuthering Heights. Certainly it is not surprising that a young and intelligent girl who has not been beyond the range of the park before the age of thirteen, whose only companion is her nurse, and whose only amusements are rambling on the moors and reading, should be eager to make new acquaintances. And of course Cathy passes through certain predictable stages of adolescence; but unlike her mother, she does *pass* through, and restlessness, romantic love, and rebellion are only stages of her development. For example, Cathy and Linton Heathcliff's "love affair" is typical of the adolescent absorption with romantic notions, and the fact that the relationship is somehow taboo makes it all the more alluring. Cathy exaggerates the importance of her love letters, weeping and pleading to Nelly "to spare one or two." Nelly Dean's common sense reply to the mere suggestion of Cathy loving Linton is, "Loving! Pretty loving indeed, and both times together you have seen Linton hardly four hours in your life!" (184).<sup>4</sup> That Cathy is able to open her mind to this objective, adult point of view is a credit to her maturity, and something the older Catherine never learned to do.

In her relationship to Linton, Cathy begins to learn that her desires are complex and that her experience of reality must be reconciled to actual reality – in other words, *her* view of Linton Heathcliff as "a pretty little darling" must be reconciled to Nelly's less generous description: "The worst-tempered bit of a sickly slip that ever struggled into its teens!" (195). In learning to distinguish between what she *thinks* she wants (Linton) and what she *really* wants (an energetic and empathetic companion), Cathy begins to achieve the disciplined growth and broad perspective which is the undertaking of the *Bildungsroman* protagonist. Simply the way she handles Heathcliff and her captivity at Wuthering Heights demonstrates an intelligent, unselfish, and practical kind of defiance which Catherine never displayed, because Catherine acknowledged only her own needs and desires. When Linton says, "You *must* obey my father, you *must*," Cathy replies, "I must obey my own," reflecting her growing sense of responsibility. After her forced marriage, she is prepared to accept the consequences of her situation by loving Linton in spite of Heathcliff – "You cannot make us hate each other!" (228). Cathy remains dignified and controlled, and speaks "with a kind of dreary triumph: she seemed to have made up her mind to enter into the spirit of her future family, and draw pleasure from the griefs of her enemies" (228).

If Nelly's narrative makes Cathy's behavior sound reminiscent of the older Catherine's vengeful fits, it should be pointed

is, however, a somewhat static character who seems to have by-passed childhood by accepting rather strenuous responsibilities. Thus Nelly's phases of growth or development are subordinated to the more dynamic stages of her mistresses.

4. One could perhaps make a case that Nelly Dean is Brontë's real female *Bildungsroman* protagonist, even though she remains unmarried. As maternal surrogate to both Catherines, Nelly maturely manages to maintain some semblance of ordered domesticity in her violent environment. She

out that Cathy's "enemies" are *real*, not fancied, conspirators. Heathcliff at this point has kidnapped her, kept her from her dying father, abused her physically, and forced her to marry his sickly, peevish son. Cathy's situation is wretched, almost hopeless; when Linton dies shortly after their degenerate union, she is left at Wuthering Heights with only Hareton and Heathcliff. And here her *bildung* or education needs to be emphasized. Part of education and development is arriving at an understanding of one's value; this, I would argue, is the major undertaking of adolescence. The older Catherine never sees herself realistically. She has notions of superiority and self importance that can be justified only in terms of her exceptionally passionate nature and her extraordinary bond to Heathcliff. Catherine's immature and narrow vision cannot imagine that she is not the central concern in everyone else's life. It is almost an epiphany when she says to Nelly, "How strange! I thought, though everybody hated and despised each other, they could not avoid loving me" (104). Despite Heathcliff's furious devotion and her husband's genuine affection, Catherine always feels unloved and undervalued. Even as she is dying, she cries, "That is how I am loved!" like a self-pitying child. Nor does Catherine value the love of others: "I have such faith in Linton's love," she says, "that I believe I might kill him, and he wouldn't wish to retaliate" (86). Rarely if ever is Catherine described as a loving person, one who is willing to give the self freely to another; even her professed love for Heathcliff is strangely qualified by her claim, "I am Heathcliff!" He seems to be only a kind of narcissistic double.

Young Cathy of course wants to be loved, but unlike her mother she is willing to take the risks and suffer the consequences of loving another. When she kisses Hareton in an effort to make peace, she is conquering her pride and scorn — and her loneliness — in a way that truly suggests maturity. She is beginning to see herself in relation to others, beginning to develop a realistic adult perspective. For example, Cathy knows she has been unfair and cruel to Hareton, and sincerely tries to improve their relationship in the best — the most straightforward — way she knows how. "When I call you stupid, I don't mean anything — I don't mean that I despise you," she explains, and by articulating her meaning she arrives at a closer understanding of the way she affects others. By humbling herself,

Cathy learns to master herself, and by offering her friendship to Hareton, she is on the verge of a new, perhaps more traditional, kind of education: marriage. But the marriage of Cathy and Hareton is not the traditional union of the male teacher/master and the female learner/servant. By reversing the roles and making Cathy the educator, *Wuthering Heights* takes on the aspects of a new feminine *Bildungsroman* in which a woman emerging from childhood and adolescence approaches marriage not merely as a means of social advancement, or knowledge, or security, but as a mutual broadening of experience in which love balances power, with "both their minds tending to the same point" (249).<sup>5</sup>

So it is with the second generation of the Heights that Brontë begins her feminine *Bildungsroman*. If Catherine and Heathcliff have a more tumultuous and exciting story, it may be because theirs is the tale of arrested childhood, a furious protest against the necessity of growing up. Perhaps Cathy's struggle is less stormy and her future too settled and neat to satisfy our lingering adolescent admiration for rebellion, stubborn self satisfaction, and emotional intensity. But in the world of *Wuthering Heights*, as in our own, the passage from innocence to experience is an awkward limbo, a thin papery wall, between two selves — between the waif outside the window, and the woman within.

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5. Charlotte Brontë's female protagonists (one thinks of *Jane Eyre* and *Lucy Snowe*, in particular) are similar to Cathy in that they do not seek male

approval as a substitute for individual growth, or see marriage as an emblem of social acceptance or self worth.

## Pater's Temporizing: The "Conclusion" to *The Renaissance*

Ross Borden

In *The Westminster Review* of October 1868 appeared a review without a signature, entitled "Poems by William Morris." If it was the author who decided the title, he may have intended a challenge to the ignorant and a promise to the informed: his own style of poetry would not remain anonymous. We shall find that masks of a near transparency are characteristic of Pater, early and late. In 1873 the concluding pages of the unsigned review appeared again, somewhat altered, this time as the "Conclusion" to Walter Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*. The book was adored by the young, but attacked by the old guard at Oxford, above all for its aesthetic climax. Pater suffered a time of perplexity, which he converted, as usual, into a form of ingenuity. He omitted the troublesome "Conclusion" from the second edition, in 1877. He also changed the title to *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*. Since our subject is the historical imagination, we may note that Pater seems to have abandoned History in favor of Art and Poetry. The new title may indicate a surrender to caution, consistent with suppressing the "Conclusion," which had historicized everything, the world without and the world within. But it is possible to read the new title in a different light, as compensating for the suppression and, indeed, vindicating the "Conclusion." For Pater allows the book to announce itself as history, as an event with the ghostliest effects. The title now has the very outline of the "Conclusion": a moment of history, perfected in art. The contour of a phrase gives a cold sort of comfort, which Pater knew best of all how to cherish. Students who missed the grand statement could find it, now glorified, circulating through Oxford. This episode prepares the way for the next and nearly the last: his restoring the "Conclusion" in the 1888 edition. Most of the changes make a show of moderation, and they seem to have fooled no one, though some critics take pleasure from his apparent cowardice. The large fact, however, is that Pater did reprint the "Conclusion." As in the altered title, we may detect in this version signs of a secret triumph.

To order the evidence, it may serve to try the perspectives of a hostile reader, then a sympathetic reader, and last a reader thankful not to be cheated of a legitimate terror, but amazed by the resources of anarchy in Pater's art. Now in our hostile mood, we delight to find Pater recanting. The best evidence is his new tenderness toward religion. In 1868 he wrote:

The service of philosophy, and of religion and culture as well, to the human spirit, is to startle it into a sharp and eager observation.

This is to place religion on a level with culture, to subordinate

both to philosophy, and to enlist all three in the service of the human spirit as it seeks experience in the sensuous world. In 1888 Pater writes:

The service of philosophy, of speculative culture, towards the human spirit is to rouse, to startle it into sharp and eager observation.

This leaves religion out of reach and unbruised. Here the human spirit is roused before it is startled: given a soft warning, alerted to the surprise. The object is no longer "a sharp and eager observation," a momentary impression. It has become a life of constant observation, an ideal of conduct binding each moment to the next. Earlier, the service of philosophy was "to the human spirit." Once he settled on "to rouse, to startle it," Pater thought to avoid an unwanted echo by writing "towards the human spirit." The new preposition sounds mistaken, under an alien constraint. It betrays the tendency of Pater's revisions to lift the spirit above the present moment. A soul roused to vigilance appears safe enough.

There are three other modifications of this sort, at the level of whole sentences. Our unfriendly critic may content himself with one more, to establish that the first is not an exception.<sup>1</sup> In 1868 Pater wrote:

Well, we are all *condamnés*, as Victor Hugo somewhere says: we have an interval, and then we cease to be.

The "somewhere" suggests more than casual scholarship. Not Pater but Victor Hugo has lost his place, undergone dissolution. The flippant turn of phrase indicates a grave prospect. Pater dwells on this view in 1888, but he deletes the adverb as if it were misleading:

Well! we are all *condamnés*, as Victor Hugo says: we are all under sentence of death but with a sort of indefinite reprieve — *les hommes sont tous condamnés à mort avec des sursis indéfinis*: we have an interval, and then our place knows us no more.

Pater weakens the sentence by trying to buttress it with solemn repetitions. He extends the quotation in French and throws the burden of his meaning across the Channel. In a favorite touch he adds an exclamation point to show that he himself is taken aback. The sentence is badly altered by the end: "and then we cease to be" is translated into biblical language, "and then our place knows us no more." Everyone here, artistic or not, is assured of surviving elsewhere.

To continue with censure, we may glance at the difference a single word can make. Pater urged us in 1868 to discard any

1. In addition to those cited:

a) 1868: "Some spend this interval in listlessness, some in high passions, the wisest in art and song."

1888: "Some spend this interval in listlessness, some in high passions, the wisest, at least among 'the children of this world,' in art and song."

The allusion is to Luke 16:8, and the application is difficult: "And the Lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children

of light."

b) 1868: "High passions give one this quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love, political or religious enthusiasm, or the 'enthusiasm of humanity.'"

1888: "Great passions may give us this quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love, the various forms of enthusiastic activity, disinterested or otherwise, which come naturally to many of us."

"morality . . . not identified with ourselves." He changes the word in 1888:

The theory or idea or system which requires of us the sacrifice of any part of this experience, in consideration of some interest into which we cannot enter, or some abstract theory we have not identified with ourselves, or what is only conventional, has no real claim upon us. [my italics]

Morality escapes criticism now. But the repetition of "theory" short-circuits the sentence, with the result that its finer discriminations, of theory or idea or system, of "some interest . . . or what is only conventional," look elaborately haywire.

Finally, at the heart of his sensibility, Pater recommended in 1868 "any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange flowers and curious odours." The plurals, yielding to one another, make a single rapture. In 1888 Pater replaces "flowers" with "colours"; and he adds a comma after it, so that "strange colours" is now a discrete image. The revision helps to interpret "strange dyes," which must represent a texture. Liquid or woven, it is an appeal to touch as "strange colours" is an appeal to sight. "Strange dyes, strange colours, and curious odours" falls into a pattern of touch, sight, and smell. But in the earlier version "strange flowers" crosses these boundaries to assimilate the senses in a central, unstable moment. After this "strange colours" seems only to repeat "strange dyes" in a duller phase. The additional comma taps on the flaw and shivers the ecstasy.

A sympathetic reader admits the new moderation, but interprets it differently – in the light of Pater's story, his footnote to the revised "Conclusion." The second edition of the *Renaissance*, though it lacked a rallying chapter, did not still the commotion at Oxford. Pater declined to be the rage. In 1881 he resigned his position as tutor, to spend the next three years clarifying his position as critic. This image of himself he called *Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas*, published in 1885. It was intended to show that passionate observation. Pater's program in the *Renaissance*, is consistent with social values, even with some forms of Christianity.<sup>2</sup> Once he had corrected the hedonistic tendencies of his argument, he could reprint the "Conclusion." He had only to make "slight changes":

This brief "Conclusion" was omitted in the second edition of this book, as I conceived it might possibly mislead some of those young men into whose hands it might fall. On the whole, I have thought it best to reprint it here, with some slight changes which bring it closer to my original meaning. I have dealt more fully in *Marius the Epicurean* with the thoughts suggested by it.

A reader may accept this view from the highest authority. It would appear that the modifications demonstrate Pater's sense of responsibility.

I should like to press the point harder than friendly critics have done as a way of transforming it into our last, appalled perspective. Edmund Chandler has observed of *Marius*, revised like the *Renaissance* in its third edition (1892): "By the time of the later edition Pater was more firmly confident and emphatic in his own aesthetic attitude, though more discreet in his

recommendation of it to others" (74). We can hear the note of confidence in the new "Conclusion." Pater begins by accepting responsibility, which has the desired effect: it allows him to sound responsible. Yet he accepts responsibility for nothing other than his "original meaning" – the review of 1868 – and for "those young men" who have it by heart.

To a wary reader the changes of 1873 and 1888 together show a weird assurance. Pater has added a great deal of punctuation, which is read as emphasis rather than hesitation. For instance, all but one of the following commas are missing from the review:

Not to discriminate every moment some passionate attitude in those about us, and in the brilliancy of their gifts some tragic dividing of forces on their ways, is, on this short day of frost and sun, to sleep before evening.

A critic intent on Pater's self-betrayal would argue that these changes, and others like them, soften the effect of time passing, which Pater rendered acutely in the first version. Yet the discrimination of moments, the brief arrest of time, is just the measure of success for Pater, his avowed ideal of art.

The "Conclusion" of 1888 begins to appear less concessive, more assertive than before. A large difference is the deletion of a paragraph from the 1868 text:

Such thoughts seem desolate at first: at times all the bitterness of life seems concentrated in them. They bring the image of one washed out beyond the bar in a sea at ebb, losing even his personality, as the elements of which he is composed pass into new combinations. Struggling, as he must, to save himself, it is himself that he loses at every moment.

This is a vision of warning, fashioned from a vision of Pater himself. He had cancelled the passage in 1873, probably with the idea of disowning so desolate a prophecy. In 1888 the idea seems still more confident: rather than caution his reader, he offers a new self-image.

Has Pater revised the text according to his "original meaning" or according to the "thoughts suggested by it?" He directs some readers to the 1868 review and others to *Marius the Epicurean*. The footnote to the "Conclusion" is the most significant change, the highest note of triumph and literally the lowest, in its radical division of self the most startling. In each of the previous essays Pater disguised himself as the artist he was praising. As essay followed essay, the identification and the praise became fainter. In the body of the "Conclusion" there is no self-portrait of this kind. Once the drowning swimmer is gone, there is only the mask of style. But in the footnote Pater appears in his own right, as the leader of a new generation. It is typical of him that he arrives by indirection, claiming that he cannot possibly mislead. To appreciate the bitterness of this self-projection, the motive for it and the license it gave Pater to continue writing, it is important to recall that in 1885, when the two volumes of *Marius* were complete, Ruskin resigned as Slade Professor of Fine Art, Pater proposed himself and Oxford chose a safer man.

We discover allusions to the event in sentences that we have

2. An echo of my reading which I have been unable to locate, probably in Stein.

considered empty of self. In fact, they declare a personal resistance. For example,

Well! we are all *condamnés*, as Victor Hugo says: we are all under sentence of death but with a sort of indefinite reprieve — *les hommes sont tous condamnés à mort avec des sursis indéfinis*: we have an interval, and then our place knows us no more.

The exclamation marks the point of identification. The persistent translation invites us to read deeper. The repetitions do not void the meaning: they signal a hidden, worried significance. With a fellowship at Brasenose, without a chair at the University, Pater feels "under sentence of death but with a sort of indefinite reprieve." The sentence revolves around a lack of definition, a center of indifference not Pater's. The "but," unmatched in the French, expresses the irony of his situation at Oxford, which would not know him.<sup>3</sup>

To recover himself, Pater begins a different school: "of this wisdom . . . the love of art for art's sake." Here is his largest self-assertion:

for art comes to you *professing* frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake. [my italics]

As ever, the "you" designates an "I" in front. The class of young men is at the end of a term, about to enroll in another. The text of 1893, the last to be supervised by Pater, shows the context to be altered yet again. He comes to write "proposing frankly," as if after all he had lost his hope of a profession and an academy. Even this change has a double aspect, however. By granting so much to time, Pater is forever conjuring the possibility of a second Renaissance. With all the ceremony of a marriage vow, he proposes so odd an affair.

By comparing two sentences within the 1873 text, we may harmonize our discrepant conclusions. In the first chapter Pater defines the Renaissance:

For us the Renaissance is the name of a many-sided but yet united movement, in which the love of the things of the intellect and the imagination for their own sake, the desire for a more liberal and comely way of conceiving life, make themselves felt....

This may be compared with the last sentence of the *Renaissance*:

Of this wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for art's sake, has most; for art comes to you professing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake.

The second statement is different from the first, as one would expect of Pater, so sensitive to changes from moment to moment that every sentence has the look of a separate undertaking, doomed as soon as it reaches completion. More striking perhaps than the differences is the high level of similarity between the two statements, occurring at opposite ends of a book that propounds incessant change. But the swift unweaving of every moment requires Pater to weave it once more, to re-form it as best he can, "with a sense in it, a relic more or less fleeting, of such moments gone by." The power of time to undo everything forces Pater to do everything again, only with a harder polish, the high finish of a desperate art. And the similarity between one sentence and another throws their differences into relief, making the slightest shade of qualification look brilliant. By the time we reach the "Conclusion," "the things of the intellect and the imagination" have lost whatever solidity had been given them by Pater's language, to be apprehended now as the quality of a moment, no more than the epiphany of art. We have learned to recognize the play of sameness and difference everywhere in language, to identify it with the production of all significance. It seems to have attracted Pater with unusual force, nearly to having riveted him as a stylist, perhaps because he was so conventional, desiring to be the same as other men with intense diffidence, and yet so singular, even to the point of cultivating his strangeness. Self-divided, he exploited a principle of language to rare effect, through the attenuation of monotony happening again and again upon the finest discriminations. He temporized for a double reason: to suit the time and to gain time for himself.

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 [Pater, Walter H.] "Poems by William Morris." *The Westminster Review* 34 n.s. (1868): 300-312.  
 Pater, Walter, H. *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*. London and New York: Macmillan, 1888.  
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 Stein, Richard. *The Ritual of Interpretation*. Cambridge, Harvard UP, 1975.

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3. Pater first expanded the quotation in 1873:  
 "Well, we are all *condamnés*, as Victor Hugo says: *les hommes sont tous condamnés à mort avec des sursis indéfinis*: we have an interval, and then our place knows us no more."  
 Here the context is different: Pater was in line to receive a position as

University proctor, which he would fail to win the following year, probably on account of the "Conclusion." His expectations make the passage less fretful and the allusion less pointed than it would become in 1888. Indefiniteness in Pater is sometimes soothing, sometimes threatening.



## Books Received

- Assad, Thomas J. *Tennysonian Lyric: "Songs of a Deeper Kind" and "In Memoriam."* Tulane Studies in English Vol. 24. New Orleans: Tulane U, 1984. Pp. 323. \$28.00. Assad analyzes eleven songs published between 1827 and 1889; he then analyzes *In Memoriam* along the lines of Jung's four psychic functions. Much of the criticism of the last fifteen years is ignored in favor of earlier commentators on Tennyson.
- Bouchelle, Joan Hoiness, ed. *With Tennyson at the Keyboard: A Victorian Songbook.* Garland Reference Library of the Humanities Vol. 527. New York & London: Garland, 1985. Pp. xxv + 236. \$40.00. Bouchelle provides the musical settings as well as commentary on 20 Victorian and 1 Edwardian composers who set to music Tennyson's verse. Included are some 35 lyrics with their music.
- Crump, R.W. *Charlotte and Emily Brontë, 1916-1954: A Reference Guide.* Boston: G.K. Hall, 1985. Pp. xvii + 197. \$32.00. The second in a three volume bibliography of secondary writings on the two Brontës (See VN #62, Fall, 1982, for vol. 1 notice).
- Foster, Shirley. *Victorian Women's Fiction: Marriage, Freedom and the Individual.* Totowa, N.J.: Barnes & Noble, 1985. Pp. 240. \$26.75. Has an introductory chapter on women and marriage in mid-nineteenth-century England and then chapters on Dinah Mulock Craik, Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Sewell, Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot.
- Haight, Gordon S., ed. *Selections from George Eliot's Letters.* New Haven & London: Yale UP, 1985. Pp. x + 567. \$25.00. A handsome volume which condenses the nine volume Haight edition of the letters. Haight's method is "to cover the principal epochs of George Eliot's life by giving the most interesting parts of hundreds of letters to provide a continuous narrative for the general reader as well as the essential details of the writing and publication of her works" (vii).
- Hardy, Thomas. *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy.* Ed. Michael Millgate. Athens, GA: U of Georgia P, 1985. Pp. xxxvii + 604. \$35.00. "A text that can be unequivocally read and accepted as an integral part of the Hardy canon. By recovering - with as much fidelity as the surviving evidence will allow - the wording that stood at the time of Hardy's death, and by recording (in the list of post-Hardy revisions) the biographically significant changes made for *Early Life* and *Later Years*, it becomes possible to see just what Hardy himself wrote and what his widow subsequently altered and to confront *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy* as an entirely Hardy text - as an autobiography. . . ." (xxvi-xxvii).
- Lulofs, Timothy J. and Hans Ostrom. *Leigh Hunt: A Reference Guide.* Boston: G.K. Hall, 1985. [xix] + 264. \$49.95. An annotated reference guide to works about Hunt appearing between 1800 and 1982.
- Lyons, Anne K. *Anthony Trollope: An Annotated Bibliography of Periodical Works by and about Him in the United States and Great Britain to 1900.* Greenwood, FL: Penkevill Pub. Co., 1985. Pp. 163. \$25.00.
- Nord, Deborah Epstein. *The Apprenticeship of Beatrice Webb.* Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1985. Pp. ix + 294. \$25.00. A revisionist portrait of Webb based primarily on the diaries and *My Apprenticeship*; compares *My Apprenticeship* to male autobiographies in the nineteenth century and to female autobiographies and to fiction.
- Peckham, Morse. *Romanticism and Ideology.* Greenwood, FL: Penkevill Pub. Co., 1985. Pp. [x] + 381. \$32.50. Essays and addresses by Peckham from 1971 to 1981. Includes 19 chapters divided under the following headings: "The Romantic Tradition," "The Uses of Ideologies," and "Theory of Art and Criticism."
- Tennyson at Aldworth: The Diary of James Henry Mangles.* Ed. with Intro. by Earl A. Knies. Athens OH and London: Ohio UP, 1984. Pp. xviii + 155. \$24.95. A diary of some 50 MS pages in which Mangles "from August 1870 until October 1872. . . played Boswell to Tennyson's Johnson. . ." (p. 2). Knies admits of the diary "But although it provides fresh insights, it contains few real surprises" (p. 21).

### Coming in The Victorian Newsletter

- Sarah Gilead. "Trollope's Ground of Meaning: *The Macdermots of Ballycloran*"
- Peter W. Graham. "Byron and Disraeli"
- Laura Hapke. "He Stoops to Conquer: Redeeming the Fallen Woman in the Fiction of Dickens, Gaskell and Their Contemporaries"
- William Sharpe. "J. E. Millais *Bubbles*: A Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"

## Victorian Group News

Northeast Victorian Studies Assoc. Conference: *Victorian Work and Workers*. April 18-20, 1986, British Art Center, Yale University, New Haven, CT. For program information address Prof. Mary Davis, Chair, English Department, Albertus Magnus College, New Haven, CT 06511.

The Victorians Institute will hold its annual meeting at Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. October 4-5, 1985. The conference topic is *The Uses of the Past in Victorian Culture*. Dwight Culler will deliver the keynote address. For information, write John Pfordresher, English Department, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. 20057.

*Victorians Abroad* is the topic of the Midwest Victorian Studies Assoc. meeting in Cincinnati, April 25-26, 1986. Ten pp. papers or two pp. abstracts should be sent no later than November 15, 1985 to Kristine Ottesen Garrigan, MVSA Exec. Sec., Department of English and Communication, DePaul University, 2323 N. Seminary Ave., Chicago, IL 60614.

The Dickens Project of the University of California welcomes the submission of proposals for papers for a conference on Dickens, Shakespeare, and the Theater, to be held in Santa Cruz August 7-10, 1986. Selected papers will be published in *Dickens Studies Annual*. Two pp. proposals will be accepted through 1 March 1986; completed papers should be mailed by 1 May 1986. Inquiries and submissions to Joel J. Bratlin and Nan Dorsey, Coordinators, The Dickens Project, Kresge College, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA 95064.

*Amusement, Entertainment, and Diversion in the 19th Century* will be the topic for the Southeastern Nineteenth Century Studies Association meeting April 10-12, 1986 in Memphis, TN. Keynote speaker will be Mark Girouard. Papers from a variety of disciplines are invited. Abstracts due by December 1, 1985; completed papers must be received by January 10, 1986. Inquiries and submissions to Joan Weatherly, English Department, Memphis State University, Memphis, TN 38152.

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