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Cover: On the hundredth anniversary of the publication of *Plain Tales from the Hills*, we reproduce Harry Furniss's portrait of Rudyard Kipling, from *Strand Magazine*, 1923.

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The Gothic Form of *Wuthering Heights*

George E. Haggerty

Emily Brontë's remarkable novel has often been placed within the Gothic tradition in fiction, and it is indeed from within that tradition that this harrowing tale of a solitary gypsy youth who first liberates and then nearly destroys a pair of Yorkshire families finds its conventional vocabulary and its range of images.¹ But Brontë was no mere scribbler attempting to resuscitate the greying features of a dying form. For like no other writer before or since, Emily Brontë in *Wuthering Heights* looks into the heart of Gothic fiction, as it were, uncovers the most deeply rooted formal problems which Gothic novelists themselves were never able to resolve, and forges a solution to those problems out of the literary smithy of her own soul.

The problem in the Gothic novel, as I have argued elsewhere, is fundamentally a problem of language. Indeed the novel itself, as a form, posed difficulties for writers primarily concerned with the expression of subjective fantasy.² The key to understanding the distinction between intention and form in the Gothic novel lies in the very nature of the language which the Gothicists employed. Roman Jakobson's now famous article "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances" argues that "The development of a discourse may also take place along two different semantic lines: one topic may lead to another either through their similarity or through their contiguity. The METAPHORIC way would be the most appropriate term for the first case and the METONYMIC way for the second, since they find their most condensed expression in metaphor and metonym respectively. In aphasia one or the other of these two processes is restricted or totally blocked. . . ." (90).³ Within the Gothic novel itself, there is a constant tension between these two uses of language. The result is a kind of literary aphasia, if you will, rendering literary expression both unsatisfying and self-defeating. In a sense, the very metonymic nature of the novel, inherently concerned with the contextualization of experience and the socialization of the private, formally contradicts the metaphorical demands of the Gothic, which began with a dream and developed by means of a series of fantasy situations and characters, at times carefully developed and at times blandly automatic, but rarely fully integrated into the demands of the novel's content and scope.

We might, for instance, consider the techniques in *The Monk* (1795) whereby Lewis attempts to involve his villain Ambrosio in actions that express the extremes of psychological horror at the same time that they advance the plot and expand our sense of his character. For this purpose, Lewis devises such scenes as the murder of a lady to whom he is confessor and for whose daughter he has developed unexampled lust, as well as the scene in which he later rapes and murders the supplicating girl herself. These scenes are vivid and distressing, and the revelations concerning his relation to his victims (they are his mother

and sister) are meant as the final measure of damnation.

The difficulty Lewis encounters in this dramatic rendition of Ambrosio's Gothic role is that brand of sensationalism which results from Lewis's own kind of aphasia. Metaphorical ramifications of Ambrosio's predicament are powerful enough, but the metonymical aspect of his presentation feels gratuitous and strangely unconvincing. In outright ghost stories within the novel, however—the superficially ridiculous tale of the Bleeding Nun, for instance—Lewis devises an internal narrator whose record of private experience begins to contain the metaphorical dimensions of subjectivity within the bounds of the metonymical. "I listened. . . I felt. . . I shuddered. . . I heard. . . I started": Raymond de Cisternas tells us of his encounter with the gory religious (159). Raymond contains his tale within the personal at the same time that he insists on vivid contextual detail. The internal tale, that is, suspended from the novel form, momentarily sustains and intensifies Lewis's Gothic intention, and it seems that he has managed to construct a linguistic system which can temporarily resolve the tension between metaphor and metonym in his work. Lewis was incapable, however, of sustaining these effects or discovering an idiom which could render the personal effectiveness of the tale, so capable of incorporating the metaphorical within the metonymical, formally compatible with novelistic expression.

Brontë was not only aware of such formal inconsistency in the Gothic novel, she seems to have structured her own work both to mirror these tensions and to demonstrate the linguistic as well as thematic means of their resolution.⁴ *Wuthering Heights*, in other words, directly confronts the formal dilemma facing every Gothic novelist and works out with literary exactitude the means of identifying Gothic intention and the novel form.

Brontë does this in the first place by writing instead of a conventional novel an extended tale, what Northrop Frye calls a romance.⁵ The distinction between novel and tale is of course not merely one of semantics: Brontë employs internal narrators who tell their own accounts of the action which transpires. These private accounts already have a tale-like force because they attempt to explore the subjective and personal. Unlike the internal narrators in novels such as *The Monk* or *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), however, Brontë's narrators are impervious to the threats of other-worldly presences. They are created out of the formal stuff of novels, Lockwood and Nelly Dean, and they thereby indirectly place the novelistic version of experience against something deeper and more powerful. In so creating them, Brontë challenges novelistic form with Gothic meaning as it had never before been challenged. Lockwood, it could be said, attempts to novelize the events he witnesses and indeed to force a novelistic resolution to the action; but his very failure

1. The most useful study in this regard remains Kiely 233-51. See also Moers 35-39, Trickett 338-47, Windsor. For the most illuminating study of the Gothic in the mid-nineteenth century, see Sedgwick.

2. See also Kiely 17, Sedgwick 12-14, and Weiskel 14, 112.

3. See also Weiskel 30 and Gillis 80.

4. The most useful formal study of *Wuthering Heights* is that of Anderson

112-34. See also Garrett 1-17 and Miller 85-100.

5. (304-305). Frye's use of the term romance is confusing in this context, for he distinguishes the romance in other places as "myth" and "mode." Here he considers substituting "tale" for "romance," but decides that "tale" "appears to fit a somewhat shorter form."

to be convincing is the measure of the inadequacy of his response.⁶ His inadequacy, however, is not merely temperamental: it is the inadequacy of a certain kind of novelistic language that his failure both exposes and censures. Nelly, too, attempts to mould her material into novelistic form, and again her failure becomes itself a metaphor for the limits of interpretation.⁷ Their metonymical presence, in other words, becomes a sign for the metaphorical absence of the experience they relate. Brontë thereby uses the novel to display the limits of its own expressive power.

Lockwood's inadequacy when he first confronts the largely "second generation" *Wuthering Heights* has been richly remarked.⁸ His structures of response, like those of other Gothic heroes before him, are incapable of interpreting the terms of his experience correctly. In addition to mistaking a heap of dead rabbits for cats and assuming a marital relation between Heathcliff and the second Cathy, Lockwood demonstrates a general anxiety in the face of what he does not understand and an urge for meaning which results in endless mis-construction. This anxiety is of course vividly represented in his attempts to "read" the various inscriptions which he discovers around his bed, and in his brutal reaction to the pleading Catherine Linton of his dream, whose wrist he rubs to and fro on the broken window pane "till the blood ran down and soaked the bed-clothes" (30). The repressed fear and aggression suggested by this dream begin to represent the kind of disfiguration of the tale that socializing, civilizing, contextualizing, novelizing versions of it perpetrate (see Musselwhite). In other words, Lockwood is the first critic of *Wuthering Heights*, and he literally attempts to tear it to shreds.

Challenged by Heathcliff to explain his midnight raving, Lockwood finds himself unwittingly incapable of using language in a way which Heathcliff can understand:

"The truth is, sir, I passed the first part of the night—" here, I stopped afresh—I was about to say "perusing those old volumes;" then it would have revealed my knowledge of their written, as well as their printed contents; so, correcting myself, I went on—"in spelling over the name scratched on the window-ledge. A monotonous occupation, calculated to set me asleep, like counting, or—"

"What can you mean by talking in this way to me!" thundered Heathcliff with savage vehemence. "How—how *dare* you, under my roof?—God! he's mad to speak so!" And he struck his forehead with rage. (32)

Lockwood begins this explanation of the immediate cause of his dream by calling upon "truth." But of course truth is just what his polite conversation is structured to evade. Lockwood's repression of the truth and his mode of self-editing suggest at once the effiteness of literary language as well as its intentional duplicity. This language reveals more than it hides, however, because its blithe urbanity is a measure of its inability to contain the essential reality it has not even begun to understand. Heathcliff's reaction emphasizes both what

Lockwood of madness because he seems oblivious to the power behind his words. Lockwood feels indeed that he can control language as he chooses and here use it to lead him through a difficult moment. To him Heathcliff's reaction clearly seems as akin to madness as his own prattling does to Heathcliff.

We feel that communication between these two characters is impossible, and critics have been quick to attribute this to Lockwood's citified urbanity (see, for instance, Knoepfmacher 88-89). If we look closer, however, we can describe this disruption in more specific terms. Lockwood clearly suffers a "similarity disorder" in the terms I outlined from Jakobson above, while Heathcliff seems the victim of the converse contiguity disorder. Lockwood sees little beyond the immediate contextualizing syntax of his words, and Heathcliff sees nothing but their profound significance. Lockwood is all form and Heathcliff is all meaning. It would take more than a midnight chat to bring such characters into communication. Their anger indeed is nothing more than the frustration they experience at seeming to speak the same language while being constitutionally unable to understand each other. To describe Lockwood, then, as an "unreliable narrator" is to distort his central function here. His ruthless distortions of the truth are a part of his breeding. They emerge from what it means to be a member of society. His interpretations therefore may be unreliable, but they are intrinsic to the nature of Brontë's enterprise. His metonymic superficiality is necessary to the measure of what it cannot understand. Without Lockwood, that is, Heathcliff would be beyond our power of comprehension as well. Lockwood and Heathcliff cannot communicate with each other, but together they begin to convey the nature of the novel.

Nelly Dean has also been accused of misinterpretation and manipulation.⁹ She is without question unsympathetic to her "friends" Heathcliff and Catherine and does indeed act counter to their mutual understanding and even physical survival. Yet Nelly is not therefore to be censured as "unreliable" but understood as central to Brontë's technique. For Nelly too represents the novelizing force of interpretation and contextualization, and her pernicious inadequacy is but a measure of the limitations of her form for understanding and those of upright and well-meaning people.

Nelly gives Lockwood, for instance, this description of events at the Grange after Catherine's hysterical scene upon Linton's dismissal of Heathcliff:

While Miss Linton moped about the park and garden, always silent, and almost always in tears; and her brother shut himself up among books that he never opened—wearying, I guessed, with a continual vague expectation that Catherine, repenting her conduct, would come of her own accord to ask pardon, and seek a reconciliation—and while *she* fasted pertinaciously, under the idea, probably, that at every meal, Edgar was ready to choke for her absence, and pride alone kept him from running to cast himself at her feet, I went about my household duties, convinced that the Grange had but one sensible soul in its walls, and that lodged in my body.

I wasted no condolences on Miss, nor any expostulations on my

6. Lockwood's narrative presence has been widely discussed. See especially Knoepfmacher 84-108 and McCarthy 48-64.

7. The classic indictment of Nelly Dean is presented by Hafly. See also Mathison, 333-53, Knoepfmacher 92-93, and McCarthy 56-58.

8. See, for instance, Kiely 238-39, Knoepfmacher 88-89, and McCarthy 51.

9. In addition to those critics listed above, n. 7, see also Musselwhite 157.

mistress, nor did I pay any attention to the sighs of my master. . . .

I determined they should come about as they pleased for me; and though it was a tiresomely slow process, I began to rejoice at length in a faint dawn of its progress, as I thought at first.

Mrs. Linton, on the third day, unbarred her door; and having finished the water in her pitcher and decanter, desired a renewed supply, and a basin of gruel, for she believed she was dying. That I set down to a speech meant for Edgar's ears; I believed no such thing, so I kept it to myself, and brought her some tea and dry toast. (103)

To catalogue Nelly's behavior here is less important than to analyze her attitude by means of the language with which she expresses it. The first paragraph is but a single sentence, the subject of which, in the final clause, is "I." This is not merely to say that Nelly is an egoist and that she interprets experience primarily in relation to herself, but even more importantly to demonstrate that her language itself is incapable of finding any other center but that "I." This is not a story about Nelly Dean, but she tells it nevertheless from the only perspective she knows—her own. Nelly's impatience and even seeming cruelty in scenes such as these is more than a comment on the recalcitrance of servants. Nelly can express no more than she understands: a world of contiguity, cause and effect, action and reaction. "[W]earying, I guessed," "under the idea, probably," "I went about. . . convinced," "I wasted no condolences," "I determined," "she believed she was dying. . . I believed no such thing. . . ." Nelly continually asserts her assumptions and beliefs because without them the experience of this household would seem arbitrary and meaning-less. She treats everything representationally because, like Lockwood, she has no other linguistic terms with which to treat them: Nelly is all presence; the absence of metaphor has no meaning for her.

The central characters in the novel, on the other hand, if Catherine and Heathcliff can be called such, understand only metaphor. Like their Gothic predecessors, they inhabit a world which for them is so charged with meaning that it is almost unbearable. They speak a language which moves among these meanings with only the barest concern for contiguous syntactical structure. In Catherine's final "madness," for instance, her mind wanders among what Nelly calls "associations," in a realm of fantasy.¹⁰ As she pulls feathers from a torn pillow, she murmurs:

"That's a turkey's. . . and this is a wild duck's; and this is a pigeon's. Ah, they put the pigeons' feathers in the pillow—no wonder I couldn't die! Let me take care to throw it on the floor when I lie down. And here's a moor-cock's; and this—I should know it among a thousand—it's a lapwing's. Bonny bird; wheeling over our heads in the middle of the moor. It wanted to get to its nest, for the cloud touched the swells, and it felt rain coming. This feather was picked up from the heath, the bird was not shot; we saw its nest in the winter, full of little skeletons. Heathcliff set a trap over it, and the old ones dare not come. I made him promise he'd never shoot a lapwing, after that, and he didn't. Yes, here are more! Did he shoot my lapwings, Nelly? Are they red, any of them? Let me look." (105)

Catherine gives way completely to the metaphorical mode—goes

mad, that is—when it is clear that social acceptance of her feelings for Heathcliff—their contextualization, if you will—is impossible. Syntactic coherence therefore gives way to non-contiguous assertions of meaning and associations of significance. The specific terms of this speech, although interesting, are in turn less important than its own "significance" in the novel's structure. For placed against Nelly's prim and even destructive morality or Lockwood's civilization, this madness suggests a world of wind, and light, and energy—and love.¹¹ That is not to say that Catherine's speech is not heart-rendingly pathetic, but rather that this very pathos is but the measure of our own inability to share in Catherine's vision. "You're wandering," Nelly imaginatively suggests. "I'm not wandering, you're mistaken," Catherine answers. Nelly is mistaken, and we are as well, insofar as we attempt to force Catherine into our own restrictive linguistic structures. Meanings, for Catherine, reside in a heap of feathers, in a lap-wing, in a cloud. She sees Heathcliff in them all because he is the only character in the work who understands her, who speaks her language.

Heathcliff's own program of revenge after Catherine's death is an attempt to overturn the established order of things and to assert the primacy of his private vision. Like a Gothic hero, he tries to disrupt the contiguity of experience and make present the absent meanings of metaphor. This behavior too is a kind of madness; but while Catherine's madness was self-destructive, Heathcliff's is self-assertive. As such, it brings the realms of metaphor and metonym into vivid confrontation. The world of private meanings is pitted against the world of public ones. And if there is to be resolution in the novel, our concern must be with more than which side wins:

Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest, as long as I am living! You said I killed you—haunt me, then! The murdered *do* haunt their murderers, I believe. I know that ghosts *have* wandered on the earth. Be with me always—take any form—drive me mad! only *do* not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you! Oh God! it is unutterable! I *cannot* live without my life! I *cannot* live without my soul!" (139)

Heathcliff is in his own way both as pathetic and as inaccessible as Catherine. If throughout the second half of the novel, as this quotation suggests, he inhabits a world of ghosts, he in that sense makes his private motivation his only meaning, becoming, to the public eye, mad; his frustrated attempts to gain control of the Earnshaw and Linton families bespeak the impossibility of translating that madness directly into social action. More than a Gothic villain, he becomes like the Gothic novelist him-or herself in attempting to introduce private subjective meanings into an objective public world without first finding the formal means to accomplish such a union.

In the action of the second half of *Wuthering Heights*, Brontë attends directly to these concerns and not only demonstrates the nature of the resolution to her own story here but also works out the terms of effective Gothicism in the novel. From one point of view, the story of the second generation is the outline of Heathcliff's frustrated revenge and ultimate death.

10. The process whereby such thinking came to be labelled madness is provocatively discussed in Foucault. See esp. 87-93 and the discussion of the relation of madness to passion to be found in chapter IV. For a

post-Freudian reading of this passage, see Homans 16-18.

11. The imagery of *Wuthering Heights* is emphasized in such classic studies as that of Van Ghent 187-208.

From another, it is the story of young Catherine's discovery of Heathcliff's world, her forced marriage to his son Linton, her confrontation with the reality of death, and her ultimate toleration and then love of Hareton Earnshaw. Only by understanding these in relation to one another can we get a sense of Brontë's achievement.¹²

Both Linton and Hareton are sons of Heathcliff, the former physically and the latter spiritually (see Eigner 96-99). As his sons they come to represent both the two sides of Heathcliff's own personality and their relation to the worlds the novel depicts. Linton is the pathetic outward sign of Heathcliff's attempt to control the world of contiguity in the novel. He is the implement of Heathcliff's revenge, and in that role his simpering weakness provides outward manifestation of the impotence of Heathcliff's plan. As Linton becomes more clearly a tool of his father's revenge, he becomes less a person with whom we can sympathize, an almost allegorical figure of peevishness and perverted self-vindication. Indeed, this is what Heathcliff himself must seem to those who only know him from without. Ironically Linton's death complements his weakness as representative of the ultimate failure which Heathcliff must experience in his attempt at this kind of resolution. It leaves Heathcliff with everything, but nothing.

If Linton comes to represent this impotent program of revenge, this attempt to assert private meaning in the public world, Hareton clearly represents the other private Heathcliff that the novel seems so to celebrate: "Well, Hareton's aspect was the ghost of immortal love," Heathcliff says, "of my wild endeavours to hold my right, my degradation, my pride, my happiness, and my anguish—" (255). Hareton, for Heathcliff, belongs to that metaphorical world of madness and private meaning. At the same time, it is important that Hareton is not really Heathcliff's son, because that would include Heathcliff in the kind of worldly success that had failed with Linton's death. As a spiritual son, however, Hareton offers the terms whereby Heathcliff's private vision can be made public reality, limited and awkward at first, but ultimately approaching something like resolution.

Hareton's love is perhaps the most capacious of anyone's in the novel. It does not insist on complete possession nor is it absolutely exclusive. We can see this most clearly in the scene where Cathy forces a confrontation between herself and Heathcliff as objects of Hareton's love. Because he loves them both, he does everything within his power to avoid the confrontation while attempting to offend neither of them. When the confrontation does occur, "Hareton attempted to release [Cathy's] locks, entreating [Heathcliff] not to hurt her that once" (253). Hareton's actions suggest that violence between the generations is not necessary. When Heathcliff drops his hand from her head—whether as a result of Hareton's entreaties or of Catherine's looks—he has begun to realize how unrealistic his stance has become in relation to his own desires. In seeing their love he is reminded of his own, and, in his own words, "it partly contributes to render me regardless how he and his

cousin go on together. I can give them no attention, any more" (255). Our ability to see Hareton partly as a manifestation of what was best about Heathcliff makes the union between Cathy and Hareton much more than the mere domestic resolution which Nelly and Joseph would make it. Instead it dramatizes the psychological regeneration which reaches fruition for both generations in Heathcliff's death.

By focusing our attention on the second generation as a reflection and reinterpretation of the first, Brontë accomplishes both thematic and formal resolution. Much has been said about resolution and reintegration in *Wuthering Heights*.¹³ It is nevertheless important to note that this resolution is not, finally, a triumph of public values over private ones. Nelly and Lockwood are not the winners in *Wuthering Heights*, as much as their homely domesticity and urbane gentility may lead us to think so. Brontë insists instead that we look beyond the world of metonymic language if not into a world of pure metaphor, at least into a realm where private vision can be given public meaning after all.

The process of reunion with Catherine, of course, begins for Heathcliff almost immediately after her death, but Brontë has constructed the action so that we do not experience his torment except in the excessive revenge to which it drives him. The result is to force us to experience the most discomfort at the very moments at which Heathcliff feels the greatest distance from Catherine. That we only recognize this in retrospect is Brontë's method of preventing us from scrutinizing too carefully the terms of her other-worldly resolution. If we were to see Heathcliff roaming the moors night after night, the meaning Brontë places on these excursions would become banal. There is also, I think, the possibility that we would not remain at all sympathetic to his suffering in the midst of his savagery. For this reason, Brontë has Nelly narrate most of the denouement of the story after Heathcliff has died. Finally, lest an over-explicitness dispel the impact she seeks, Brontë allows Nelly to describe, but rarely to interpret, Heathcliff's actions just before his demise. This momentary refusal to contextualize places Heathcliff beyond the metonymical scope of language into a realm we can only approach by means of analogy:

... I peeped in. Mr. Heathcliff was there—laid on his back. His eyes met mine so keen and fierce, I started; and then he seemed to smile.

I could not think him dead, but his face and throat were washed with rain; the bed clothes dripped, and he was perfectly still. The lattice, flapping to and fro, had grazed one hand that rested on the sill; no blood trickled from the broken skin, and when I put my fingers to it, I could doubt no more—he was dead and stark!

I hasped the window; I combed his black long hair from his forehead; I tried to close his eyes—to extinguish, if possible, that frightful life-like gaze of exultation, before anyone else beheld it. They would not shut; they seemed to sneer at my attempts, and his parted lips and sharp, white teeth sneered too! (264)

In this final look, just as in all his inexplicable looks over

the "resolution" of *Wuthering Heights*. For Burgan, the ending is "designed. . . to answer the problems posed by the beginning," both dramatically and psychologically (404-405); while Armstrong suggests the suppression of Romantic concerns in a Victorian resolution (253-54).

12. Interesting discussions of the second generation in *Wuthering Heights* are included in Knoepfelmacher 105-08, Garrett 8; Eigner 96-99, Burgan 395-413, and Armstrong 243-64.

13. See Burgan 404-11 and Armstrong 253-54 for recent considerations of

Nelly's shoulder throughout the last section of the novel, we see more than Brontë allows Nelly to articulate. The setting and the pose strongly suggest that he is reaching out to his beloved Catherine at last. The rain is a cleansing, soothing image when compared to the blood Lockwood produced in similar circumstances. Heathcliff's sneer forbids us to share his final vision, but it is this final refusal to articulate his private reality which places him at last beyond the contextualizing force of the novel itself.

Those critics who resist Brontë's attempt to resolve the relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff in a transcendent realm ignore the peculiar nature of the action she has constructed.¹⁴ As a resolution of the public world of the novel, the mere death of Heathcliff and the succession of the second generation is sufficient. Yet the work insists on a reading that accomplishes more than this metonymical completion. Brontë pays careful attention to a kind of growing supernatural awareness on Heathcliff's part, our interest in which can but supersede our concern with a happy ending for the young lovers. "I have a single wish," Heathcliff says, "and my whole being and faculties are yearning to attain it. They have yearned towards it so long, and so unwaveringly, that I'm convinced it *will* be reached—and *soon*—because it has devoured my existence. I am swallowed in the anticipation of its fulfillment" (256). The power of metaphor here is to liberate Heathcliff from the confines of his separation at the same time that it makes him less likely to continue in this world. Heathcliff is consumed within his own anticipation just as his language, and metaphorical language in general in the novel, becomes self-absorbed and ultimately self-reflexive. There is no public role for Heathcliff and Catherine, except within our own imaginations; and that is the realm within which Brontë finally tries to place them. As a physical union, if united at all, they are united in the grave. As a spiritual union, on the other hand, they reach beyond the grave and animate the novel with a spirit of otherworldliness both palpable and convincing.¹⁵

Cathy and Hareton have been called substitutes for Heathcliff and Catherine, and surely Brontë means us to understand their final happiness in those terms. It is not simply perverse, on the other hand, to note that Heathcliff is responsible for that union and that it is his own spirit that gives it life. Cathy takes it upon herself to tame this spirit, as it were, a project most readily accomplished by teaching Hareton to read and write. As he struggles to form words to her specification, she offers him kisses as a reward. She finds as well that his immense private world of love can be shared and realized publicly. When she first attempts this, of course, she risks the force of Heathcliff's wrath and his insistence that her love will make Hareton a beggar, but after his death Lockwood grumbles that "*they* are afraid of nothing" (265). At the close of the novel, they are set to marry and move into the Grange: they seem poised to realize their private happiness in a public form.

Cathy and Hareton do offer a resolution, then, which combines metaphor and metonymy in a reintegration of linguistic modes. They are neither haunted by private meanings nor trap-

ped within public ones. The image of their indoor/outdoor existence at the Heights, with windows open to the sun and the fire blazing within, suggests this union of public and private, in contrast both to the darkness of the churchyard graves of Heathcliff and Catherine and the coldness of Lockwood's response to them.

It is not a weak compromise, then, that Brontë offers to the Gothic dilemma. She has depicted instead a world in which literary forms can collide without destroying a work but instead giving it life. Cathy and Hareton survive all attempts to make them anything but themselves. The tale, at its close, remains open to all the possibilities of language; the public has been contained within the private, and the private within the public. In *Wuthering Heights*, Brontë has liberated language from the rigid dichotomies of the Gothic novel and found instead an idiom capable of animating the social form with the private fantasy. At the end of *Wuthering Heights* we do not question whether Cathy and Hareton will be happy or whether Catherine and Heathcliff will realize their union. Instead, we set down the novel with satisfaction: this is the first truly successful Gothic novel. Walpole's "ancient and modern romance" have at last been blended so as to produce one of the most profound personal statements in English.

I lingered round [the graves], under that benign sky; watched the moths fluttering among the heath and hare-bells; listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass; and wondered how anyone could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth. (266)

Lockwood's closing speech reminds us of how much there is to comprehend at the close of *Wuthering Heights* and how much lies beyond comprehension. For like Lockwood, we can only look and wonder. That is the measure of Brontë's achievement here.

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14. See Leavis 85-138 and Kettle 140-55. A useful answer to such studies is to be found in Grudin, 389-407.

15. This discussion is much indebted to Ralph W. Rader, "The Coherent

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A Rural Singing Match: Pastoral and Georgic in *Adam Bede*

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Although some people might not agree that George Eliot's *Adam Bede* (1859) is "the finest pastoral novel in English" or a "supreme novel of pastoral life,"¹ few would disagree with its pastoral status, whether because it "put[s] the complex into the simple"² or simply because it is set in the country. Yet the assumption of its pastoral status is anything but safe and is possible mainly because of the neglect of georgic, pastoral's sterner older cousin³ whose fate, as Joseph Addison complained in 1697, has usually been neglect or confusion with pastoral. This still persistent misunderstanding has obscured the role of georgic in Eliot's novel, thus skewing our understanding of it and oversimplifying its complex vision of rural life.⁴ Like

Vergil, Eliot uses pastoral and georgic as contrasting visions that organize her characters and landscapes into a moral order that is one of the novel's most important concerns.⁵

A complete catalogue of the differences between pastoral and georgic is beyond the scope of this essay, but a reexamination of Vergil will identify one major difference significant for Eliot's novel: The contrast between pastoral *otium* and georgic *labor*. In Vergil's first *Eclogue* we meet the shepherd Tityrus "reclining beneath the shelter of a spreading beech" (*patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi*)⁶ and "relaxed in the shade" (*lentus in umbra*, 1.4), a condition he calls "leisure" (*haec otia*, 1.6). This *otium* is the freedom, peace, and self-contained

1. Quotations in order: Allen 105, Pritchett 91. For *Adam Bede* as pastoral see Squires 53-85, Marotta 59-72, Hunter.

2. Empson 22. Empson's contrast of simplicity and complexity underlines a set of assumptions informing one major definition of pastoral; cf. e.g. Welsh 133, where he considers *Adam Bede* pastoral "because of the contrast between sophisticated and simple points of view"; and 139, where the novel's "pastoralism" is considered "one of its most pleasing conventions, and if life were simpler, as that convention pretends, then suffering and the relief from suffering would be easier all round." On the other hand, a focus on the rural landscape and hence the contrast between urban and rural (parallel to the contrast between simple and sophisticated) yields a different emphasis: cf. e.g. Graver 101-102: "Though it [sc. rural landscape] had changed over the years, the countryside was still very much in evidence, and . . . memories of its beauty and attraction could exert a compelling imaginative or spiritual force in true Wordsworthian fashion. Throughout George Eliot's fiction, the countryside exercises this power, even in *Adam Bede* and *Silas Marner*, where the spatial distance between the landscape and the narrator contributes greatly to the pastoral effect and its appeal to the urban reader." My point in this essay is that no matter how defined or emphasized, a focus on just pastoral in *Adam Bede* is misleading, since Eliot like Vergil uses pastoral in the context of georgic, which can challenge pastoral's oversimplifying idealization of the rural

world.

3. The best general survey of the European georgic tradition is still Lilly. For the English georgic see Durling and Low. Some cogent perceptions on the significance of georgic (and pastoral) in broader social and political terms can be found in Williams 17-20 and *passim*, and in Turner *passim*.

4. I am referring not only to the distortions that arise from focussing exclusively on pastoral, but also to the reading of the novel that considers it flawed because of its unconvincing fusion of pastoral and realism. Cf. Gregor: "So we are driven in reading *Adam Bede* into understanding it either in terms of tragic irony. . . or in terms of pastoral convention. . . in order to make it an effective whole. Unfortunately, for the sake of artistic coherence, neither appeal can be consistently made," (26). More recently cf. Ashton, who feels that "the 'Dutch realism' of *Adam Bede* lapses into pastoral idyll, romance, even myth in places," (30). For a response to Gregor and for arguments establishing *Adam Bede*'s coherence see Auster 110-111, also 111, n. 16.

5. For the distinctions between pastoral leisure and georgic labor see Rosenmeyer 21-26. More limited in scope but still useful is Patterson 241-68. For labor in *Adam Bede* see Fisher 40-42, Goode 34-36.

6. Text that of R.A.B. Mynors *Eclogue* 1.1 Except where noted, translations mine. Henceforth references to Vergil parenthetical in text.

leisure to sing and love, the two representative pastoral activities sustained by the responsive, sympathetic landscape.⁷ The georgic, on the other hand, glorifies *labor*, the work necessary to overcome the harsh conditions and destructive forces of the natural world and of humanity itself in order to create and maintain civilization: "Labor conquered everything, relentless labor, and poverty oppressing when things were harsh" (*labor omnia vicit/improbis et duris urgens in rebus egestas*, *Georgic* 1.145-146), a labor necessary given the natural world's inherent tendencies to disorder: "thus everything by fate rushes into ruin, slips back and is born away" (*sic omnia fatis/in peius ruere ac retro sublapsa referri*, G.1.199-200).⁸ Given the potential disorder of humanity's passions and of the natural world, only relentless struggle and diligence, and the values of hard work and self-control these foster, can create the order and stability that make civilization and ultimately human identity possible.

Yet, *otium* and *labor* are not confined to the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* respectively. In each work Vergil calls on both pastoral and georgic visions to build meaning that results from their interrelationships and contrasts held in uneasy synthesis. Thus opposed to Tityrus in *Eclogue* 1 is the exile Melibeus: "we leave the borders and sweet fields of the fatherland. We are fleeing the fatherland" (*nos patriae finis et dulcia linquimus arva./nos patriam fugimus*, E.1.3-4). The references to the political reality of the nation (*patriae*); to the borders that mark property ownership as well as nation (*finis*); to the ploughed fields (*arva*'s literal meaning) that testify to humanity's need to subject a harsh natural world to technology in order to survive; and, in *fugimus*, the allusion to the proscriptions of land around Mantua by Augustus in order to resettle his soldiers after Phillipi in 42 B.C.—all evoke a contingent world subject to history, the world Vergil in the first *Georgic* attributes to the will of Jupiter, who imposed these contingencies on humans so that they would leave behind an essentially bestial golden-age sloth and by overcoming those contingencies create the civilization that is the essence of humanity's identity (G.1.121-146).⁹

Pastoral *otium*, however, can be positive in the proper context, and Vergil calls on it in the second *Georgic* to communicate the peace and absence of anxiety that can characterize the farmer's life, an *otium* unproblematic only if the result of georgic virtues such as hard work and simplicity:

... a carefree calm, a life not knowing how to deceive, a wealth of manifold resources, leisure on broad lands, caves and living lakes, cool vales and lowing cattle and soft sleep under a tree—all are not absent.

... *secura quies et nescia fallere vita, dives opum variarum, at latis otia fundis, speluncae vivique lacus, at frigida tempe mugitusque boum mollesque sub arbore somni non absunt.* (G.2.467-471)

This description resembles in some of its details the picture of

Tityrus in *Eclogue* 1 (cf. *otia*, E.1.6; *mollesque sub arbore tempe* with *recubans sub tegmine fagi*, E.1.1). The difference is that here Vergil uses pastoral *otium* to represent the peace of mind that results from the virtue of rural hard work preached in the first *Georgic*, particularly when rural life is contrasted with the stress and anxiety and decadence of the complex urban world (G.2.461-466; 495-512).¹⁰ Both visions—the negative harsh one of the first *Georgic* and the more positive "pastoral" of the second—read together present a complete picture of the values and rewards of *labor*, the physical costs it exacts and the psychological benefits that follow. Separated from *labor*, however, *otium* is merely self-indulgent and destructive, for it ignores, as does Tityrus in *Eclogue* 1, the contingencies that must be recognized and mediated before leisure can be enjoyed. Vergil recognizes the dangers of leisure at the end of the *Eclogues* when he says that the representative pastoral shade is "harmful to singers. . .and to crops" (*solet esse gravis cantantibus umbra, . . . nocent et frugibus umbrae*, E.10.75-76).¹¹ Whether Vergil believes this synthesis of *otium* and *labor* is ultimately tenable is problematic; however, he clearly uses within the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* pastoral and georgic as modes embodying contrasting values and points of view.

Eliot in *Adam Bede* used pastoral and georgic in much the same way as Vergil. She develops her contrast of leisure and labor through her four main characters and their relationships: Adam Bede and Dinah Morris endorse values centered on the necessity of work; Arthur Donnithorne and Hetty Sorrel are in different ways destroyed by leisure, the former by the very real idleness and passivity resulting from his wealth and status, the latter by her vanity that inspires dreams of a life above her station acquired through her and Arthur's love. The novel opens with Adam at work in Burge's carpentry workshop, singing a hymn that encapsulates the basis of his character and values: "Awake, my soul, and with the sun / Thy daily stage of duty run; / Shake off dull sloth. . ." (1). Adam's work is "part of his religion" (498); he thinks a man close to God who spends his spare time working (6); he has faith in labor's recuperative powers in times of trouble: "There's nothing but what's bearable as long as a man can work" (116). And in Eliot's own description of Adam's character, labor is the common thread running through his personal and social identities: he is a man with "an inheritance of affections nurtured by a simple life of common need and common *industry*, and an inheritance of faculties trained in skilful and courageous *labour*" (217, emphases added). From work comes the ability to focus on needs outside the self and its desires, and this self-mastery in turn makes possible other values, such as honesty and fellow-feeling, that harmonize the human community.

Dinah Morris also dedicates herself to her labor, the preaching of the gospel and the tending of those in need (19-30) that she refers to as "the work" (32,88).¹² Yet Dinah also knows physical labor: she works in a cotton mill in barren Stonyshire

7. For a discussion of the philosophical origins and implications of *otium* see Rosenmeyer 65-97. For the responsiveness of the pastoral landscapes see Dick 27-44.

8. For discussions of this aphorism see Wilkinson 137-141, Miles 81-85.

9. Cf. Patterson 241: "Because of the issue that divides the shepherds in *Eclogue* 1. . . Virgilian pastoral would have indicated its liminal status on the borders of georgic, even if the *Georgics* had never been written." For

Vergil's variations of landscape to embody differing visions and interpretations of the rural world see Leach 113-142.

10. See Miles 151ff. for a fuller discussion of this passage.

11. For the representative value of shade in pastoral see Smith 298-304.

12. For the revival of an interest in georgic related to Protestantism and its work ethic see Fowler 107; for georgic and the Christian doctrine of the Fall see Low 156-167.

(18), and "her hand bore the traces of labour from her childhood upwards" (110). Whereas Adam must first suffer through his blinding desire for the flawed Hetty before his georgic values can stabilize his life, Dinah is from the start the novel's moral exemplar, whose self-sacrifice and tending of other's needs lessen their suffering and strengthen the community.

Eliot is careful to juxtapose Dinah's selflessness with Hetty's selfishness in the chapter called "The Two Bed-Chambers." The two women have already been established as doublets: Hetty is Mr. Poyser's niece and Dinah Mrs. Poyser's. Moreover, when Hetty first enters the story the two women's characters are contrasted: while Dinah works steadily at her knitting, Hetty gazes at her own reflection in the surfaces polished by the labor of her aunt (72); thus an essential part of the contrast is each's attitude toward work. This pairing of the two is made explicit in Chapter 15. Incited by Arthur's kiss in the grove, Hetty admires herself in the mirror (an effective emblem of her flawed vanity, as it is cracked) and dreams of the life of luxury and leisure Arthur will provide her (152; cf. also 99, where she longs "to sit in a carpeted parlor" and "not to be obliged to get up early"). Dinah, on the other hand, prays and worries about Hetty (160), finally going to her bed-chamber on a premonition that some evil is lurking near her. This contrast between Hetty's vanity and selfishness and Dinah's modesty and selflessness is strengthened by their different attitudes towards children: "Hetty would have been glad to hear that she should never see a child again" (157), a foreshadowing of her abandonment of her child; whereas the crying baby who rejects Hetty instinctively goes to Dinah and calms down (149). Dinah unceasingly labors at the tending of others; Hetty indulges her vanity, which yearns for leisure necessary for her self-absorption, a narcissism inimical to the community and its continuity children represent.

Hetty's dreams of self-absorbed leisure are her undoing; Arthur's actual leisure, the legacy of his wealth and status, nearly destroys him.¹³ His wealth insulates him from challenging contingencies and so does not prepare him for the complexities of human emotions and relations, or the self-denial that these potentially destructive emotions make necessary: he has had "nothing to occupy him imperiously through the live-long day" (140). Thus he becomes passive, seeing himself as acted on by "circumstances": "Well, but one may be betrayed into doing things by a combination of circumstances, which one might never have done otherwise," he tells the rector Mr. Irwine (175; cf. also 322, where he rationalizes his lapse with Hetty by claiming "he had been led on by circumstances"). These circumstances are the contingencies of human experience, the intersection of desire and intractable events, that the ethic of labor prepares one to meet and mitigate. Only after Arthur suffers—physically in the fight with Adam and his fever while in exile, psychologically in his guilt and remorse—can he be received back into the community of Hayslope and take his place as the Squire. That he can be reintegrated while Hetty

dies in exile is testimony to the unfair social realities, the privileges of class and gender, that make Hetty's blind absorption in the self all the more destructive.

The ways in which these four characters interrelate make explicit the contrast between pastoral and georgic values and Eliot's judgment of which values are preferable. Sexual attraction and the marriage that validates sexuality in communal terms are the concrete mechanism by which these characters meet and part and reform relations. When we consider how these various combinations develop, we can gauge Eliot's response to the collisions of the values the characters embody. The anti-marriage, so to speak, of Arthur and Hetty results in a very marked sterility—the abandonment and death of the child that should ratify the marriage and insure its continuity in the broader community. The point here is that carelessness and self-absorption associated with leisure blind one to the contingencies of class differences and to the fruit of illicit sexuality, the bastard. Hetty's marriage to Adam would seem to be the ideal one—Adam's georgic values redeeming Hetty's irresponsible selfishness—yet the fact that this marriage never comes off suggests Eliot's doubts that positive values can redeem negative ones when the context is sexual attraction. That leaves Adam and Dinah's marriage, the logical one given the similar values both share, values confirmed by the children born to them. Moreover, Adam and Dinah have each been able to mitigate somewhat the destructive effects of Arthur and Hetty's irresponsibility. Adam, albeit roughly, forces Arthur into breaking off with Hetty, acting as his conscience and making apparent to him the destructive ramifications of his actions (307-316). This shame and guilt will lead to Arthur's exile, which in turn makes it possible for him to return to Hayslope. And Dinah brings spiritual comfort to Hetty, helping her to confess and seek God's grace (455-65). The negative values resulting from leisure are destructive in a sexual relationship; the positive georgic values are constructive; the mingling of the two in a sexual relationship is by implication impossible. The key here is sexuality, and Eliot implies that it can only be positive in social terms if the people attracted to one another share the same correct values, as do Adam and Dinah.

The characters' problematic intersections are emphasized by the landscapes in which key encounters take place.¹⁴ Two landscapes are especially relevant for this discussion: the Grove in the Donnithorne woods and the garden at the Hall Farm. Two scenes occur in each of these places, and of the two one highlights a pastoral vision of the landscape, one a georgic: thus the landscapes become a part of the moral structure built around the four characters. The Grove is particularly important as it is where Arthur seduces Hetty, and Eliot's description of the Grove locates Arthur and Hetty's experience in an artificial, sentimental pastoral *locus amoenus* of timeless simple sexuality never challenged by the complex contingencies outside the pleasure. Thus the pastoralized eroticism in the description of the Grove:

13. Cf. Hunter 129: "Everywhere 'ease' is the enemy. In the story it is Arthur's 'ease' and Hetty's 'carelessness' which is their undoing." Although focussing on different modes of perception of the rural world, Hunter doesn't mention georgic.

14. As noted by Haight, Eliot's own attitudes toward the rural world were georgic rather than pastoral: "I am always made happier by seeing

well-cultivated land,' she wrote; in fact, she seldom saw beauty in any terrain that was unsuitable for farming. . . . Her comments on the weather usually considered its possible effect on her crops. When the rain poured down, her first thought was not of muddy London pavements, but of the wet hay and laid corn in the fields of Warwickshire," (3-4).

It was a wood of beeches and limes, with here and there a light, silver-stemmed birch—just the sort of wood most haunted by the nymphs: you see their white sunlit limbs gleaming athwart the boughs, or peeping from behind the smooth-sweeping outline of a tall lime; you hear their soft liquid laughter—but if you look with a too curious sacrilegious eye, they vanish behind the silver beeches. . . . It was not a grove with measured grass or rolled gravel for you to tread upon, but with narrow, hollow-shaped, earthy paths, edged with faint dashes of delicate moss—paths which look as if they were made by the free-will of the trees and underwood, moving reverently aside to look at the tall queen of the white-footed nymphs. (130-131)

those pouting child-lips, and for a long moment time has vanished. He may be a shepherd in Arcadia for aught he knows, he may be the first youth kissing the first maiden, he may be Eros himself, sipping the lips of Psyche—it is all one. (138)

The extended image of the coy nymph certifies the erotic pastoral credentials of the grove, as do the beeches, the pastoral tree par excellence (cf. *Eclogue* 1.1). Note also the typical pastoral personification of the landscape in the image of the trees voluntarily moving aside to create the paths: a personification that not only asserts a harmony between the natural world and the human, but also attributes to Hetty's seduction a "naturalness" that deceptively ignores social forces and institutions. The nymph also evokes the cloying sexuality ("white sunlit limbs," "liquid laughter") of sentimental nymph-and-shepherd pastoral, a sexuality devoid of human complexities and ignoring the social realities and consequences precluding a relationship between an aristocrat and a commoner.

In the paragraph following, however, Eliot indicates the dangerous limitations of pastoral's fiction of unproblematic sexuality by emphasizing the destruction lurking beneath the pastoral beauty of the Grove:

It was along the broadest of these paths that Arthur Donnithorne passed, under an avenue of limes and beeches. It was a still afternoon—the golden light was lingering languidly on the purple pathway and its edge of faintly-sprinkled moss: an afternoon in which destiny disguises her cold awful face behind a hazy radiant veil, encloses us in warm downy wings, and poisons us with violet-scented breath. (131)

The phrase "broadest of these paths" echoes Matthew 7.13, "broad is the way that leadeth to destruction," and the "purple pathway" recalls the purple carpet upon which Agamemnon, like Hetty an infanticide, steps in the *Oresteia* (*Agamemnon* 909-911). These intimations of destruction are confirmed by the "cold awful face" of destiny and the verb "poisons," which convey the contingencies of time and death that give the lie to the illusion of timelessness and sexual innocence emblemized by the grove and the nymph. Eliot further reminds us of these realities when she has Hetty drop her workbasket: "Something had fallen on the ground with a rattling noise; it was Hetty's basket, all her little workwoman's matters were scattered on the path. . ." (133-34). A workbasket falling in a Grove reminds us of the Fall in the Garden of Eden, the result of which was the labor and suffering that are our unavoidable heritage. Georgic values recognize these contingencies and the labor that mitigates them; pastoral leisure vainly and destructively attempts to avoid them.

The next scene in the Grove, in which Arthur kisses Hetty, is described with the same awareness of pastoral's limitations:

His arm is stealing round the waist again. . . his lips are meeting

The evocation of pastoral in "shepherd in Arcadia" is obvious, as is the claim to pastoral timelessness in the "time has vanished." The baroque preciousness of this scene and its illusions are undercut when Arthur and Hetty part:

As for Arthur, he rushed back through the wood, as if he wanted to put a wide space between himself and Hetty. . . . He walked right on into the Chase, glad to get out of the Grove, which surely was haunted by his evil genius. Those beeches and smooth limes—there was something enervating in the very sight of them. (139)

The "queen of the white-footed nymphs" has metamorphosed into an "evil genius," an inversion which, along with the "enervating" trees, destroys the Arcadian artifice behind which Arthur hides the social and class realities dooming his attraction to Hetty.

All of the latent dangers of Arthur and Hetty's pastoral experience in the Grove are made obvious when Adam sees them kissing in it (302). In this scene all pastoral artifice disappears and Adam's georgic vision dominates. Thus Adam appreciates the beeches because he is a carpenter who knows intimately the materials with which he works (301); whereas Arthur considers the trees his "sacred grove" (302), a pastoral *locus amoenus*. But Adam soon forces on Arthur the social context of sexuality, particularly the class barriers a pastoral vision ignores:

"You know. . . what it's to lead to, when a gentleman like you kisses and makes love to a young woman like Hetty. . . . You know it couldn't be made public as you've behaved to Hetty as Y'have done without her losing her character, and bringing shame and trouble on her and her relations." (304, 305)

Class differences preclude the marriage that can provide for the possible outcome of sexuality, a child; and without marriage, the community then reasserts itself as the context of sexuality, since the child born becomes part of the community and affects it for good or ill: thus the "shame and trouble" in Adam's reproach, thus the reference to "relations," the family that is the most immediate representative of the broader society. Leisure indulges the self-absorption that ignores the consequences of sexuality—the child, the suffering of the family, the whole social reality that checks human desire. Georgic values like Adam's recognize these contingencies and labor to control desire so that others will not suffer.

The garden at the Hall Farm is the setting for two important encounters between Adam and Hetty, and like the two scenes in the Grove, one highlights a pastoral vision of the landscape, the other a georgic. In the first scene Adam misinterprets Hetty's blush as love for him (224), whereas it really comes from her mistaking Adam for Arthur (225). Adam is being blinded by desire, and Eliot in her description of the garden notes its disorderliness, the luxuriant "naturalness" characteristic of the *locus amoenus*: thus the garden is filled "with hardy

perennial flowers, unpruned fruit-trees, and kitchen vegetables growing together in careless, half-neglected abundance" (222). On the one hand, the garden can represent Hetty, her sexual beauty and its impossible fertility ("flowers," "abundance") compromised by her self-absorption ("half-neglected," "careless"). Yet "unpruned," "careless," and "half-neglected" also point to an absence of labor that evokes Adam's inability to control his passion for Hetty and see her for what she really is. His failure is linked to Arthur's in the Grove by Hetty's dropping of the basin of currants (223), which recalls her dropping her workbasket. Adam's failure, of course, is more understandable, as nothing but Hetty's lack of character prevents their marriage. Yet the point remains that sexuality may be too powerful even for those with strong values.

Adam's values may not be strong enough to control his passion for Hetty, but they still can make it possible for him to mitigate somewhat the destructive effects of Arthur's irresponsibility. The passive Arthur must be forced by Adam into writing the letter that ends his relationship with Hetty, whereas Adam, despite his wounded feelings, delivers the letter (327ff.) and promises to stand by Hetty: "I'll take care of you as if I was your brother" (330). This scene also takes place in the garden and contrasts with the pastoralism of the previous scene. As he walks to meet Hetty, Adam remembers that earlier encounter:

The remembrance of that scene had often been with him since Thursday evening: the sunlight through the apple-tree boughs, the red bunches, Hetty's sweet blush. It came importunately now, on this sad evening, with the low-hanging clouds; but he tried to suppress it, lest some emotion should impel him to say more than was needful for Hetty's sake. (327)

The pastoralism of the first scene, briefly recalled in the "apple-tree boughs," and the "red bunches" paralleled in Hetty's blush, is now lost in the "low-hanging clouds" that emblemize the contingencies of life that thwart desire's unproblematic fulfillment. To lessen those contingencies' destructive potential one must exercise self-control and recognize the demands outside the self, just as Adam here suppresses his own jealousy and hurt to do what is best for Hetty. Such self-control is hard work, and Adam's ability to exercise such control results from the ethic of work central to his character and values.

The pastoral and georgic modes are the two axes of a grid on which Eliot plots her characters and scenes, playing off the one against the other until the limitations of pastoral values and the strength of georgic are made obvious at the novel's end by Adam and Dinah's children and by Arthur's reintegration into the community of Hayslope.¹⁵ And the values central to the georgic, those of hard work, honesty, sympathy, and

self-control, are also central to Eliot's moral vision throughout her work. They characterize *Middlemarch's* Caleb Garth, the moral hero whose "virtual divinities were good practical schemes, accurate work, and the faithful completion of undertakings" (173); they surface in her advice to the working classes in "Address to Working Men, by Felix Holt":

[W]hether our [sc. working classes'] political power will be any good to us. . . must depend entirely on the means and materials—the knowledge, ability, and honesty, we have at our command. These three things are the only conditions on which we can get any lasting benefit, as every clever workman knows: he knows that for an article to be worth much there must be good invention of plan to go upon, there must be well-prepared material, and there must be skillful and honest work in carrying out the plan. (417-18)

Adam Bede and Caleb Garth are the "clever workmen" Eliot creates who substantiate her point and expand its significance beyond the world of labor to the ethical and moral conditions necessary for a harmonious community.

As in every novel, many voices sing in *Adam Bede*. Pastoral may be its sweetest and most alluring, but long after it is silenced, georgic's voice continues to hymn the values central to Eliot's moral vision.

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15. Adam and Dinah's marriage has been a subject of critical debate since the novel's publication. See Diekhoff 221-27. He concurs with the judgment that the "ending. . . [is] out of harmony with the tone of the whole and untrue to character," (221). Gregor sees the happy ending as an attempt to impose a coherence that Eliot's "pastoralism" and "realism" deny: "She demands, in the end, a response from the reader which he cannot give, because he cannot feel that the solution admissible in one mode of fiction can solve the problems raised in another," (29). Cf. also Liddell 44, who considers the marriage the result of "Lewes' unfortunate suggestions," and that it "lacks interest" and is "quite unconvincing."

Carpenter (50-53) feels that Book VI "undermines the supposed happiness of Dinah's fate with the bitterness of Hetty's," (51), since the two women have undergone a "ghostly merging of identity," (53). For a positive view of the marriage in terms of its being prepared for by Adam's and Dinah's development as characters, see Doyle 47-48. Eliot herself felt strongly about the validity of the marriage: "He [Edward Lytton] thinks the two defects of "*Adam Bede*" are the dialect and Adam's marriage with Dinah; but of course I would have my teeth drawn rather than give up either." Letter to John Blackwood, 23 February 1860. In *Selections from George Eliot's Letters* 240.

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The Sublimation of Carnival in Ruskin's Theory of the Grotesque

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In *Rabelais and His World*, Mikhail Bakhtin argues that once the exuberant and transgressive energies of Renaissance carnival were displaced from the public celebrations they were originally rooted in, they sought refuge in the underground of the individual psyche. In the wake of European romanticism, Bakhtin claims, "the carnival spirit was transposed into a subjective, idealistic philosophy" (37). But the "heterodox, messy, excessive and unfinished" energies that Peter Stallybrass and Allon White associate with that spirit (183) did not simply disappear as a result. They were transformed in a complex process involving fragmentation, marginalization, sublimation, and repression. "In the long process of disowning carnival and rejecting its periodical inversions of the body and the social hierarchy," Stallybrass and White argue, "bourgeois society prolematized its own relation to the power of the 'low,' enclosing itself, indeed often defining itself, by its suppression of the 'base' languages of carnival" (181). Nowhere is this process more evident than in John Ruskin's theory of the grotesque. Grounded in Neoplatonic metaphysics, indebted to German Romantic theory, insistently moralistic, Ruskin's "Grotesque Ideal" presents a striking contrast to the material and communal orientation of Bakhtin's "grotesque realism."¹ One of Bakhtin's central comparisons in *Rabelais and His World* expresses this contrast succinctly. "Folk culture brought the world close to man, gave it a bodily form, and established a link through the body and bodily life, in contrast to the abstract and spiritual mastery sought by Romanticism. Images of bodily life, such as eating, drinking, copulation, defecation, almost entirely lost their regenerating power and were turned into 'vulgarity'" (39). Ruskin's quest to achieve mastery over the grotesque began with the writing of *The Stones of Venice* (1851-3), continued with volumes three and four of *Modern Painters* (1856), and concluded with the attacks on Charles Dickens and George Eliot in "Fiction Fair and Foul" (1880). His

critical project was an ambitious one, in part a campaign against his culture's utilitarian rage to exclude the imperfect and the irrational, in part an imposition of Evangelical moral constraints on an inherently transgressive form.² The result is a theory that is both defined and complicated by its attempted rejection of "the power of the 'low.'" In the pages that follow, I propose to analyze the rhetoric of Ruskin's theorizing as a seminal instance of the post-Romantic transformation of carnival.

At the very beginning of his critical enterprise, in volume two of *The Stones of Venice*, Ruskin attempts to banish all "low" manifestations of the grotesque to the geographical and historical "space" of late Renaissance Venice:

The architecture raised at Venice during this period is amongst the worst and basest ever built by the hands of men, being especially distinguished by a spirit of brutal mockery and insolent jest, which, exhausting itself in deformed and monstrous sculpture, can sometimes be hardly otherwise defined than as the perpetuation in stone of the ribaldries of drunkenness. (*Works* 11: 135)

This association of aesthetic and cultural degradation with the excesses of the body is a characteristic one. So is the subsequent recognition that the ostensibly excluded "low" domains continue to haunt the "high." "On such a period, and on such work, it is painful to dwell, and I had not originally intended to do so," Ruskin says. But "there were many most interesting questions arising out of the study of this particular spirit of jesting" (*Works* 11: 135). In fact, Ruskin discovers within the very forms of debasement he so excitedly condemns the same qualities he admires in Gothic architecture: "there is jest—perpetual, careless, and not unfrequently obscene—in the most noble work of the Gothic periods." His quest thus becomes an attempt to discover and insist on a demarcation between "the jesting of art

1. Clayborough emphasizes the Neoplatonic orientation of Ruskin's theory (36-48); Harpham specifically links it to the philosophy of Kant and Hegel (176-85); Thompson with the romantic theory of Friedrich Schlegel and Victor Hugo (14-16).

2. Landow provides an excellent account of the way in which Ruskin's theory is grounded in "Evangelical versions of traditional Christian beliefs about revelation, prophecy, and scriptural language" (370).

in its highest flight" from "jesting in its utmost degradation" (*Works* 11: 136). A certain urgency attends this challenge, since "the distinction between the true and false grotesque is one which the present tendencies of the English mind have rendered as practically important to ascertain" (*Works* 11: 145). He fears that his culture will cease to value, in its people and its art, "that strange *disquietude* of the Gothic spirit that is its greatness; that restlessness of the dreaming mind, that wanders hither and thither among the niches, and flickers feverishly around the pinnacles, and frets and fades in labyrinthine knots and shadows along wall and roof and yet is not satisfied, nor shall be satisfied" (*Works* 11: 215). To preserve the noble and religious aspects of this spirit while controlling its baser tendencies is Ruskin's difficult task.

In volume two of *The Stones of Venice*, Ruskin divides artists into three classes—Purist, Naturalist, and Sensualist, claiming "the two necessary classes are only the first two" (*Works* 10: 223). The "Sensualist," who fills himself "with the husks the swine did eat" (*Works* 10: 224), delights in pursuing and portraying evil but never subsumes this evil within a humanly or spiritually ameliorating context. Ruskin expresses contempt for Murillo's painting of two "ragged and vicious" paupers eating in the street because it exhibits a "mere delight in foulness." "Are we the least more likely to take any interest in ragged schools, or to help the next pauper child that comes in our way, because the painter has shown us a cunning beggar feeding greedily?" (*Works* 10: 229). Yet by volume three he recognizes that certain forms of jesting with evil, with "Sin and Death," produce the "noble grotesque," characterized by spiritual insight and imaginative sympathy: "the master of the noble grotesque knows the depth of all at which he seems to mock, and would feel it at another time, or feels it in a certain undercurrent of thought even while he jests with it" (*Works* 11: 167). He still attempts to marginalize the grotesque at this point, in one passage adopting a kind of utilitarian rhetoric:

Now all the forms of art which result from the comparatively recreative exertion of minds more or less blunted or encumbered by other cares and toils, the art which we may call generally art of the wayside, as opposed to that which is the business of men's lives, is, in the best sense of the word, Grotesque. (*Works* 11: 157)

He also claims that "there is a Divine beauty, and a terribleness or sublimity coequal with it in rank, which are the subjects of the highest art; and there is an inferior or ornamental beauty, and an inferior terribleness coequal with it in rank, which are the subjects of grotesque art" (*Works* 11: 165). By the time he comes to define the three branches of the "True Ideal" of art in volume three of *Modern Painters*, however, the "Grotesque Ideal" takes its place beside the "Purist" and "Naturalist" ideals, all three valued for their power of penetration "by intuition and intensity of gaze (not by reasoning, but by its authoritative opening and revealing power), a more essential truth than is seen at the surface of things" (*Works* 4: 284).

Ruskin's attempts at formal definition are also characterized and frustrated by a desire to maintain distinctions between the "high" and "low." There are two "branches" of the grotesque, he argues in volume three of *The Stones of Venice*, the "sportive" and "terrible." However, only the artist of the "terrible" grotesque, who understands "the value of the human soul, and the

shortness of mortal time" (*Works* 11: 171), possesses "deep insight into nature," "because the dreadfulness of the universe around him weighs upon his heart" (*Works* 11: 169). But Ruskin fails to keep the two branches from intertwining. As he observes, "there are hardly any examples which do not in some degree combine both elements" (*Works* 11: 151). In fact, although he consistently associates the sportive grotesque with merely destructive sarcasm or sensationalism, and the terrible grotesque with ennobling art, "the interval is filled by endless conditions more or less inclining to the evil or the good; impurity and malice stealing gradually into the nobler forms, and invention and wit elevating the lower. . ." (*Works* 11: 177).

Ruskin attempts to impose a similar kind of hierarchy on the qualities of mind that produce grotesque art. In *The Stones of Venice* this produces a four-tiered ranking. At the top are those individuals who play "wisely," whose eyes are "fixed upon heaven, and open to the earth," and whose greatest representatives are Plato and Wordsworth (*Works* 11: 153). Below them are those who play "necessarily," followed by those who play "inordinately," whose minds are "more sensible to what is ludicrous and accidental, than to what is grave and essential" (*Works* 11: 154). Finally, there are those in whom all traces of playfulness have been repressed, who are "driven too hard by the necessities of the world to be capable of any species of happy relaxation" (*Works* 11: 155). This paradigm is replaced in volume three of *Modern Painters* by a more explicitly psychological analysis which yields such startling insights as this one: "there is. . . a strange connection between the reinless play of the imagination, and a sense of the presence of evil, which is usually more or less developed in those creations of the imagination to which we properly attach the word *Grotesque*" (*Works* 5: 103). Here Ruskin is close to essential agreement with Bakhtin, for whom the grotesque is a form of imaginative transgression. From this insight Ruskin develops a conception of the three psychological states out of which the grotesque arises: "healthful but irrational play of the imagination in times of rest"; "irregular and accidental contemplation of terrible things; or evil in general"; and "the confusion of the imagination by the presence of truths which it cannot wholly grasp" (*Works* 5: 131).

But this division quickly breaks down when Ruskin observes that all three categories of mind, as well as the mind of the "Sensualist," play host to an unpredictably transgressive imagination. He notes that

the imagination, when at play, is curiously like bad children, and likes to play with fire; in its entirely serious moods it dwells by preference on beautiful and sacred images, but in its mocking or playful moods it is apt to jest, sometimes bitterly, with undercurrent of sternest pathos, sometimes waywardly, sometimes slightly and wickedly, with death and sin; hence an enormous mass of grotesque art, some most noble and useful, as Holbein's Dance of Death, and Albert Durer's Knight and Death, going down gradually through various conditions of less and less seriousness into an art whose only end is that of mere excitement, or amusement by terror, like a child making mouths at another, more or less redeemed by the degree of wit or fancy in the grimace it makes, as in the demons of Teniers and such others; and, lower still, in the demonology of the stage. (*Works* 5: 131)

On the one hand, Ruskin wants to privilege orthodox and morally "useful" forms of the grotesque, and exclude their supposed

opposites. As one of the embodiments of the unpredictable carnival spirit, the theatre was condemned and suppressed throughout much of the nineteenth century by a bourgeoisie that placed a high value on order and control. Ruskin's participation in this exclusionary process includes the peroration that ends the paragraph above, in which he descends from the refiner's fire of Durer's art to the symbolic "hell" of the theatre, the "demonology of the stage." Yet he also celebrates the power of the imagination to leap over or ignore such hierarchical boundaries. He goes on to note that all "naturally imaginative" art is transgressive, since it is "hardly ever free from some slight taint of the inclination to evil; . . . moral fairy tales. . . are hardly ever. . . naturally imaginative The moment any real vitality enters them, they are nearly sure to become satirical, or slightly gloomy, and so connect themselves with the evil-enjoying branch" (*Works* 5: 131). Despite his uneasiness in its presence, the effect of these statements is to legitimize the grotesque in all its forms, to transform it into what George Eliot calls the imagination in *Adam Bede*: "a licensed trespasser" (115).

In thus elevating the status of this form of the imagination, Ruskin aligns himself with a tradition within romanticism whose earliest and most important spokesman was Friedrich Schlegel. It was Schlegel who originally found a home for certain fragments of the displaced carnival spirit in the creative mind itself. Schlegel's own subjective philosophy of the grotesque has never received the attention or recognition it warrants, in part because of the cryptic, aphoristic style of its formulation. But it anticipates the terms of virtually all modern discussions of the term, even Bakhtin's.³ Like Ruskin, Schlegel defines the grotesque as a tense interplay of opposites, but his definition is attended by none of Ruskin's attempts at moral containment. Schlegel calls the 'arabesque,' which he usually used as a synonym for the grotesque, "this artfully ordered confusion, this charming symmetry of contradictions, this wonderfully perennial alternation of enthusiasm and irony which lives even in the smallest parts of the whole. . . certainly the arabesque is the oldest and most original form of human imagination" (86). Schlegel's arabesque brings us near the divine *logos* of Neoplatonic philosophy, the creative principle through which God manifests himself. For Schlegel the arabesque is at the heart of the creative process itself, emblem and agent of meaning and change.⁴

Anticipating both Ruskin and Bakhtin, Schlegel places a high value on the ability of the grotesque to "cancel the progression and laws of rationally thinking reason, and to transplant us once again into the beautiful confusion of imagination. . ." (86). Bakhtin similarly claims that the grotesque "leads men out of the confines of the apparent (false) unity, of the indisputable and stable" (48). While he doesn't share Schlegel or Bakhtin's eagerness to undermine reason, Ruskin too values extra-rational

modes of vision. As early as volume three of *The Stones of Venice*, Ruskin declares that "wherever the human mind is healthy and vigorous in all its proportions, great in imagination and emotion no less than in intellect, and not overborne by an undue or hardened preeminence of the mere reasoning faculties, there the grotesque will exist in full energy" (*Works* 11: 187). All three writers are making an appeal that is ultimately metaphysical and religious rather than aesthetic or (in the case of Bakhtin) political. Bakhtin claims that the "carnival spirit" "offers the chance to have a new outlook on the world, to realize the relative nature of all that exists, and to enter a completely new order of things" (34). Ruskin is far less relativistic. Like Schlegel, his conception of the grotesque is Neoplatonic, while most of his terms are Christian. In volume three of *The Stones of Venice* he claims that mankind requires the grotesque, because

the fallen human soul, at its best, must be as a diminishing glass, and that a broken one, to the mighty truths of the universe round it; and the wider the scope of its glance, and the vaster the truths into which it obtains an insight, the more fantastic their distortion is likely to be, as the winds and the vapours trouble the field of the telescope most when it reaches farthest. (*Works* 11: 181)

For Ruskin the distortions of the grotesque represent man's intuition of the infinite filtered through his flawed instrument of vision.

Schlegel also anticipated Ruskin and Bakhtin by freeing the grotesque from what had been its exclusively aesthetic connotations. In one of his most famous aphorisms, Schlegel calls the French Revolution "the grotesque of the age in the most awesome dimensions, where the most profound prejudices and the strongest presentiments of the age are mingled in a horrible chaos, and are interwoven to a tremendous tragicomedy of mankind to the most bizarre degree" (148). As Marshall Brown has said, Schlegel conceives of the arabesque or grotesque as a "revolution in the mind" (92); here he is powerfully announcing the extra-aesthetic significance of that conception. Bakhtin's theorizing about revolution, constrained as it was by the spectre of Stalin, was confined to more figurative examples. But his romantic socialism finds an ideal literary analogue in the irrepressible and communal "grotesque body" of medieval and Renaissance folk culture, which is seen as a liberating force constantly erupting out of the world of "the people" or *Volk* (Clark and Holquist 77; Gossman 348). Less sanguine about revolution than Schlegel or Bakhtin, Ruskin nonetheless interprets the presence of the grotesque in a culture as a gauge of that culture's vitality: "I believe there is no test of greatness in periods, nations, or men, more sure than the development, among them or in them, of a noble grotesque and no test of comparative smallness or limitation, of one kind or another, more sure than the absence of grotesque

3. Kayser is one of the few critics of the grotesque who gives Schlegel his due (38-54). Bakhtin was familiar with Schlegel's theory of the arabesque through his reading of Kayser, whose *The Grotesque in Art and Literature* he critiques in *Rabelais and His World* (48-52). Clark and Holquist situate Bakhtin in an ideological and intellectual context which is informed in important ways by European romanticism. As Lionel Gossman puts it in his review of their biography, "his work belongs visibly to that great current of romantic and post-romantic reflection that revolves around the opposition and the need to reconcile part and whole, discontinuity and continuity, subject and object, self and world. It is

radically opposed to Enlightenment (Western) thought and Anglo-French positivism, which is in the end the bedrock of political liberalism. On the contrary, it is profoundly metaphysical and even religious" (341). During his studies at Petersburg, when the first "Bakhtin Circle" was formed, Bakhtin thought of himself as a philosopher, not a literary scholar, and was influenced in important ways by German idealistic philosophy (Holquist xxii-xxiii).

4. For a summary of the metaphysics of Schlegel's poetic theory, see Behler and Struc's introduction to their edition of Schlegel's *Dialogue on Poetry and Literary Aphorisms* (15-18).

invention, or incapability of understanding it" (*Works* 11: 187). In fact Ruskin is seeking a "revolution" in the aesthetics of his culture that will create a wider channel for grotesque expression, since

if field for such expression be frankly granted, an enormous mass of intellectual power is turned to everlasting use, which, in this present century of ours, evaporates in street gibing or vain revelling; all the good wit and satire expiring in daily talk, (like foam on wine,) which in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had a permitted and useful expression in the arts of sculpture and illumination, like foam fixed into chalcedony. (*Works* 5: 138)

Here Ruskin urges a renewed receptivity to those forms of "high" art whose margins will accommodate the transgressive (but ultimately useful) energies of exuberant jesting.

Still, this passage makes it clear that folk humor is to be kept in its place. When Ruskin moves from theoretical to practical criticism, his ranking of works and genres displays a similar disparagement of the popular. In volume three of *Modern Painters*, after establishing the three mental processes that produce the grotesque, Ruskin separates the works resulting from these processes into three branches, "sportive," "terrible," and "symbolical" (Ruskin adds a fourth branch, the "Grotesque Expressionists School," in volume four of *Modern Painters* [*Works* 5: 469-74], which he associates with caricature). The third branch, the only "thoroughly noble one," includes "nearly the whole range of symbolical and allegorical art and poetry. . . . No element of imagination has a wider range, a more magnificent use, or so colossal a grasp of sacred truth" (*Works* 5: 131, 134). He terms the allegorical image itself a "grotesque," an identification he illustrates by explicating a stanza from Book I of *The Faerie Queene*. After lengthily summarizing the complex notion of envy Spenser has captured in nine short lines, Ruskin quotes the single stanza description by which Spenser economically accomplishes this:

And next to him malicious Envy rode
Upon a ravenous wolfe, and stil did chaw
Between his cankred teeth a venemous tode
That all the poison ran about his jaw.
All in a kirtle of discolord say
He clothed was, y-paynted full of eies;
And in his bosome secretly there lay
An hatefull snake, the which his tail uptyes
In many folds and mortal sting implyes. (*Works* 11: 132)

This passage illustrates Ruskin's definition of the "symbolical" grotesque, which is

the expression, in a moment, by a series of symbols thrown together in bold and fearless connection, of truths which it would have taken a long time to express in any verbal way, and of which the connection is left for the beholder to work out for himself; the gaps, left or overleaped by the haste of the imagination, forming the grotesque character. (*Works* 11: 132)

Ruskin is an excellent reader of Spenser, and he here offers a valuable defense of the oblique and compressed language of poetry. But it is worth noting that when seeking an example in literature of the highest manifestation of the grotesque, he finds it in a personification of sin. In volume four of *Modern Painters*, he observes that "when the powers of quaint fancy are associated.

. . . with stern understanding of the nature of evil, and tender human sympathy, there results a . . . spirit of grotesque, to which mankind at the present day owe more thorough moral teaching than to any branch of art whatsoever" (*Works* 6: 471). The more clearly didactic the grotesque, the higher its value.

When the excesses of the body are dramatized in a less schematic fashion, Ruskin's judgments are not so approving. In volume three of *The Stones of Venice*, he says that "wherever the lower orders are allowed to express themselves freely, we shall find humor, more or less caustic, becoming a principle feature in their work" (*Works* 11: 172). This had a positive effect on Gothic architecture, because the builders recognized that "folly and sin are, to a certain extent, synonymous." Consequently, "the vices were permitted to be represented under the most ridiculous forms, and all the coarsest wit of the workman to be exhausted in completing the degradation of the creatures supposed to be subjected to them" (*Works* 11: 172). The contemporary situation is quite different. "The classical and Renaissance manufacturers of modern times having silenced the independent language of the operative, his humor and satire pass away the word-wit which has of late become the especial study of the group of authors headed by Charles Dickens; all this power was formerly thrown into noble art, and became permanently expressed in the sculptures of the cathedral" (*Works* 11: 172). The lowest form of the grotesque, in other words, is of the sort produced by Dickens, and it lacks even the moral purpose previously expressed through the "ridiculous forms" of Gothic architecture.

"Fiction Fair and Foul," published in 1880, elaborates on this condemnation, and extends it to George Eliot. Ruskin consigns the two novelists to the "lowest orders" of creative minds, and implicitly ranks Victorian fiction at the bottom of his hierarchy of literary forms. As in his discussion of the grotesque in general, Ruskin frames his argument in terms of the extremes of high and low. Here the language of social rank informs his comparison between Sir Walter Scott, who is praised for maintaining a tone of aristocratic chivalry in his novels, and Dickens and Eliot, who willingly portray "vile" characters and behavior in their fiction. Ascribing the contemporary appetite for sensation to urban crowding and monotony, Ruskin accuses contemporary novelists of pandering to the lowest human sensibilities. He describes both the readers and characters of *Bleak House* and *The Mill on the Floss* as if they were depraved denizens of Tom All-Along's: "the reactions of moral disease upon itself, and the conditions of languidly monstrous character developed in an atmosphere of low vitality, have become the most valued material of modern fiction, and the most eagerly discussed texts of modern philosophy" (*Works* 34: 268). He attacks Dickens' rendering of the nine deaths in *Bleak House*, calling them all "grotesquely either violent or miserable" (*Works* 34: 272), and observing by contrast that in the novels of such "great masters" as Scott "death is always either heroic, deserved, or quiet and natural" (*Works* 34: 273). Bodily destruction and mental aberration seem to him to be "the entire product of modern infidel imagination," an observation he supports with reference to *The Mill on the Floss*. Describing "the common railroad-station novelist," Ruskin claims that "the author describes carefully to his recognition the blotches, burrs and pimples in which the paltry nature resembles his own. *The Mill on the Floss* is perhaps the most striking instance extant of this

study of cutaneous disease" (*Works* 34: 377). Whereas in the novels of Scott "only lofty character is worth describing at all" (*Works* 34: 376), George Eliot solicits our interest in common and insignificant characters. Maggie is no more interesting than other girls "fairly clever, half educated, and unluckily related; Tom is "a clumsy and cruel lout," and "the rest of the characters are simply the sweepings out of a Pentonville omnibus" (*Works* 34: 377). With the example of *The Mill on the Floss* clearly in mind, Ruskin complains that "the automatic amours and involuntary proposals of recent romance acknowledge little further law than the instinct of an insect, or the effervescence of a chemical mixture" (*Works* 34: 286). Given his tendency toward exclusionary extremes, it is little wonder Ruskin had no sympathy with Eliot's stated intention of presenting "mixed human beings" in her fiction (*The George Eliot Letters* 2: 299).

Ruskin's animus toward these two particular novels is significant. Elsewhere he wrote approvingly of *Hard Times* and *Silas Marner* (*Works* 17: 31; 27: 425), each of which represents the closest the two writers came in their novels to writing moral fables. *Bleak House* and *The Mill on the Floss*, on the other hand, are far more ambiguous and open-ended. They also embody modes of grotesque representation that encompass both Ruskin's "Grotesque Ideal" and the messy domains of the body and consciousness that he attempts to exclude from it. In each novel, the excesses and abnormalities the flesh is heir to become ways of modeling the relationship of the individual to the social environment and of analyzing the relative conditions of both. And the imagery of the two novels Lady Dedlock's neurotic tremblings, Esther Summerson's self-effacing gestures, the Smallweed family's "likeness to old monkeys with something depressing on their minds" (219), Krook's spontaneous combustion, the smallpox that claims Jo the crossing sweep and scars Esther—these are images of the physical body that simultaneously register corruptions within the social body. Some of these images are encompassed within neat thematic patterns. Krook becomes overtly symbolic of the parasitism and social unresponsiveness of Chancery; his pyrotechnic demise is a warning about the dangers of deferring reform. (It is also an exemplary instance of the unsettling coexistence of "two elements, one ludicrous, the other fearful," that Ruskin identifies with the grotesque (*Works* 11: 151)). Esther's physical and psychic scars, on the other hand, are not so readily contained, as the dash that brings her narrative to a halt without satisfactorily ending her story suggests (Craig 623; Frank 112).

The Mill on the Floss too is bound together by a web of imagery relating to the extremes of the body, from the literally grotesque bodies the Dean sisters conjure up in their descriptions of ailing friends and relatives to the unruly energies of Maggie and Tom Tulliver and Philip Wakem, rendered in part by way of

repeated allusions to giants and dwarfs. Even such a small detail as Maggie's hair becomes an analogue for her uncontrollable impulses. According to her mother, "her hair won't curl all I can do with it and she's so franzy abut having it put i' paper, an' I've such work as never was to make her stand and have it pinched with th' irons'" (I. ii: 60). Both *The Mill on the Floss* and *Bleak House* incorporate elements of Bakhtin's "grotesque realism," which "ignores the closed, smooth, and impenetrable surface of the body and retains. . . only that which leads beyond the body's limited space or into the body's depths" (318). The body as rendered by this realism is changeable, anarchic, alternately swelling and shrinking in size, and most of all, incomplete: "the last thing we can say of the real grotesque is that it is static; on the contrary it seeks to grasp in its imagery the very act of becoming and growth, the eternal incomplete unfinished nature of being" (52). Maggie's story, like Esther's, lacks a satisfactory ending; by having her drown with Tom, reconciled at last in death, Eliot simply imposes mythic closure on the life of an individual whose "struggles had lain almost entirely within her own soul, one shadowy army fighting another, and the slain shadows forever rising again" (V. ii: 405).⁵

By dramatizing such ceaseless skirmishing, by embodying it in vivid images of physical and psychic excess, Eliot and Dickens created fictional styles of grotesque representation that elude the barriers of Ruskin's theory. His account of the transgressive nature of the creative process anticipates modern psychological analyses of the grotesque (Holland 293; Steig 259), and his definition of the form, which conceives it as a site of logical contradiction and defamiliarization, has a surprisingly contemporary ring to it.⁶ But these insights are subsumed within a "Grotesque Ideal" which seeks "abstract, spiritual mastery" over such tendencies and elements. This ideal aspires to the condition of allegory, and those works which do not do the same are banished to the realm of the "low." As a result, the same critic who exalted the capacity of Gothic architecture to recognize "the individual value of every soul," to "confess its imperfection," and only bestow dignity "upon the acknowledgment of unworthiness" (*Works* 11: 188) was unwilling to acknowledge a similar capacity in the capacious fictional structures of the two greatest Victorian novelists.

Yet the very intensity of Ruskin's indignation here serves to further illuminate the dynamics of his theorizing. As Stallybrass and White observe, "there are two quite distinct kinds of 'grotesque,' the grotesque as 'Other' of the defining group or self, and the grotesque as a boundary phenomenon of hybridization or inmixing, in which self and other become enmeshed in an inclusive, heterogeneous, dangerously unstable zone" (193). Although the two are distinct,

5. Of all the excellent commentators on the novel, Nina Auerbach most suggestively links the conflicts within Maggie to the excesses of the body and the passions. In a startling formulation, she characterizes Maggie as "a woman whose primordial feminine hunger for love is at one with her instinct to kill and to die" (171).
6. Geoffrey Galt Harpham might have been thinking of Ruskin's struggles with definition when he observed that "Grotesqueries both require and defeat definition. . . . They stand at a margin of consciousness between the known and the unknown, the perceived and the unperceived, calling into question the adequacy of our ways of organizing the world, of

dividing the continuum of experience into knowable particles" (3). Gregory Ulmer places Jacques Derrida's "Op Writing" in the tradition of such visual artists of the grotesque as Albrecht Durer. He finds a connection between Derrida's style and Durer's marginal embellishments: "Derrida's own homophonic or punning strategy results in a similar 'fantasy etymology,' which has much the same distorting effect in a philosophical discourse as had Durer drawings of interlacing thistles, cranelike birds, and gargoyles on the margins of the prayer book the Emperor Maximilian had commissioned for his newly founded Order of St. George" (45).

a fundamental mechanism of identity formation produces the second, hybrid grotesque at the level of the political unconscious by the very struggle to exclude the first grotesque. That is to say, when the bourgeoisie consolidated itself as a respectable and conventional body by withdrawing itself from the popular, it constructed the popular as grotesque otherness: but by this act of withdrawal and consolidation it produced another grotesque, an identity-in-difference which was nothing other than its fantasy relation, its negative symbiosis, with that which it had rejected in its social practices (193).

When Ruskin condemns the "brutal mockery and insolent jest" embodied in the architecture of late Renaissance Venice, when he locates the basest forms of contemporary imagination in "the demonology of the stage," and when he refers to the deaths in *Bleak House* as "grotesquely either violent or miserable," he is elaborating his version of this first grotesque.⁷ His goal is to identify, isolate, and exclude all manifestations of Bakhtin's "carnival spirit." Ruskin's opposition to this spirit at the level of social practice is unmistakably inscribed in his rage against *Bleak House*, and *The Mill on the Floss*. "All healthy and helpful literature sets simple bars between right and wrong; assumes the possibility, in men and women, of having healthy minds in healthy bodies," he writes in "Fiction Fair and Foul," whereas "the entire product of modern infidel imagination" can be seen "amusing itself with the destruction of the body, and busying itself with the aberration of the mind" (*Works* 34: 376, 281). But as Ruskin's central image of the imagination as a "bad child" suggests, his attempts to suppress this infidel impulse produce a theoretical formulation which gives it sanctuary and license. The result is a provocative and enduring poetics of transgression that subliminally embraces the very "carnival spirit" it seeks to exclude.

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Albion College

The Narrator as Protoreader in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*

Jerome Bump

John Fowles' brilliant pastiche, imitation, and parody of Victorian literature, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, generates many of the central questions about the fidelity and trustworthiness of twentieth-century versions of nineteenth-century literature. For instance, it has been regarded as a complacent subversion, even an "overthrow," of Victorian literature. However, I believe that the opposite is also true, that it is an effective introduction of the modern reader to the nineteenth century which

actually helps the twentieth-century reader overthrow his own complacency and prejudices about the Victorians and come to appreciate and even admire some of the profound ways in which they differ as well as resemble ourselves.

Perhaps the dominant critique of the novel has been articulated by Patrick Brantlinger: "*The French Lieutenant's Woman* is really a myth for now. . . the myth of the overthrow of 'Victorianism,' entailing the ritual exorcism of Duty and Work

7. This first "grotesque" is of course familiar from common usage. It continues to denote that which threatens our sense of the natural, the normative, the human or humane. Paul Theroux's use of the word in describing the nuclear power station at Dungeness is illustrative: "the unnatural look of nuclear power stations was daunting. They could not

be prettified. Their horrific aspect, to someone staring at them across a calm bay, was their explosive shapelessness, the random swollen angles, and all those radiating power lines, like orbs of model shock waves. The nuclear power station at Dungeness from fifteen miles away was grotesque. . ." (34).

and Chastity. . ."¹ Brantlinger identifies the narrator as the source of this self-congratulation: "The Victorians were slaves to their taboos, Fowles's narrator tells us, and the nineteenth century was a moral Stone Age in comparison with ours. Perhaps we should blame the narrator rather than Fowles for this, but the effect is a kind of moral Podsnappery almost as insufferable as the original" (341). He supports this with a quotation from chapter twelve, relatively early in the book, and concludes that in the area of "sexual mores" the narrator believes that "we are light-years ahead of our Victorian forefathers" (341).

I agree that the narrator begins with such an attitude, much as readers of Victorian literature do today, often associating the word "Victorian" with "repression." However, reading a poem such as "Goblin Market" many of them discover soon enough why that poem appeared in *Playboy* in our century and how an age which covered up the "legs" of pianos had perhaps a more highly developed and at times more sophisticated sense of sexuality than we do today. The narrator in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, I would suggest, mimics the progress of such modern explorers of the Victorian age, becoming a modern protoreader of Victorian literature.

His initial attitude, in chapter eleven, may indeed seem condescending:

He could not go on, for she had turned, her eyes full of tears. Their hands met, and he drew her to him. They did not kiss. They could not. How can you mercilessly imprison all natural instinct for twenty years and then not expect the prisoner to be racked by sobs when the doors are thrown open? (71, Ch. 11)

However, by chapter twenty, the narrator begins to discover that the supposed "schizophrenia" (288) of the Victorians allowed them to have sexual experiences no longer available to us:

He was at one and the same time Varguennes enjoying her and the man who sprang forward and struck him down; just as Sarah was to him both an innocent victim and a wild, abandoned woman. Deep in himself he forgave her her unchastity; and glimpsed the dark shadows where he might have enjoyed it himself. Such a sudden shift of sexual key is impossible today. A man and a woman are no sooner in any but the most casual contact than they consider the possibility of a physical relationship. (143)

The narrator goes on to congratulate himself and the modern reader about our more casual sex, but he has begun at this point to perceive some of the complexity of the Victorian attitudes about sexuality.

More importantly, he has begun to recognize that even stuffy Charles was capable of overcoming the kind of simplistic

dualisms² the Victorians are so often accused of cherishing. He will later claim that "In spite of Hegel, the Victorians were not a dialectically minded age; they did not think naturally in opposites, of positives and negatives as aspects of the same whole. Paradoxes troubled rather than pleased them" (197). We have indeed increasingly identified the Victorians with the idea of a "divided self," with Arnold's familiar lines, "Wandering between two worlds, one dead, / The other powerless to be born," with the opening phrases of *A Tale of Two Cities*:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period. . . .

While this passage reveals that some Victorians could conceive of the coexistence of opposites, it may be argued that most of the great achievements of the twentieth century derive from the repudiation of dualisms, Einstein's renunciation of the matter vs. energy dichotomy being only the most obvious example.³ In *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, acceptance of paradoxes is a feature we identify with the modern heroine of the novel who "in an earlier age would have been either a saint or an emperor's mistress. . . because of that fused rare power that was her essence—understanding and emotion" (52).

Supposedly, transcendence of dualisms was limited in the Victorian age to small groups such as the heroes of the conclusion of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, the Pre-Raphaelites. Cecil Lang and others have demonstrated that the Pre-Raphaelites did indeed embody a revolt against such simplistic dualisms as natural vs. supernatural (xxvii). However, it should be noted that by chapter twenty Fowle's narrator perceives that his conventional Victorian, Charles, is capable of a transcendence of dualism, and one no longer possible today. Even in the area of sexuality the narrator has begun to discover that paradoxes could have pleased them, that Charles did not alternate crazily between two opposites but was both "at one and the same time."

In chapter thirty-five the narrator suggests "That secrecy, that gap between the sexes which so troubled Charles when Sarah tried to diminish it, certainly produced a greater force, and very often a greater frankness, in every other field" (214). Such passages inspired Brantlinger to state that "Fowles subscribes to the theory that the chief accomplishments of the Victorian age came about because energies tightly buttoned up by sexual

1. Brantlinger (340). By "duty" Brantlinger states that Fowles means "sexual repression" (341) and traces the success of the novel to its flattery of our victory over repression: "the identification of [Charles'] abandonment of Ernestina for Sarah with sanity and with modern superiority to 'Victorianism' is, it seems to me, one source of the popularity of Fowles's story" (342). He describes the sexual climax of Charles and Sarah as "the climax of the novel" (340), the "unleashing of energies which all 'Victorianism' has worked to leash" (341).

2. Most of us at one time or another have been impaled on "the horns of a dilemma," as the saying is, and have taken for granted such categorical dualisms as ideal vs. real, eternal vs. mortal, man vs. nature, heaven vs. earth, or spiritual vs. material. By looking only at the opposite poles of these or other dichotomies we tend to ignore everything between them, fail to

recognize the dependency of each pole on the other, the possibility of the simultaneous presence of both, or conceive of a larger whole which contains both opposites.

3. Indeed, in 1930 Arthur Lovejoy began the Paul Carus lectures,

I propose in these lectures to review the course and to attempt to estimate the results of a movement in thought which has been, on the whole, the most characteristic and most ambitious philosophic effort of our generation in the English-speaking part of the world. The last quarter-century, it may fairly confidently be predicted, will have for future historians of philosophy a distinctive interest and instructiveness as the Age of the Great Revolt against Dualism. (1)

taboos had to be released somehow, and so found outlets in industrialization, imperial expansion, and the arts—a theory which hardly explains the aggressive creativity of some other ages” (341). Nevertheless, whatever one may think of this theory of the narrator’s, I think we need to admit that by chapter thirty-five his complacency and self-congratulation about the modern attitude toward sexuality have been seriously shaken. Indeed, the sentences which immediately precede the articulation of the theory cited above suggest the conversion of the protoreader to the Victorian view of sexuality:

So it seems very far from sure that the Victorians did not experience a much keener, because less frequent, sexual pleasure than we do; and that they were not dimly aware of this, and so chose a convention of suppression, repression and silence to maintain the keenness of the pleasure. In a way, by transferring to the public imagination what they left to the private, we are the more Victorian—in the derogatory sense of the word—century, since we have, in destroying so much of the mystery, the difficulty, the aura of the forbidden, destroyed also a great deal of the pleasure. Of course we cannot measure comparative degrees of pleasure; but it may be luckier for us than for the Victorians that we cannot. (213-214)

Perhaps the popularity of *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* may be due not so much to its initial praise for the modern overthrow of sexual repression as to the way the protoreader leads us past our stereotypes of the age to discover the complex results of “repression,” what the Victorians knew all along.

Criticizing repression hardly makes a book striking enough to be popular today, but subtly revealing how the Victorians transcended our own simplistic dualism of pleasure vs. repression is unique enough to earn best seller status. To my mind any modern imitation which can reveal to us the modus operandi of the reflexive asceticism of the Victorians, and their ability to transcend simplistic dichotomies generally, deserves its fame. Such a revelation brings us closer to the central mysteries of the age. It was Pater, after all, in the review which became the most notorious manifesto of hedonism of that era, who said that “a passion of which the outlets are sealed, begets a tension of nerve, in which the sensible world comes to one with a reinforced brilliance and relief—all redness is turned into blood, all water into tears” (303).

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Evangelical Doctrine and George Eliot’s Narrator in *Middlemarch*

Katherine M. Sorensen

The relation between evangelical Christianity and George Eliot’s fiction has been a subject of considerable study. Critics have examined George Eliot’s own religious views; the depiction of historical religious figures, debates, and events in her fiction; and the elements in plot and characterization especially emphasized by evangelical religion, such as confession, conversion, and providence. The close relationship between evangelicalism and the narration of Eliot’s fiction, however, remains undemonstrated, and yet this relationship illustrates how thoroughly evangelicalism informs Eliot’s imaginative vision and permeates the world of her novels.¹ Evangelicalism does not

exert an external influence upon Eliot’s fiction, but shapes her work from within, generating evangelical patterns of discourse even in *Middlemarch*, the most secular of all her works. Although Eliot in adult life rejected religious doctrine in favor of agnosticism and expressed clear ties to positivism, the religion she embraced from age nine to twenty-one shaped her vision, as we can see from the very fabric of Eliot’s *Middlemarch*.

The close relation between Eliot’s intense evangelicalism and the world of imagination is evident in her early letters. Here Mary Ann Evans illustrates how evangelicalism created a vast and significant living drama in which she took a part.² A letter she

1. George Eliot’s religious views are most fully documented in Haight’s biography, and a brief summary of the biographical information has been compiled by Adams.

The critics who focus on fictional presentations of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century religious issues are generally interested in a historical survey of fiction as it reflects the period. These include: Maison, who considers Eliot’s *Scenes of Clerical Life* the best nineteenth-century work on Methodism; Cunningham, especially pp. 143-189; and Wolff, especially valuable on *Scenes*.

The best known works on the literary significance of evangelicalism in Eliot’s fiction are by Svaglic and Masters, neither of whom considers Eliot’s early evangelicalism in much depth or the relation between religious doctrine and fictional technique.

Vargish does consider the relation between doctrine and form, but nonetheless describes Eliot’s novels as secular, interpreting the religious characters and events in her novels as embodiments of positivist beliefs.

Myers understands George Eliot to be narrowly positivist in outlook, and misses Eliot’s acceptance of religious mystery.

Elizabeth Jay brings together many of these ideas in the most complete treatment of the subject that I know, and also considers Eliot’s realism as a response to evangelical concerns.

2. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the evangelical movement also literally offered roles for women, an appealing prospect to an independent spirit. A small but influential number of women were Methodist preachers, for example, and many were active leaders in religious societies (Rogal, and Brown xii). Mary Fletcher, whose biography Eliot read at age nineteen, rebelled against her upper-middle class Anglican upbringing by leaving home in search of a sincere religious life among the Methodists. She founded an orphanage, administered a house for itinerant Methodist preachers, married a famous Methodist minister, and eventually preached herself. I believe Dorothea Brooke, in her own way, desired such a life.

wrote at age eighteen reveals the weight religion gives to a friend's preparations for a family wedding and her own trip to London with her brother Isaac:

I really feel for you, sacrificing as you are your own tastes and comforts to the pleasure of others, and that in a manner the most trying to rebellious flesh and blood, for I verily believe that in most cases it requires more of a martyr's spirit to endure with patience and cheerfulness daily crossings and interruptions of our petty desires and pursuits, and to rejoice in them if they can be made to conduce to God's glory and our own sanctification, than even to lay down our lives for truth.

You must let me tell you though that I was not at all delighted with "the stir of the great Babel," . . . We heard on Sunday morning a very animated and experimental sermon from the Revd T. Dale of whom you may have heard. In the afternoon we went to St Paul's where I grieve to say my strongest feeling was that of indignation (I mean during the sermon) towards the surplined personages, chapters I think they are, who performed the chanting, for it appears with them a mere performance, their behaviour being that of schoolboys, glad of an opportunity to titter unreprieved. (*Letters* 1: 6-7)

The bother of preparing for a wedding is not an insignificant interruption of routine, but a religious lesson in self-denial. London is not simply a grand city, but a focus for moral judgment and concern. She continues:

I was once told that there was nothing out of myself to prevent my becoming as eminently holy as St Paul, and though I think that is too sweeping an assertion, yet it is very certain we are generally too low in our aims, more anxious for safety than sanctity, for place than purity, forgetting that each involves the other, and that as Doddridge tells us, to rest satisfied with any attainments in religion is a fearful proof that we are ignorant of the very first principles of it. O that we could live only for Eternity, that we could recognize its nearness! (*Letters* 1:7)

Here, Mary Ann Evans' evangelicalism gives her life shape and purpose, makes it matter. Certainly the adult artist Eliot shares the recognition of life's drama and value with the adolescent evangelical, and that is not all. The evangelical drama has set expectations that originate in doctrine and extend to influence the later artist's view of the world and of the responsibilities, desires, and behavior of human beings.

It is not a simple task to describe the ideology of Eliot's evangelicalism or of evangelicalism in general, because evangelicalism is not a distinct set of doctrines nor an individual denomination. Evangelicalism is an attitude toward the religious and moral life, and an emphasis on a particular group of religious ideas that in themselves are shared with non-evangelical congregations. George Eliot never left the Church of England, and neither did John Wesley, who probably influenced Eliot more deeply than any other evangelical figure. A great Methodist revival coincided with Mary Ann Evans' religious years, and her aunt and uncle, Elizabeth and Samuel Evans, were Methodist lay

preachers;³ for these reasons, probably, the evangelicalism of Eliot's fiction seems Methodist in tone. Nonetheless, the central evangelical ideas that I will identify were shared not only by most eighteenth- and nineteenth-century evangelicals, but also by protestants in general. They are characteristic of evangelicalism simply because evangelicals placed such great emphasis upon them.

First, all evangelical Protestants emphasized the primary importance of every individual soul, in direct relationship with God. This emphasis upon what Ian Watt calls a "subjective and individualist spiritual pattern" almost by definition set the individual in conflict with the institutions of church and state, since instead of trusting those external guides, the evangelical relied upon the "inner light," his own experience of God's unmediated communication (Watt 75, Edwards 38-40). The individual must therefore use self-scrutiny thoroughly and frequently, especially since evangelicals recognized the danger of confusing one's own desires with a divine voice or "leading." Second, the individual perceived God within the self and within the world because of God's immanence: he believed that God acted in all of life, in ordinary details as well as grand occasions, and the attentive evangelical proved his faith by learning from God's providence in daily life (Watt 77). To the evangelical, the greatest tests were the ordinary ones in the family and at work. All evangelicals, furthermore, emphasized the depravity of man and his need for conversion, arguing that an adult's salvation required a conscious conviction of sin and of the need to accept the atonement of Christ. With such a conversion came the evangelical's justification, God's forgiveness. This occurred through the individual's faith in Christ's atonement, not through any act of his own, and could be fully recognized only by the "inward witness."⁴ Finally, the evangelical believed he was accountable for the souls of others, and must therefore evangelize, must spread God's word, must convince and convert others.

These elements of evangelical doctrine are clearly present in the content of Eliot's fiction. Evangelical ministers are central in *Scenes of Clerical Life*, *Adam Bede*, and *Felix Holt*; evangelical religion is an important experience for characters in *The Mill on the Floss*, *Silas Marner*, *Middlemarch*, and, in Catholic dress, in *Romola*. The individual in a conflict of conscience with society—the essential Protestant stance—is the typical position of Eliot's heroes. Eliot's "doctrine of consequences" acts very much like traditional providence in that the worthy are rewarded and the guilty are punished, usually very neatly through the results of their own actions.⁵ The domestic drama of Eliot's fiction parallels the evangelical focus on ordinary life, and as Elizabeth Jay convincingly argues, egoism is Eliot's version of human depravity (54). Finally, patterns of confession and conversion are central in all of Eliot's novels.

These aspects of content in Eliot's fiction illustrate to me the continuing vitality of her evangelical experience for her imagina-

3. Eliot wrote about her aunt: "She was loving and kind to me, and I could talk to her about my inward life, which was closely shut up from those around me" (*Letters* 2: 503).
4. From here on, doctrinal disagreements begin. Evangelicals argued about predestination and free grace, the importance of works as opposed to faith, the necessity of assurance, and much more.
5. Vargish insists that Eliot's fiction does not represent the "providential aesthetic" because, although the novel's techniques are the same as those

of clearly providential novels, only the characters affirm God's providence. In *Middlemarch*, Bulstrode, but not the narrator, interprets the entirely unlikely arrivals of Raffles and Ladislav as God's plan for his chastisement. Is the narrator's explicit support for this interpretation necessary to the novel's creation of a religious world? I argue that the techniques in themselves—here the use of utterly unlikely coincidence to expose Bulstrode—create a religious universe.

tion. When she first came to write fiction, some twenty years after turning away from doctrinal religion, she looked back to the characters, beliefs, and conflicts of her religious life, subject matter that she knew "from close observation in real life" (*Letters* 2: 247-8). Surely she chose to write about religious subjects because she considered them central to life, because she perceived and understood life in religious terms. Eliot's critics, however, do not interpret these patterns of plot and character as signs of the metaphysical world of Eliot's fiction. They account for the religious elements in Eliot's plots by describing them as no more than mimetic representations of Eliot's world or as metaphors for Eliot's presumably absolute positivist beliefs.⁶

Felicia Bonaparte's *The Triptych and the Cross*, for example, argues that the religious elements so central to *Romola* are metaphors describing the religious phases of human history and of Eliot's own life. Like many other contemporary critics—but unlike the Victorians, who were accustomed to open discussions of religion and morality—Bonaparte cannot accept that Eliot intended the "surface" of her fiction, religious and didactic as it is, to act upon the reader directly (Bonaparte 33). Defining myth as religion without belief, she identifies the literal level of religion in *Romola* as Eliot's metaphor, as myth. In doing so, she accounts for the presence of religious elements while avoiding our late twentieth-century discomfort with literal religious belief, and joins the tradition of positivist explanations of Eliot's fiction. But she does not account for the urgency and life in the literal events of the novel, the novel's first level of meaning. I distrust such arguments because they avoid the significance of the surface of Eliot's art—and in great art, nothing is insignificant—but one cannot disprove them: of course religious controversy and evangelicals were prominent in the nineteenth century, Eliot knew that religious world, and all art may be viewed as metaphorical.

But the narrator, or the conventions of Eliot's narration, echo the religious elements regularly found in her plots. Certainly Eliot considered narrative technique essential to the meaning of her work. She uses the term "treatment" to signify the discourse or expression of her novels, and writes about the composition of *Adam Bede*: "I refused to tell my story beforehand, on the ground that I would not have it judged apart from my *treatment*, which alone determines the moral quality of art" (Eliot's emphasis, *Letters* 2: 503-4). In this essay, I hope to illustrate how Eliot's narrator through his character, his technical capabilities, and his stated purpose, expresses several basic tenets of evangelical belief.

The narrator in *Middlemarch* is a collection of literary techniques that Eliot draws largely from a religious world and its literature. Those techniques in turn create a religious world in *Middlemarch*.

The narrator is the medium through which the reader perceives the world of a novel, and thus the narrator acts to create that world for us. Scholes and Kellogg claim: "In the relationship between the teller and the tale, and that other relationship between the teller and the audience, lies the essence of narrative

art." Furthermore, they go on to say, point of view "is the primary way [the novelist] controls and shapes his materials" (240 and 275). The narrator thus also influences and limits the world the author creates, for in choosing a narrator, an author begins to define his fictional world. The character of a narrator, for example, and the nature of the story told, must be suited to one another.

We come to know a narrator's character largely through content and style. There have always been some readers of George Eliot who hear only her narrator's earnest moralizing, but most enjoy the elaborate story of *Middlemarch*, supported both by the narrator's thoughtful commentary and by realism. At the same time, wit and irony enliven the commentary and identify the narrator as a critic of society. Finally, the narrator's tone is consistently sympathetic toward the novel's central characters, even toward its "villains." These qualities are often considered identifying marks of Eliot's narrator, for they are not common in nineteenth-century novels. But they may be found among the narrative techniques of the period's popular evangelical writing.

Evangelicals told stories as a primary form of teaching. Of course, most evangelicals condemned fiction as untrue, as deadening the reader's sympathy for real pain while stimulating his passions about imaginative and egoistic pleasures, as inoculating the reader to sin and ignoring its consequences, and, if nothing else, as wasting time that should be spent in the praise and service of God (Rosman, and Cunningham 49). Nonetheless, evangelicals told stories, and those stories have much more in common with Eliot's novels than do the fictions evangelicals condemn.

Biographical or autobiographical accounts of religious trial, conversion, and service were widely read (Jay 152-54). Such accounts were especially important to evangelicals since the experiences of conversion and justification by faith were deeply individual ones. Readers still hoping for assurance were encouraged by the successes of others, and readers who felt themselves justified were strengthened by the evidence of community. For these reasons, John Wesley asked his preachers to compose personal accounts of their conversions and religious lives and published them regularly in his *Arminian Magazine*. These accounts were so popular that Thomas Jackson collected and published them in 1837 as *The Lives of Early Methodist Preachers*. The biography of Mary Fletcher by Henry Moore, typical of the longer religious life and relished by Mary Ann Evans in 1839 (*Letters* 1:18), introduces a woman who, in a thoroughly religious spirit, enjoyed youthful rebellion, independence, adventurous social service, and romantic love. A second type of evangelical story was the "remarkable account" of events that illustrate the hand of God in the chastisement of sinners or the deliverance of the religious (Monk 41-42, 43). Wesley also published such accounts in the *Arminian Magazine* and in his *Journal*, and they make up frequent episodes in *The Lives of Early Methodist Preachers*. Finally, the "instructive tale" was a favorite form of story-telling, popularized through tracts. In the *Family Magazine*, Mrs. Trimmer published one such tale every month in 1788-89, using members of the same large cast of characters in each and so creating an interwoven fictional world. Hannah More's *Cheap*

6. See Haight, in Eliot, *Letters* 1: xliii, for the assumption that Eliot's treatment of religious issues stems simply from her thorough knowledge

of the subject; and Vargish, Myers, Paris (98-107, 223-50), and even Jay (224) for the interpretation of evangelical ideas as aspects of positivism.

Repository Tracts also included a monthly tale through which an intrusive narrator taught a clear religious or moral lesson.⁷

In each of these forms of religious stories, the narrator points out the repercussions of sin and the value of conversion, and interprets the religious significance of events. A story acting as a sermon could hardly be a waste of time according to the evangelical viewpoint, but it can certainly still entertain, as do the works mentioned above.

A reader's first and most general impression of a narrator's character derives from the kind of story he tells and the conclusions he draws from it. The narrator of *Middlemarch* tells about spiritual trials undergone by typical inhabitants of an English city, not about exotic adventure or romance among remarkable visitors to remote lands. As in plainly evangelical accounts, Eliot's narrator focuses on the inner lives of the novel's central characters and on their struggles and development in the arena evangelicals considered the most challenging of all: the realistic world of personal relations, work, and the home (Jay 132, *Maison* 33-34). Fred Vincy experiences moral trial and conversion: he wins his wife through his victory over his own weaknesses, and those weaknesses are such prime subjects of evangelical opprobrium as self-centeredness, gambling, and idleness. Bulstrode, who has convinced even himself of his religious purity for many years, is forced to admit the failure of his religious life through a series of coincidences unusual enough to qualify as a "remarkable account." Lydgate's disastrous and destructive marriage teaches caution as successfully as could any instructive tale—and a satisfying marriage was often the subject of evangelical instruction.

Earnest narrative commentary upon the character's spiritual trials is obviously also in line with evangelical writings. Much of this commentary uses the story to teach a lesson, as Eliot's narrator points out the universal significance of her characters' experiences. Thus, Dorothea's uncelebrated faithfulness to her principles demonstrates a truth of life that the reader ought to recognize: ". . . the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive: and 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" (613). The painful delusions of Casaubon, unfortunately, can occur to all of us with ease: "Will not a tiny speck so very close to our vision blot out the glory of the world, and leave only a margin by which we can see the blot? I know no speck so troublesome as self" (307). Such commentary is certainly close in content to evangelical morality. Hannah More, for example, in her widely read *Practical Piety*, emphasizes both the importance of an insignificant person's evangelism ("Where is the human being so inconsiderable but that he may in some shape benefit others, either by calling their virtues into exercise, or by setting them an example of virtue himself" [59]) and the battle against self-

love is the centre of the unrenewed heart" [155]). Equally significant is the fact that Eliot's narrator through this direct and personal style emphasizes the relevance of the novel to the reader's life, as the turn to the personal pronouns "I" and "you" makes clear.⁸

Many evangelicals argued that actual religious lives or experiences were especially capable of convincing a reader of their relevance simply because they were true. Fictional realism lets novels claim a similar status through giving the impression of actuality.⁹ At the same time, literary realism shares several particularly evangelical interests, especially a focus on the challenges of ordinary lives, and the assertion that the ordinary is meaningful. Certainly Eliot's narrator teaches the assumed reader this lesson when that still unenlightened individual shrugs off Dorothea's early disillusionment with Casaubon as too common to be affecting:

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. (144)

The narrator here assumes both that the story is true to our experience of life, and that we are generally insensitive to the significance of such events. Evangelicals know, however, that these ordinary crises are the material of spiritual battle (More, *Practical Piety* 102).

Eliot's narrator at other times suggests even the literal reality of the novel's story by implying that the characters are living human beings. Again, the purpose is to teach the reader. When Mr. Garth is excited about hiring Fred Vincy and Mrs. Garth doubts Fred's capacity to mature, the narrator asks: "Which would turn out to have the more foresight in it—her rationality or Caleb's ardent generosity?" (413). A reader treats such a question seriously only when he assumes that these characters live, that they are subject to the tests of ordinary life.

The character of Eliot's narrator, then, is partly created through the author's original choices to tell a story about the internal struggles of ordinary people, and to comment upon them. Eliot defines the narrator's character yet more thoroughly through the narrator's paradoxical attitude toward the novel's protagonists—an attitude combining irony and affection.¹⁰

Irony depends on the author and the reader sharing knowledge that the subject does not possess, and usually suggests some moral distance from that subject. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century evangelicals certainly believed that they possessed religious awareness and moral stature superior to that of their

7. See Pickering, especially Chapter One. Hannah More's novel, *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (1809), is an instructive tale of some length, teaching the seriousness of one's choice in marriage, also a common theme in *The Lives* (see 1:157).

8. Lecky describes the style of extempore Methodist sermons: "It was their main object, by gesture, by look, by the constant use of the singular pronoun, to preach so that each member of the congregation might imagine the whole force of the denunciations or of the pleadings of the preacher was directed individually to himself" (61).

9. Jay explores this idea in Part II, Chapter 4, section one.

10. Cunningham describes Eliot's openness to her characters as "love," made up of "compassion, sympathy, and tolerance" (8-9). His characterization of Eliot creates a dramatic contrast to Eliot's description of Edward Young, in "Worldliness and Other-Worldliness: The Poet Young." Eliot calls Young's religion "egoism" and his art "insincere" primarily because of his lack of "human sympathy" for others (*Essays* 358 and 371-72).

unregenerate countrymen, but evangelicals could have made little progress without sincere sympathy for the sinful human beings they were trying to convert. As one early Methodist wrote, "I began to look around and to observe, more than ever, the whole world full of sin and misery. I felt a strong desire for others to partake of the same happiness with myself" (*The Lives* 2: 321-22). The doctrine of man's depravity identified all human beings as in need of salvation, and evangelicals were sympathetic to those who struggled toward religion, and ironic about those whose self-satisfaction hid the need for conversion. The blend of irony and affection, thus, is quite common in evangelical writing. In order to help the guilty toward salvation, the evangelical must both see through the disguises of sin and care for the human being who commits it. Hannah More conveys both irony and affection for her reader through her wry humor:

We might perhaps collect a tolerably just knowledge of our own character, could we ascertain the *real* opinion of others respecting us; but that opinion being, except in a moment of resentment, carefully kept from us by our own precautions, profits us nothing. We do not choose to know their secret sentiments, because we do not choose to be cured of our error; because we "love darkness rather than light;" because we conceive that in parting with our vanity, we should part with the only comfort we have, that of being ignorant of our own faults. (*Practical Piety* 164)

Wesley's description of a meeting with a noisy critic suggests Wesley's awareness of that man's weaknesses and self-deception:

I met a gentleman in the streets cursing and swearing in so dreadful a manner that I could not but stop him. He soon grew calmer; told me he must treat me with a glass of wine; and that he would come and hear me, only he was afraid I should say something against fighting of cocks. (*Journal* 3: 72)

Wesley conveys irony with effective delicacy through the simple reproduction of the stranger's words, and the fact that Wesley's affection was clear even to this stranger is demonstrated by the latter's friendly, if utterly inappropriate, response.

The irony of Eliot's narrator is similarly quiet. Dorothea makes terrible mistakes, especially in her decision to marry Casaubon, and we hear the narrator's irony clearly when he uses Dorothea's own language to demonstrate her misconceptions:

She felt sure that she would have accepted the judicious Hooker, if she had been born in time to save him from that wretched mistake he made in matrimony; or John Milton when his blindness had come on; or any of the other great men whose odd habits it would have been glorious piety to endure; . . . The really delightful marriage must be that where your husband was sort of father, and could teach you even Hebrew, if you wished it. (7-8)

But the narrator's sympathy for Dorothea is also clear, especially in his descriptions of the socially accepted ideas about marriage that Dorothea is trying to rise above:

Certainly such elements in the character of a marriageable girl tended to interfere with her lot, and hinder it from being decided according to custom, by good looks, vanity, and merely canine affection. (6)

Such a wife might awaken you some fine morning with a new

scheme for the application of her income which would interfere with political economy and the keeping of saddle-horses: a man would naturally think twice before he risked himself in such fellowship. (7)

The blend of irony and affection with which Eliot introduces Dorothea is directed at every character in *Middlemarch*, revealing to the reader not only the worst a character can do—Bulstrode's setting the scene for Raffles' death—but also the best he was once capable of and still longs for—life as an evangelical missionary. Sympathy and irony both involve knowledge, however, which leads us out of the question of the character of the narrator, and into that of his capabilities.

George Eliot might reasonably have chosen to use a first person narrator, like Charlotte Brontë's in *Jane Eyre*; a limited omniscient narrator, like Jane Austen's in *Emma*; or an omniscient narrator, either a self-consciously authorial figure, like the narrators of *Tom Jones* and *Vanity Fair*, or a narrator that sustains the illusion of the novel's realism, like those of Trollope and Dickens. Eliot, of course, chose the last of these possibilities, and the general implications of her narrator's artistic capabilities are shared with those of similar narrators.

An omniscient narrator is a single consciousness capable of knowing and understanding everything within the scope of the novel and of moving about in the space as well as the time of the novel's world. The obvious implication of using such a consciousness, as long as it does not challenge the mimetic realism of the work, is that the world is knowable, that human beings are comprehensible. Furthermore, while all art suggests that the world is ordered in some way, since all art requires some kind of ordering, the world delineated by an omniscient narrator communicates the overseeing authority of a single, more than human mind.¹¹ The narrators of Trollope, Dickens, and Eliot, therefore, all suggest God-ordered worlds, and Eliot's narrator also makes frequent use of certain techniques that emphasize specific values and doctrines of evangelicalism. Eliot's free indirect discourse and instructive narrative commentary express the need for careful self-examination and the view of the world as a place for learning moral lessons.

Self-examination was the central responsibility of an evangelical Protestant for the simple reason that he believed his relationship with God to exist within the self. While Wesley argued that the Bible provides the unchanging rules of faith and action and that we must therefore follow the Bible in any subject it treats, the religious experience of the individual, like his justification by faith, remains personal. Because the inner being was the individual's source of truth about his religious life, self-examination acts as the entrance to religion. And yet, of course, successful self-examination is extremely difficult. John Wesley published his *Journal* during his lifetime largely in order to provide his readers with the model of his own self-examination and, through letters, with that of others (3: 162, 173-74, 245). He reminds his readers that a selfish or a physical desire can masquerade as a spiritual "leading" without the conscious intention to deceive. As protection, one should certainly study the Bible and consult others, but the most important defense is self-

11. See Chatman (217). Vargish asserts that such a narrator is typical of the providential aesthetic (90).

knowledge. Probing oneself is a way to discover God's intentions and one's own true self.

The omniscience of Eliot's narrator permits him to know characters entirely and to understand the meaning of their experiences. While the narrators of Dickens and Trollope also know their characters absolutely, they generally give little emphasis to the process of coming to know them. But this process, the spiritual and psychological probing of motives and thoughts, is the activity for which both Eliot's fiction and Methodist meetings are famous (Lecky 49). It lies behind the evangelical diary, and is as evident in the *Journal* of John Wesley and in the autobiographical accounts of his preachers as it is in *Middlemarch*.¹² Nearly every character in *Middlemarch* deceives himself, whereas the narrator consistently reveals the truth beneath appearances, fulfilling the evangelical prescription for self-examination:

We should examine not only our conduct but our opinions; not only our faults but our prejudices, not only our propensities but our judgments. Our actions themselves will be obvious enough; it is our intentions which require the scrutiny. These we should follow up to their remotest springs, scrutinize to their deepest recesses, trace through their most perplexing windings. (More, *Practical Piety* 139)

Eliot's narrator quotes Ladislaw's internal debate about staying in Middlemarch, just as Wesley's preachers often describe their internal arguments about decisions or actions.¹³ Eliot's narrator explains not only Casaubon's rationalizations about making his will, but the truth behind his decision, a truth that Casaubon himself cannot conceptualize (308).

The theological relevance of self-examination is demonstrated through the story of Nicholas Bulstrode, the most powerful evangelical in Middlemarch. Although Bulstrode's wealth and desire for power offend many, he seems sanctimoniously virtuous to all who observe him. But Bulstrode, though not a simple hypocrite, is a failure as a religious man because he has allowed himself to use religion as an excuse for ambition and crime. Bulstrode's line of thought illustrates the very weaknesses and pitfalls about which evangelical preachers warned their congregations:¹⁴

He remembered his first moments of shrinking. They were private, and were filled with arguments; some of these taking the form of prayer. The business was established and had old roots; is it not one thing to set up a new gin-palace and another to accept an investment in an old one? The profits made out of lost souls—where can the line be drawn at which they begin in human transactions? Was it not even God's way of saving His chosen? "Thou knowest,"—the young Bulstrode had said then, as the older Bulstrode was saying now—"Thou knowest how loose my soul sits from these things—how I view them all as implements for tilling Thy garden rescued here and there from the wilderness." (451)

The typical process of characterization in Eliot's fiction is illustrated here. After examining a character at some length, she probes thought and motive through internal description, the quotation of thought, and free indirect discourse.

George Eliot's use of this last technique, and she has been described as the first author to use it so fully (Glaser 117), is especially significant in relation to evangelicalism. In free indirect discourse, the narrator uses the character's language in describing the character's thoughts. The narrator does not identify that language as belonging to the character; we know the words to be the character's simply because they are appropriate only to him. Internal description allows a narrator to press his investigation of character behind dialogue, action, and even the direct and indirect quotation of thought. Free indirect discourse, in addition, allows the narrator to emphasize the way the character thinks by revealing the process of thought that adheres to an individual's language. Eliot's treatment of Casaubon illustrates the process of her study of character.

We first see Casaubon through Dorothea's eyes, and the narrator is quick to explain that Dorothea is distorting his image. She falls into the trap that Protestants are warned against: she sees herself instead of another reality, and does not distinguish the difference: "Dorothea by this time had looked deep into the ungauged reservoir of Mr. Casaubon's mind, seeing reflected there in vague labyrinthine extension every quality she herself brought. . ." (17). The narrator describes several other characters' impressions of Casaubon as well, and these also are distortions governed by the particular values of the viewer (62). While we agree that Dorothea should not marry Casaubon, his critics in Middlemarch do not see truly why Casaubon is unfit for her.

The narrator insists that we put aside the external evidence that these mirrors distort. The narrator forces us to see with Casaubon before we judge him, and does so by slipping into Casaubon's language so smoothly and convincingly that we simply seem to perceive with him:

One morning, some weeks after her arrival at Lowick, Dorothea—but why always Dorothea? Was her point of view the only possible one with regard to this marriage? . . . In spite of the blinking eyes and white moles objectionable to Celia, and the want of muscular curve which was morally painful to Sir James, Mr Casaubon had an intense consciousness within him, and was spiritually a-hungered like the rest of us. . . . It had occurred to him that he must not any longer defer his intention of matrimony, and he had reflected that in taking a wife, a man of good position should expect and carefully choose a blooming young lady—the younger the better, because more educable and submissive—of a rank equal to his own, of religious principles, virtuous disposition, and good understanding. On such a young lady he would make handsome settlements, and he would neglect no arrangement for her happiness: in return, he should receive family pleasures and leave behind him that copy of himself which seemed so urgently required of a man—to the sonneteers of the sixteenth century. (205)

The dash calls us back to the narrator's perspective (as does the parenthesis in the quotation below), letting us recognize where we have been. After a brief pause, free indirect discourse again exposes the very private world of Casaubon's mind, where we find his unconscious self-deception about his future with Dorothea:

And when he had seen Dorothea he believed that he had found

12. See, for example, Wesley, *Journal* 3: 162; and Moore 245. It is generally acknowledged (Cunningham 9, Watt 74-80, and Tillotson 131) that Protestant self-scrutiny helped to shape the English novel. I believe its influence is especially visible in the fiction of George Eliot.

13. Compare *Middlemarch* 345 and *The Lives* 1: 197-98, 2: 227.

14. See, for example, Wesley's letter to Westley Hall, *Journal* 3: 325-26. Bulstrode's failure should not be ascribed to his religion, but to his egoism.

even more than he demanded: she might really be such a helpmate to him as would enable him to dispense with a hired secretary, an aid which Mr Causabon had never yet employed and had a suspicious dread of. (Mr Casaubon was nervously conscious that he was expected to manifest a powerful mind.) Providence, in its kindness had supplied him with the wife he needed. A wife, a modest young lady, with the purely appreciative, unambitious abilities of her sex, is sure to think her husband's mind powerful. (205-6)

Free indirect discourse reveals a character's misreading of reality by enacting that misreading. The technique demonstrates the character's view of his own reflection by reproducing that individual's linguistic stamp on his conception of the external world. The reference to Providence specifies Casaubon's error: he is confusing his perception of his own desires with the idea of God's desire, and he is much too fearful a man to examine his desires objectively. The narrator, however, can see Casaubon truly, and is able to identify his great insecurity and fear as the sources of his inability to love, the real barrier to Dorothea's happiness.

The narrator in this way both shows us Casaubon's character and demonstrates the process of examination necessary to understand his behavior accurately. The purpose of such examination is to come as close as one can to the truth, which, for the evangelical, exists in the conscience, and while several contemporary critics argue that Eliot does not provide a world possessing objective reality, I believe that the narrator's successful analysis locates objective reality in human character.¹⁵ Truth, however, need not be simple. The order Eliot's narrator sees is an order of human nature; the fact that every character perceives reality through the distorting influence of the ego does not mean that reality does not exist, but that all human beings are flawed through their egoism, and that we must attempt to attain the narrator's honest and clear vision as well as we can.

The second literary technique frequently used by Eliot's narrator and demonstrating a clear kinship to evangelicalism is intrusive narrative commentary that does not advance the novel's action, but teaches a moral lesson through the specific situation at hand. These moral lessons provide evidence for the order of life that the presence of an omniscient narrator and even the existence of a unified plot in themselves already suggest. Examples of such commentary are so frequent that the reader's involvement in the novel's moral issues becomes a part of the novel's very texture. Mary Garth chooses to avoid her friend Farebrother because she wishes to protect her love for Fred. The narrator generalizes:

When a tender affection has been storing itself in us through many of our years, the idea that we could accept any exchange for it seems to be a cheapening of our lives. And we can set a watch over our affections and our constancy as we can over other treasures. (423)

Lydgate cannot be satisfied with blaming circumstances for his own failures: "It always remains true that if we had been greater,

circumstance would have been less strong against us" (418). The narrator invites the reader to measure himself by means of the commentary and so to learn from the experiences of the characters. Since evangelicals assume that God orders every detail of life, experiences are significant both to their actors and to those who observe them (More, *Practical Piety* 101; Wesley, *Journal* 4: 481). Life, and thus a realistic portrayal of life as well, is preparation, education in God's truth.

The narrator of *Middlemarch* consistently teaches three central lessons through the experiences of the characters: that all people are flawed, that human character can be saved, and that there is a moral order in daily life to which we should aspire. These three lessons reflect three of Wesley's central concepts: human depravity, free grace, and practical piety.

All people are flawed by egoism: this objective truth about human character that the narrator teaches reproduces the evangelical doctrine of universal depravity: "We are all of us born in moral stupidity, taking the world as an udder to feed our supreme selves" (156). The famous image of the scratches on the pier glass (194-5), occasioned by Rosamond's plans to marry Lydgate, demonstrates the distortions egoism creates in every individual's view of reality: ". . . the candle is the egoism of any person now absent. . ." (195). Until an individual can emerge from this distorting influence, he will see a world that seems to be ordered around him even as the scratches on the pier glass appear to radiate from the light of the candle, "that little sun." Fred Vincy understands his uncle Featherstone's role in life in just such a light, but Fred later provides the novel's clearest example of the ability to escape such egoism. With the help of Mary Garth, the minister Camden Farebrother, and Caleb Garth, Fred turns his irresponsible, egoistic, and wasteful life into one of useful work and considerate affection. Nineteenth-century Methodists prided themselves on turning shiftless individuals into purposeful hard workers through religious conversion, and Fred becomes a contributor to society. But his conversion is also spiritual. He chooses not to become an Anglican minister, the upwardly mobile career his father desired for him, because he is true to his lack of vocation; and he is saved, furthermore, because he admits his weakness and his need for guidance, a need evangelicals would identify as a need for grace. All the novel's characters are capable of such a change, just as God's grace is free to all, but they must concede their weakness and accept a reality outside themselves.

Rosamond is Fred's sister, by implication equally capable of change, but she never emerges from her egoism. She never admits any weakness or fault and firmly remains within her closed egoistic system. Her role is important because she provides a negative example necessary if one is to construct a system of moral order. For such a system, there must be right behavior and wrong behavior. When Bulstrode and Lydgate are disgraced, their wives respond differently: Mrs. Bulstrode will "go down to her unhappy husband and espouse his sorrow, and say of his guilt, I will mourn and not reproach" (550). But Rosamond will enact

ignoring her husband: "In reality, however, she was intensely aware of Lydgate's voice and movements. . ." (469). That "reality" is in contrast to the opinions of Vargish (168 and 177) and Ermarth.

For a philosophical description of Eliot's acceptance of objective reality, see Davis.

15. Often Eliot's narrator summarily tells the reader the truth. After Mr. Vincy pathetically tells Fred that he has thrown away the opportunities his father worked to give him, the narrator comments: "In reality, Mr. Vincy's wishes about his son had had a great deal of pride, inconsiderateness, and egoistic folly in them" (415). Rosamond seems to be

"a forsaking which still sits at the same board and lies on the same couch with the forsaken soul, withering it the more by unloving proximity" (550). Rosamond will not give up the blinding and isolating shell of her egoism, nor will she learn from her aunt's experience, though the reader is intended to learn from hers.

The narrator's clear intention to teach the reader is fulfilled through his technical abilities to perceive and comment upon the moral order of human experience. Mrs. Bulstrode expresses her acceptance of her husband in his guilt and shame by putting off her gay clothes and dressing like an "early Methodist" (550). Her appearance signifies her faith and her participation in the Christian story: man's sin, his need for grace, and the assurance of forgiveness to the penitent. Rosamond never considers religion. She closes herself away from Lydgate and his desires more than ever, and determines to turn to Ladislav for sympathy. Certainly *Middlemarch* does not overtly teach evangelical Christianity, but the novel by no means supports Feuerbach's claim that traditional religion alienates man's proper respect and love for man. In *Middlemarch*, religion fosters a morality of sympathy and imagination, and the narrator teaches such a morality both explicitly and by his own example.

Much of the narrator's commentary in *Middlemarch* encourages the reader to understand the human imperfections in the characters and to search himself for similar and perhaps unrecognized weaknesses. Both goals result in greater sympathy for others. John Wesley's "Scheme of Self-Examination" on the "love of man" progresses from understanding others to feeling for them: "Have I, before I spoke to any, learned as far as I could, his temper, way of thinking, past life, and peculiar hinderances, internal and external? . . . Have I rejoiced with and for my neighbour in Virtue of Pleasure? Grieved with him in pain, for him in sin? . . ." (Schmidt 1: 98-99). Hannah More arrives at the same end from the other direction: "That self-knowledge which teaches us humility, teaches us compassion also. The sick pity the sick" (*Practical Piety* 166).

Eliot's narrator uses both approaches. He shows how Casaubon's cruel unresponsiveness to Dorothea and his unjust suspicions of her derive from pathetic insecurity and sensitivity. We are not asked to agree with Casaubon's interpretation of his marriage, but we do feel sympathy for the pain that his distorted view of Dorothea gives him:

Poor Mr Casaubon! This suffering was the harder to bear because it seemed like a betrayal: the young creature who had worshipped him with perfect trust had quickly turned into the critical wife; and early instances of criticism and resentment had made an impression which no tenderness and submission afterwards could remove. (306)

In another situation, the narrator asks for our sympathy by turning the focus of his questioning upon the reader. Bulstrode has manipulated his religion to serve his own ends, but the reader should not dismiss his story without self-scrutiny:

If this be hypocrisy, it is a process which shows itself occasionally in us all, to whatever confession we belong, and whether we

believe in the future perfection of our race or in the nearest date fixed for the end of the world; whether we regard the earth as a putrefying nidus for a saved remnant, including ourselves, or have a passionate belief in the solidarity of mankind. (453)

The careful reader is not permitted to judge even these two most unattractive characters without understanding them and admitting kinship with them.

Indirectly, the narrator teaches the same lesson still more successfully simply by enacting sympathy for all the characters and by including himself in the process of self-analysis addressed to the reader. This indirect teaching is successful, I believe, because the reader as he reads, simply through the practical relation between the teller of the tale and the listener, both trusts the narrator and assumes his opinions. Thus the reader tends to adopt the narrator's words and attitudes.

This subtle and effective way of teaching demonstrates the artist's power over his reader and his consequent responsibility to exercise that power for good. Certainly evangelicals—laity as well as clergy—accepted such responsibility for the souls of others. Preachers were accountable for the religious lives of their congregations, and all were accountable to some extent for the souls of their children, servants, and friends.¹⁶ This religious responsibility is the source of the evangelical's mission to evangelize all he can, as is clear in Wesley's *Journal*. He often comments after preaching that he is "clear of the blood of his people" (*Journal* 4: 316, 317). He takes every opportunity to discuss religion with every individual who walks or wanders within his reach: innkeepers, the boys who bring his horse, the villagers who give directions. And Wesley understood the power of literature in fulfilling that responsibility to evangelize. In addition to his *Arminian Magazine*, his *Journal*, *Sermons*, *Hymns*, and *Letters*, Wesley collected, edited, and published inexpensively large numbers of works he considered important for the religious life as *A Christian Library*. Perhaps literature seemed all the more powerful (and also therefore all the more threatening) to evangelicals because of the private nature of reading. An author may speak directly to the reader's private self, the location of the inner light.

George Eliot also believed that literature had great influence and that the artist has a concomitant responsibility to use that influence in the service of morality. In "The Natural History of German Life," a review composed when she was beginning her own fiction, she summarizes what she considers the particular moral lesson best suited to art:

The greatest benefit we owe to the artist, whether painter, poet, or novelist, is the extension of our sympathies. Appeals founded on generalizations and statistics require a sympathy ready-made, a moral sentiment already in activity; but a picture of human life such as a great artist can give, surprises even the trivial and the selfish into that attention which may be called the raw material of moral sentiment. (*Essays* 270)

Three years later, she repeats the idea in a letter:

If Art does not enlarge men's sympathies, it does nothing mor-

16. This is the kind of responsibility Eliot's narrator communicates to the reader when he describes our possible influence in the fall from idealistic vocation so many people experience: "Nothing in the world more subtle than the process of their gradual change! In the beginning they inhaled

it unknowingly: you and I may have sent some of our breath towards infecting them, when we uttered our conforming falsities or drew our silly conclusions: or perhaps it came with the vibrations from a woman's glance" (107).

ally.

...the only effect I ardently long to produce by my writings, is that those who read them should be better able to *imagine* and to *feel* the pains and the joys of those who differ from themselves in everything but the broad fact of being struggling erring human creatures. (*Letters* 3: 111)

If a reader perceives the parallels between himself and fictional characters, he may better sympathize with others and recognize his own limitations, both central goals of the Christian life.

The goals and narrative techniques of *Middlemarch*, then, are informed by evangelical beliefs and evangelical literature. Many of the elements of George Eliot's discourse that have been identified as so distinctly her own—her development of internal description and free indirect discourse, her particular brand of realism, her intrusive moral commentary, and her tone of ironic affection—may now be seen as originating in the world of evangelicalism rather than in Eliot's imagination alone. The sources of Eliot's imaginative vision, in other words, are more clearly seen when we recognize the workings of evangelicalism in her fiction.

The effect of Eliot's fiction upon her readers is also more clearly understood. The religious response many readers experience is not due simply to a style formed by the King James Bible. Eliot creates an evangelical world through the very discourse of her fiction. The narrator creates a world in which most social values and events are superficial and unimportant, but in which the individual's moral and religious life holds all significance and value. The commentary of the omniscient narrator suggests that the world is minutely ordered by divine providence, since events provide clear moral lessons; and the narrator's effort to teach the reader is the activity of evangelicalism. The narrator shows the reader his limitations and his capacity for growth. Perhaps even more significantly, the narrator communicates the value of the reader's inner life through the narrator's effort to reach and change him, to free him from the limits of triviality and egoism.

The evangelical world of *Middlemarch* lies *behind* the explicit text of the novel, not only in the sense that it sometimes seems hidden by the novel's secular subject matter, but also in the sense that the evangelical world provides the novel's imaginative and moral source. When George Eliot turns to explicitly religious subjects in her next novel, *Daniel Deronda*, she is not changing her focus, but shining a light more directly upon the sources of her creativity.

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"Dover Beach," Hardy's Version

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The Thomas Hardy who was once praised by critics for his keen observations of nature is being replaced by the Thomas Hardy whose keen eye was often reading a book. On a mission to place himself in a poetic tradition, this new Thomas Hardy writes poems imitative of Milton, Keats, Shelley, and Wordsworth in an attempt to show himself at the end of a line of investigation. In his echoes and borrowings from his poetic forefathers he invariably "completes" earlier poems, often reversing them entirely, to reflect the new truths closing out the old beliefs and old poems of a previous age. This thesis has been argued in several articles on Hardy and gives a new interpretation to his oft-quoted admonition to Robert Graves that all we can do is to write on the old themes, in the old forms (Casagrande, Giordano, Grundy, Persoon). Hardy's comment to Graves—disingenuous to the extent that he changed the old themes—at the same time reminds us of the care he took in studying those themes as a source for his poetry.

Hardy's arguments were never with straw men: he took on the greatest of those whom he thought were behind the times, especially if they lived in his own time. Browning and Tennyson are often targets, sometimes in the same poem, as when in "A Sign-Seeker" Hardy argues with both "Cleon" and *In Memoriam*. But there is an obvious name missing from this short list of eminent Victorian poets whom Hardy felt it necessary to correct: where is Matthew Arnold?

Arnold may have escaped in part because Hardy approved of his attempt to modernize religion by preserving its poetry but purging its literalisms. Hardy first met Arnold at a London dinner in February 1880 and, as his literary notebooks show, began reading widely Arnold's essays during the next several years, snapping up works as soon as they appeared; a passage copied from "Pagan and Mediaeval Religious Sentiment" on "the modern spirit" became central to his next novel, *A Laodicean* (Millgate 208-9, 246). In his extensive "Apology to Late Lyrics and Earlier" Hardy echoes Arnoldian ideas in apparent agreement. But the Hardy who summed up Browning's character as "smug Christian optimism worthy of a dissenting grocer" could be equally dismissive of Arnold: in a notebook entry for October 7, 1888, commenting on *Literature and Dogma*, Hardy writes "When dogma has to be balanced on its feet by such hair-splitting as the late Mr. M. Arnold's it must be in a very bad way" (*Life* 224). Clearly Arnold's poems do not escape parody or reversal simply because of a general sympathy of ideas. Where, then, is Hardy's poetic response to Arnold?

Hardy read widely but idiosyncratically. In his responses to Milton and Tennyson he took on their best known work, correcting the theology of *Paradise Lost* and finding the comfort of *In Memoriam* too easily won from too little evidence. In the case of Browning, however, the poem Hardy referred to most, quoting from it in seven separate works, "The Statue and the Bust," has never been of central importance to anyone but Hardy. By far the most widely read poem of Arnold's today is "Dover Beach," though that was not so during his own or Hardy's lifetime. Hardy, however, nicely anticipating modern preferences, in his own

copies of Arnold's poetry made "Dover Beach" one of only two poems annotated in any way. Significantly, the other annotation, on "Tristram and Iseult," he used in his play *The Queen of Cornwall*. An additional reason to look to "Dover Beach," besides modern interest in the poem and the fact of Hardy's annotation, is that its topic guarantees Hardy's interest—religious belief. A poem like "The Statue and the Bust," with its theme of wasted chances and lost love also guaranteed Hardy's interest. But where Browning's theme invited quoting, Arnold's would invite correction.

If one looks for verbal echoes to "Dover Beach," they are hard to find, leading one to accept Carl Weber's conclusion that Arnold is quoted for his ideas, not his poetic phrasing (Weber 245). "Darkling" is the single word to have been seized on to link "Dover Beach" to Hardy. The link is of course to the commonly anthologized "The Darkling Thrush," and a case has been made that the mood of the two is very close (Paulin 151). If one looks at the ideas of "Dover Beach," an argument can be made for a poem which looks and sounds very little like Arnold's but does indeed echo its theme—"A Cathedral Facade at Midnight," in which the creeping moonlight in a church seems to signal "the ancient faith's rejection / Under the sure, unshaking, steady stress / Of Reason's movement" (Bailey 504).

Rather than search for verbal echoes or similar ideas between "Dover Beach" and any Hardy poem, I would like first to construct a likely way for Hardy to have read the poem as a way into understanding how he might have answered it with a poem of his own. We have no first-hand account of Hardy's response to "Dover Beach," but we do know that during a trip to Belgium with his wife Emma he carried a copy of Arnold's poetry (still extant in the Dorset County Museum) in which he marked next to the title "Dover Beach" his and Emma's initials and the date, "September—1896."

This was characteristic of Hardy, to visit sites associated with people whom he admired. The celebratory trip to Italy with Emma nine years earlier had turned into a pilgrimage for Hardy, each day's itinerary determined by where Keats and Shelley, Gibbon and Napoleon had gone before him. At this time Hardy had written relatively little poetry, but he used the inspiration of this trip to compose eleven "Poems of Pilgrimage," including "Rome: At the Pyramid of Cestius near the Graves of Shelley and Keats" and "Lausanne: In Gibbon's Old Garden: 11-12 p.m." It was almost as if by sitting in Gibbon's garden or standing by Shelley's grave or in the field where Shelley saw his skylark that Hardy could absorb some lingering ambience of the earlier writer to help him on his poetic pilgrimage. The value of human association over any formal aspect of beauty was a principle that Hardy had articulated early on for himself and set forth most completely in the essay "Memories of Church Restoration." Given the primacy for Hardy of a thing's human associations, extending to association of place and even to time (attempting to be in Gibbon's garden during the exact hour when the earlier man had finished his greatest work), it becomes obvious that it was no accident that he happened to have a copy of "Dover Beach" with him before the Channel crossing to Belgium. No Dover poem, however, was composed at this time.

Michael Millgate suggests (378) that it is tempting to see a reconciliation in the Hardys' deteriorating marriage as they read

together "Ah, love, let us be true / To one another," though Hardy's placing of the annotation next to the title rather than by these lines dampens this speculation. Regardless of the state of his marriage, it would have been surprising if Hardy had affirmed Arnold's lines, for one of his most consistent themes is the miscarriage of love. In hundreds of poems from the earliest such as the "She To Him" sonnets of 1867 through a poem like "A Question of Marriage" in 1928, Hardy habitually questioned the loyalty of love. One of the few exceptions (out of nearly 1000 poems) is "A Jog-Trot Pair," in which two of the common people "plainest, barest" are "happier than the cleverest, smartest, rarest." Outside of this happy pair the only other loyal Hardy couples are separated, by death or by an impediment such as marriage to another. That is, the loyalty is one-sided or involves yet another disloyalty. We may surmise, then, on the basis of Hardy's own treatment of love as a common and consistent source of loss, how he might have read Arnold's plea to his love to stand true as a comfort against loss.

There is a second attitude toward "Ah, love, let us be true / To one another" that Hardy may have taken. Throughout his life Hardy adopted the posture of the watcher. A frequent comment of visitors to Max Gate was how unimpressive Hardy was and how unremarkable the conversation, yet how attentive and alert the eyes. Hardy himself was aware of the power of his gaze; he sat once for Sir William Rothenstein, who recalled that Hardy "remarked on the expression of the eyes in the drawing that I made—he knew the look he said, for he was often taken for a detective" (Paulin 101). Hardy's stance as passive observer in the poems has frequently been observed. In addition, Hardy was in the habit of not just watching from within a scene but apparently of so distancing himself from a scene that he felt himself watching from outside it (*Early Life* 275):

For my part, if there is any way of getting a melancholy satisfaction out of life it lies in dying, so to speak, before one is out of the flesh; by which I mean putting on the manners of ghosts, wandering in their haunts, and taking their views of surrounding things. . . . Hence even when I enter into a room to pay a simple morning call I have unconsciously the habit of regarding the scene as if I were a spectre not solid enough to influence my environment.

This out-of-body perspective became central to his concept for his great verse-drama *The Dynasts*, which has been described by John Wain (xi) as so perfectly anticipating the cinema that any director wishing to turn it into film "would have nothing to do except follow Hardy's instructions" in the many stage directions. The most characteristically cinematic devices of *The Dynasts* are the panoramic views and long-distance, wide-angle shots of the whole terrain. But Hardy goes beyond the normal panoramas of cinema epics, pulling the camera's eye ever farther and farther back until the effect is truly cosmic and we are watching the action from the point of view of the Spirit Choruses. From this lofty vantage point men do not appear to be men nor armies but rather become "a brain-like network of currents and ejections, twitching, interpenetrating, entangling, and thrusting hither and thither" (*Dynasts* 118). All this is to say that while Hardy cared intimately for domestic scenes and the small detail and used them

frequently in his works, he habitually tried on another broader perspective we might call cosmic. For Hardy, cosmic perspective was not meant to imply solely a universal vision applicable across the ages and across the boundaries of country, race, and sex; it was much more literally the view from high up.

The essential facts I have so far suggested are Hardy's wide reading and use of that reading as data for his poetry; evidence that "Dover Beach" was a significant poem for Hardy; his characteristically ironic stance toward the loyalty of lovers; his "cinematic technique," used most extensively in *The Dynasts*, written in the first decade of this century. One further element needs mentioning. When the First World War dashed the meliorist spirit of the age (and of *The Dynasts*), the innocence of that pre-war era seemed gone, never again possible. The armies of "Dover Beach" could never again be merely metaphorical.

During the war Hardy published 17 poems in a last section of MOMENTS OF VISION (1917) called "Poems of War and Patriotism." Some indeed were exhortations to patriotism, such as "A Call to National Service," which begins "Up and be doing, all who have a hand / To lift." But Hardy was no blind patriot and won, for example, Siegfried Sassoon's praise as the man he admired more than anybody living (Fussell 7, 91). What Hardy had created before the war in *Satires of Circumstance* (1909) Paul Fussell argues (6), was "a vision, an action, and a tone superbly suitable for rendering an event constituting an immense and unprecedented Satire of Circumstance." Fussell further argues (69) that a poem in that pre-war volume, "The Discovery," is "a condensed redaction of Arnold's 'Dover Beach,' but with certain adjustments in the idea of the modern since Arnold's day." Where Arnold's ignorant armies are guessed at, Hardy's are palpable in the simile of the cannonades:

I wandered to a crude coast
Like a ghost;
Upon the hills I saw fires—
Funeral pyres
Seemingly—and heard breaking
Waves like distant cannonades that set the land shaking.

I would suggest another war poem as representing how Hardy might have read "Dover Beach" now over a half century after its appearance during Hardy's young manhood. In November 1919 Hardy published "Going and Staying":

I

The moving sun-shapes on the spray,
The sparkles where the brook was flowing,
Pink faces, plightings, moonlit May,
These were the things we wished would stay;
But they were going.

II

Seasons of blankness as of snow,
The silent bleed of a world decaying,
The moan of multitudes in woe,
These were the things we wished would go;

But they were staying.

Characteristically, final place and permanence are given to those things we wished would go. The contrast between before and after, the turn from then to now, is characteristic Hardyean irony and was adopted by other younger war poets as a device to mark the catastrophic and fundamental change in their world wrought by the war.

In 1922 Hardy added a third stanza:

III

Then we looked closelier at Time
And saw his ghostly arms revolving
To sweep off woeful things with prime,
Things sinister with things sublime
Alike dissolving.

This stanza has the effect of mitigating the bleak end-of-the-war mood of the first two stanzas. Several interpretations for the image of time have been offered: Hardy could be referring to the hands of some ghostly clock, or imaging an anthropomorphized broom, or echoing Shakespeare's phrase "the whirligig of time" (Bailey 441) or perhaps calling up from folklore the story of Amllet's salt mill (Jason 263). "Dover Beach" gives us another way to interpret this stanza.

In "Dover Beach" Arnold pictures a world controlled by ignorant and violent forces:

And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Where Arnold writes of metaphoric armies on a plain, Hardy alludes to the real armies still on the plains of France in the very month the poem was published. Arnold's ignorance and violence also appear in Hardy's poem, but modulated by a note of detachment in Hardy's Time, which is both unaware and powerful—unaware of the distinctions between "things sinister" and "things sublime" (those are human distinctions) but powerful enough to dissolve all alike.

Arnold's phrasing before his climactic lines—

for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain—

is itself an echoing of the language Milton gives to Satan upon beholding his hell and realizing that paradise is lost (Bidney 87). In Arnold's poem, our world has become like that hell by the withdrawal of the Sea of Faith; the beautiful gives way to the loss of the final lines. And in Hardy's poem, the opening stanza with its images of variety, beauty, newness, light, and love gives way to a second stanza showing the effects of armies at war.

In broad terms, Hardy has chosen Arnold's theme: how to behave in an ignorant and violent world. Hardy's answer counterpoints Arnold's, and the image that embodies that answer is built

out of Arnold's famous lines. In his third stanza Hardy takes literally Arnold's image of the darkling plain swept with confusion and asks who is doing the sweeping. Hardy transfers Arnold's image to the sphere of the forces responsible for human woe in order to complete from a cosmic perspective his Arnoldian theme. Thus the tone of human closeness in "Ah, love, let us be true/To one another!" can be distanced, as befits a post-war unbelief in faith and in a substitute for faith.

In "Going and Staying" Hardy agrees with Arnold's assessment of the world's condition. But where Arnold looks for some human comfort to face a world swept with confusion, Hardy gives us a robotic Time with a broom. Arnold's armies and love (Hardy's bleeding multitudes and May plightings) are reduced to motes for a dustpan, and then further reduced out of existence, "alike dissolving." In this way Hardy has retold "Dover Beach" freed from the human perspective. In place of the passionate image of ignorant armies by night, he has offered us in his last line an indistinct and disintegrating vision, even its rhythm trailing into nothingness.

This vision is of a world quite different from Arnold's in the 1850's and 60s. Arnold mourned the loss of faith but could yet seek comfort in human tenderness. Hardy peels all that away, but in its place leaves the curious comfort that results from the withdrawal of faith. God may seem to have withdrawn from the world but another deity has remained. In *The Dynasts* Hardy calls this deity such names as the World-Soul, the Eternal Urger, the Immanent Will, or just It. One of the images Hardy there gives to It—"That / Which. . . works. . . / Like some sublime fermenting vat" (Part First, Act VI, Scene iii)—may well lie behind the second image of Time as a force capable not only of sweeping but also of dissolving. In the great solution of his last stanza, that vat in and out of which things sinister and things sublime alike dissolve, Hardy has stripped us of our ability to distinguish between faith and love on the one hand and war and pain on the other. We are not left to end on the note of Arnold's night or Hardy's second stanza of woe. In their place we have the slow camera dissolve taking us higher and higher until we live among personified cosmic forces, immune to the twitches that go on below. This is a very different poem, finally, from "Dover Beach," documenting how very different the 1860s were from the 1920s. Thomas Hardy, of course, wrote and read through both times. He was uniquely positioned as a translator and completer of the earlier time for the post-war generation now ready to recognize in him the poet whom the Victorians had not seen.

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Grand Valley State College

Protoplasmic Hierachy and Philosophical Harmony: Science and Hegelian Aesthetics in Oscar Wilde's Notebooks¹

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My title suggests an association that critics might ordinarily dismiss: Oscar Wilde and *science*? Given the received view of Oscar Wilde as brilliant, self-promoting, homosexual *poseur*, the unlikely combination of scientific awareness with decadent celebrity seems more appropriate as material for an anecdote like the one in Charles Blinderman's recent article, "Huxley, Pater, and Protoplasm." Retelling the story of Oscar Wilde's visit to T. H. Huxley's home as an example of "the attitude that the Darwinists must have held towards the decadent personages," Blinderman notes that "there is no record of what the two gentlemen said to each other from the first limp handshake of corpulent Oscar to the final goodnight, but the meeting could well have been hilarious" (477). The hilarity would presumably arise from the incongruous confrontation of Wilde's superficial wittiness and Huxley's high seriousness. Blinderman reports only as much as his source tells us: after the meeting, Huxley remarked to his daughter Nettie, "That man never enters my house again" (477). Blinderman passes on to his real subject, Walter Pater's use of Huxley's ideas, remarking later in the article, "It would be stunning were anyone to demonstrate that Pater read Huxley's essay ["On the Physical Basis of Life"] and took from it the materials conducive to an exposition of aestheticism" (481). As Blinderman argues persuasively that Darwinism "was part of the network of ideas leading to the full expression of Decadence" (485), he notes that both the central image and the conclusion of Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* are "faithful" to Huxley's idea of protoplasm and Pater's appropriation of it (486). Because Blinderman does not explain how corpulent, limp-handed Oscar might have learned about protoplasm by any other route than its currency as a "household word" in late Victorian England (484), I take it that he, and most modern critics and historians of ideas, would agree with Peter Morton's remarks about Wilde in his 1984 study, *The Vital Science: Biology and the Literary Imagination 1860-1900*. Having quoted the passage on Heredity from "The Critic as Artist," Morton says:

Oscar Wilde. . . attempts to make the fearful facts of human heredity as the late nineteenth century revealed them a subject of aesthetic contemplation; to turn them into art. Despite his confident definitions we may well suppose that in reality he knew little

and cared less for the specific difficulties which biology found itself in by the early 1890s; yet shorn of its flamboyances his strongly emotional attitude was shared by his more sober and better-informed peers. (149)

Wilde may not have been as sober as some of his peers, but, contrary to supposition, he was considerably better informed about science than most of them. My collaborative research with Michael Helfand for our annotated edition with commentary of Wilde's Oxford notebooks shows how much Wilde's knowledge of nineteenth-century science has been underestimated or misunderstood. In the commentary we argue that Wilde's aesthetic theory, as manifested in his critical essays and creative writing, was based upon a carefully developed synthesis of science, especially evolutionary theory, with Hegelian philosophy. In the notebooks, Wilde began to develop his syncretic view of science and philosophy in order to accommodate and consolidate modern scientists' latest theories and experimental findings. Our major arguments will appear more fully in the commentary; here, however, I want to suggest how they will apply to Wilde's knowledge of science, and I will add some significant details which will not appear in the book.

I hope it will be "stunning" to demonstrate about Wilde what Blinderman wished to find about Pater: that he read and made use of T. H. Huxley's "On the Physical Basis of Life." More importantly, Wilde's Commonplace Book and Notebook kept at Oxford in the late 1870's reveal extensive readings not only in Huxley, but also in John Tyndall, W. K. Clifford, Herbert Spencer and others who explored the ability of modern science to explain the world.² Finally, I will propose that Wilde's aesthetic and critical theory envisioned the progressive and self-conscious development of human culture through evolutionary mechanisms recognized as valid by Victorian scientists. As Helfand and I argue in our commentary, an understanding of Wilde's synthesis not only should prove his knowledge and use of science in his aesthetic theory, but also should produce a comprehensive re-evaluation of his importance as a critical theorist, creative writer, and representative Victorian humanist.

Wilde's notebook entries on topics such as the "the Unity of the Principle of Life," "The Protoplasmic Hierarchy," "Limits

1. This paper reflects the results of collaborative research done with Michael S. Helfand of the University of Pittsburgh. Our edition and commentary, "Oscar Wilde's Oxford Notebooks: A Portrait of Mind in the

Making," is forthcoming from Oxford University Press.
2. In page references the Commonplace Book will be referred to as CB and the Notebook kept at Oxford as CN.

of the Investigation of Nature," and "The Realistic assumptions of modern science" demonstrate his interest in the details of contemporary scientific debates. For example, Wilde's early Commonplace Book entries on biology, especially those pertaining to *Bathybius haeckelii*, show how a young and brilliant scholar of classics at Oxford in the 1870's read, recorded, and appropriated for his own critical purposes the latest findings of experimental science. The story of *Bathybius haeckelii*, especially as told by Loren Eiseley in *The Immense Journey*, sounds like a quaint eccentricity of Victorian science—he calls it "one of the most curious cases of self-delusion ever indulged in by scholars. It was the product of an overconfident materialism, a vainglorious assumption that the secrets of life were about to be revealed" (35). If it is a fossil of scientific thought, however, it has high value as an indicator of how interpretation functions to determine constitutive arguments and warrants for acceptance of evidence in scientific discourse (Rehbock 533).

T. H. Huxley's announcement in 1868 of the discovery of an organic compound at the bottom of the Atlantic seemed to many nineteenth-century scientists the proof of an advanced theory. At last, one could see under the microscope a bit of that *Urschleim*, "protoplasm," upon which Huxley founded his theory of "the physical basis of life." Like the hoped-for discovery of the "missing link" in primate evolution, biological proof of the existence of protoplasm would mean a solid warrant for a contested theory. *Bathybius haeckelii* (named by Huxley to recall its origin in the sea and to honor his German colleague and friend, Ernst Haeckel), was a verified part of scientific evidence for seven years, until 1875, when it was proven to be an inorganic compound, and Huxley retracted his acceptance of it as protoplasm. Despite Huxley's recantation, *Bathybius haeckelii* continued to be accepted by other scientists, including Haeckel himself, for years afterwards: it had been written into published scientific texts, and whole descriptions of the development of life assumed that this inorganic compound was a simple deep-sea organism, which validated the protoplasmic theory.

Wilde read such accounts and wrote notebook entries based on them that provide a fascinating case study of his interest in science. He accepted the organic interconnectedness of all life as a principle unifying the highest and lowest forms. In his Commonplace Book entry on "the Unity of the Principle of Life," he wrote: "As regards the hierarchy of protoplasmic phenomena we can ascend gradually by increased differentiation of function and division of labour from the structureless albumenoid matter (*Bathybius Haeckelii*) which the depths of the north Ocean hide, to the elaborate cerebral cells of the human brain which if they are not themselves consciousness are at least the organs by which consciousness manifests itself" (CB 19). Wilde also believed that this hierarchy represented the evolutionary development of human intelligence. In another entry he wrote: "Comparative anatomy shows us that, physically, man is but the last term of a long series which leads from the highest mammal to the almost formless speck of living protoplasm which lies on the shallow boundary between animal and vegetable life • so does comparative psychology or the anatomy of the mind" (CN 51).

In his appropriation of evolutionary theory in the notebooks, Wilde accepted and used a hypothesis discredited in the twentieth century, the inheritance of acquired characteristics. He credits Herbert Spencer for the idea of "the generalistic empiricism of hereditary transmission of concepts: Innate Ideas have thus returned to the mind. . . on Biological Grounds" (CB 61). He takes from W. K. Clifford the notion that "the experience of the race having been substituted for the experience of the individual, necessary truths are admitted to be a-priori to the individual, though a-posteriori to the race" (CB 137). He sums up the ideas in an entry titled "Heredity": "Religion tells us that the father has eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth shall be set on edge—and the latest word of modern science is that the fact of our ancestors having held peculiar views on the three angles of any triangle is an inheritance from which we cannot escape" (CB 145).

Wilde's notebook references to evolutionary theory, protoplasm, *Bathybius haeckelii*, and heredity do not indicate his endorsement of the overconfident materialism Eiseley criticizes. He studied carefully the work of John Tyndall, for example, noting in an entry entitled "*Limits of the investigation of Nature*" (CB 93) exactly where the materialist scientist feared to tread. Wilde found nothing in Tyndall's atheism or Huxley's agnosticism to contradict his own belief that "spirit is that which thinks, so the spirit must be an indivisible entity" (CN 57). Even though Wilde believed in the existence of soul, he also could accept protoplasm as the physical basis of life without accepting materialism; his notebooks record several comments on the insufficiencies of materialist, positivist, and empiricist explanations of life, including Huxley's famous remark from "On the Physical Basis of Life," "Positivism may be described as catholicism without Christianity" (CB 214). Another entry suggests Wilde's view that the materialist camp lacked a metaphysical foundation: "Modern Positivists are as men who while they deny the existence of the sun yet worship the sunlight on the Earth, who acknowledge that the fruit is sweet to eat, and the flower goodly for sight yet insist that the root is rotten, and the soil barren" (CB 89).

The missing sun, roots, and soil may be found in Wilde's development of a philosophical and critical synthesis in the notebooks and in his later critical prose. This synthesis enabled him to appropriate and legitimate the facts and theories of "hard science" which most other Victorian humanists found puzzling or distasteful. As several notebook entries reveal, Wilde read the scientists and their results through the dialectical lens of Hegelian philosophy;³ this way of reading enabled him to find in the scientists' discourse and experimental results some of the warrants for his own critical synthesis of evolutionary theory and Hegelian philosophy. Its metaphysical basis incorporated both empirical and rational truths, and in one of the few entries containing a personal reference, Wilde stresses the need for such a foundation: "Metaphysics seems to me the one science which has a future • for the acquiring of the new methods of science and reasoning to which we look forward must rest always on a metaphysical basis" (CB 151). Such a basis gave Wilde a pow-

3. As J. E. Chamberlin remarks, "Many Oxford students in the 1870s claimed that for a long period they never saw Darwin except through

Hegelian bifocals" (58).

erful and inclusive synthetic philosophy; his reading in Hegel and the Oxford Hegelians (William Wallace and Benjamin Jowett) gave him access to a logic and dialectic which could resolve the major opposition in the history of western philosophy, the conflict between idealism and realism. In his entry on this subject, Wilde writes:

The opposition between Idealism and Realism is a shallow one belonging to the onesided method of the understanding: Every true philosophy must be both idealist and realist: for without realism a philosophy would be void of substance and matter • for with idealism it wd. be void of form and truth: Realism is the assertion of the claims of the . . . particular, the detail, the parts: Idealism is the grasp of the whole and the universal • In the rhythm of both the line of dialectic finds its true course of progress. (CB 101)

Wilde reasoned by analogy that the Hegelian dialectic explained the development not only of absolute idea, but also the progressive physical and mental evolution of man, and of human thought in any of what he called “spheres” of history, religion, philosophy, art, criticism, and aesthetics. Wilde wrote about the power of analogy in an entry titled “Physical Science”: “The influence of physical science is rather the attracting influence of an new analo[g]y than a practical disproof of any particular belief. . . but the force of analogy[,] the desire to bring all one[']s thoughts into harmony, and mutual correspondance [sic], have led men to infer that the reign of Law which is the first message of physical science, is also to be extended to those phenomena which seem the most remote from Law” (CN 105). Those phenomena include human thought, and in a Commonplace Book entry, Wilde adopts an analogy from evolutionary theory to explain his preference for Hegelian dialectic. Marking three X’s in the margin as a sign of importance, he writes: “Hegelian dialectic is the natural selection produced by a struggle for existence in the world of thought” (CB 204). Elsewhere in the notebooks, Wilde writes about the necessity of a critical method to make sense of facts, and remarks, “nothing is easier than to accumulate facts, nothing is so hard as to use them” (CN 28). A few pages later he adds, “Rem[ember] what every great man has prided himself on is, not the results he attains to, but the *method* he follows” (CN 39); twice in the notebooks he quotes aphoristically Leibniz’s thought that “The attaching too high a value to mere facts is often a sign of a want of ideas” (CN 27 & 44).

Several entries also show that the ideas and method of his aesthetic theory owed much to Hegel’s *Aesthetik*, which he may have read at first hand, and certainly knew through J. A. Symonds’ and Walter Pater’s works based on it. Our forthcoming commentary will more fully explain Wilde’s use and occasional revisions of Hegel’s aesthetic and historical theory of art. Here I want to stress the importance of a master idea, what Wilde called “one high law, the law of form or harmony” (“English Renaissance” 445). The imagination, understood as a faculty of mind, intuits the harmonies, sees the analogies, and constructs the correspondences. Wilde’s synthesis itself is an example of the aesthetic urge toward order, harmony, and, as he phrased it in the entry on analogy, “mutual correspondance” of thought (CN 105). This

law of harmony does not eliminate or foreclose artistic and critical disagreements, oppositions, and conflicts; instead, it assumes the dialectical necessity for them in a progressive, but not necessarily orderly, development. Just as Wilde accepted the analogy of mental development (the evolution of mind) with biological evolution, so also he believed that the artistic and critical spirits evolved dialectically and manifested themselves through racial inheritance in imaginative individuals.⁴

Wilde’s several notebook entries on science and poetry understand imagination as the defining mental characteristic of both scientists and poets. For example, he writes of the need for a more imaginative scientific method, “Rem[ember] how the early Greeks had mystic anticipations of nearly all great modern scientific truths; the problem really is what place has imagination and the emotions in science: and primarily rem[ember] that man must use all his faculties in the search for truth: in this age we are so inductive that our facts are outstripping our knowledge—there is so much observation, experiment, analysis—so few wide conceptions: we want more ideas and less facts: the magnificent generalizations of Newton and Harvey cd. never have [been] completed in this mod. age where eyes are turned to earth and particulars” (CN 43). His remarks to an American reporter in 1882 echo this entry’s insistence on the imaginative basis of science and poetry: “Poets, you know are always ahead of science; all the great discoveries of science have been stated before in poetry. So far as science comes in contact with our [aesthetic] school, we love its practical side; but we think it absurd to seek to make the material include the spiritual, to make the body mean the soul, to say that one emotion is only a secretion of sugar, and another nothing but a contraction of the spine” (Mikhail 1:45).

Wilde’s theory of science and aesthetics resists the production of such reductive, materialist conceptions and provides instead a site for the spirit, the soul, and the emotions to influence the imaginative, contemplative development of thought, and indeed, for the hereditary transmission of such developments. The early expressions of these ideas in the notebooks and lectures of the 1870s and 80s are coherent with their later formulation in Wilde’s most famous dialogue, “The Critic as Artist.” I will conclude by drawing attention to those remarks in which, Peter Morton supposes, Wilde “knew little and cared less” about the science he invoked. When Gilbert, Wilde’s *raisonneur*, contends that “the scientific principle of Heredity has become, as it were, the warrant for the contemplative life” and that “the imagination is the result of heredity. It simply concentrated race-experience” (1040-41), he speaks from Wilde’s demonstrable familiarity with contemporary evolutionary hypotheses about heredity. This idea of imagination, as Gilbert suggests, gives tremendous scope and power to the creative artist and writer: “We have merely touched the surface of the soul, that is all. In one single ivory cell of the brain there are stored away things more marvelous and more terrible than even they have dreamed of, who, like the author of *Le Rouge et le Noir*, have sought to track the soul into its most secret places, and to make life confess its dearest sins” (1055).

4. He conceded, however, that regression or stagnation might follow periods of historical progress; for example, he viewed Roman culture

as such a period in the history of art and literature (CB 41).

Gilbert does not speak in hyperbole: Wilde's theory has the largest possible consequences for the development of life and culture; it does not reduce into a shallow aestheticism of art for art's sake, as critics have often contended. Gilbert claims that the nineteenth century is "a turning point in history. . . one of the most important eras in the progress of the world" (1058) because the work of Charles Darwin and Ernest Renan demonstrates the emergence of human thought into critical self-consciousness about its scientific and aesthetic basis. Self-consciousness has tremendous implications for the development of the race, such that it would enable humans to "reach the true culture that is our aim. . . the perfection of which the saints have dreamed." Gilbert explains Wilde's master revaluation, the claim that "AEsthetics are higher than ethics" with a crucial analogy based on evolutionary theory: "AEsthetics, in fact, are to Ethics in the sphere of conscious civilization, what, in the sphere of the external world, sexual is to natural selection. Ethics, like natural selection, make existence possible. Aesthetics, like sexual selection, make life lovely and wonderful, fill it with new forms, and give it progress, and variety and change" (1058).

This analogy of aesthetics to sexual selection is squarely based in Wilde's synthesis. Its assumptions about physical and mental evolution are drawn from Darwin's *Origin of Species* and *Descent of Man*, from Spencer's and Clifford's theories of the hereditary transmission of culture, and from the unity of the

organic principle of life described by Huxley and Tyndall. Hegel's philosophy of dialectical spiritual progress drives its metaphysical assumptions: the realization of critical and imaginative self-consciousness in individuals gives humans the power to choose, to select on aesthetic and scientific principles, the course of their future development. As Gilbert concludes in his presentation of the theory, "The Critical Spirit and the World Spirit are one" (1058).

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Above Ruskin's Labyrinth

Andelys Wood

I would build such a gallery as should set an example for all future picture galleries. I have had it in my mind for years. I would build it in the form of a labyrinth—all on ground story—but with ventilation between floor and ground—in form of a labyrinth, that in a small space I might have the gallery as long as I chose—lighted from above—opening into larger rooms like beads upon a chain. . . . (1852 letter, Bradley 121)

When Ruskin proposed building a labyrinthine gallery in 1852, he had the comfort and convenience of the spectator in mind as well as the preservation and display of Turner's works. He was certainly not thinking of the labyrinth's familiar associations with danger and confusion. Twenty years later, however, the negative associations were inescapably mixed with the positive ones in works like *Fors Clavigera*, while the labyrinth, as John Hayman and Jay Fellows have shown, remained a key image (Hayman 123). As Fellows so elaborately demonstrates, the paradoxes inherent in the image make it a particularly appropriate symbol for the convolutions of Ruskin's logic, combining "mastery and madness," while Ruskin also exploits them himself

to illustrate the complexity and simplicity of his message. The labyrinth traditionally represents hopeless confusion, but its design actually imposes order; the way in seems to be the challenge, but getting out again poses the real difficulty; and the experience of it depends entirely on perspective, the one from inside seeming to offer many false turnings, the one from above revealing that there is in fact only one way in or out.¹

Ruskin explores the implications of the image most extensively in Letter 23 of *Fors Clavigera*, November 1872, to which he gave the title "The Labyrinth" when he added titles for the 1884 edition of the letters. Close examination of Letter 23 shows the paradoxes at work. As so often in Ruskin's writing, the organization of the prose illustrates the concept that the words explain.² On first reading, a process comparable to entering a labyrinth, the letter seems impossibly disorganized, full of irrelevant digression. Further readings with knowledge of the whole, however, reveal the pattern, as the labyrinth looks less mystifying when viewed from above.

Such a helpful overview was intended by Cook and Wedderburn when they added abstracts of each letter to the Library Edition "to bring out the train of thought, and to indicate the nature of the transition from topic to topic" (27: xxxi), but the abstract for Letter 23 merely reflects the bewildering array of topics:

1. Among many discussions of the traditional meaning of the labyrinth image are those by Bord, who notes that representations of the Cretan labyrinth are

always "unicursal" (39), Davenport, West, Ayrton, and Matthews.
2. See Feltes, Harris, and Rosenberg for discussions of other examples.

1. Statement in the *Pall Mall Gazette* that on Mr. Goschen alone depends British sea-power.
2. A convict's complaint.
- 3, 4. The sculpture of Theseus in the British Museum.
- 5, 6. The necessary preparation for enjoying the Museum.
7. The living power of Theseus.
8. The author's earlier and later styles.
- 9, 10. The Cretan Labyrinth as engraved on the wall of Lucca Cathedral.
11. The Grecism of Shakespeare.
12. The Greek fret a survival from the labyrinth of Daedalus. Its symbolism. Chaucer's tale of Theseus.
13. The Egyptian Labyrinth in Herodotus.
14. Ariadne's clue.
15. Theseus as lawgiver.
- 16, 17. Aeacus, Minos, and Rhadamanthus and their living power.
- 18-20. The labyrinth of Minos and the circles of Dante's *Inferno*.
21. The icy Hell of Traitors.
22. The Minotaur.
23. Letter from Mr. Sillar on Usury.
24. Sir Philip Sidney's versions of Psalms xiv. and xv. (27: 227)

As extensive as it is, this summary omits references to the literary gentlemen of the Athenaeum, to the nursery rhyme "The House that Jack Built" (although the editors do point out that Ruskin considered and rejected that as a title for the letter), to the etymology of the word labyrinth, and to pickpockets on Tower Hill, all at least equal in importance to some of the topics that are included.

For a clue to the meaning of all this, the reader looks for transitions, but while some are helpful, some are so abrupt as to give the impression of a blank wall, forcing the seeker to turn back and try again. The reader coming from Letter 22 knows that the month's topic is supposed to be Theseus, the Athenian lawgiver or squire, a topic first promised almost two years earlier in Letter 2. And the frontispiece to the original edition, showing a coin with the head to Theseus surrounded by the meander pattern that Ruskin calls the Greek fret, would have suggested that the promise was being kept. The letter itself, however, begins with reference to two items in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, items that Ruskin assures us "are to our present purpose" without reminding us what that purpose is. The item about Mr. Goschen, he says, will be relevant eventually, but the convict's verses that follow are supposed "to bear on the subject of this letter" (27: 394). After printing twelve of the twenty verses, he resorts to a particularly involved sentence to make the connection explicit:

The questions respecting punishment and reformation, which these verses incidentally propose, are precisely the same which had to be determined three thousand years ago in the city of Athens (the only difference of any importance being that the instrument of execution discussed was club instead of cat); and their determination gave rise to the peculiar form in which the history of the great Athenian Squire, Theseus,—our to-day's subject—was presented to mankind. (396)

Further, this involved sentence does not in fact introduce the history of Theseus. The next paragraph begins, "The story is a difficult one to tell, and a more difficult one still to understand," and sends the reader off to the British Museum to look at the Parthenon sculpture thought by some to represent Theseus. Even that straightforward instruction is contradicted, though, by a peevish tirade on "your. . . mighty fuss to get yourselves into the British Museum on Sundays" (398). This is followed by another direct instruction: "Go and walk in the fields on Sunday, making sure, first, therefore, that you have fields to walk in: look at living birds, not at stuffed ones; and make your own breasts and

shoulders better worth seeing than the Elgin Marbles" (399). When the next paragraph reiterates the instruction to go and look at the Theseus, any reader has a reason to feel confused.

The confusion seems to be reaching Ruskin as well when he tries to make the transition from Theseus to the Greek fret to the labyrinth—again, he seems to promise an explanation and immediately refuse it. Mention of the decorative pattern sends him into a digression on the defects of his earlier style. Then, after asserting that the Greek fret pattern has "a significance, very precious, though very solemn, when you can read it," he again stresses difficulty: "There is so much in it, indeed, that I don't well know where to begin. Perhaps it will be best to go back to our cathedral door at Lucca . . ." (400). Instead of offering a clear path, the sentences point only a tentative way, one that may, like so many already, lead no closer to the explanation of Theseus' history.

Once the topic of the labyrinth has thus been introduced, the thread of argument continues to be difficult to follow. For instance, the topic summarized by Cook and Wedderburn as "The Grecism of Shakespeare" comes in the middle of a long paragraph, introduced casually with "And by the way" (402). Section 12 progresses in one long sentence from the spiral on Greek capitals, through allusions to Revelation, Ephesians, Job, and Dante's *Purgatorio*, to Chaucer's tale of Theseus, and continues with a long quotation from Chaucer, the modern habit of speaking evil of everybody, and false stories of St. George. As in the end of section 8, the only way back to the topic is an abrupt "But to come back to the house that Jack built," a reminder of how far we have come out of the way (407).

Most abrupt and apparently unconnected of all is the conclusion, with its references to Mr. Sillar's letter on usury and Sir Philip Sidney's psalm paraphrases. As in the beginning of the letter, Ruskin emphasizes the role of chance, of Fors, by implying that he is drawing to a close not because he has completed his thought but because time and space are running out. This begins in section 22—"I have not room for it now. . . . I have time to tell you no more to-day" (413)—which ends with him tantalizingly deferring all sorts of topics to the next letter and the next year (Theseus' vegetable soup, Aeacus' coining business). Mr. Sillar indirectly reminds him of Sidney's psalms, so that a letter that began quoting verses that he happened upon in the newspaper ends with more serious verses, also apparently brought in by chance association. Ruskin's last sentences in Letter 23 focus entirely on the words of the psalm, with no direct references to Theseus or the labyrinth.

Clearly, however, Ruskin did not intend his audience to stop after one reading, and he did intend them to take some trouble to read the letters and puzzle out the meaning. As he says in Letter 6, with his specified audience of "workmen and labourers" in mind,

I write in words you are little likely to understand, because I have no wish (rather the contrary) to tell you anything that you can understand without taking trouble. You usually read so fast that you can catch nothing but the echo of your own opinions. . . . I neither wish to please, nor displease you; but to provoke you to think; to lead you to think accurately; and help you to form, perhaps, some different opinions from those you have now. (27: 98-99)

He expects to challenge the less-educated reader, to write above his level on purpose with the confidence that he will understand all "eventually" (27: 181).

Just how much trouble the reader is expected to take is implied by the comparisons in Letter 23 of the process of writing and reading to that of solving a labyrinth. For example, the similarity between "This is the labyrinth that the Cretan Daedalus built" and "This is the house that Jack built" goes beyond the structure of those sentences and the events of the stories to include the structure of the whole tale: "the gradual involution of the ballad, and necessity of clear-mindedness as well as clear utterance on the part of its singer, is a pretty vocal imitation of the deepening labyrinth" (402). Teller and listener must both be as alert as Theseus to follow the story. Dante's *Inferno*, too, embodies more than one labyrinth: the "labyrinthine form" of the circles, which Ruskin illustrates with a diagram that combines a spiral and right angles and is placed in the text (in both the original and the Library Edition) where the reader's eye can move easily back and forth from explanation to illustration, and the "graphically labyrinthine manner" of Minos' judgment of sinners (411). If both the nursery rhyme and the *Inferno* are labyrinthine, it follows that *Fors Clavigera* is as well, that we need a clue to "disentangle" the meaning (408).

In fact, the apparently irrelevant conclusion points to the best method for finding the thread of meaning throughout "The Labyrinth." The theme of difficulty continues here, for Ruskin quotes the psalms in what he calls "old English," asserts that the reader must make an effort to understand, and provides no explanation. The last sentence in the letter, though, indirectly gives one last instruction: "Whether you like it or not, the sense of it is true, and the way to the sacred mount (of which mounts, whether of Pity, or of Roses, are but shadows) told you for once, straightforwardly,—on which road I wish you God-speed" (416). The way to make sense of a labyrinth is to view it from above, and the reader is told to climb a mount—and the way to the mount must be discovered in the psalm. Not surprisingly, the way turns out to be one that Ruskin has pointed to throughout his works, whether *King of the Golden River*, *Unto This Last*, or *Fors Clavigera*: "Who sells not guiltlesse cause for filthy love of gain,/ Who thus proceedes for ay, in sacred mount shall reign." The way to the sacred mount, to understanding as well as salvation, is thus to live honestly, to seek righteousness rather than profit; in other words, the evils of modern society can be attributed to the dominance of the profit motive and can be defeated by a change in priorities, in values. Reading back over Letter 23 with this principle in mind, we discover connections between the apparent digressions.

Ruskin's stated purpose, to discuss the life of Theseus, is linked to the larger purpose of teaching new values because Theseus is not only a hero but also a Squire, a law-giver and judge, and justice is the main concept that is being redefined in this letter. To accomplish the redefinition, Ruskin presents three kinds of examples: modern illustrations of wrong values and the need for change, mistaken values from the past, now being corrected, and legendary and literary illustrations of the true meaning of justice.

The modern illustrations of the need for new values are the ones that on first reading seem to be most random and least

related to the central idea of the letter, and they appear mostly toward the beginning. The two items from the *Pall Mall Gazette*, as unrelated to each other as items in a day's newspaper usually are, are nevertheless both examples of false values. Ruskin implies not only that the *Times* letter-writer who believed the nation must look to Mr. Goschen "even for permission to retain our power at sea" is wrong in his judgment, but that the nation whose leading newspaper printed such a statement is wrong in its conception of liberty (394). Then the "convict's complaint" implies that the nation is also wrong in its conception of justice, since Ruskin says that the verses propose "questions respecting punishment and reformation," and the convict speaker sounds thoroughly unreformed as he welcomes the liberal M.P.'s opposition to capital punishment (386). Ruskin implies that the M.P.'s sympathy for such a criminal is misplaced, that true justice requires punishment.

Once Ruskin introduces the subject of Theseus and instructs the reader to go look at the statue in the British Museum, more examples of society's false values intrude. The statue is "mother-naked," he says, the better to reveal the subject's heroism. While the "modern method" is to clothe figures in period costume, Ruskin asserts that "my own steady aim is to strip them for you, that you may see if they are of flesh, indeed, or dust. Similarly, I shall try to strip theories bare, and facts, such as you need to know" (397). Ruskin implies that modern society finds it difficult to believe in heroism at all, so that the gentlemen of the Athenaeum who use copies of the Parthenon sculptures for decoration are also wrong in "pilfering what they cannot imitate" (397). If they exhibited statues reflecting their own true values, he says, the statues would have to show them "at Epsom Downs on the Derby day" (398). And if the gentlemen care nothing about true heroism, neither do the workers, whose desire to visit the museum on Sunday is also a symptom of false values. Ruskin's instruction to walk in the fields is thus an instruction to reorder priorities, to appreciate and preserve natural life before contemplating the dead past displayed in a museum.

The other place where Ruskin seems to have wandered far from the topic, section 12 (Cook and Wedderburn disguise the digression under the heading "Chaucer's tale of Theseus"), is another example of false modern values. In the long quotation from Chaucer, the God of Love scolds the poet for having spoken evil of ladies, and Ruskin continues, "I have written the lines for you because it is the very curse of this age that we speak evil alike of ladies and knights, and all that made them noble in past days;—nay, of saints also" (406). He has a particular example in mind, Emerson's account of St. George, which he mentions here to show the extent of this bad modern habit, but defers the full explanation until Letter 26. He anticipates the explanation in the next paragraph, though, in the discussion of reality versus legend: for symbolic purposes, Daedalus-Jack really built the labyrinth, as St. George really killed the dragon.

The examples of false values illustrate the need for change but do not explain how the change is to be accomplished. Rather than explaining, Ruskin provides models for the process of reevaluation, showing how he corrects past mistakes. One such model comes in section 8, which links the Greek fret pattern and Ruskin's own works (Cook and Wedderburn's summary, "The

author's earlier and later styles," obscures this link by reflecting only the last part of the paragraph). This paragraph is directly related to one of the main ideas of the letter, stated at the end of the previous paragraph: "you never pass a day without being brought, somehow, under the power of Theseus" (400). The Greek fret pattern is a visible sign of that power, but Ruskin admits that he once disliked it, when he did not yet understand its meaning, "having been obliged to write too young, when I knew only half truths, and was eager to set them forth by what I thought fine words." He thus revalues not only the decorative pattern, but his own earlier style, which he now ridicules for being too alliterative. In the process, he corrects those of his admirers who complain that he no longer writes well. True evaluation thus requires true understanding.

The same suggestion underlies the comment in section 10 on "the singular Grecism in Shakespeare's mind, contrary in many respects to the rest of his nature" (402). Certainly Ruskin already values Shakespeare, and already associates him with the stated topic of Letter 23 when he refers to "the Theseus of the Elgin Marbles and *Midsummer Night's Dream*" (Letter 22, 27: 384). But this association and some examples of Shakespeare's usage that reflect Greek etymology provide a new reason for admiration.

The process of revaluing is also applied to the labyrinth itself, and accounts for some of the less obviously related parts of the discussion. Thus, sections 13 and 14, which sound like separate topics in Cook and Wedderburn's summary, are actually united by a question that is ultimately one of value: to what extent was the labyrinth real and therefore worthy of belief? Ruskin approaches the question from various directions. First, he asserts that the labyrinth must have existed because it is on the coin of Knossos, but then qualifies that by the comparison with St. George and the dragon, also pictured on coins. Then he suggests that there might have been one, "for all we know," and cites Herodotus' account of an Egyptian one with crocodiles. All this leads up to his real answer, that what counts is its existence in our imagination, setting "the pattern of almost everything linear and complex" and taking visible form in such living manifestations as the maze at Hampton Court (407). In fact, section 14 continues, the power of the labyrinth depends on the imagination. He notes that in all the pictured versions, there is only one path, and relates that to the etymological interpretation that derives "labyrinth" from "coil-of-rope-walk" (408).³ Therefore,

had the walls been real, instead of ghostly, there would have been no difficulty whatever in getting either out or in, for you could go no other way. But if the walls were spectral, and yet the transgression of them made your final entrance or return impossible, Ariadne's clue was needful indeed.

The reader's question as to whether such a structure ever actually existed is thus shown to be irrelevant, a mistaken concern. What is important is the existence of the idea in the imagination.

Once the connection between Theseus and the labyrinth and the need for finding the true meaning of justice is established, the

rest of Letter 23 seems relatively logical in its construction as it provides illustrations of true justice. In section 16, the Greek idea of justice is represented by Aeacus, Minos, and Rhadamanthus, and section 17 focuses on Aeacus as Ruskin again asserts the importance of the meaning of these figures, whether they actually existed or not. The section ends with another involved sentence connecting the by now familiar ideas of the power of imagination and the past, the falseness of modern values, and the need for establishing true values:

And, perhaps within memory of man, some of you may have walked up or down Tower Street, little thinking that its tower was also built by Aeacus, for his wandering Trojans and their Caesar, by Thames side: and on Tower Hill itself—where I had my pocket picked only the other day by some of the modern Aeacidae—stands the English Mint, "dividing" gold and silver which Aeacus, first of all Greeks, divided in his island of Aegina, and struck into intelligible money-stamp and form, that men might render to Caesar the things which *are* Caesar's. (410)

The rest of Letter 23 up to the conclusion is devoted to a discussion of Dante's *Inferno*, introduced as further evidence that "the Minos labyrinth is more real yet; at all events, more real for us" (410). Ruskin summarizes the types of sin and punishment as more illustration of true justice; he especially pauses to notice the "people who have not rightly governed their *thoughts*: and these are buried for ever in fiery tombs, and their thoughts thus governed to purpose; which you, my friends, who are so fond of freedom of thought, and freedom of the press, may wisely meditate on" (411). But he comes back to the Minotaur, placed by Dante as a guard over the seventh circle, where sins of violence are punished. Apparently rushing to conclude, Ruskin uses the Minotaur to emphasize his central point about justice. The bull-man is the "embodiment of the two essentially bestial sins of Anger and Lust; . . . both these are in the human nature, interwoven inextricably with its chief virtue, Love" (414). Therefore, he concludes, "the labyrinth of these passions is one not fabulous, nor only pictured on coins of Crete. And the right interweaving of Anger with Love, in criminal justice, is the main question in earthly law, which the Athenian lawgiver had to deal with." This refers to the other paradox of the labyrinth, implied in section 14: the structure hides, protects, keeps in this embodiment of bestial violence, and the test of the peace-making hero Theseus is to find and destroy the monster through violence; but he can complete the task and escape the labyrinth only with Ariadne's clue, representing love. This idea is more clearly explained in Letter 24, where the discussion of Dante is continued, and in Letter 28, accompanied by the "Botticelli" engraving promised in section 18 of this letter.⁴

By emphasizing connections rather than digressions in *Fors Clavigera*, I do not intend to suggest that it is a perfectly unified work. Ruskin knew it was not and was sometimes apologetic on that account, but more often defended the randomness as a kind of method: in Letter 36, for instance, where he calls *Fors* "a mosaic-work into which I can put a piece here and there as I find

3. Modern commentators lean instead toward "house of the double axe"—see Matthews, Fellows, West—but insist equally on the imaginative importance of the structure.

4. Other threads of meaning from Letter 23 recur in *Fors*: St. George and the Egyptian labyrinth in Letter 26, Sir Philip Sidney and Psalms 14-15 in Letters 35, 36, and 80, Minos and judgment in Letters 47 and 82, for example.

glass of the colour I want; what is as yet done being set, indeed, in patches, but not without design" (27: 669). But if the digressions and apparent irrelevancies are intended as part of a design, it is too easy to attribute them to Ruskin's confused mental state. Letter 23 is a useful reminder that Ruskin consciously intended the reading to be difficult, so that the reader would have to make an effort and might therefore learn and remember. He provides enough clues in illustrations and transitional expressions to keep the process going, but not so many that the puzzle-solver will lose interest—a teaching method reflected also in the *Lectures on Art*, which he had George Allen publish with ten blank pages at the end and an encouragement to each reader to compile his own index (20: 15), or in his idea that the arrangement of a museum is at least as important as the information given on labels in presenting the opportunity to learn (19: 221; 34: 247-48). Robert Hewison gives similar examples of Ruskin's refusal to set out a detailed scheme for the work of the Guild, and concludes that "To learn from Ruskin we must follow him into the labyrinth of his writings, but the true disciple of Ruskin will find his own way out" (229). Letter 23, "The Labyrinth," is Ruskin's own characteristic statement of this principle.⁵

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Union College, Kentucky

Kipling, Joyce and the "Bitched Line"

David H. Stewart

Those familiar with James Joyce's biography will recall that he praised Rudyard Kipling: "I believe the three writers of the nineteenth century who had the greatest natural talent were D'Anunzio, Kipling, and Tolstoy—it's strange that all three had semi-fanatic ideas about religion or about patriotism." Joyce believed that "*Plain Tales from the Hills* shows more promise. . . than any other contemporary writer's youthful work. But he did not fulfill that promise" (Ellmann 661n). Made in the 1930's, this judgment represents Joyce's considered opinion; but of course by the 30's, the literary establishment had closed ranks against Kipling. It is unlikely that Joyce read his later work. He was echoing the enthusiasm he recorded to his brother already in 1907 for *Plain Tales* (Ellmann 235).

By contrast, Arnold Bennett declared in 1897 that Kipling was "not an artist at all. And especially he is not an artist in words. I have never (in his prose work) found a trace of the artist's passion for words and loving care over them" (2:77-78). Bennett's opinion is typical of the twentieth-century literary establishment, but today we recognize the superiority of Joyce's opinion because we have access to Kipling's autobiography and some of his manuscript revisions. There is no longer any question about Kipling's "passion for words," though most critics would claim that he used them in the service of bad causes. Joyce's approval suggests that Kipling's idiom satisfied the Master Modernist of prose, whereas Bennett found Kipling alien. This seems odd

because conventional wisdom links Kipling with Bennett rather than Joyce as a Victorian realist with tinges of romanticism, not a fabulator of texts.

If we remember the prophetic strain in Kipling's work, we may wish to revise conventional wisdom. He not only affirmed old-fashioned values, he anticipated the consequences (*dire* consequences, he thought) of mass media, of socialism, of uncurbed technology, of cultural anomie. He had a poor opinion of most twentieth-century literature because it dramatized the death of values dear to him, but this did not prevent him from understanding that artifice is the precondition of all literature.

As craftsmen, Kipling and Joyce were on the same side. We can demonstrate this by their reactions to lines of "bitched print." The issue may seem quaint, if not trivial, but it sheds light on each writer's relationship with texts during the period in literary history when mass literacy and triumphant print were causing a crisis, the dimensions of which we are only beginning to recognize.

Scholars define the crisis in terms of the relationship between oral and literate modes of communication. One sees them as two halves of an equation; another places them in symbiotic relationship; still others note a tension or conflict between them.¹ However related, the two modes caught Kipling's and Joyce's attention. Each author saw clearly that print was an active ingredient in (not a passive conveyor of) the literary transaction between

5. I am grateful to Union College for the sabbatical leave that gave me time to pursue this topic and to R. K. Loverance, who is not baffled by mazes.

1. The three positions are exemplified by (1) Eric Havelock, (2) John H. Fisher and (3) Walter J. Ong and Jacques Derrida.

writer/speaker and reader/hearer.

Joyce often receives credit for first exploiting, if not discovering, the dramatic potential of the print medium. To be sure, writers as varied as Cervantes, the emblematic poets, Swift and Sterne toyed with print and exposed its ambiguities as part of the story-telling process. But Hugh Kenner established the widely accepted view that it was Joyce who fully grasped the implications of print as an actor in the literary process (the *Stoic Comedians* 30-66). In *The Mechanic Muse*, he provides a "footnote" to *Ulysses*, 16.1257: "(.) eatondph 1/8 ador dorador douradora." Here Joyce "was trying for a plausible 'line of bitched type' in a newspaper, and it's one of the few things he didn't get exactly right" (8).

Joyce should have written "etaoin shrdlu" immediately after some typographical error. The keyboard layout on the Mergenthaler linotype located these most frequently used letters in the left columns of keys, and the operator used them to complete a botched line with nonsense that proofreaders could easily see and remove. The corresponding column on a typewriter is "qwerty."

One may conjecture that when Joyce's visual memory failed, his ear took over and provided a melodious "douradora" for an unpronounceable "shrdlu." Proofreaders, working visually, would never do this.

The point to be made (and the point that Kenner makes) is that the line of bitched type is an emblem of the "age of transparent technology," of the ascendance of visual over audible language that broke the old illusion of the story-teller's "voice" and made the very act of composition problematical, at least to a writer as sensitive to change as Joyce.

Kenner traces the problem to the seventeenth-century abolition of rhetoric and substitution of a "plain style" heralded by Thomas Sprat and the Royal Society. The ideal was "so many *Things*, almost in an equal number of *Words*." This is a grave mistake because "the real language of men is chameleonlike; words refuse to mean what they ought to, and a culture which does not observe this is a culture in decay" (*The Mechanic Muse* 131). (*Pace* Sprat, Wordsworth and Symbolists such as Arthur Symons!)

Now Kipling, like Joyce, was acutely aware that good prose is not plain talk but high artifice. His many portraits of the artist are similar to Joyce's in that both writers seek to blend the priestly visionary with the humble craftsman. The grand goal of making words that (in Kipling's phrase) "became alive and walked up and down in the hearts of all . . . hearers" could be achieved only by mundane drudgery with the flawed implements of language, especially print.

Elsewhere I have argued that Kipling wrote his finest fiction by ear rather than by eye; yet in some ways, Kipling is the last author whom one would think of as oral rather than literate. After all, he apprenticed for seven years as a journalist. Even before he joined the news staff in Lahore, he apparently learned to read type "upside down and backwards" (if the Stalky tale called "The Last Term" is trustworthy).

He wrote during the high tide of European literacy. Only during the last half of his life did radio and film challenge print, and only after his death did television and computers reveal the possibility of "post-literacy." His news reporting in India shows that he was a typical hyper-literate journalist writing for an

audience that read quickly and silently. In "The Man Who Would Be King" (1888), he records the cub reporter's sense of being a cog in the machinery of international journalism. Reality stops at the door of the press office, within which "there were no Kings and no incidents except the daily manufacture of a newspaper." Print seems to blot out reality utterly or to create a counterfeit reality.

He was fascinated by high-speed typesetting and the process of zinc etching that he discovered during his first American tour (*Kipling* 2:190,194). The surest sign of his sensitivity to the visual impact of texts is the alacrity with which he welcomed illustrations, especially his father's. There is also his own readiness to supply graphic supplements. We see this in the elaborate ornamentation of his early manuscript notebooks of verse. We see it in the drawings he added to the *Just So Stories*.

It was in 1887 that Kipling anticipated Joyce's preoccupation with print (or *misprint*) in *Ulysses* 16.1257—in a manner that would have delighted the younger author. An article called "An Important Discovery" (*Civil and Military Gazette*, 17 August 1887) (in *Kipling's India* 254-57), begins with a Punjabi compositor's mangled "rough proof": "The Poligs of the Oern Vent in dugard to the Brounicinl Coutrick is the colic of the unscrifulouse Gawler." Calling himself "the Reader," Kipling first turns this typographical nightmare into the sense it had when he originated the sentence: "The policy of the Government in regard to the Provincial Contract is the policy of the unscrupulous lawyer, and, behold, with a mere turn of the wrist, the Aryan had glorified, and enriched with the wealth of an exuberant Orientalism that simple sentence, till it stood forth a gem, or rather a collection of gems!"

Next "the Reader" speculates about what George Meredith might have woven from "Oern Vent" in *Shaving of Shagpat* or what some writer "of the American school" might have done with "Unscrifulouse Gawler," perhaps a "ghoulodemoniacal, triple Quilpian, Jekyll-and-Hydeous character." But then "the Reader" realizes that he has discovered the secret of Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*. Carroll must have seen the rough proof of a very vilely written poem. Perhaps he was enchanted by the value of misprints and made the printer drunk. "The Reader" therefore must deconstruct Carroll's deconstructed verse to find the "matrix whence the diamond had been drawn—the writing of the palimpsest." He translates Carroll's jaberwocky back into standard language.

'T was brillig and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe.
All mimsy were the borrow-groves
And the mome-raths and out-grabe.
Bearing that in mind, read this:

"'T is fitting Arthur slight thy love,
Did gyve and gin bind in thy mate?'"
Ah! Memory wreathes the barren groves
And the worn paths of fate!

A word of explanation is necessary. The first two lines, you will see, are addressed by some happy girl, rich in Arthur's love, to a proud and passionate woman with a past, a widow, or a mistress betrayed if the allusion to 'gyve and gin' have any meaning. Hear the latter's wailing protest against the hardships of Destiny that fills the last two lines. The memory of those fair days when yet she was all in all to Arthur drives her

to meet inevitable scorn, bitter women's scorn from Arthur's bride. On this splendidly dramatic situation the key-note of the verse is struck, and the pitch of passion is sustained throughout. You may, as the Reader did, reconstruct it for yourself.

We would pay little attention to this typographic spoof were it not for Joyce, or rather for Hugh Kenner's pursuit of Joyce's print-bound imagination through a linotype operator's bitched line. "Etaoin shrdlu" leads us back to Kipling's joke and reminds us that he and Joyce had the wit to laugh at the stresses and dilemmas that print posed for the story-teller. In Kipling's article, "the Reader" claims that "had Carroll not been first. . . , I could have made something of Oern Vent—an epic perhaps." But it was Joyce, not Kipling, who made epics out of morphemic jabberwocky.

That both men actually tried to *hear* typographical errors suggests a shared trait that may explain an off affinity between them. The deadening influence of print infected the novel with sclerosis from 1870 on. Except for regional fiction that relied on dialect, prose no longer invited oral performance. But Kipling and Joyce, for all their sensitivity to print and to visual effects,

summon readers to speak and listen. That is why they are both valuable for sharpening reading skill. Their "messages," of course, differ radically, in part because Joyce capitulated to print while Kipling remained amused by it.

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Texas A & M University

Two New Letters on Matthew Arnold and English Protestantism in 1869

Clinton Machann

Two unpublished letters by Matthew Arnold in the Roger L. Brooks Collection at Texas A&M University (see Burt and Machann) furnish glimpses of the Victorian poet turned critic in the midst of a debate concerning his analyses of English Dissent and of the tradition of Puritanism within the Church of England during the late 1860s.

I

The first letter is addressed to the Rev. Edward White (1819-1898), the Congregational minister of St. Paul's Chapel, Hawley Road, Camden Town, London. White apparently had sent Arnold two books written from a Nonconformist point of view,¹ probably in response to *Culture and Anarchy*, which had just been published in book form (January 1869) after serialization in the *Cornhill Magazine*, 1867-68. This series of essays contains Arnold's well-known critique of "the Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion" and the "narrow and inadequate" idea of human perfection to be found in the English Protestant version of "Hebraism."

Arnold's letter of thanks may be seen as indicating more than a rhetorical politeness in confronting his polemical adversaries. In spite of his scathing criticism of Dissenting ideas and attitudes,

which he was to develop further in his first major religious essay, published only a few months later,² Arnold had had close dealings with many of this persuasion and by no means wished to completely estrange himself from them as a group.³ The phrase "movement of mind," which Arnold uses in the letter, is of course a key expression that recurs throughout Arnold's prose.

II

Feb. 24.th 1869.

Dear Sir

Many thanks for both your books; the smaller one reached me last night, and I have already read more than half of it, with much pleasure. No one knows better than I do how considerable a movement of mind there is among the ministers of the Nonconformist Churches, among those of the Independents and Baptists particularly. All I could wish is that they should as little let their Nonconformity bias this movement, as I, for my part, would let Churchism bias it.

Believe me, dear Sir, with sincere good will,

Truly yours,
Matthew Arnold.—

The Rev.d Edward White—

1. Perhaps the books were his own, since White was a prolific author of books and pamphlets. In the one other known letter to White, written not long before (Dec. 8, 1868), Arnold had thanked him for sending a pamphlet (see Davis 94).

2. The first part of *St. Paul and Protestantism* was published in the October issue of the *Cornhill Magazine*, as discussed below.

3. Arnold's duties as school inspector had brought him in contact with Dissenters as he inspected their primary schools (see Honan 256, 263). Congrega-

tionist ministers were among old family friends (see Robert H. Super's notes *Works* 5: 434-435). Although Arnold was unyielding in his attacks on Nonconformist thought he listened to and tried to answer the objections of his Nonconformist critics, and his professed ultimate aim was reconciliation and unity within the English Church. For critical responses to *St. Paul*, see *Works*: 5:421 and the excerpts from critical reviews reprinted in Dawson and Pfordresher 258-280.

III

The following letter to the Rev. George Greenwood is almost certainly a response to the minister's comments on Arnold's *St. Paul and Protestantism*, the first two parts of which had appeared in the October and November issues of the *Cornhill Magazine*.⁴ Greenwood (d. 1908) was an Anglican priest and author who was serving as Hospitaller of St. Thomas's Hospital in London during the period 1860-69. This is the only known letter which Arnold wrote to him.

In *St. Paul* Arnold states his thesis again and again: "The three cardinal points in Paul's theology are not. . . those commonly assigned by Puritanism, *calling, justification, sanctification*; but they are these: *dying with Christ, resurrection from the dead, growing into Christ*." Furthermore, "dying" is to be understood as the "death of obedience to blind selfish impulse" and "resurrection" as "rising, in this visible earthly existence. . . to the life of obedience to the eternal moral order" (*Works* 5:56). In the letter to Greenwood, Arnold continues his emphasis on an active striving for morality and righteousness in this world rather than a passive faith in God and on linking Christian doctrine to a general course of development in man's concept of moral law.

Harrow—
Dec. 2.nd 1869.

Dear Sir

I have to thank you for your long letter which I assure you I receive as it was meant. Allow me to point out to you that I do not say faith in Christ, in Paul's special sense, is "the appointed means of righteousness"; I only say Paul found it so for himself and proclaims it so for mankind. I do not say that a faith like that of Abraham or Socrates,⁵ by which I understand *a holding fast to an unseen power of goodness*, is not justifying; all I say is that Paul imported something more special than this into the term

faith, and that there is something forced in his extending this faith of his to denote Abraham's [see Romans 4]. Paul's "dying with Christ" is one form of that holding fast to an unseen power of goodness, which is saving,—but it is not the only one; and it is only by putting some force upon words and thoughts that it can be made to pass for the only one.

Substitute the *spirit of Christ* for *Christ* and there is much in your representation of the working of divine grace in the world with which I concur. It comes to much the same as what St. Augustine said:

"Res ipsa, quae nunc religio Christiana nuncupatur, erat apud antiquos, nec defuit ab initio generis humani quousque Christus veniret in carnem, unde vera religio quae jam erat coepit appellari Christiana."⁶

Believe me, dear Sir,
very faithfully yours,
Matthew Arnold.—

The Rev. George Greenwood—

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4. The third and final part was to appear in February 1870 (see *Works* 5:420).

5. In *St. Paul*, Arnold compares Socrates to Paul (*Works* 5:30) and to Christ (48-49). Interestingly enough, the transforming powers of Christ's attributes of love and sympathy are given an emphasis not unlike that placed on "Hellenistic" principles in *Culture and Anarchy*.

6. "For what is now called the Christian religion existed even among the

ancients and was not lacking from the beginning of the human race until 'Christ came in the flesh.' From that time, true religion which already existed, began to be called Christian" (52). The Latin quotation appears in Arnold's notebook for the year 1868 (83). Ironically, most of the references to St. Augustine in *St. Paul* are negative, because of his influence in the hardening of Church doctrine.

Visions of Wholeness and Voices from the Deep: Kindred Wanderers in Byron's "The Dream" and Tennyson's "Ulysses"

Martin Bidney

Strong Byronic undercurrents in Tennyson's mariner-monologue have been sensed by many readers. Building on comments by Auden, Baum, Chiasson, Langbaum, and Stanford—all pointing out Romantic elements in the poem which work to counterbalance the explicitly Homeric and Dantean parallels - B. J. Leggett suggests *Childe Harold* III as chief Byronic source. Ulysses' reluctance to "rust unburnished" (*U* 1. 23) is inherited from Byron's comparison of inactive energies to an unused "sword" that "rusts ingloriously" (*CH* III, 44), and the Haroldian hero who aspires "Beyond the fitting medium of desire" (*CH* III, 42) anticipates Ulysses' urge to fare "Beyond the utmost bound of human thought."¹ Leggett shows, too, that Ulysses' boast, "I am a part of all that I have met" (*U* 1. 18), has the sound of Byron's "I live not in myself, but I become / Portion of that around me" (*CH* III, 72) to which Christopher Ricks adds a note on the relevance of Byron's question: "Are not the mountains, waves, and skies, a part / Of me and of my Soul" (*CH* III, 75).² Frustrated, restless energies, never fulfilled, desperately seeking to "lose" themselves in a "welter of new sensation" - this is Leggett's portrayal of the Tennysonian Ulysses' enduringly Byronic aspect (149).

The observations are just, but incomplete. Striking as the *Childe Harold* parallels may be, there is another Byron poem that promises an equally rich variety of precisely focused comparative insights and revealingly allusive echoes. "The Dream" has so far been relatively neglected, though Pafford, Marchand, Gleckner, and McGann have made useful comments on it, as did the gifted nineteenth-century memoirist Alexander Herzen.³ Ridenour's three pages on the poem are the most stimulating I have yet encountered.⁴ "The Dream" has apparently never been brought into conjunction with Tennyson's "Ulysses" in any critical discussion. The comparison offered here, by calling attention to some intriguing features of Byron's little-studied masterwork, may throw supplementary light on the (perhaps half-conscious or subliminally active) sources of Tennyson's greatest short dramatic monologue.⁵

Like "Ulysses," "The Dream" looks back on a life already rich in events—colorful, intense, well-pondered. The shadow of oncoming night hangs heavily over both poems; both seers sum up their prospects in visions of darkness and the deep. This is in part because their pasts throw such a shadow over the future. The past has led to a present which, taken by itself, is felt as barren, blighted, desolate. But while the present is narrow and shallow, the past is deep—deep in memories which are inescapable, for they have become in each case the essence of the seer's self, the center of his life's meaning. The depths of the future's dark vision are akin to the depths of this valued, dreamlike, ineluctable past. The state of dream or reverie⁶ brings both deeps together, engulfing the seer in their darkness and, by doing so, making him feel part of a greater mysterious and solemn whole.

Stoic hardihood, sorely tested but victorious, contributes to each seer's self-image as almost a demigod. Byron's dream-protagonist, with his supernatural-seeming powers of survival, is likened to Mithridates:

He fed on poisons, and they had no power,
But were a kind of nutriment; he lived
Through that which had been death to many men. . . . (*D* 11. 196-98)

Tennyson's hero similarly pushes against the limits of mortality, thinking of himself as a dauntless contender with deities:

Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods. (*U* 11. 51-53)

Byron's psychological poisons would have been death to many ("had been" is to be read as past conditional), and Ulysses' misadventures did indeed result in the deaths of his crewmen (*Ward* 315) (Byron's verses thus apply literally to Ulysses if we read "had been" as pluperfect indicative). In each case the indomitable fighter, the heroic wanderer, differs clearly from lower mortals though Ulysses, who now needs more crewmen,

1. (151-52). The first comparison also appears in Pettigrew 44.

2. Leggett 153; Ricks, *The Poems of Tennyson* 563n. Ricks makes the comparison to *CH* III, 72 as well. All citations of "Ulysses" (abbreviated *U*) refer to Ricks' edition.

3. Pafford (124) notes that "'The Dream,' crowded with poignant recollections of Mary Chaworth, the earlier life at Newstead, the *Childe* of the first pilgrimage, and the fated marriage, summarizes also much of the mood of *Childe Harold* and is intimately tied in with the attitudes of *Manfred*." Marchand (129) pursues the biographical emphasis. Gleckner (200-202) stresses the power of disillusionment in the poem, akin to the dissolution of Shelleyan idealities in "Epipsychidion." McGann (82n) likens the distinction between dream and waking lives in "The Dream" to the distinction between Harold and Byron as developed in *CH* III. Alexander Herzen (389-91) sees "The Dream" as a key to Byron's life and character: "Byron's epilogue, his last word, if you like, is *The Darkness*; here is the finish of a life that began with *The Dream*" (390). Herzen's remarks, unconstrained by chronological exactitude, are nevertheless often penetrating and witty.

4. Ridenour speaks of "an area in which mental and real, imagined and experienced, future and past are not easily separable - an area of 'real

imaginings" (460). This theme is developed and expanded in the present essay: specific implications are explored in detail.

5. Saunders argues that the poem is a rhetorical rather than a dramatic monologue, that the definiteness of setting (Ulysses' palace) and audience (Telemachus and the mariners) force us to define it this way, and that in so doing we can better understand Ulysses' rhetorical strategies as he tries to persuade the sailors to join him on a new voyage. But Pettigrew (37-42), in showing how the poem's four sections exhibit varying degrees of interiority, implicitly calls into question any tendency to regard the poem as chiefly a rhetorical performance. Internal inconsistencies also make doubtful the wisdom of considering the poem as addressed to a definite group of sailors. Ward observes: "For years commentators on 'Ulysses' have been mentioning that according to the *Odyssey* none of the crew survived to reach Ithaca" (315). So Ulysses is hardly able to reminisce about previous shared voyages with sailors in his Ithacan palace. Hughes convincingly defends this generic classification of "Ulysses" as well (97-99), usefully adducing criteria offered by Martin (59-78).

6. Ryals (234) emphasizes the psychology of "reverie" in the poem.

elides the difference.

The two heroes are not merely *übermenschlich* in their fortitude, they are also clairvoyant or clairaudient initiates into the mysteries of darkness. The Byronic visionary reads from the book of Night; the Tennysonian seeker slowly musters up his forces in imitation of the moon ascending the darkening sky. Both heroes listen to "voices" from the "deep." Darkness reveals its wonders to Byron's dream-traveler:

To him the book of Night was opened wide,
And voices from the deep abyss reveal'd
A marvel and a secret—Be it so. (*D* 11. 199-201; emphasis added)

"Be it so" is hardly mere stoic resignation: it also has some of the asseverative religious force of "amen," one of whose meanings is given in the *OED* as "A solemn expression of concurrence in, or ratification of, a prayer or wish: Be it so really!" Ulysses, too, welcomes the dark lessons of the voices in which deep calls out to deep:

The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: *the deep*
Moans round with many voices. (*U* 11. 54-56; emphasis added)

In both visions, the plurality of voices from the deep multiplies and so enhances the mystery, the unsayable essence underlying the protean utterances.⁷ Voices from the depths of the sea, the past, the future, the unconscious, may also be plural in their ambivalent signification: attractiveness and doom. One thinks of the "feuchtes Weib" who sang to the now-vanished fisherman in Goethe's "Der Fischer," (1.8, 1:153) and of many other sirens, nixies, mermaids, Loreleien. Tennyson's many-voiced sea-deep "moans," a word with specifically erotic nuances (compare Keats: "She look'd at me as she did love, / And made sweet moan" ["La Belle Dame sans Merci: A Ballad," 11. 19-20]). Unhappy with his actual "aged wife," yet still "yearning in desire" (*U* 11. 3, 30), Ulysses gives his vaguely intuited dark anima (the half-personified "deep") muted but palpably erotic accents. The comparable dark vision of Byron's depth-explorer is similarly conditioned by unfulfilment in love: "Time taught him a *deep* answer—when she loved / Another" (*D* 11. 70-71; emphasis added). Both these supermen are solitaries, but the many-voiced welcome they hear from the deep, its "secret" revelation of a "marvel," its melodious "moan," feels like an escape from loneliness. It merges them in reverie with a larger, inclusive, multiple unity.

Of course, they can never really escape the loneliness inherent in their natures as introspective solitaries. Byron's protagonist, "a mark / For blight and desolation," is "alone": "The beings which surrounded him were gone, / Or were at war with him" (*D* 11. 187-88, 185, 186-87). Tennyson's Ulysses, living amid "barren crags," is similarly devoid of fruitful friendship, for his merely sensual subjects "know" him "not," and his merely

practical son is "decent" but uninteresting (*U* 11. 2, 5), while the crewmen who had surrounded him on shipboard are now gone. But even when Ulysses was happy—or intensely sad, intensity itself being a kind of deep pleasure for him—he felt these quickening emotions, as he puts it, "both with those / That loved me, and alone" (*U* 11. 8-9; emphasis added). His comrades loved him, but he doesn't say he ever "loved" them, and the omission is telling.⁸ Byron's hero is similarly withdrawn, psychologically isolated. He has been miserably rejected in love, and his beloved herself goes mad. Yet the poet avers that "the wise / Have a far deeper madness, and the glance / Of melancholy is. . .the telescope of truth" (*D* 11. 177-80). He cherishes his own melancholy, together with the melancholy "shadow" (*D* 1. 93) of her who caused it; and this sadness, brought on (for both him and his cold beloved) by solitude, he labels "truth." It does not appear that anyone will ever be admitted on a basis of love or genuine dialogue into the inner world of either Byron's or Tennyson's questing dreamer.

Rather, the multiple, inclusive unity these questers seek—which they already enjoy in memory and imagination—is a unity of many images and many past and future selves, a crowding-in of endlessly varied sensations felt, remembered, re-imagined, and projected forward. Ulysses says, "I am a part of all that I have met" (*U* 1. 18), and Byron's poem uses variants of this phrase in three crucial passages, each providing a commentary on some of its implications for the Tennyson poem as well. Being a part of all that one has met, and hearing voices from the deep—the two central concepts of each poem—are interrelated versions of one fundamental idea: the encompassing, multiple, ambivalent unity, dark yet liberating, which is revealed to the seer in a state of elemental reverie. For Byron in "The Dream," like Tennyson in "Ulysses," creates a poetic persona who is a dreamer of the sea.⁹

As we follow the development of Byron's nine-part poem, focusing on its treatment of the two main motifs, the part-whole relationship in visionary reverie and the voices arising from the deep, and as we study the way these motifs relate to the corollary image-themes of sea-waves and sea-vertigo, we can at the same time explore the Tennysonian parallels in "Ulysses." A portrait of kindred wanderers will emerge, each a solitary who becomes one and many, part of an expanding and multiple unity, in his union with past and future selves.

Ulysses derives comfort, an expanded sense of being, from contemplating the fact that he has "become a name" (*U* 1. 11): his past selves, remembered by those he has met on his far-ranging journeys, and freshly imagined by those who have only heard those journeys reported, circle back to Ulysses in both memory and imagination to make him part of them, and to become part of him as well. Past and present selves merge, and the merger is broadened still further in reverie by being projected as a model for adventures of a future self - as adventures experienced in

7. Perhaps Tennyson also had in mind Ps. 93:3, "The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves."
8. Findlay, (139-49) subtly observes that in the verse "It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles" (*U* 1. 63) "The potentially emotive verb 'touch' suggests the intensity of Ulysses' desire to relive his past experience with Achilles, but the dominant navigational sense of the term here indicates that renewal of human acquaintance may not be granted to a man who has

shown himself neither capable nor desirous of more than casual contact" (140).

9. In emphasizing sea imagery as key to reverie patterns in both poems I am influenced by the methodology of Bachelard, though Bachelard says nothing about "The Dream" or "Ulysses." For more on Bachelardian phenomenology of reverie in its relation to patterns of water imagery see my "Water, Movement, Roundness: The Epiphanic Pattern in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*."

prospect even as they are imagined. Reverie insures that Ulysses will not need to "pause, to make an end" (*U* 1. 22) even while he feels marooned amid barren crags. He does not "hoard" himself in a narrow sphere of concerns; instead, like Faust,¹⁰ he wants to follow the "sinking star" of knowledge beyond the horizon's bound, reawakening his exploratory past and giving rise to new legends, which will spawn new imaginings, new reported and envisioned Ulysses-selves (*U* 11. 29, 31).

Byron's "The Dream" is a reverie of this same kind: the speaker says he wants to "recall a vision which I dream'd / Perchance in sleep—for in itself a thought, / A slumbering thought, is capable of years, / And curdles a long life into one hour" (*D* 11. 23-26). The reverie described here is a kind of waking dream: whether the seer saw it in a sleeping or waking state is immaterial, perhaps unascertainable. "Sleep"—or the half-waking reverie state evoked in this first section of the poem—"hath its own world, / A boundary between the things misnamed / Death and existence" (*D* 11. 1-3). Just as Ulysses is standing on the shore, the boundary between land and sea, between his quotidian and remembered/envisioned selves, so Byron the *rêveur* is likewise in a boundary-state, between what is (the present) and what is not (the remembered or envisioned world, what has passed out of being or has not yet happened). For Byron's seer, the unreal—what is apart from day-to-day life—has its own reality: "Sleep hath its own world, / And a wide realm of wild reality. / And dreams in their development have breath" (*D* 11. 3-5), the breath-like, inward-outward exchange of selves with the daytime world. Visionary reveries

... leave a weight upon our waking thoughts,
They take a weight from off our waking toils,
They do divide our being; they become
A portion of ourselves as of our time,
And look like heralds of eternity;
They pass like spirits of the past,—they speak
Like sibyls of the future. . . . (*D* 11. 7-13)

For Byron's speaker, as for Tennyson's Ulysses, the reverie-state, in which a "slumbering thought. . . capable of years" comes back as "vision" in an experience which is "perchance" sleep, perchance wakefulness, unites the remembered/imagined "spirits of the past" with a projected "future" intimated in sibylline voices (cf. Tennyson: "I am a part of all that I have met"; "every hour is. . . A bringer of new things" [*U* 11. 18, 26, 28]). Such reveries become a "portion of ourselves" because we enter into them and become a "part of" them, in an inward-outward, breathlike interchange which constitutes a multiple wholeness. In their expansion of self to imagined, even legendary or legend-making dimensions, such reveries become a part or "portion of. . . our time" as well; thus Ulysses becomes an embodied imaginative history, "a name"—as does the "Byronic hero."

The part-whole relationship in Byron's poem is illuminated

10. To Ricks' note referring to Cary's Dante (564n) we may add a mention of Faust's desire to follow the sun, as it sinks below the horizon, so he can continue to "drink its eternal light":

Allein der neue Trieb erwacht,
Ich eile fort, ihr ew'ges Licht zu trinken,
Vor mir den Tag und hinter mir die Nacht,
Den Himmel über mir und unter mir die Wellen. (*Faust* 11. 1085-88)
[But now the new drive wakens: I hasten away to drink its eternal light, the day ahead of me and the night behind me, the sky above me and below

by a look at its structure. "The Dream" is symmetrically framed: the narrator of sections 1 and 9 uses his opening and closing meditations to embrace or enclose the adventures of the dreamed self in sections 2 through 8. But the dreamed self reciprocally expands, and thus in a sense includes or encloses, the self of the narrator: each expands the being of the other; each stands toward the other in the relation of part to whole. Ulysses, in the same way, is a "part of all" that he has met, and all that he has met is a "part of" him.

There is evidently something about the fluxile movement of interflow between past and present selves, or dreamed and waking selves, that makes Byron's imagination constantly recur to the image of the sea in "The Dream." In section 2 the dreamed poet's beloved stands upon a hill which looks like the "cape" of a "long ridge" of hills, "Save that there was no *sea* to lave its base, / But a most living landscape, and the *wave* / Of woods and cornfields" (*D* 11. 30-33; emphasis added). The narrator may try to dismiss or qualify the "sea" image, but it irresistibly returns in the form of "waves." The young woman looks past her desperate, devoted admirer (whom she regards with a mere sisterly affection), toward the metaphoric sea or waves below (where he stands), as she seeks some distant view of her chosen lover's steed. The spurned poet, for his part, also faces toward a metaphoric sea: "she was his life, / The ocean to the river of his thoughts, / Which terminated all: upon a tone, / A touch of hers, his blood would ebb and flow, / And his cheek change tempestuously" (*D* 11. 56-60). She is the ocean into which his thoughts flow, but she is also the moon who moves the (often tempestuous) ebbing and flowing tides of his blood. So he, too, is an ocean.

In sum, Byron's dreamed self, like that of Tennyson's Ulysses, is depicted in a context of marine imagery: his life of wandering is announced by an image-cluster that blends him with the watery element (the woman he loves is an ocean like him: she proves to be hardly more than an emblem of his own imaginative desires, another self-image). So, too, the mariner Ulysses must return to, and blend with, the sea: it makes no difference if the "gulfs" should "wash us down," for this may be part of the summons issued by the voices from the deep; the "baths / Of all the western stars" offer a welcome, a fitting intimation of what may be (*U* 11. 60-62).

After section 3 of "The Dream," which mostly advances the plot (the dreamed poet shreds his intended farewell note and departs forever), the central portion of Byron's nine-part poem (sections 4, 5, and 6) brings the part-whole theme to its climax. In doing so, it offers the fullest Byronic commentary on—and, I would suggest, may well have provided the fullest Byronic inspiration for—the key line in "Ulysses": "I am a part of all that I have met." Byron carefully brings this motif into intimate contact with marine imagery of waves and a Ulyssean sense of vertiginous depths.¹¹ This central portion of "The Dream"

me the waves.] (40)

Goethe's image is as ambivalently Icarian as Tennyson's.

11. Cf. Shaw: "As the 'untraveller' worlds begin to stream away from Ulysses at alarming speeds, the very expansiveness produces a feeling of vertigo." Shaw's analysis of Tennyson's strategies for making the Ulyssean imagination "cross in an instant enormous intervals of space and time" (86) is also related to our discussion of the conflation of past and future selves in both Tennysonian and Byronic reveries.

brings about an artful interweaving of the poet's imagining and imagined selves and even throws some light on the problem of unfulfilled love—related to Ulysses' dilemma of the "hungry heart" (U 1. 12).

As the Byronic boy becomes a man amid "the wilds / Of fiery climes," he unites extremes, drinking in "sunbeams" and "girt / With strange and dusky aspects": like Ulysses, "on the sea / And on the shore he was a wanderer" (D 11. 108-11). As soon as the narrator tells us this, he confesses that "There was a mass of many images / Crowded like waves upon me, but he [the narrator-poet's dream self] was / A part of all" (D 11. 112-14; emphasis added). No sooner does the narrator mention the dream-poet's wanderings on sea and shore than he himself feels as if great sea-waves of images are welling up around or over him. Dreamer-self and dreamed self intertwine as imaginations and memories overwhelm them both. The dreamer is immersed, or crowded over, by surges of dream-sensation; the dreamed self is a part of all of these; and the two selves are each a part of the other, in a dizzying imaginative whirlpool.

After this many-leveled merger of part and whole, Byron's narrator finishes section 4 with a vignette of the dream-protagonist lying amid fallen columns, with camels and a nearby fountain, guarded in his sleep by a white-robed patriarch, all "canopied" under a sky so pure "That God alone was to be seen in Heaven" (D 11. 123, 125). Here we find no clear Tennysonian parallel; instead, after Ulysses tells us he is a "part of all that I have met," he adds: "Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough / Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades / For ever and for ever when I move" (U 11. 19-21). But though this sequel is less reposeful than the Byron scene (Tennyson's "arch" being far less reassuring than Byron's blue canopy), it too expresses a mysterious sense of supernal guidance. Though Ulysses can never pass "through" his experiences as a victor might pass in pride through a triumphal arch, the skyey "arch" does suggest a noble entry, an indefinitely—indeed, infinitely—deferred but still noble goal. (Gothic arches may come to mind, and cathedrals.) One can think of a distant guiding power in control somewhere on high.¹²

In a quite Ulysean way (as we shall see) Byron's dream-protagonist is "a part of" even more than he realizes. In section 5 the dreamer switches the scene to the beloved Lady who rejected the hero: she lives a thousand miles away, with a loving husband and lovely children, but afflicted with a mysterious dolor:

What could her grief be?—she had loved him not,
Nor given him cause to deem himself beloved,
Nor could he be a part of that which prey'd
Upon her mind—a spectre of the past. (D 11. 140-43)

This is all *erlebte Rede* or free indirect discourse, the narrator edging his way into the dream-protagonist's mind. He sympathetically portrays for us the protagonist's perplexity. But it is transparently clear to the reader that the dream-self is indeed a part—the central part—of his beloved's grief, the "spectre" of

her past. And in section 6, when the scene switches again to the dream-hero's wedding, he cannot utter the required marriage-formula without experiencing a vertiginous semi-collapse: he "heard not his own words, / And all things reel'd around him" (D 11. 157-58). He is blended with past experiences, of which he will always be "a part" (as they will be "part of" him); and the dizzying surges of them, as it were, crowd in upon him again as the "waves" of images did upon the narrator earlier. "The day, the hour, the sunshine, and the shade" (in a curious verbal echo, Ulysses too remembers "The thunder and the sunshine" [U 1. 48]), and "All things pertaining to that place and hour [when the dream-hero wrote and then destroyed his intended farewell note], / And her who was his destiny, came back / And thrust themselves between him and the light: / What business had they there at such a time?" (D 11. 162-66). The dream-protagonist is the dark "spectre" of his Lady, and she is a shadow blotting out his light: as early as section 3 we were told that "his heart / Was darken'd with her shadow" (D 11. 92-93). Shadow and spectre merge: the two tragic darknesses are "part of" each other.

The word "destiny" in the Byron passage above is a key to Ulysses' situation—and its imagery—as well as to that of Byron's dream-hero: future prospects, for each of them, issue so inevitably from past experiences and imaginings, that the ideal future ironically takes the shape of previous discontents. What the wanderer tries to escape goes with him: it is "a part of" him.¹³ Byron's dream-hero cannot escape the "shadow"; he himself is a "spectre." Similarly, Ulysses shuns an "aged wife," but describes himself as a "gray spirit" (U 11. 3, 30). This admission reveals more than Ulysses may realize: a gray head hardly commits one so ineluctably to essential agedness as does a "gray spirit," which conveys the picture of a "shade," the shadowy spirit of one departed. The Byronic dream-hero experiences a vertiginous reeling when crowds of spectral images surge up from the past to blot out the light, but the vertiginous crowding-in of images is also the aptest metaphor for his whole life of ceaseless waves of sensory intensity: they both involve a kind of dizzying semi-collapse. Similarly, Ulysses tries to present his ideal future prospects as promising "honour" and "toil" (U 1. 50), but the imagery of the vision betrays it as a kind of prolonged, languorously evoked descent below the horizon to meet the moaning deep, to follow a sinking star, perchance to be washed down, engulfed. Each of these heroes has a "hungry heart"; Ulysses uses this phrase to describe a quest for knowledge but, as with the Byron dream-protagonist, Ulysses' perpetually unfulfilled passion centrally involves the heart and thus cannot be unrelated to a lack of fulfilment in love (think of the frustrating "aged wife"). There is something of a compensatory *Liebested* or love-death feeling in each man's ardent wish to be overwhelmed, immersed, a part of everything.

True, Byron's poem enacts a symbolic revenge on the cold Lady, for which there is no real parallel in Tennyson's lyric. The Lady goes mad: she who had treated her suppliant suitor with such royal disdain is now sardonically called the "queen of a fantastic realm" (D 1. 173), a Queen Mab of lunacy. The narrator

seek, to find, and not to yield' of the movement of the fifth line ('That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me') is less a matter of contrast, than of a curious affinity between what disgusts him, and the escape from it proposed."

12. Palmer observes that the creative tension of myth and monologue in "Ulysses" is like the "effect of a simultaneously closed and open form" embodied in "the poem's central symbol of the arch" (48).

13. Thomson (67) wryly observes: "And perhaps the echo in 'To strive, to

takes over in section 9, after the dream ends, to muse how strange it was that the dream should have so vividly traced the course of two creatures' shared doom, "the one / To end in madness—both in misery" (*D* 11. 205-06). The dreamer vindicates the dream-hero by putting the latter's tormentress in her proper place. But though we find no such barely-masked *Schadenfreude* in "Ulysses," there will always be readers who wonder if the "aged wife" is not rather poorly repaid for her twenty years of exemplary fidelity to an absent husband. If this final voyage is not Ulyssean malice or symbolic retributiveness, it will find other uncomplimentary designations.¹⁴

Section 8, discussed in some detail earlier in this essay, is the penultimate section, dramatizing what may be called the penultimate of the whole poem, a sense of almost-ending, of the not-quite-final, the next-to-last, of a refusal to conclude.¹⁵ It is here that the "book of Night" is "opened wide" (*D* 1. 199): night approaches, but voices from the deep do not quite sing of finality. Instead they utter "A marvel and a secret," just as the deep voices' moans to Ulysses speak less of terror than of welcome. Ulysses was always a more social being than Byron's dream-hero: the former boasts of seeing and knowing "cities of men / And manners, climates, councils, governments" (*U* 11. 13-14), while the latter "made him friends of mountains: with the stars / And the quick Spirit of the Universe / He held his dialogues" (*D* 11. 195-97). But Byron's dream has revealed "power— / The tyranny of pleasure and of pain" (*D* 11. 13-14), and this joy-melancholy is a power that Ulysses, too, has never wished to turn away from: "all times I have enjoyed / Greatly, have suffered greatly" (*U* 11. 7-8).

Wandering is an ambivalent state, unsettled and unsettling. It may sometimes be a kind of madness: we learn from Byron's dream that the now distraught mind of the unresponsive Lady "had wandered from its dwelling" (*D* 1. 170). But wanderings—remembered, imagined, projected, shared have made Byron's and Tennyson's protagonists part of a larger multiplicity of selves, dizzily brought together in waves of elemental reverie arising from the depths.

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14. Cf. Pettigrew: "The undeniable snarl in 'Match'd with an aged wife' is scarcely fair to poor old Penelope, whose own marital loyalty has been displayed during the years of Ulysses' absence by her weaving a magic web as steadily as the Lady of Shalott (with the additional hardship of

having to take the work out every night)" (37).

15. Cf. Hughes: "All that matters is to resist closure and to keep moving" (98); she speaks of "Ulysses" but a similar impetus drives "The Dream."

Ontogeny and Phylogeny in *The Mill on the Floss*

Preston Fambrough

The subject of George Eliot's fiction is man's moral experience; and as she chronicles moral triumph and failure in novel after novel, there emerges not only a consistent moral credo centered on faithfulness and responsibility but also a distinct physiology of moral behavior in human life. The twin derivation of this moral physiology from Wordsworth and Comte is well known.¹ In Wordsworth she found a valorization of feeling as the root of moral action, an idealization of childhood as the time of freshest and most intense feelings, and an ideal of adult life in which the individual's days would be bound each to each through memory and through successive reaffirmation of the natural piety of the child. In Comte and positivism she found the application of universal laws to human affairs and the conviction that "the past rules the present, lives in it, and we are but the growth and outcome of the past" (*Letters* 3: 320).

The view of society as an organism, an analogy which has figured in moral philosophy at least since the Stoics and which came to dominate nineteenth-century social thought, adds to the urgency of George Eliot's moral vision by revealing "the infinite issues belonging to everyday duties" (*MF* 150; bk. 2, ch. 4). Since human society is a living unity of interdependent parts, the slightest action of any of these human integers theoretically affects the whole and every part, not merely for the present but for all time. As Bourl'honne summarizes, "les conséquences de nos actes se propagent inéluctablement dans le temps et dans l'espace" (135-36).

George Eliot was especially struck by the corollary of nineteenth-century organicism holding that the life of an individual recapitulates the life of the species,² a theory she endorses most explicitly in *Romola* in asserting that our lives make a moral tradition for our individual selves, as the life of mankind at large makes a moral tradition for the race" (420; bk. 7, ch. 39). In George Eliot's fiction, Suzanne Graver explains, the process of development

applies to the individual no less than society, and the crucial correspondence between the two makes these connections the most vital of all for George Eliot. As a result the natural history of our social life finds its complement in what she later called a 'natural history of the mind,' with 'mind' signifying the psychological evolution of developing capacity for moral growth. (33)

Similarly, William Myers observes that for George Eliot, "the individual and society are constituted in each other's structures" (67).

The analogy between the individual's experience and the

community's is most vividly manifest in *The Mill on the Floss*, George Eliot's one novel chronicling the moral-psychological development of its protagonist from childhood to adulthood against the background of a community whose moral history is powerfully if intermittently evoked.³ In this *Bildungsroman* the heroine's experience closely parallels the experience of the community itself. In both the individual and the collective history, moral behavior is shown to depend on attentiveness and fidelity to memories of past acts of compassion: the response of the medieval St. Ogg to the heart's need of a suffering woman corresponds to Maggie's early movements of sympathy and love, while the moral failings of both heroine and community are shown to result from a similar fragmentation of experience, a repudiation or alienation of the past.

For George Eliot, the essence of moral experience lies in feelings of pity and affection, feelings without which, as we see from the example of Tom Tulliver, human beings are capable of nothing higher than a narrow, pharisaical form of justice. Like Wordsworth, George Eliot held these feelings of spontaneous compassion to be part of the "natural piety" of childhood. And these first affections, for the novelist as for the poet, are seen as "the fountain-light of all our day." The highest morality springs from a retention or recovery, through memory and sometimes conscious effort, of those childhood well-springs of affection. According to Ruby Redinger George Eliot considered her own childhood "the source of her power to love as a mature woman, for only love can beget love" (49). And Ernest Bevan reflects that "the memory which recalls youth helps return her characters to their better selves and strengthens those affections which generate the flow of sympathy" (66).

Like Wordsworth, George Eliot insists repeatedly in *The Mill on the Edenic* quality of childhood existence. Thus, Maggie's promise to kiss Philip when they should meet again proves

void, like so many other sweet, illusory promises of childhood; void as promises made in Eden before the seasons were divided, and when the starry blossoms grew side by side with the ripening peach—impossible to be fulfilled when the golden gates had been passed. (166; bk. 2, ch. 7)

And the chapter ends with the solemn refrain: "They had entered the thorny wilderness, and the golden gates of their childhood had forever closed behind them" (171; bk. 2, ch. 7).⁴ Critics have long complained of an alleged incongruity between the narrator's idealization of childhood as paradise and the facts of the heroine's experience.⁵ It is true that Maggie's is from the start a "troubled

1. See for example Pinney, "Wordsworth's Influence on George Eliot" and Dunham.

2. W. J. Harvey asserts that the "recapitulation theory" was current in Europe before Haeckel's well-known formulation of it in 1866. And he contends that "this conviction is a part of the tap-root of George Eliot's 'ideology'" (153). In a more recent study Stephen Jay Gould attributes to Charles Bonnet (1720-93) "the first extensive parallel between ontogeny and the history of life" (18). For a discussion of the terms "ontogeny," "phylogeny," and "evolution," see Gillian Beer (15).

3. Ernest Bevan points out that while Maggie Tulliver resembles Dorothea Brooke and Gwendolen Harleth in her struggle to accommodate the needs of the imaginative self with worldly conditions, *The Mill on the Floss* differs from the later novels "by explicitly treating the relationship between childhood past and adult present" (69).

4. Compare Pip's departure from childhood in chapter 19 of the profoundly Wordsworthian *Great Expectations*, where as Jerome Buckley has noted (292) the language echoes that of the end of *Paradise Lost*.

5. For example Knoepfelmacher (216-217) and Graver (198).

life" (44; bk. 1, ch. 6) and that those with whom she shares "those first affections"—Tom and her father—cannot fully reciprocate her love (though Knoepfelmacher certainly exaggerates the deficiency of Tom's early affection for her [216-17]). But the real point of the narrator's insistence on the Edenic nature of Maggie's childhood lies elsewhere, not in its "delight and liberty" or even in the greater reciprocity her affections encounter at this period in Tom and her father, but rather in the quality of *her own* first affections. As in "Intimations of Immortality," we understand that the "glory" (used in the poem in its religious sense of a halo, an aura of heavenly light) described as lying about the child in infancy and steadily fading as it grows older, actually inheres in the child as a state of mind, a vestige of a prenatal paradise in which the individual soul is *at one* with creation. Maggie's childhood is seen as a paradise because, as the period when her primary affections are strongest and purest, it is a lifelong source of her natural piety. As in "Intimations," the memory of childhood constitutes a memory of a memory of paradise. Thus her childhood home is always for Maggie a "sanctuary where sacred relics lay" (420; bk. 16, ch. 14), and the leitmotif of "sacredness" recurs throughout the book linking childhood and paradise.⁶ The moral vision stemming in the novel from George Eliot's idealization of childhood, her clear endorsement of Maggie's choices of renunciation of present happiness in favor of ties to the past, has mystified many readers and repelled others. Her repudiation of an incipient friendship with Philip in deference to her father's and brother's animosity seems wholly unreasonable. And the reader's difficulty is compounded by the novelist's intellectual and artistic honesty in developing with great cogency a point of view opposed to her own. Philip's argument that Maggie's renunciation is but a "narrow self-delusive fanaticism, which is only a way of escaping pain by starving into dullness all the highest powers of your nature" (286; bk. 5, ch. 3) has been mistaken for George Eliot's view by critics who read the novel as a tragedy of misguided and pointless repression and regression.⁷ But the arbitrariness of such a reading has been clearly demonstrated by John Hagan, who notes that the narrator terms Philip's desperate plea a "sophistry" and Maggie's resistance a "true prompting against a concealment that would introduce doubleness into her own mind, and might cause misery to those who had the primary natural claim on her" (54-55).

Once, in reply to Philip's timid reproof that she could never love him as much as Tom, Maggie answers simply, "Perhaps not; but then, you know, the first thing I remember in my life is standing with Tom by the side of the Floss, while he held my hand: everything before that is dark to me" (268; bk. 5, ch. 2). The reader who enters into George Eliot's view of the origin of human sympathy in the first affections of childhood will recognize the ineluctability of Maggie's decision to give Philip up, unjust as it seems. To require her to sacrifice her primary family ties to a more recent sympathy is self-contradictory, since her affection for Philip itself, in this view, actually *depends* upon her

primary ties with family which are the root of all subsequent affection.

The moral dilemma posed for Maggie by her love for Stephen reveals more fully how morality depends on the individual's awareness of the temporal *continuity* of his existence as well as its *solidarity* with all other human life.⁸ For George Eliot, W. J. Harvey observes, "to lose one's roots is to lose that sense of oneself as part of the continuum of things, to blind oneself to that sense of looking before and after which is so necessary for maturity" (182). To succumb to the evil of egoism, as Maggie does momentarily in her "Great Temptation," is to live in a disconnected present. In allowing herself the forbidden joy of dancing with Stephen she rationalizes: "This one, this last night, she might expand unrestrainedly in the warmth of the present, without all those chill eating thoughts of past and future" (386; bk. 6, ch. 10). Likewise, when she sets out with Stephen on their fateful boat ride, we are told that "memory was excluded" (407; bk. 6, ch. 13). Again her yielding is described as a hiatus in the continuity of her life: "They spoke no word; for what could words have been but an inlet to thought? And thought did not belong to the enchanted haze in which they were enveloped—it belonged to the past and the future that lay outside the haze" (407; bk. 6, ch. 13).

The novel reveals an elaborate parallel between these moral struggles of the heroine and the collective experience of the community. St. Ogg's, a town which "carries the traces of its long growth and history like a millennial tree" and which is "familiar with forgotten years" (104; bk. 1, ch. 12), has had in its collective infancy a potential "fountain light" of compassion and moral force. Wiesenfarth points out that the legend of Ogg is a myth of the *origin* of the community (103), while Buckler relates the story to Genesis (153). The spontaneous unquestioning pity with which Ogg, the patron saint of the old town,⁹ responded to the heart's need of the wayfarer thus parallels closely the formative "first affections" of Maggie's childhood. It is true that the significance of Ogg's example in the novel is complicated by George Eliot's well-known ambivalence regarding social-historical evolution. But in this novel the narrator, while echoing the conventional nineteenth-century meliorism George Eliot upheld throughout her career, repeatedly praises the greater intensity of emotion attained by past ages.

Like her fellow agnostic John Stuart Mill,¹⁰ George Eliot admired the potential of the Christian religion at its best to inspire self-transcending enthusiasm, but lamented the deterioration of Christianity in her own day into empty ritualism. In *The Mill on the Floss*, the narrator reflects that "The days were gone when men could be greatly wrought upon by their faith." And in his interviews with Maggie, Dr. Kenn echoes much the same animadversion:

And the Church ought to represent the feeling of the community, so that every parish should be a family knit together under a

6. For example: "Her tender, tranquil affection for Philip, with its root deep down in her childhood. . . seemed now to make a sort of sacred place, a sanctuary . . ." (359; bk. 6, ch. 7).

7. For example William R. Steinhoff, Jerome Thale and Elaine Showalter.

8. These terms, which the novelist used in her essay "On Historic Guidance" ("More Leaves" 371), have been compared by Suzanne Graver to

Comte's "Social Dynamics" and "Social Statics" (154).

9. According to Joseph Wiesenfarth, the legend of St. Ogg "is a rewriting of the legend of St. Christopher, as told by Anna Jameson, George Eliot's 'private hagiographer'" (106). See Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art* 2: 47-57.

10. See *On Liberty* 50-51.

spiritual father. But the ideas of discipline and Christian fraternity are entirely relaxed—they can hardly be said to exist in the public mind . . . and if I were not supported by the firm faith that the Church must ultimately recover the full force of that constitution which alone is fitted to human needs, I should often lose heart at observing the want of fellowship and sense of mutual responsibility among my own flock. (432-33; bk. 7, ch. 2)

Somewhat more problematic but still essentially approbative is the appraisal of the past intimated in the narrator's contrast between the ruins of the Rhone and the Rhine:

And that was a day of romance! If those robber-barons were somewhat grim and drunken ogres, they had a certain grandeur of the wild beast in them—they were forest boars with tusks, tearing and rending, not the ordinary domestic grunter; they represented the demon forces for ever in collision with beauty, virtue, and the gentle uses of life; they made a fine contrast in the picture with the wandering minstrel, the soft-lipped princess, the pious recluse, and the timid Israelite. That was a time of colour, when the sunlight fell on glancing steel and floating banners; a time of adventure and fierce struggle—nay, of living, religious art and religious enthusiasm; for were not cathedrals built in those days, and did not great emperors leave their Western palaces to die before the infidel strongholds in the sacred East? (237-38; bk. 4, ch. 1)

The common denominator among St. Ogg, the robber barons of the Rhine valley, the cathedral-builders and the Crusaders—the redeeming grace, in the narrator's eyes, of this age of lawless violence—is the sway of "passionate impulse." This characteristic is of course the distinguishing mark of Maggie Tulliver as a child; and this implied link between the heroine's childhood and the barbaric Middle Ages is textually reinforced, as both Stump (105) and Harvey (175) have noted, by the child's punishment of her "fetish" doll.¹¹ Without resolving all the inconsistencies in George Eliot's view of historical evolution, Harvey's comparison between childhood and pre-civilized society is illuminating. Childhood, Harvey insists, with its spontaneous sympathy and sense of unity with creation which are the fountain-head of moral life in the adult, is itself actually *pre-moral*. And he cautions that while continuity with childhood is essential for George Eliot,

continuity is not sameness; merely to extend the pre-moral life of childhood into the adult world is disastrous. For the child is also a simple ego, with little sense of cause or consequence. Like an animal, like a savage, his moods are intense but fugitive, lacking the necessary sense of time before and time after. (183)

11. Later in the novel, Stump observes, the Middle Ages are characterized by "a vigorous superstition, that lashes its gods or lashes its own back."
12. Basil Willey sees as the main impulse of George Eliot's work "a conservative-reforming one" (204), while Pinney notes that "the political and social reforms approved in the novels turn out to be not innovation but renovation" (39). A contrasting view is that of Suzanne Graver, who asserts that any suggestion of evolutionary progress in the novel is simply "denied by the resolution of the conflict, which depends on the writings of a medieval monk and primitive kinship needs" (198-99); see also Shuttleworth (58).
13. The words "rescue" and "darkness" function as leitmotifs in the novel, symbolizing respectively moral salvation or triumph and the difficulty and obscurity of moral choice.
14. "The historian guides us rightly in urging us to dwell on the virtues of our ancestors with emulation" (*The Temptations of Theophrastus Such* 320).
15. The compatibility of scientific curiosity with a certain transcendentalism

The admiration the narrator expresses for the intensity of passion and compassion in the age of Ogg and the robber barons does not constitute a retrogressive proposal to return society to the conditions of the Middle Ages, any more than Rousseau's *Social Contract* proposes a return to the state of nature. The ideal of modern society the novel implies is rather a community in which the ancient springs of feeling still flow, but channeled by the "labor of choice" (135; bk. 2, ch. 1), by "that necessary sense of time before and time after," sharpened and extended by modern science and the accumulation of "hard-won treasures of thought, which generations of painful toil have laid up for the race of men. . ." (225; bk. 4, ch. 3).¹²

We are told at the conclusion of the legend of St. Ogg that

it was witnessed in the floods of aftertime, that at the coming on of the eventide, Ogg the son of Beorl was always seen with his boat upon the widespreading waters, and the Blessed Virgin sat in the prow, so that the rowers in the gathering darkness took heart and pulled anew. (105; bk. 1, ch. 7)

Ogg's legend, I believe, presents a complex allegory depicting the moral influence of the past on the present in the life of both individual and community. On one level Ogg's act of compassion stands for the passionate impulse characteristic of civilization's infancy and serving as the "root of piety" for the "mature" civilization. The rowers in the gathering darkness represent successive generations who, under the influence of Ogg's act of charity, struggle to "rescue" their fellow men, or struggle in the *darkness* with their own moral difficulties and dilemmas.¹³ And in a more general way Ogg's deed stands for any of the innumerable acts of goodness, historic and unhistoric, on which "the growing good of the world is partly dependent" (*Middlemarch* 613; bk. 8, "Finale"), sometimes through direct moral inspiration,¹⁴ but also in incalculable, mysterious ways. For George Eliot, with all her enthusiasm for Comte and positivism, never denies the existence of an irreducible core of mystery in human affairs. In a well-known letter she speaks of "the mystery that lies under the processes" (*Letters* 3: 227). We recall the narrator's insistence in *The Mill* on the "mystery of the human lot" (238; bk. 4, ch. 30), a dimension of reality virtually ignored by the current generation but appreciated by the Middle Ages. And elsewhere she professes through Maggie, "I think there are stores laid up in our human nature that our understanding can make no complete inventory of" (226; bk. 5, ch. 1).¹⁵

The river, prominent in Ogg's legend and ubiquitous in the

or mysticism in a mind like Eliot's is cogently argued by Gillian Beer:

The novelist's and the scientist's enterprise is fired by the same pre-science, the same willingness to explore the significance even of that which can be registered neither by instruments nor the unaided senses; the same willingness to use and outgo evidence . . . The imagery of transcendence, of the invisible world, is one which George Eliot shares. The microscope and the telescope, by making realizable the plurality of worlds, scales and existences beyond the reach of our organization, were a powerful antidote to that form of positivism which refused to acknowledge possibilities beyond the present and apparent world . . . Far from eschewing mystification, the extension of possibility through scientific instruments and scientific hypothesis-making actually gave at this time a fresh authority to the speculative and the fictive. Projects cannot rest in the present—they rely upon extension and futurity. (151-52)

novel itself, is a multi-faceted symbol which further links ontogeny and phylogeny by reinforcing the novel's central vision of solidarity and continuity in life. The Floss ties the community of St. Ogg's both spatially to all living humanity and temporally to the life of the past and future. It "links the pulse of the old English town with the beating of the world's mighty heart" (238; bk. 4, ch. 1) while it binds the present population to the "ghostly boatman" who haunts it still. At the same time the river serves as a metaphor for the formation and function of habit in the moral experience of individual and community,¹⁶ a concept central to George Eliot's problematical theory of determinism.¹⁷ The language of channels and pathways gouged out in the mind by habitual acts and feelings, derived from G. H. Lewes and his fellow physiological psychologists (Shuttleworth 72), is frequently encountered in George Eliot's work. In the Proem to *Romola* we read that "The great river-courses which have shaped the lives of men have hardly changed; and those other streams, the life-currents that ebb and flow in human hearts, pulsate to the same great needs, the same great loves and terrors" (43). In the same novel we are told of Tito Melema that "The little rills of selfishness had united and made a channel, so that they could never again meet the same resistance" (106; bk. 1, ch. 9). And in her essay on "Historic Guidance," the novelist writes,

We study the preparation made for us by previous ages, and discerning how laborious devoted lives or grand jets of noble resolution have made *currents* of good effect reaching to ourselves, grateful admiring love is more or less stimulated by our contemplation; this sentiment reinforces our desire to exert some corresponding influence over the destiny of our own successors. (371; my italics)

Yet consciousness, as Shuttleworth reminds us, was by George Eliot's time already seen as multiple, "the confluence of many streams of sensation" (Lewes 2: 68; qtd. in Shuttleworth 73). And this conflicting plurality in the influence of the past on the present of both the individual and the race is powerfully depicted in *The Mill on the Floss* through complication of the river symbolism. We recall the "fierce collision" of "opposing elements" (261; bk. 5, ch. 1) that is foreshadowed at the moment of Maggie's acquaintance with Philip Wakem. And in fact at the climax of her moral experience, two opposing "currents" are perceived at work within her, one a habit of compassionate self-denial originating in early childhood, the other an appetite for personal enjoyment also present in her childhood but latent until quickened into an inexorable force by repeated indulgence just before her fatal lapse with Stephen. At the outset of her acquaintance with Stephen, though she is tempted by the delicious prospects of admiration and luxury such a relationship seems to offer, there are still "things in her stronger than vanity—passion, and affection, and long deep memories of earlier claims on her love and pity and the *stream* of vanity was soon swept along and mingled imperceptibly with that wider *current* which was at its highest force today. . ." (382; bk. 6, ch. 9; my italics). The difference in magnitude between the two opposing forces depicted here—one a mere "stream," the other a "wider current"—augurs that the latter

will eventually prevail. But first Maggie must be "Borne Along by the Tide" of egoism (bk. 6, ch. 13), the long deep habits of self-renouncing compassion momentarily overmastered by the "feeling of a few short weeks" (413; bk. 6, ch. 14). During her abortive elopement with Stephen it seems to Maggie "that the tide was doing it all—that she might glide along with the swift silent stream, and not struggle any more" (403; bk. 6, ch. 13). As she lies down to rest on the deck of the ship, "she was being lulled to sleep with that same soft stream still flowing over her" (412; bk. 6, ch. 13). And when her better self inevitably reasserts itself, "it came with the memories that no passion could long quench: the long past came back to her, and with it the fountains of self-renouncing pity and affection, of faithfulness and resolve" (450; bk. 7, ch. 5).

Analogous to the struggle between egoism and duty raging within Maggie is the tension between these two elements within the community. "The mind of St. Ogg's did not look extensively before or after," we are told. "It inherited a long past without thinking of it, and had no eyes for the spirits that walk the streets" (106; bk. 1, ch. 12). Maggie's transient state of mind at the moment of yielding to temptation is here revealed as the habitual mode of consciousness for most of the inhabitants of the ancient town. And near the end of the novel Dr. Kenn laments that "At present everything seems tending toward the relaxation of ties—toward the substitution of wayward choice for the adherence to obligation, which has its roots in the past" (433; bk. 7, ch. 2). Here as elsewhere in the text, the notion of ontogeny recapitulating phylogeny is inherent in the duality of "the past" that Dr. Kenn invokes: the people of St. Ogg's are oblivious both to their individual pasts with the duties that inhere in them and also to their communal history with its exemplary instance of compassion for suffering. Even if we regard the legend of St. Ogg entirely as a myth created by the community, its moral significance for the present is the same: "They are unfaithful to that generous impulse of their ancestors that gave rise to the legend of St. Ogg and recognized the validity of the heart's need" (Wiesenfarth 109).

Yet though its efficacy is mysterious and problematic, St. Ogg's deed of mercy does not fail to transmit its currents of benevolence down to the narrative present of the novel and beyond. For Ogg seems clearly to be reincarnated in several characters in the novel in their moments of charity and compassion. Bob Jakin, an unlikely avatar nonetheless linked to the Saint through his association with boats and water, repeatedly offers help to Tom and Maggie and responds to Maggie's heart's need without questioning it when she is in disgrace.¹⁸ More unmistakable is the link between Ogg and Dr. Kenn (curiously overlooked by Wiesenfarth). When Maggie first sees the clergyman his face seems "to tell of a human being who had reached a firm, safe stand, but was looking with helpful pity towards the waves" (381; bk. 6, ch. 9). And when he advises Maggie in her time of utmost need, he does so in precisely the spirit of the legendary boatman. We recall the word of the transfigured woman of the legend upon reaching the shore: "Ogg the son of Beorl, thou art blessed in that thou didst not question and wrangle with the heart's need, but was smitten with pity, and did straightway relieve the same" (105; bk.

16. Like Spencer, George Eliot believed that acquired moral characteristics could be transmitted genetically (Paris 59).

17. For the seminal discussion see Levine.

18. Stump (100), Wiesenfarth (119) and Buckler (152) all link Bob Jakin to St. Ogg. Buckler points out significantly that Bob befriends Maggie "for memory's sake" (152).

1, ch. 7). Though *reason* dictates marriage between Maggie and Stephen as the expedient involving the least evil, we are told that Dr. Kenn "entered with all the comprehension of a man who had known spiritual conflict, and lived through years of devoted service to his fellow-men, into that state of Maggie's heart and mind which made the consent to the marriage a desecration to her: her conscience must not be tampered with . . ." (434; bk. 7, ch. 3).

During the "Final Rescue" with which the novel ends, the actual drama of St. Ogg and the Virgin is re-enacted with Maggie seeming to reincarnate alternately the two figures of the legend. First, in setting out in a boat on the flood, she assumes the role of Ogg (Fisher 68). Then, with Tom at the oars, she is transformed into the Madonna always seen seated in the prow of Ogg's boat in the floods of aftertime (Bevan 74; Wiesenfarth 120). Though Maggie cannot save Tom's life, "the benevolent force of her past," as Bevan asserts, "is nonetheless affirmed: Tom renounces pride and calls her 'Magsie'" (75). I would suggest that in fact both Maggie's pasts are confirmed by her final act of love, the "deep underlying, unshakable memories of early union" with Tom (453; bk. 7, ch. 5) and, even deeper, the racial memory of St. Ogg's long-ago deed of mercy.

Maggie's actual knowledge of the St. Ogg legend is documented only once, near the end of the novel, through her dream on board the ship with Stephen:

She was in a boat on the wide water with Stephen, and in the gathering darkness something like a star appeared, that grew and grew till they saw it was the Virgin seated in St. Ogg's boat, and it came nearer and nearer, till they saw the Virgin was Lucy and the boatman was Philip—no, not Philip, but her brother, who rowed past without looking at her; and she rose to stretch out her arms and call to him, and their own boat turned over with the movement, and they began to sink, till with one spasm of dread she seemed to awake, and find she was a child again in the parlor at evening twilight, and Tom was not really angry. (412-13; bk. 6, ch. 14)

This dream, emerging from the individual and collective unconscious, provides the impulse for Maggie to renounce Stephen.¹⁹ The shifting identity of the boatman in the dream reflects the twin sources of her renewed moral strength in her own early affections for Tom and Philip and in the legacy of Ogg. Her breach of faithfulness to her individual and racial pasts is symbolized by Tom's (the boatman's) refusal to look at her.

The benevolent influence on Maggie of a larger communal past takes a tangible form in her reading of Thomas a Kempis. Wiesenfarth explains that *The Imitation of Christ* "amplifies the meaning of St. Ogg by formulating the way an individual can understand his position in relation to other men" (114). It is significant that at least two human intermediaries are involved in the transmission of Kempis' message across the centuries to Maggie: the "quiet hand" (253; bk. 4, ch. 3) that directs her to certain passages in the text and Bob Jakin, who, himself impelled by memories of their early friendship (Buckler 152), gives her the book. The documentation of these intermediaries reinforces our sense of a historical continuum of human sympathy of which

Maggie is the culmination and beneficiary.

But the moral value or significance of Maggie's renunciation of Stephen, like that of her rupture with Philip earlier, has been questioned repeatedly.²⁰ It is true that while the touchstone of George Eliot's moral system is the well-being of others, Maggie's ultimate refusal to marry Stephen comes too late to avert the suffering caused by her temporary lapse and indeed appears to effect no happiness nor alleviate any pain in the world around her. But those who deny the meaning and value of Maggie's choice have failed to grasp the breadth and complexity of the novelist's moral vision, the web-like interconnectedness she perceives pervading all human affairs. Everywhere in her work we are reminded of the incalculable, inevitable and infinite diffusiveness of good and evil in this organic universe: "So deeply inherent is it in this life of ours that men have to suffer for each other's sins, so inevitably diffusive is human suffering. . ." (MF 215; bk. 3, ch. 7); or as Adam Bede puts it, "You can never do what's wrong without breeding sin and trouble more than you can ever see" (AB 169; bk. 1, ch. 16).

I believe Myers is mistaken in categorically denying the utilitarian basis of George Eliot's morality (66-67). But certainly hers is an elusive and problematic form on utilitarianism, not to be confused with the sort of crude balancing of immediate consequences which Dr. Kenn rejects in his deliberations over Maggie's plight. Rather, it is utilitarianism with "a large vision of relations" (239; bk. 4, ch. 1), an absolute conviction, part scientific and part mystical, of the inevitability of evil's begetting evil, balanced by a corresponding faith that the currents of beneficence springing from Maggie's compassionate choice will one day re-emerge in the stream of human time.

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19. I am indebted here to Shuttleworth's fine analysis of the function of individual and collective subconscious in the novel (67-73).

20. For example by Steinhoff, Thale, Bennett and Lerner.

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Swinburne's Imitations of Catullus

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Since Swinburne is a distinguished Victorian practitioner of the imitation of ancient poets, it is useful to consider his approach to the problems of *imitatio* in the later nineteenth century—not merely what models are chosen and what is drawn from them, but how the poet places himself, personally, in relation to his models. One would want to consider how he relates modern interests to ancient themes and how effectively he confronts the difference between his own accentual English verse and the very different metrics of the Greeks and Romans.

Like most Victorians, Swinburne showed relatively little interest in Roman writers, and greatly preferred the Greeks. But he does speak warmly of Catullus and draws on him frequently in his work. (Catullus is the favorite Roman poet of those who don't much care for Roman poetry). But while the Greek connections have been frequently, if superficially, explored, this important aspect of his relation to the ancients has been dealt with only in passing.

It is easy to see why Swinburne should have been drawn to the poet his adored Landor called "the vigorous and impassioned Veronese" (Welby 11: 179). Catullus comes across as a vivid individual voice in a way that recalls the personal evocativeness of early Greek monodists. He is erotic in a way that would appeal to an admirer of Sappho, whom he imitates, and eloquently scurrilous in the manner of Archilocus. Swinburne indeed reflects some aspects of Catullus most fully in prose, where his development of scatological assault as a critical approach makes up in sustained vigor what it lacks in the concentrated intensity with which Catullus' fury is expressed.¹ The learning and playfulness of Catullus are also conspicuous in Swinburne's prose, the latter especially in the letters. (The colloquialism of Catullus would be best found in Browning, among the Victorians, and the

racy vitality nowhere.) But he especially provides a model for Swinburne in his adaptation of ancient (in his case, Greek) materials to modern and very personal ends,² and in developing modern (Latin) equivalents to the ancient metrical forms.

Swinburne's own metaphor for the nature of his relationship with Catullus is that of brother:

To Catullus

My brother, my Valerius, dearest head
Of all whose crowning bay-leaves crown their mother
Rome, in the notes first heard of thine I read
My brother.

No dust that death or time can strew may smother
Love and the sense of kinship inly bred
From loves and hates at one time with one another.

To thee was Caesar's self nor dead nor dread,
Song and the sea were sweeter each than other:
How should I living fear to call thee dead,
My brother?³

The poem is a "roundel," Swinburne's version of the French *rondel*, and in "The Roundel" he describes it as a gemlike form suitable to all kinds of subjects. He used it several times for funerary poems, and in the background of "To Catullus," remotely but certainly, are Catullus' celebrated lines to his brother who had died (101), the final words of which Swinburne had used as the title for his own elegy on the death of his poetic brother Baudelaire. "Frater" occurs in the second and final lines of Catullus' poem, creating the circularity that Swinburne presents more strictly by beginning and ending his poem with "My brother." The reference to Caesar recalls Catullus' remarks on him in poems (11, 57, 93), and refers to Swinburne's own political verse. It is hard to be specific about either "song" or "the sea." Catullus' accomplished technique must presumably serve for the first, and there are evocative lines in 64 which might explain Swinburne's claiming him as a fellow sea-lover.

The most explicit allusion to Catullus in the poem is also the

"even when [Catullus] employs foreign [i.e., Greek] materials he works them up in such a manner as to give them a Roman air and character" (Smith 1: 653).

3. Swinburne will be cited from the ed. of 1904.

1. Swinburne's closest approximation to Catullan invective in verse might be "In Sepulcretis," which derives its title and an epigraph from Catullus 19. But it is general where Catullus would be specific.

2. Swinburne's contemporary, William Ramsey, writing in a standard reference work of the period, cites "a German critic" to the effect that

strangest. When we read of "loves and hates at one with one another," we have to recall Catullus' famous "Odi et amo" (85), where the hating and loving are at one with one another in the sense that he feels both at the same time. Swinburne has "mis-translated"⁴ this as meaning that the two of them are the great lovers and haters in similar ways, which establishes a basis for their fraternal bond.⁵ Catullus' lines to his brother dwell on the immeasurable, irremediable distance between them, while Catullus is claimed as Swinburne's brother because he feels so close to him. The poem demonstrates this fraternity by reflecting Catullus' own gift for graceful renovation of earlier sources.

While Swinburne often draws on Catullus, more or less directly, in his poems, in four of them he attempts a particularly close connection with him. These poems are true imitations in the Renaissance sense. They are also brief and unpretentious, and make it easy to focus on Swinburne's practice of classical imitation.

The first of these, the early "Hendecasyllabics," is at the very least a remarkable piece of virtuosity. The hendecasyllabic line is generally associated with Catullus,⁶ but the relation here can be defined more precisely. It is impossible, in fact, to respond fully to Swinburne's apparently paradoxical welcome to autumn and the extinction of life except when it is seen in relation to a long tradition of poems welcoming the spring and life's renewal. Catullus wrote one of the best-known "spring" poems of Latin antiquity (46), in hendecasyllabics, and it is the work to which Swinburne's title most directly calls attention.

What is intended to strike us is the startling contrast between the two poems, and then between Swinburne's and all spring poems expressing traditional attitudes. For in terms of the excitement expressed at the change of season, the Latin is much the more "romantic" of the two. The vibrant urgency of the fourfold "Now" (*iam*; 1-2, 7-8), each beginning its line, the excited response to the spring in both mind and body as Catullus looks forward to taking in the sights of Asia on his way back from Bithynia, contrast sharply with the mannered intensity of the Victorian poet's contemplation of the autumnal equinox:

In the month of the long decline of roses
I, beholding the summer dead before me,
Set my face to the sea and jourmied silent,
Gazing eagerly where above the sea-mark
Flame as fierce as the fervid eyes of lions
Half divided the eyelids of the sunset;
Till I heard as it were a noise of waters
Moving tumultuous under feet of angels
Multitudinous, out of all the heavens. . . .
(1-9)

The form of the poem is assertively classical. Ancient poems were usually classified by meter, and Swinburne approximates to hendecasyllables about as well as could be expected in so different a language with such different metrical conventions. He counts out his eleven syllables with regularity, and even in

length his poem exceeds the longest piece in hendecasyllables by Catullus (10) by only four lines. He even seems to attempt, as far as English permits,⁷ to follow Catullus in favoring spondees in the first syllable of the line.

But the effect is assertively un-classical, modern, even "decadent" in its rejoicing in decay and death. This can usefully be considered in terms of the surprisingly emphatic use of Biblical materials. There is the apocalyptic "noise of waters" (7), the angels (8) and, most notably, the extended reversal of the welcome to the Bride in the spring in the Song of Solomon:

"Lo, the summer is dead, the sun is faded,
Even like as a leaf the year is withered,
All the fruits of the day from all her branches
Gathered, neither is any left to gather.
All the flowers are dead, the tender blossoms,
All are taken away; the season wasted,
Like an ember among the fallen ashes. . . .
(19-25)

For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of
birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.
The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the
tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and
come away.
(Song of Solomon 2: 11-13)

Swinburne's treatment fills the context supplied by the Song with imagery of dying vegetation taken from the prophets, where, in strong contrast to Swinburne's poem, it has a heavy weight of moral implication.⁸

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of
the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.
The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our
God shall stand forever.
(Is. 40: 7-8, compare also Ez. 17: 9-10)

But if the first section of the poem involves a drastic modernizing of traditional Hebraic images and associations, Swinburne is scarcely less innovative in his treatment of classical materials in the last thirteen lines, which offer a highly idiosyncratic development from the kinds of classical celebration of a paradisaal afterlife found especially in the *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid*, and in Pindar, a tradition found with a fair degree of completeness in four lines by Tennyson first published in "Morte d'Arthur" (1842):

Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea. . . .
(260-63)

These are lands of eternal spring, with unfading flowers. But in Swinburne it is an eternal winter that is offered, and the amaranth ("flowers that fade not after autumn," 28), are unfading

4. I borrow this use from Greene, which I shall refer to throughout this essay.

5. "Dearest head," however, echoes the *carum caput* of Horace's dirge for Quintilius, Odes 1: 24.2.

6. The connection was made explicit in Tennyson's "Hendecasyllabics," published three years before (1863).

7. In the introduction to his much later translation (pub. 1880) of the "Grand

8. Chorus of Birds from Aristophanes Attempted in English Verse after the Original Metre." Swinburne expresses doubts that English can tolerate spondees.
8. The tone is complicated by the fact that the comparison of human mortality to leaves falling in autumn is one of the great classical commonplaces.

only because they are dead:

Now with the light of the winter days, with moonlight,
Light of snow, and the bitter light of hoarfrost,
We bring flowers that fade not after autumn,
Pale white chaplets and crowns of latter seasons,
Fair false leaves. . . . (26-30)

With the "iron blossom of frost" in the chaplet of winter in line 38 one may compare the flaming golden flowers from which the inmates of Pindar's Islands of the Blest weave themselves chaplets and crowns (*OI. 2: 72-74*), a passage Swinburne draws on elsewhere,⁹ while the earlier reference to "Pale white chaplets and crowns of latter seasons" (29) reads in context like a wittily literal mistranslation of Vergil's "omnibus his *nivea* cinguntur tempora vitta" (*Aen. 6:665*: "their brows are bound with *snowy* wreaths"),¹⁰ where the adjective "snowy" is purely figurative.

But the most trenchant contrasts may be with the *Odyssey*:

for there is no snow, nor much winter there, nor is
there ever
rain, but always the stream of Ocean sends us breezes
of the West Wind blowing briskly for the refreshment
of mortals.
(4: 566-68; Lattimore)

Both Homer and Pindar stress the ocean breezes that cool the Elysian landscape, and already in line 10-17 Swinburne had written of the strange and unnatural winds ("not born in the north or in any quarter, / Winds not warm with the south or any sunshine") of his own—northern and modern—Elysium. These winds are in contrast not only with the refreshing breezes of classical paradise, but even more with the beneficent winds that herald the spring in traditional spring poems such as Catullus 46 or Horace's Odes 1:4 and 4:7, and in any number of other works in a long tradition extending to Swinburne's day. (Extending in fact to Swinburne himself, as in the very late "Hawthorn Tide," pub. 1904).

The reference in line 35 to "sonorous fruitless furrows" echoes two Homeric epithets for the sea, the first by way of Catullus. "Sonorous" recalls the Homeric "much-sounding" (*poluphloisbos*) by way of the *resonante. . . unda* of Catullus 11: 3-4, while "fruitless" renders the Homeric *atrugetos*, usually understood to mean "barren of fruit." The expression "weeping winter" (36) may derive from the famous *lugentes campi* of Vergil's underworld (*Aen. 6: 441*), while the reference to tears could recall, by contrast, the *et micant lacrimae tumentes de caduco pondere* ("Sparkling tears quiver in a heavy drip," Loeb trans.) of the *Pervigilium Veneris* (ms. line 17)—what Pater was to call "a kind of mystic hymn to the vernal principle of life in things" (*Marius the Epicurean*, ch. 6).

But the final impression of all this learned negation is that of a "winter paradise" offering a strangely exciting desolation. The "eternity" claimed for this state is based on no compensatory fancies of fulfillment after death, as in Homer, Vergil, and Pindar, nor is it the eternal sleep of Catullus and Horace, but an intensely modern contemplation of the irreducible elements of existence.

If this is classical at all, it is in terms of tragedy. Most

specifically, it seems to be a northern, modern version of that Grove of the Furies in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, which Swinburne would later celebrate as a spot whose verdure "Keep[s] the wind from wasting and the sun from too strong shining" in "Athens: an Ode" (str. 3), and in the sacred grove of "A Nympholept." In the latter instance, especially, there is great emphasis on the gloom divine that corresponds to the muted light conditions of "Hendecasyllabics" (26-27). But while the later workings of the material remain classical (as Swinburne understood it) in presenting the apotheosis of Oedipus and the epiphany of Pan, the theophany offered by "Hendecasyllabics" is in a very different tradition. It presents winter as immortal sufferer, a Man of Sorrows:

the weeping winter,
All whose flowers are tears, and round his temples
Iron blossom of frost is bound forever. (36-38)

That this is radically unclassical is the point, though it is more pagan than Christian.

I would call this imitation of the sort Thomas Greene labels "heuristic," which "come to us advertising their derivation from the subtexts they carry with them, but having done that, they proceed to *distance themselves* from the subtexts and force us to recognize the poetic distance traversed (Greene 40). Greene restricts the term to works that focus on a single text, which is not the case here, though the title and verse form direct us to keep Catullus in mind. But "Hendecasyllabics" certainly "defines itself through its rewriting, its 'modernizing,' its *aggiornamento*" of the variety of texts it draws on. The range of reference here is more like that Greene finds in a poem of Petrarch's which "brings together allusions or echoes of Cicero, Horace, Saint Matthew, the *Apocalypse*, Saint Augustine, and Dante," a kind of text he classifies as "eclectic" or "exploitative" (395). With reference to the particular concerns of his study, he claims that imitation of this sort cannot "mediate effectively between a past and a future" since it presents the past as "fragmented, jumbled, in effect dehistoricized" (40).

When modernist works do this, of course, we are expected to value the jumbled effect as expressive, confronting our impoverished selves with remains of higher cultures, providing fragments to shore against our ruin. But Swinburne is not so modern, too much of a Victorian, to adopt this servile attitude toward the past, however much, as in the case of ancient Athens, he admired and idealized it. His attitude toward the past is, for a Victorian, appropriately imperial. It is especially suitable to associate his aggressive appropriations of the past with the poet he regarded as the first poet of an earlier imperial power, "mother Rome."

But if Catullus was a brother to Swinburne, who was therefore another of the sons of mother Rome, Swinburne's older contemporary Landor tended to be spoken of as a kind of demigod, an object of veneration. This highly un-Catullan attitude toward a poet is implicit in the Latin poem "Ad Catullum," which begins by addressing "Catulle frater," is written in a Catullan meter, which echoes Catullus, but which is concerned with the death of Landor.

In these lines Swinburne expresses a wish that Catullus might serve him as a guide (*ducem*, 4) across the Styx (much as the Sibyl had served Aeneas or as Vergil had served Dante in the

9. "Athens: an Ode," str. 1.24; ant. 2.3, 10.

10. Unattributed translations are mine.

Commedia). The goal in this case is to view once more the face of the dead Landor (*ora vatis optimi*, 6), whose verse he is sure Catullus admires as much as he does. (Cf. the emphasis on Landor's face in "In Memory of Walter Savage Landor," 15-18).

That an ancient poet Swinburne is fond of should be associated with a modern poet he revered, whose work drew heavily on the classics and who was especially attracted to Catullus is, to say the least, appropriate, and is consistent with his usual practice. And Swinburne expresses assurance (*scio*, 7) that Landor has found his way to a lake more lovely or a land more fruitful than those of Catullus himself, referring of course to a spot celebrated in his poems. The *lacum* of line 8 is the famous *Lydiae lacus undae* (31: 13), whose "Lydian laughter" Tennyson would celebrate in "Frater Ave atque Vale" (8), with perhaps some recollection of the *limpidum lacum* of 4:24 (in the meter of "Ad Catullum").¹¹ Swinburne has appropriately shifted the characteristically Catullan adjective *venustus* from the peninsula to the lake, than which the lake of the god of the dead is said to be yet more lovely. This is a skillful use of Catullus to evoke a vision of an afterlife that he himself could not have taken seriously.

Death is first presented in the masculine figure of Dis (3), and the gender is retained in the *serenus deus* of line 10, but the language of lines 12-13 takes advantage of the accident of grammatical gender to present the consort of Dis and a *blanda mors* who seems more than anything else a loving mother:

Ubi serenus accipit suos deus,
Tegitque myrtus implicata laurea,
Manuque mulcet halituque consecrat
Fovetque blanda mors amabili sinu,
Et ore fama fervido colit viros
Alitque. . . . (10-15)

. . . where the serene god receives his own, and they wear myrtle intertwined with laurel, and gracious death caresses them and consecrates them with her breath, cherishes them in her lovely bosom, and in passionate speech honors and nourishes the heroes, with renown. . . .

This echoes the presentation of death as "vierge et mère" (18) in the "Ode (le tombeau de Théophile Gautier)," offering as well a form of poetic apotheosis that recalls that in the French poem and anticipates the apotheosis of Catullus and Theocritus in the elaborate "Ode for the Centenary of. . . Landor" (st. 47). Such an attitude toward death could hardly be less Catullan; it is clearly more Keatsean than classical. Swinburne is in fact developing lines from one of the best-known lyrics of Landor himself, "Ternissa! you are fled!":

Ternissa! you are fled!
I say not to the dead,
But to the happy ones who rest below. . . .
Girls who delight to dwell
Where grows most asphodel,
Gather to their calm breasts each word you speak:
The mild Persephone

11. In the roundel "Insularum Ocellae," which applies the terms of Catullus 31 to the Island of Sark, Swinburne "mourns" that "nought so lovely [had been] beheld by Sirmio's lover." (Sark was the place of exile of Victor Hugo, and it is noticeable that Swinburne's favorite modern poets tend in his works to be associated in some way with Catullus.)
12. This could be the most likely model for Swinburne's *Fovetque blanda*

Places you on her knee,
And your cool palm soothes down stern Pluto's cheek.
(1-3, 7-12)

In vocabulary, Swinburne's Latin has associations of erotic or maternal cherishing (sometimes in a funerary context, usually of the reception of the dead by mother earth), a tradition echoed in Landor's lines. And the most relevant use of the word *sinus* in Catullus is the erotic one of Lesbia's sparrow playing in her lap (2:2).

There are, as it happens, two especially suggestive classical precedents for this passage. One is a line in which Tibullus, urging Philoe to be compliant to the boy Marathus, insists that presents should be required only from an aged lover who offers them so that "he may warm his chilly limbs on your soft breast": *ut foveat molli frigida membra sinu*, 1: 8.30.¹² The other is from the classical predecessor of Swinburne's "Thalassius," in which Ovid, writing his poetic autobiography, says that as a young man he had "revered and cherished the poets of the time, / and reckoned all present bards as present gods":

temporis illius colui fovique poetas,
quotquot aderant vates, rebar esse deos.
(*Tristia* 4: 41-42)

These two passages between them offer relevant classical uses of major terms of the passage of Swinburne (*sinus*, *fovere*, *colere*) in contexts one of which is erotic and the other inclined to regard poets as divine beings. But it is only when taken together that they can begin to approximate Swinburne's very modern version of a Death who loves and consecrates poets.¹³

Swinburne had a Shelleyan belief in poets as united in a communion of saints. He also believed that Landor one day in Florence had placed him in the apostolic succession of poets, and "Ad Catullum" retroactively consecrates Landor himself by having him bind his head with a garland received from the hand of Catullus (17-21), thus reinforcing Swinburne's own fraternal connection with Catullus. While the role played by mother Rome in the roundel is here played by mother Death, the poem itself may be said to trace a "trajectory," as Greene would say, from Catullus through Landor to Swinburne himself, with all three identifiably present in the language of the work. In this sense it might be called "collaborative imitation," though Swinburne establishes the rules and has the last word.

Imitating is again mediatory in this personal way in the Latin poem on the death of Gautier ("In Obitum Theophili Poetae"), but in this case (and in "Choriambics" as well) we have that development from a single original that Greene requires for heuristic imitation, though I don't think what we find is exactly "a kind of *rite de passage* between a specified past and an emergent present" (41). The impulse to write the poem in the way he did obviously came from a sense of similarity between the kinds of poet Catullus and Gautier were. As he observed with

mors amabili sinu, though at least two eds. of the *Gradus ad Parnassum* (1820 and 1845) offer (under "sinus") a line that is at least as close: *Quem fovet in molli virgo pudica sinu*.

13. The poem, of twenty-one lines, is composed of a single sentence, like several poems by Catullus.

regard to this poem, "it was irresistibly appropriate to try and do an epicede on Gautier in a metre of Catullus" (Long 2:203). It is in fact a meter which Catullus used only once, while Horace used it three times, but clearly Catullus' strange, powerful No. 30 impressed Swinburne strongly. Just as clearly, the relation between the two poems goes well beyond the merely metrical.

But the tone of Swinburne's reference to irresistible appropriateness suggests that his approach to the task was at least partly playful. And while a Latin dirge on the death of a poet offers limited opportunity for drollery, the poem does reveal a seemingly wit suitable to the occasion. To appreciate the fact, however, it is necessary to recall how much Gautier himself had drawn on the ancients in his own verse, and one has to catch specific connections between the poem and its Catullan model.

In No. 30, Catullus is reproaching a friend for a betrayal, the nature of which is never made clear. The language is violent, and it's hard to know how to take it. Critical responses have ranged from reading it as lighthearted banter to finding it pathological in the hysterical intensity of its reproach. The poem shows metrical anomalies as well, which are susceptible of more than one interpretation. It seems most natural to me to take the poem "straight," as seriously meant, with the irregularities considered as expressing intensity of feeling.

Unlike "Choriambics," the English poem Swinburne wrote on the basis of Catullus, there is here no hint of reproach to the dead Gautier (as one might expect from the model, and as there had been of Clough in Arnold's "Thyrsis"), and the motif is displaced to the relevant deities in a tradition that goes back to Hellenistic antiquity, but is most powerfully mediated to the readers of English by Milton and Shelley: "Why could the Muse thy mother not preserve thee, poet, nor the Graces, / Nor Venus, to whom thou hast ever been faithful?" (6-7). But Catullus' Latin has left specific verbal traces in Swinburne's imitation, drastically altered to be sure in the new setting.

In the first line of the poem, Catullus had addressed its object as "selfishly neglectful and false to your faithful comrades" (*unanimis false sodalibus*). While *false* anticipates Swinburne's stress on Gautier's contrasting fidelity, the other two words quoted from the poem are themselves repeated significantly. In line 11 and following we hear that Gautier is worthy to be mourned as one cherished "by the gods and his comrades": *dis superis atque sodalibus* (12). The specific *sodales* involved, we learn at once, were fellow poets who followed him in the pursuit of poetic aims, though they were less gifted than he. Their ceremonial entombment of his ashes is accompanied by a song of grief (*maesto... carmine* [15], echoing the *maesta... carmina* of Catullus 65:12, lines addressed to his dead brother), their obsequies concluding with a "unanimous prayer" (*Votoque unanimae vocis*, 18) which itself echoes the famous closing words of Catullus' great valediction to his brother (*ave atque vale*, 101): *Ave dicimus et Vale*.

While this last is a nice touch, the verbal echoing of words conspicuous in the first line of the so very different poem by

Catullus is more interesting. He clearly wants to remind us of his poem's contact with that of Catullus in ways that, as with the other poems, are more than metrical. Catullus' poem is violent—nearly hysterical—in the intensity of its denunciation. Swinburne's is a gracious tribute to a poet he had never met but much admired. The "losses" in the two cases and the nature of the response to them could hardly be more different. It is an essential part of Swinburne's tribute to Gautier that he has deflected such ferociously antagonistic materials to the service of the praise of Gautier as "dear companion to Apollo": *comes dulcis Apollini* (11) playing for the second time in the poem on the meaning of "Théophile" in Greek.

Considering the background in Catullus, there is striking emphasis on the sweetness and gentleness of Gautier as known from his works. It is clearly a selective view of a remarkable artist (less fair to him than "Ave atque Vale" had been to Baudelaire), but it is suitable to the occasion and calls particular attention to the difference between this poem and the lines of the violent invective that lie behind it. It draws on qualities of Catullus himself that led Tennyson to characterize "Sweet Catullus" as "Tenderest of Roman poets" ("Frater Ave atque Vale," 9, 6). Tennyson's description is strange if one thinks of Catullus as a whole, but he clearly has in mind the praise of Sirmio in 31 (from which he quotes, 2), and the farewell to his dead brother in 101, though the latter possesses a Roman gravity that Tennyson's lines hardly suggest.

This gentleness is brought out especially in lines 2-5, where we hear of his voice "more gentle than a gentle breeze," and find his death compared to that of a "lover of earthly spring" who was "snatched away" (*abripuit*, a traditional word) just as the flowers of that season were beginning to reappear. He is the "longed-for light of the weeping loves, / whose loss is lamented with bleeding cheeks and unbound hair"¹⁴ (9-10), and has left his friends desolate. Swinburne's Gautier, that is, was as lovable as the object of Catullus' reproach was hateful. The relation between the two poems is in this sense figurative.

We are now in a position to do justice to the most brilliant of the poem's allusions to Catullus. Conspicuously, in the first line, in a witty translation of Gautier's given name, he is addressed as "Light of the Muses and darling [*deliciae*] of the god who wears the laurel." The effect here is something like a private joke. But once we "catch on" that Swinburne associates Gautier with Catullus, we can respond to the effect of the word *deliciae* here, since it is impossible to repress awareness of its prominent occurrence in two of Catullus' most witty, charming, and best-known poems, Nos. 2 and 3. In both cases the word is used of Lesbia's pet sparrow, the latter being an affectionately ironic dirge on the death of the bird.¹⁵

Deliciae is often a frivolous word, often referring to a pet or toy, sometimes in the sense of "passion's plaything"—as in the famous second line of Vergil's second eclogue. It occurs in this sense elsewhere in Catullus, as well as in Horace. It is, however, especially the use in the "funerary" context of Catullus 3 that is

14. Since this can hardly be a biographical reference (Gautier was born in August and died in October, at the age of 61), it must be an allusion to his works, in Swinburne's usual manner. It probably is meant to characterize the work as a whole, but Gautier did write "spring" poems, especially the "Premier sourire du printemps" and "La fleur qui fait le printemps" (both

from *Emaux et camées*), as well as his translation, in an imitation of the original meter, of Horace's Ode 1:4.

15. The poem is alluded to in Gautier's "Maria," for which it supplies an epigraph. Landor (Welby 11: 194) remarked that 2 and 3 "seem to have been admired both by the ancients and moderns, above all the rest."

recalled:¹⁶

Dead is my girl's sparrow,
Dead the sparrow, my girl's *deliciae*. (3-4)

It is plausible, then, that the use of *deliciae* in Swinburne's Catullan commemoration of the death of Gautier, which might seem oddly tactless, is a wholly suitable piece of Catullan urbanity—suitable, that is, to all three poets. Gautier himself had fulfilled Catullus' ideal of *doctus poeta* (which seems to mean something like "knowing" poet) in the fullest sense: a poet whose learning and sophistication produced works of formal elegance and total modernity—a person, that is, to appreciate a moment of learned playfulness in the opening line of a poem characterized on the whole by a gracious solemnity. And Swinburne of course hopes that we will think of himself in this way too.

Wit of a different kind is shown by the other poem based on Catullus 30, "Choriambics," which is the name Swinburne knew for the meter. Swinburne called attention to what he was doing in "Choriambics" in a letter in which he praised Catullus' poem for its concentrated intensity, and explained his adaptation of the meter to English verse. He also observed that his poem was indebted to Catullus' metrically "and otherwise" (Lang 2: 201). This last, unspecified, element of the relationship needs particular attention.

I have pointed out that in 30 Catullus is reproaching a friend for a betrayal, the nature of which is never made clear. As with other of Catullus' poems of personal invective, our very lack of information as to who is addressed and what is really involved gives the work a curiously disinterested quality, as the diffuse violence of reproach takes form in the weighty and measured flow of the poet's language. A recent editor of Catullus has remarked on the "odd mixture of styles" in the poem's twelve lines: "declamatory rhetoric," "measured, logical statement," as well as lines that are "stilted, alliterative, sententious" (Quinn, *Catullus* 181). It is yet odder, given the highly formal nature of the relation Swinburne suggests in the letter between his "Choriambics" and Catullus 30, and his appreciation of the compressed intensity of the latter, that the language of his own poem should show so little modulation, the tension should be so slight, and the general effect diffuse even by Swinburne's standards—certainly when compared to the earlier and much denser "Hendecasyllabics." The effect is rather that of a stylish Pre-Raphaelite languor:

LOVE, what ailed thee to leave life that was made
lovely, we thought, with love?
What strange visions of sleep lured thee away, down
from the light above?
What strange faces of dreams, voices that called,
hands that were raised to wave,
Lured or led thee, alas, out of the sun, down to the
sunless grave? (1-8)

The bitter upbraiding of a faithless friend for an unspecified act of betrayal becomes, in Swinburne's hands, a graceful expression of tender reproach to an unnamed woman who had been loved, but who has been seduced by the love of death to follow

him to the grave. The motif of death as lover is combined with the Catullan theme of death as sleep:

Nay then, sleep if thou wilt; love is content; what
should he do to weep?
Sweet was love to thee once; now in thine eyes
sweet than love is sleep. (41-4)

This plays especially against the famous lines in which Catullus urges that he and Lesbia live and love, in spite of all, since "though suns may repeatedly rise and set ./ we have ourselves but one brief day ./ and then the night of an unbroken sleep" (5: 4-6). But there is never any suggestion in Catullus that death can be in any way desirable, and the classical model is to be found elsewhere.

In a remarkable tour de force, Swinburne has combined materials from Catullus' poem of impassioned reproach with elements of Antigone's powerful lament (*Antigone*, 806-943) as she approaches death, a favorite passage of his. This is clearest in lines 17-20, where Swinburne addresses the lady in terms that specifically recall Antigone, cut off from human love and committed as a bride to death:

Ah, thy beautiful hair! so was it once braided for
me, for me;
Now for death is it crowned, only for death, lover
and lord of thee.

"Choriambics," then, combines a major work of Greek antiquity, written in the high style of tragedy, with a later work in Latin, of a very personal nature, but characterized by vehemence of expression, in a Victorian poem that is at the least highly mannered. These notably powerful works have been subjected to careful reduction in the Hellenistic manner, a diminishment that displays as well typically Hellenistic erudition. Hellenistic practice, as we know, was to handle the most elevated of traditional materials in new, highly personal, and surprising ways—the manner, that is, of much of Catullus himself, who influentially cultivated this fashion. (How congenial this was to the Victorians has been repeatedly shown with regard to Tennyson [as in Pattison 29ff.].)

This does not of course put it in the class with Catullus' brief epic on the occasion of the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, or with Tennyson's "Ulysses," as far as seriousness is concerned, though it is clearly possible to consider it as a part of a continuing examination of the relation between love and death in Swinburne. On the whole, though, any very weighty pretensions on the part of the poem would tend to compromise its value as a kind of rococo miniature of its mighty originals, reflecting them at vast distance, but without letting us forget just what is being reflected.

One of the best-kept secrets in writing on Swinburne's verse, after all, is that he is often very funny. Though the jokes in the letters are unmistakable, the poems are seldom permitted to be other than grave. "Choriambics" is less funny than "Dolores," indeed, but much of its point lies in its playful relation to its model. The humor, if that's the word, lies in this case less in the extravagance of statement than in the finesse with which it is

16. It is possible too that Swinburne's use of *deliciae* here was suggested by Shelley's reference to Keats as "our delight" at the turning-point of

Adonais (1:334).

muted, the grace with which potentially explosive materials are induced to contribute to a small poem without overpowering it.

We have seen that a main point of the kinds of imitation considered here is that much of what Swinburne is doing is characteristic of Catullus himself, and is in that way an expression of Swinburne's feelings of brotherhood with him. And in all four of the poems we have also found Swinburne creating some degree of conflict between the expectations set up by the form of the poem, and the actual content. With regard to Catullus, in the course of a description of his cultivating "an effect of distance from immediate comprehension," Gordon Williams has called attention to his exploitation of "the tension which can be created between the form of a poem and its content" (784). A notable example of this is that "prayer" to Lesbia's sparrow (2) whose first line has offered one of the relevant occurrences of *deliciae* in the poem to Gautier. Here the tension lies "between the traditional formality of the prayer which is the outward shape of the poem and the personal feelings which are expressed within it, not through it" (Williams 785).

In the case of Swinburne, a basic tension exists between an English poet of the reign of Victoria and the Roman poet he imitates, a tension that can be especially striking in "Victorian" poems written in Latin. The verse forms, themes, and in two cases the language derive from antiquity and Catullus, but the relation is one of deliberate contrast and an aggressive modernizing that is itself much in the spirit of Catullus. Even the epicede to Gautier, the most strictly classical of the four, presents an image of a dead poet mourned by his mates which is closer to Shelley himself than to Shelley's ancient models. The real point, though, is that in considering Gautier Catullan, Swinburne implies a reading of Catullus as a kind of Roman Gautier, a poet of art for art's sake in the manner of the late nineteenth century,¹⁷ so that here the tension exists largely to be broken down in an attempt to collapse the distance in time and elaborate a relationship among Catullus, Gautier, and himself.

The particular relationship involved in any poetic imitation, that of the explicitly derivative nature of the work in relation to earlier models, has traditionally involved attitudes ranging from humble self-effacement to active competition. Swinburne, who liked to grovel before persons he admired, was capable of the ingenious pastiche of ancient materials in "Athens: an Ode" and "The Altar of Righteousness," as well as the high-minded elaboration of *Erechtheus*. And even at his most free-wheeling, as in his vigorous perversions of Sappho or of the tragedians (in *Atalanta*), he is still conservative at least in profession. In this he follows his own model (in the use of models) Landor, but without the earnestness of Landor's conception of classical decorum. So that where Landor, in his epigram "On Catullus," felt obliged to defend the poet from accusations of moral coarseness, Swinburne, in his "roundel" on the same subject, hails him as a "brother" in

the use of such basic Swinburnean themes as the torments of sex, political independence, and "Song and the sea."

This attitude of friendly sibling rivalry is clear in Swinburne's imitations of Catullus in both Latin and English, but it is of course in English that his art of imitation is most important and most highly developed. It is there that he seems to me most genuinely Catullan, in the wit of his diversion of Catullus' themes, and especially in his inventive handling of the alien meters. "Hendecasyllabics," for example, uses the exotic effect of the meter when imitated in English to emphasize the strangeness of the sentiments expressed, while the irregularity of the pauses in the long line gives a modern, nervous agitation to what might otherwise sound almost like chant. In "Choriambics," similarly, the mannered diffuseness of the sentiment that was found so surprising when compared to the rather contorted intensity of its model is expressed in a verse that is not only an impressive reconstruction of an ancient meter, but which releases a good deal of energy when read aloud, as of course it must be. In this case the alienness adds to the sense of preciousness in the sentiment and diction, while Swinburne's adaptation supplies a countering rhythmic vigor that is authentically Catullan.

Consideration of these poems may lead us to the view that Swinburne was more than the best scholar among the Victorians, and the boldest in his reading of the modern and personal implications of ancient works. His major achievement in these short poems, and in the more elaborate and sustained attempts as well, may be the skillful executions of English equivalents to classical meters, which he then relates to an essentially modern treatment of ancient motifs in ways that cause the ancient music to sound again.

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17. Kenneth Quinn (*Revolution* 68) has recently agreed with him in this. After characterizing Catullus and his group as writers of a "hard poetry—not for the general public, but for the lettered *élite* who have the culture

needed to appreciate its subtleties and the enthusiasm for tracking them down," he adds that "it is a poetry of art for art's sake, the poetry of *littérature pure*."

Swinburne's "Lancelot" and Pre-Raphaelite Medievalism

Rebecca Cochran

In the autumn of 1857, while he was a student at Oxford, a young and impressionable Swinburne met Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Morris, and Edward Burne-Jones, who were then painting Arthurian frescoes on the walls and ceiling of the Union debating hall. Morris' *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* had been completed and would be ready for publication the following year. Impressed by the man and his work, Swinburne began to write poems which imitated the subject and style of Morris' compositions. It is the Pre-Raphaelite enthusiasm for the Middle Ages, and especially the Morrisian influence, which one detects in Swinburne's early medievalism.

Despite Swinburne's association with Rossetti and Morris, most critics have underestimated the degree to which the Pre-Raphaelites influenced his early medievalism. "Lancelot," composed between 1858 and 1860, uses as its models Rossetti's painting, "Launcelot at the Shrine of the Sanc Grael" and Morris' poem, "King Arthur's Tomb."

Those critics who have not ignored "Lancelot" entirely have either found the poem confusing or unworthy of little more than a brief mention. Chew, Henderson, and Staines all make passing references to "Lancelot" in order to emphasize Morris' influence.¹ Reese asserts that the work consists of a series of statements which prove to be "puzzling unless we consider them to be the subjective reflections—containing psychological distortions of chronology and reconstructions of events—of Lancelot after Camlan and the queen's repentance" (344). Lindsey does provide a brief summary of "Lancelot" and emphasizes the Pre-Raphaelite influence, especially that of Rossetti's "blessed maid" (107). Her assessment of the poem, however, is that in it "Swinburne does not stay within the realm of medieval tradition"; instead, "Lancelot" becomes "pseudo-medieval in the manner of the Pre-Raphaelites" (111). In his recent work, *Swinburne's Medievalism: A Study in Victorian Love Poetry*, Harrison fails to mention "Lancelot," except in an appendix which provides a list of the poet's medievalist works. This seems somewhat surprising since the Lancelot and Guenevere legend is one of the greatest love affairs in medieval literature. In his "Introduction" Harrison states that he has chosen to address only those neomedieval poems which he considers to be Swinburne's finest (18). Thus, his omission of "Lancelot" suggests that he does not hold the poem in high regard. Unlike Lindsey, who asserts that Swinburne's medievalism is largely Pre-Raphaelite in its origins and characteristics, Harrison tends to minimize this influence, arguing that Swinburne's interest in medievalism, along with his knowledge of the Middle Ages, predates his acquaintance with Rossetti and Morris (26).

As we shall see, a close reading of "Lancelot" demonstrates Morris' pronounced influence over Swinburne's early Arthurian compositions. Finally, because Swinburne's neomedieval juvenilia owes much to Morris, Walter Pater's comments on the medievalism found in the *Defence* poems are equally applicable

to Swinburne's "Lancelot." If we examine this poem in view of its Pre-Raphaelite qualities and with Pater's definition of medievalism in mind, "Lancelot" proves that Swinburne's early medievalism deserves greater attention than it has received thus far.

A summary of "Lancelot" reveals that its sources are Pre-Raphaelite rather than medieval. The poem opens with Lancelot's recollection of his Quest for the Holy Grail. It is autumn, and he has searched all summer in vain. The wearied knight stops by a chapel to rest, falls in to a reverie, and is visited by an angel who brings him a vision of the Grail. Lancelot fears, however, that his vision is not real and, as he doubts his own worth, the vision changes. The Grail is obfuscated by a shadowy form, later identified as Guenevere:

"Lo, between me and the light
Grows a shadow on my sight,
A soft shade to left and right,
Branchèd as a tree.
Green the leaves that stir between,
And the buds are lithe and green,
And against it seems to lean
One in stature as the Queen
That I prayed to see.
Ah, what evil thing is this?
For she hath no lips to kiss,
And no brows of balm and bliss
Bended over me.
For between me and the shine
Grows a face that is not mine,
On each curve and tender line
And each tress drawn straight and fine
As it used to be." (Collected Works 1: 68-69)

Once this vision is eclipsed by this distorted image of Guenevere, Lancelot recalls the details of their love affair, particularly her gloomy prophecy of his future and the lovers' stay at Joyous Garde. The above passage presents Guenevere as a fallen Eve, the "evil thing" responsible for Lancelot's failure to achieve the Grail.

Swinburne's primary source here cannot be one he frequently consults for his later works—Malory. A more direct model, I would argue, is Rossetti's 1857 painting, "Launcelot at the Shrine of the Sanc Grael." While Malory emphasizes that Launcelot's inability to succeed on the Quest results from his adultery, nowhere in his medieval narrative does the knight receive in a symbolic vision the message that Guenevere is a fallen Eve. By contrast, Rossetti's painting suggests strongly Guenevere's role as Eve—or even the serpent itself—which Swinburne then transposes into verse. Rossetti's description of his painting doubles as an apt summary of Swinburne's poem. He describes his pictorial creation as:

Sir Launcelot prevented by his sin from entering the chapel of the Sanc Grael. He has fallen asleep before the shrine full of angels, and between him and it, rises in his dream the image of Queen

1. Chew's remark is very general: "Morris' influence. . . is apparent in 'Lancelot'" (27), while Henderson and Staines try to point to similarities between 'Lancelot' and specific poems from Morris' *Defence* collection.

Henderson notes that it shares its form with "The Chapel in Lyonesse" (32), and Staines mentions "Lancelot's" likeness to "Sir Galahad: A Christmas Mystery" (57).

Guenevere, the cause of all. She stands gazing at him with her arms extended in the branches of an apple tree.

(*Family Letters* 1: 242-43)

While it is uncharacteristic of Swinburne to blame the adulterous woman for the demise of her lover, throughout Rossetti's work the *femme fatale* appears in various guises: Eve, Lilith, Circe, Helen, Guenevere. Swinburne commonly depicts his women sympathetically and, like Morris, does not hold them responsible for the destruction they cause. In addition, the mature Swinburne prided himself in his fidelity to his medieval sources, while Rossetti repeatedly altered medieval material to suit his own artistic vision, as he does here with Lancelot's Quest.²

However, while Rossetti's painting furnished the general idea for Swinburne's poem, it is the Morrisian influence that prevails in "Lancelot." The rhyme scheme resembles that of "The Chapel in Lyonesse," and, like several poems in the *Defence* collection, the form is dramatic. Like Rossetti, Morris felt free to alter his sources: "Read it through," Morris says, "then shut the book and write it out again as a new story for yourself." (*Introduction to the Collected Works* 17: 39). By freeing themselves from the burden of reproducing slavishly the facts and details of their sources, the poets were able to reconstruct the medieval spirit by identifying and then imitating prevalent characteristics in the literature and art of an earlier age. Thus, Morris' *Defence* poems frequently violate Victorian expectations of what neo-medieval poetry should be. Yet, Pater, along with J. H. Shorthouse, Swinburne, and a few others, discerned that what the poems lacked in their fidelity to the letter of their sources, they more than compensated for in their spirit. Under the spell of Rossetti and Morris, Swinburne followed the same method. Therefore, although his "Lancelot" contains "inaccuracies" when compared to the received medieval legend, and in spite of the fact that its sources are modern, the poem faithfully represents the Middle Ages.

Swinburne's "Lancelot" remains most indebted to "King Arthur's Tomb," itself modelled on a painting by Rossetti.³ Characteristics shared by both poems—those often associated with Pre-Raphaelitism in general—include the employment of monosyllabic words and archaic diction; the extensive use of color, concrete detail, and synesthesia; and the exploration of altered states of consciousness.⁴ In addition, both "Lancelot" and "King Arthur's Tomb" occur in an atmosphere of oppressive heat; emphasize the suffering of nature which results from human sin; stress the queen's hair as her dominant physical trait; present

a curious mingling of love and fear; comment on Guenevere's diminished beauty as a result of her guilt; and depict the queen's final rejection of Lancelot.

Moreover, and perhaps most important, "Lancelot" and "King Arthur's Tomb" possess key qualities that Walter Pater, in his 1868 review of Morris' medievalism, associates with a "stricter, imaginative medievalism which recreates the mind of the middle age," and which represents a "profounder medievalism" than the "adventure, romance in the poorest sense," and "grotesque individualism" characteristic of a more superficial treatment of the Middle Ages found in the works of Scott and Goethe.⁵ As one might expect, Pater argues that external "facts" do not present the only, or even the truest, way to understand or distinguish between cultures or historical periods. A more valid way of labeling and comprehending them is through an intimate knowledge of their values, attitudes, and beliefs as expressed in their art. While one may choose to take issue with Pater's characterizations of these two forms of medievalism, his distinction between that poetry which attempts to imitate a medieval frame of mind—exemplified by Morris' and Swinburne's—and that which merely employs the trappings of medieval culture, is useful in judging the merits and significance of "Lancelot."⁶

From the opening of Swinburne's poem one readily detects its indebtedness to "King Arthur's Tomb." Swinburne's Lancelot recalls the events of the previous summer:

"Very long and hot it was,
The dry light on the dry grass,
The set noon on lakes of glass,
All that summer time." (1: 63)

Compare this atmosphere of heat, oppression, and weariness with the similar lines from Morris: "Hot August noon—already on that day / Since sunrise through the Wiltshire downs, most sad / Of mouth and eye, he had gone leagues of way . . ." (*Early Romances in Prose and Verse* 12).

In both poems Lancelot's adultery harms not only the knight but his natural surroundings as well. The following passage from Swinburne's poem illustrates this point:

"Thro' the sad boughs rent on high
Naked burnt the great blind sky;
.
And the birds sang, and could not long,
For a trouble in their song:
All things there did suffer wrong." (1: 63)

2. Rossetti's painting may have been suggested by a Malorian episode in which Lancelot falls asleep under an apple tree and is taken prisoner by the evil Morgan le Fay. However, this event occurs very early in Malory's narrative, prior to the Grail Quest, and is in no way connected with the knight's adultery or his failure to achieve the Grail.

3. Morris purchased a series of Rossetian watercolors which depicted Arthurian scenes, one entitled "King Arthur's Tomb" (1855-1860) (see Hilton).

4. In his "Introduction" Lang defines Pre-Raphaelitism as a critical rather than an historical term. He argues that a work should be labeled "Pre-Raphaelite" when it possesses particular literary qualities: "If . . . it is to be used strictly as a critical term, it has to mean something like 'visualized poetry of fantasy' or 'fantasy crossed with realism' . . ." (xvi). Like Pater, Lang examines a work according to the attitudes it displays and the characteristics it possesses. He also distinguishes between Pre-Raphaelitism and romanticism and between Pre-Raphaelitism and

medievalism.

5. Although the review was prompted by the publication of Morris' *The Earthly Paradise*, much of Pater's discussion focuses on the *Defence* poems.

6. In his "Introduction" to *The Renaissance*, Pater emphasizes the importance of recognizing trans-cultural qualities in art. For instance, the Renaissance shares characteristics with the twelfth century: "This outbreak of the human spirit may be traced far into the middle age itself, with its motives already clearly pronounced" (xxii). Later, Pater explains his decision to include Winckelmann in his study: "I have added an essay on Winckelmann, as not incongruous with the studies which precede it, because Winckelmann, coming in the eighteenth century, really belongs in spirit to an earlier age. . . he is in sympathy with the humanists of a previous century" (xxiv-xxv). If we consider these views, it is not surprising that Pater recognized Morris' kinship with a previous age.

Likewise, in Morris' poem sin taints not only the knight but nature:

This he knew also; that some fingers twine,
Not only in a man's hair, even his heart,
(Making him good or bad I mean,) but in his life,
Skies, earth, men's looks and deeds, all that has part,
Not being ourselves, in that half-sleep, half-strife,
(Strange sleep, strange strife,) that men call living. (12)

In his discussion of Morris' medievalism, Pater argues that this attitude towards nature is characteristic of medieval love poetry:

Of the things of nature the medieval mind had a deep sense; but its sense of them was not objective, no real escape to the world without one. The aspects and motions of nature only reinforced its prevailing mood, and were in conspiracy with one's own brain against one. A single sentiment invaded the world; everything was infused with a motive drawn from the soul. The amorous poetry of Provence... illustrates the whole attitude of nature... bent as by miracle or magic to the service of human passion. (83)

The oppressive atmosphere in both "Lancelot" and "King Arthur's Tomb," along with the projection of the hero's anxiety onto the natural world are, according to Pater, peculiar to the medieval literary mind. Thus, when they employ this convention of Provençal poetry, Morris and Swinburne create a critical imitation that constitutes medievalism in its purest form.

Another feature common to both poems is the presentation of Guenevere's hair as her dominant physical trait.⁷ Swinburne's Lancelot remarks:

"And her eyes in some old dream
Woven thro' with shade and gleam
Stare against me till I seem
To be hidden in a dream,
To be drowned in a deep stream
Of her dropping hair.

Always sate I, watching her,
By her carven gilded chair,
Full of wonder and great fear
If one long lock of her hair
In the soft wind sink or stir,
Fallen to her knee." (1:70)

And in "King Arthur's Tomb" Lancelot recalls most vividly Guenevere's hair:

"my Guenevere
Loved to sit still among the flowers, till night
Had quite come on, hair loosen'd, for she said,
Smiling like heaven, that its fairness might
Draw up the wind sooner to cool her head.

And she would let me wind
Her hair around my neck, so that it fell
Upon my red robe, strange in the twilight." (12-13)

An even more striking similarity is the curious mingling of love and fear in both poems. Swinburne's Lancelot remembers an occasion when he and Guenevere "sat in love and fear," (1:70) while she was visited by a supernatural vision of the knight's future doom:

7. This preoccupation with Guenevere's hair accords with Gitter's article.

"And she listened; and a light
Shivered upward in my sight
Thro' her set face, sad and white;
Till I hid mine eyes for fright
And for very love." (1: 71)

Compare this confession of simultaneous love and fear with the following passage from Morris' poem:

"I almost died
In those night-watches with my love and dread,
There lily-like she bow'd her head and slept,
And I breathed low, and did not dare to move,
But sat and quiver'd inwardly, thoughts crept,
And frighten'd me with pulses of my Love." (13)

This mingling of love and fear suggests the awe that Guenevere inspires. Both poems associate the queen with the supernatural and divine, and the knight's worship of her becomes something akin to a religious fervor. Swinburne's hero remembers Guenevere's ability to predict the future:

"Drear and void the sunset was
On stained flats of fire and glass
Where she saw angels pass
That I could not see:
For none eyes but hers might pierce
Thro' the colours vague and fierce
That a sunset weaves and wears." (1: 71)

In "King Arthur's Tomb" we notice a similar association of Guenevere with the remote, enigmatic, and divine. Lancelot comments:

"Pale in the green sky were the stars I ween,
Because the moon shone like a star she shed
When she dwelt up in heaven a while ago,
And ruled all things but God..." (13-14)

And earlier in the poem, the knight recalls that Guenevere smiles "like heaven" (12).

In his review, Pater argues that two central elements of the medieval spirit are "... its mystic religion at its apex in Dante and St. Louis, and its mystic passion, passing here and there into the great romantic loves of rebellious flesh, of Lancelot and Abelard" (80). Moreover, these two frequently fused: "... religion shades into sensuous love, and sensuous love into religion" (80-81). Morris and Swinburne reproduce this medieval fusion and confusion of these two loves. The result, in both poems, is the delirious, heightened sensibility of the knight, an altered state of consciousness. Here again Pater's comments prove to be illuminating:

A passion of which the outlets are sealed, begets a tension of the nerve, in which the sensible world comes to one with a reinforced brilliance and relief—all redness turns into blood, all water into tears. Hence, a wild, convulsed sensuousness in the poetry of the middle age, in which the things of nature begin to play a strange delirious part. (83)

This "reinforced brilliance," along with a distorted view of the external world, is accomplished in the poems of Swinburne and Morris through the use of vivid coloration and concrete detail. The "tension of nerve" responsible for this distortion is conveyed through synesthesia (e.g., in "Lancelot" Guenevere's tears are

described as "long and thin," and in "King Arthur's Tomb" Lancelot's lips are "long" or sometimes "loud").

In both poems Lancelot's recollections of pleasant memories are cut short by more painful ones. For instance, in "Lancelot" the knight recalls an enigmatic rhyme the queen once composed for him which alludes to the pain she will suffer when, in rescuing her from the stake, he accidentally slays Sir Gareth. In retrospect, Lancelot remarks:

"And the sin that I had done
In the fierce time that was gone
When I slew her knight alone
Face to face with the red sun
Setting in the west." (1:79)

Likewise, in Morris' poem the hero recalls the injury he had inflicted upon Guenevere by slaying her knight:

"Thoughts of some joust must help me through the vale,
Keep this till after—How Sir Gareth ran
A good course that day under my Queen's eyes,
And how she sway'd laughing at Dinaden—
No—back again, the other thoughts will rise." (13)

The "other thoughts" are very probably Lancelot's slaying of Gareth, Gawain's brother, since the poem is set after the demise of the Round Table; it must be remembered that its division and dissolution are caused in part by Gawain's anger and unrelenting desire to avenge Gareth's death.

Both poems emphasize Guenevere's diminished beauty which results from the harsh events in her life. Swinburne's Lancelot comments that the queen's face has grown "grey and long" and notices her "waning hair" (1:73). And Morris' knight observes that "her eyes did lack / Half her old glory, yea, alas! the glow / Had left her face and hands" (15).

Finally, in both "Lancelot" and in "King Arthur's Tomb" the knight hopes to reclaim Guenevere's love after the disaster has occurred, but his love remains unrequited. Swinburne's Lancelot acknowledges this when he laments: "All my love avails not her, / And she loves not me" (1:73). In Morris' poem the queen refuses the knight's request for a final kiss and asserts that they must remain parted forever: "Never, never again! not even when I die" (23).

In both cases, Guenevere's rejection of Lancelot is prompted by the fact that she feels culpable for the bloodshed that has occurred. Pater observes:

The Arthurian legends, pre-Christian in their origin, yield all their sweetness only in a Christian atmosphere. What is characteristic in them is the strange suggestion of a deliberate choice between Christ and a rival lover. (80)

We see this rivalry between spiritual and earthly love in "King Arthur's Tomb," even though it is Guenevere's fear of punishment, more than her love of Christ, which Morris emphasizes as the primary reason for her rejection of Lancelot. Swinburne's "Lancelot" accords even more with Pater's remarks, for when the vision of Guenevere supersedes that of the Grail, Guenevere and Christ become clear rivals for Lancelot's affection. It is especially significant that Swinburne presents the knight's dual vision in the form of a sleep-trance, to which I would now like to turn.

Although "Lancelot" is dramatic in form, its action is quite limited. While searching for the Grail, the wearied knight rests near a chapel. In his somnolent state, Lancelot recalls several "events" from his past. Swinburne distinguishes these episodes by the use of verb tense shifts. At the beginning of the poem he employs the past tense to describe Lancelot's ardent Quest of the previous summer (1:63); when the knight arrives at the chapel, the verse shifts to the present tense to describe the Grail visitation and the vision of Guenevere (1: 64-70). For Lancelot's ensuing recollection of the queen, Swinburne uses the past tense (1: 70-73), but in the conclusion to the poem he again resumes the present tense. Moreover, in the final lines the knight appears to have awakened from his trance and is aware that he is at the chapel: he acknowledges that he has been dreaming "between light and shade" (1:73).

Lancelot's memories do not constitute the random wanderings of a demented mind. Instead, Swinburne employs the sleep-trance as a structural device to dramatize the dichotomy between the knight's desire to achieve the Grail and his illicit love for Guenevere. In this state of heightened awareness, the significance of his life is revealed to him. In *Swinburne: An Experiment in Criticism*, Jerome McCann comments on the poet's use of the sleep-trance in his later works, but his remarks are also helpful in explaining why, in "Lancelot," Swinburne risked the charge of incoherence and vagueness in his treatment of the legend. According to McCann, the sleep-trance provides "an ultimate condition of freedom from the dialectics of loss and gain" (178). Moreover, "once experienced, the condition remains a permanent aspect of one's character. Its quality is associated with a 'secret light' . . . It does not entail freedom from the common ills of life. Places of 'pain or delight' remain to be experienced" (179).

Lancelot's awareness of the significance of his own life is augmented by the symbolic visions which appear to him while he sleeps. The entire meaning of his life—outside the constraints of time—is distilled in his view of the Grail and its obstruction by the counter-vision of Guenevere. The knight's vision of the queen recalls moments of 'pain and delight' in brilliant color and striking, concrete imagery. McCann's observation—that once it is experienced the vision remains a permanent aspect of one's own character—is sustained by Lancelot's final realization that his love for Guenevere will remain unfulfilled. However, the knowledge that his two loves represent his destiny seems to mitigate the initial tension created by this dual vision he receives.

McCann cites the opening stanza of Swinburne's "Sestina" as an example of this process described above. Here, the soul is likened to a sleeping bird that "sees" the starlight with its wings rather than with its eyes:

According to Swinburne, the soul's knowledge in sleep-trance is like the bird's consciousness of light as 'seen' not through its eyes but through its wings. We are dealing with an unusual piece of synesthetic imagery; light perceived through the sense of touch. Swinburne's verse is replete with synesthesia, often of an even more extraordinary sort. . . . What it gives is no new thing at all but a new way of experiencing any thing. (181)

Lancelot's experience serves as a process of self-discovery. He sees his life in a distilled, symbolic, and sharply manifest form. Swinburne's use of the sleep-trance—or what the Middle Ages

knew as the dream vision—allows him to present and examine a subject that in modern times would be labeled as “oppositional” (the sacred and profane loves of Lancelot) but is here presented in a conciliatory way. The knight appears to have reconciled himself with his destiny.

The sleep-trance in “Lancelot” creates confusion because it suspends time in order to explore events that are locked in the hero’s consciousness. A reader who approaches the poem expecting to encounter a traditional retelling of the Lancelot legend will be disappointed and probably disoriented. Swinburne is not interested in composing a recognizable narrative of Lancelot’s heroic feats and romantic intrigues but in capturing and distilling the two major elements that lend meaning to the knight’s existence. The two prominent features in the hero’s life—his illicit love and his quest for holiness—are at last comprehensible to him while he experiences this altered state of consciousness. “Lancelot” is thus not an insignificant, clumsy product of an enthusiastic but unaccomplished young poet; it is instead an innovative attempt to explore unconventional methods of experiencing and interpreting life. While a medieval audience applauded a digressive narrative, the Victorians expected a unified plot, much in the vein of *Idylls of the King*, especially when a poet employed medieval material which was still relatively unfamiliar to them.⁸

With this symbolic representation of Lancelot’s life, Swinburne achieves a “profound” medievalism because he dramatizes one of the central preoccupations of the Middle Ages—the struggle between earthly and spiritual love—that Pater had identified as a pervasive theme and prevalent quality of the medieval literary mind. In this, and in the projection of human emotion onto the natural world, Swinburne—like Morris and sometimes Rossetti—displays an unusual and even intuitive understanding of the distant past. If it is viewed as an experimental forerunner of Swinburne’s later thematic, aesthetic, and stylistic tendencies, “Lancelot” becomes not only more compre-

hensible but also valuable as a worthy antecedent of his mature and masterful medievalism.

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8. In his discussion of medieval and modern aesthetics, D. W. Robertson, Jr. suggests the problem of audience expectations that sheds light on the difficulty Swinburne may have encountered by imitating an earlier literary mode. In the Middle Ages, Robertson argues, “No one thought in terms of psychology. . . [there was] no taste for dramatic intensity in the nineteenth-century sense. Realism was alien to the artistic expression of the period generally, and artists showed no interest in the ordering of events in a continuum of space and time shared by the observer, in such

a way as to create structures suitable for the vicarious release of tensions” (276-277). A century earlier, J. H. Shorthouse had chided his fellow Victorians for their failure to recognize Morris’ ability to recreate the medieval past: “Did it never strike these gentlemen that, if a man opens a book written in the spirit and the manner, and influenced by the modes of thinking, of six or eight centuries ago, he is likely to find what he reads there rather different from a modern book?” (See Faulkner 48-49).

Books Received

- Bodenheimer, Rosemarie. *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction*. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1988. Pp. x + 247. \$24.95. Discusses Frances Trollope, Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Gaskell, Elizabeth Stone, Geraldine Jewsbury, George Eliot, as well as *Oliver Twist*, *Alton Locke*, *Ruth*, *Sybil*, *Hard Times*, *Felix Holt*. "The 'politics of story' of my title reflects the assumption on which the book is grounded: that it is in the shape and movement of narrative rather than in its proclaimed social ideology that we may find the 'politics' of a novel in its deepest, most interesting, most problematical expression" (3).
- Browning, Robert. *The Complete Works of Robert Browning*. Ed. Susan Crowl and Roma A. King, Jr., Vol. 8. Athens, OH: Ohio UP; Waco, TX: Baylor U, 1988. Pp. xxiv + 379. \$50.00. Vol 8 includes Books V through VIII of *The Ring and the Book*.
- Cosslett, Tess. *Woman to Woman: Female Friendship in Victorian Fiction*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities P, 1988. Pp. vii + 211. \$45.00. "It is . . . precisely the relationship of female friendship to the structure of the conventional marriage-plot that interests me" (3).
- Curtin, Michael. *Propriety and Position: A Study of Victorian Manners*. Modern European History Series. New York and London: Garland, 1987. Pp. iii + 327. \$55.00. Includes chapters "Definitions and Sources," "Courtesy Books and Etiquette," "Etiquette and Social Class," "The Gentleman," "The Etiquette of Privacy," "Public Civility," "Tact and Kindness," "Women in Etiquette."
- David, Deirdre. *Intellectual Women and Victorian Patriarchy: Harriet Martineau, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, George Eliot*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1987. Pp. xvi + 273. \$24.95. "This work is revisionist in the sense that from the perspective of resistance to and complicity with the hegemony of male-dominated culture, it takes a new look at the writings of women who have already been the subject of much important feminist criticism" (xii).
- Dictionary of Literary Biography: Victorian Prose Writers Before 1867*. Vol. 55. Ed. William B. Thesing. Detroit: Gale Research, 1987. Pp. xiii + 379. \$90.00. Includes essays on Thomas Arnold, Bagehot, Borrow, Richard Burton, Jane and Thomas Carlyle, Clare, E. S. Dallas, Dickens, Disraeli, George Eliot, W. R. Greg, Keble, Kinglake, Lewes, Macaulay, Harriet Martineau, Maurice, Mayhew, J. S. Mill, Newman, Pugin, Pusey, Ruskin, Smiles, Alexander Smith, Thackeray, Victoria.
- Dictionary of Literary Biography: Victorian Prose Writers After 1867*. Vol. 57. Ed. William B. Thesing. Detroit: Gale Research, 1987. Pp. xiii + 571. \$90.00. Includes essays on Matthew Arnold, Bradlaugh, Samuel Butler, Darwin, Charles M. Doughty, James A. Froude, Gladstone, Gosse, Frederic Harrison, Hopkins, Hutton, Huxley, Vernon Lee, Mallock, Meredith, Moore, Morley, Morris, Pater, Saintsbury, Shaw, Spencer, Stephen, Stevenson, Swinburne, Symonds, Symons, Anthony Trollope, Edward B. Tylor, Wilde, with an appendix on "Victorians on Rhetoric and Prose Style."
- Harrison, Antony H. *Christina Rossetti in Context*. Chapel Hill and London: U of North Carolina P, 1988. Pp. xiv + 231. \$29.95 cloth, \$12.95 paper. "The following chapters examine the contemporary reception of Rossetti's poetry, the historical relation of her work to that of the other Pre-Raphaelite poets, the connections between her own and Ruskinian as well as Tractarian aesthetics, and her transvaluations of the Neoplatonic traditions of amatory poetry that reached their highest level of achievement in the Renaissance with the poetry of Dante and Petrarch.
- "Discussions of such contexts and of the intertextual qualities of Rossetti's work lead to a focus on the culturally important tension that emerges in her poetry between aestheticism. . . and asceticism. . ." ([ix]-x).
- _____. *Swinburne's Medievalism: A Study in Victorian Love Poetry*. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State UP, 1988. Pp. xi + 205. \$27.50. "As a cohesive body of materials, Swinburne's medievalist poems. . . represent systematically and coherently his moral, literary, philosophical, and religious values, as they take on varied shapes and emphases during his career. This body of works, when set against the poetry of his contemporaries, fully demonstrates Swinburne's uniqueness as a major Victorian poet" (18).
- Hawkins, Angus. *Parliament, Party and the Art of Politics in Britain, 1855-59*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1987. Pp. xiii + 415. \$38.50. Includes a 17 pp. bibliography.
- Hornback, Bert G. "Middlemarch": *A Novel of Reform*. Twayne's Masterwork Studies 14. Boston: Twayne, 1988. Pp. xii + 165. \$17.95. "I have represented earlier critics and our contemporaries as fairly as I could, and I have tried in what I have written about their work to give an account of readings of *Middlemarch* different from my own" (ix).
- Keefe, Robert and Janice A. *Walter Pater and the Gods of Disorder*. Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 1988. Pp. x + 184. \$24.95. Pater "has retreated a long way [in *Plato and Platonism*] from his earlier praise of the fecundity of Venus, of the psychological complexity of Dionysus and Demeter and Persephone" (13) but it "is the book of a man who in his youth had listened to the songs of the gods and goddesses of disorder, who had stepped well outside the fortress of Victorian Hellenism and remained there for a long period. He had helped to show the educated readers of the English-speaking world a new, a more seductive and exciting reality. After Pater the Hellenists never did manage to get the drawbridge of their Apollonian fortress up and locked again" (14).
- Lough, John and Elizabeth Merson. *John Graham Lough, 1798-1876: A Northumbrian Sculptor*. Woodbridge, Suffolk and Wolfeboro, NH: Boydell P, 1987. Pp. [ix] + [136]. 40 illus. \$29.95. The fullest account yet of Lough's life and his work.
- Machann, Clinton and Forrest D. Burt, eds. *Matthew Arnold in His Time and Ours: Centenary Essays*. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1988. Pp. xvi + 220. \$24.95. Essays by David DeLaura, Ruth apRoberts, James Livingston, Sidney Coulling, Mary McBride, Laurence Mazzeno and Allan Lefcowitz, Linda Ray Pratt, Patrick McCarthy, Allan

Dooley, John Farrell, Leonard Orr, Sandra Segan Wheeler, Park Honan and Robert Super, with an afterword by William Thesing, the chapters entitled respectively, "Matthew Arnold and Culture: The History and the Prehistory," "Arnold and Natural Supernaturalism," "Matthew Arnold's Place in the Religious Thought of the Past Century," "Matthew Arnold and the American South," "Matthew Arnold and Andrew Carnegie: The Religion of Culture and the Gospel of Wealth," "Arnold and Bryce: The Problem of American Democracy and Culture," "Matthew Arnold and the Modernist Image," "Matthew Arnold, the Novel, and the World Without," "Literature and the Pleasure Principle: An Arnoldian Antidote for Critical Confusion," "'What I Want the Reader to See': Action and Performance in Arnold's Prose," "The Mid-Nineteenth-Century Irish Context of Arnold's Essay on Celtic Literature," "On the Study of Celtic Literature and the Young Writer: A Place in Arnold's Poetics," "Arnold, Eliot, and Trilling," and "Sweetness and Lightness: Matthew Arnold's Comic Muse."

Mrs Humphry Ward: A Bibliography. Comp. William B. Thesing and Stephen Pulsford. Victorian Fiction Research Guides 13. Queensland, AUS: Dept. of English, U of Queensland, 1987. Pp. iv + 71. Price for fourth series \$30.00 (Aus.), \$8.00 per vol. Contact Barbara Garlick, Eng. Dept., U of Queensland, St. Lucia, AUS. 4067.

Page, Norman. *Speech in the English Novel*. 2nd ed. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities P, 1988. Pp. x + 173. \$35.00, cloth; \$12.50 paper. The original version's (1973) "general argument and structure have been left largely unchanged." Page has revised "numerous points of detail [and included] additional examples. . . [and] enlarg[ed] the bibliographies" (ix).

Pedersen, Joyce Senders. *The Reform of Girl's Secondary and Higher Education in Victorian England: A Study of Elites and Educational Change*. Modern European History Series. New York and London: Garland, 1987. Pp. viii + 488. \$75.00. "The thesis examines the interrelationships between the institutional structure and the content of the new education and the social aspirations of those groups who helped shape it. Three groups are distinguished: the organizers of the new institutions. . . ; the teachers; and the clientele" (2).

Raymond, Meredith B. and Mary Rose Sullivan, eds. . *Women of Letters: Selected Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Mary Russell Mitford*. Boston: Twayne, 1987. Pp. xvii + 293. \$29.95. A selection "from the complete edition [of *The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning to Mary Russell Mitford 1836-1854* (1983) of] some 100 representative letters, or excerpts of letters. . . with minimal annotation," and "some examples of Mary Russell Mitford's side of the correspondence" (v).

Redmond, Christopher. *Welcome to America, Mr. Sherlock Holmes: Victorian America Meets Arthur Conan Doyle*. Toronto: Simon & Pierre, 1987. Pp. 235. \$19.95 (paper). Reconstructs Doyle's visit to America Oct., Nov., Dec. of 1894 from newspaper accounts, letters, diaries, reminiscences and so forth. Includes a reconstruction of Doyle's

lecture given 34 times over those months.

Reide, David G. *Matthew Arnold and the Betrayal of Language*. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1988. Pp. [xi] + 239. \$30.00 "My argument. . . will be that the best of Arnold's poetry results from a tension between his poetic ambition and his doubts about his medium" (28).

Richards, Jeffrey. *Happiest Days: The Public Schools in English Fiction*. Manchester: U of Manchester P, 1988. Dist. New York: St. Martin's, 1988. Pp. [ix] + 319. \$49.95. "For the historian, the public school story individually or as a *genre* provides four kinds of evidence. Firstly, it offers straightforward factual evidence about the customs, practices, conditions and methods of public schools at various stages. . . . Secondly, the books tell us something about the boy mind and the experience of boyhood. . . . The third area of interest for the historian is the promotion of particular ideas, attitudes, educational and social policies. . . . Fourthly, there is the creation and development of the genre of school stories, the body of fictional material, which conforms to certain rules and structures, and succeeds by repetition and ritualisation in mythifying ideas and codes" (5-7).

Richardson, James. *Vanishing Lives: Style and Self in Tennyson, D. G. Rossetti, Swinburne, and Yeats*. Virginia Victorian Studies Series. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1988. Pp. x + 240. \$32.50. "From the phantasmal glide of Tennyson to the strenuous attention of Hopkins, nineteenth-century poetic styles are implicated in the fluidity of the self. Variations among the poets in rhythm, impedance, imagery, lineation, syntax, and quality of sound express their senses of the speed, continuity, and feel of our passing. Their poetry is almost a sensuous equivalent of a flux it both imitates and strives against, balancing life's intensity and particularity with its vagueness and swiftness" (9).

Robb, David S. *George MacDonald*. Scottish Writers Series. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic P, 1987. Pp. 136. £4.95 (paper). Contains chapters on Life and Work, Novels, Symbolism and Allegory, *Phantastes* and *Lilith*, Fiction for the Child, and Reputation.

Shatto, Susan ed. *Tennyson's "Maud": A Definitive Edition*. Norman and London: U of Oklahoma P, 1986. Pp. xxi + [296]. \$39.50. Includes a 38 pp. Introduction, a 61 pp. Commentary, and 64 pp. of Appendices.

Stocker, Mark. *Royalist and Realist: The Life and Work of Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm*. New York and London: Garland, 1988. Pp. vi + [752]. 353 illustrations. \$200.00. A dissertation from the University of Hull on the sculptor who was a friend of Carlyle and Whistler and favorite artist of Queen Victoria.

Wilde, Oscar. *The Definitive Four-Act Version of "The Importance of Being Earnest: A Trivial Comedy for Serious People."* Ed. and Intro. Ruth Berggren. New York: Vanguard P, 1987. Pp. 192. \$18.95. Includes a 57 pp. intro.

Winner, Anthony. *Culture and Irony: Studies in Joseph Conrad's Major Novels*. Virginia Victorian Studies. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1988. Pp. 132. \$24.95. Includes chapters on *Lord Jim*, *Nostromo*, *The Secret Agent*, and *Under Western Eyes*.

Victorian Group News

Announcements

Actors Theatre of Louisville (ATL) announces the fourth annual Classics in Context Festival, this year featuring works of the Victorian Age. Classics in Context includes fully produced plays along with films, lectures and ancillary events designed to give audiences a broader perspective on the social, political and artistic influences surrounding the creation of the plays. Projected ATL festival events include dramatic performances of *Peter Pan* by J. M. Barrie, *Engaged* by W. S. Gilbert, James Winker's *With Alice in Wonderland*, and *London Labour and the London Poor* adapted by J. Bolt; the films *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Going on Stage*; and lectures by Walter Arnstein of the University of Illinois, Michael Booth of the University of Victoria, and Nina Auerbach of the University of Pennsylvania. All events will be presented at the ATL Special Visitors Weekend Oct. 14, 15, 16, 1988. For more information contact Christopher Boyer, Festival Coordinator, ATL, 316 West Main Street, Louisville, KY 40202-2916; (502) 584-1265.

"Robert Browning and 19th Century Culture" is the topic for the centennial observance of the poet's death. The commemoration is scheduled for Sept. 20-22, 1989, at the Armstrong Browning Library, Baylor University, Waco, TX 76798. Ten-page papers dealing with contemporaries and 19th century culture as they relate to Browning will be welcomed. Inquiries and papers should be addressed to Roger L. Brooks, Director, at the Library. Selected papers from the program will be published in *Studies in Browning and His Circle*.

Browning Institute Studies: An Annual of Victorian Literary and Cultural History is planning an issue dedicated to the centenary of both Robert Browning and Gerard Manley Hopkins. The editors are now accepting articles broadly based on the theme of "Victorian Difficulties with Browning and Hopkins." Papers with a strong theoretical orientation are encouraged, and, as always, *BIS* accepts papers on any issue concerning Robert and/or Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Send two copies of articles (new MLA Style) or inquiries to the editor: Adrienne Munich, English, SUNY/Stony Brook, Stony Brook, NY 11794-5350.

The Dickens Project of the University of California, Santa Cruz, announces a scholarly conference on "Sentimentality: Dickens, Sentimentality, Victorian Culture" to be held August 3-6, 1989, at UC Santa Cruz. The deadline for proposals (20 minute papers) is March 1. For more information please write to: The Dickens Project, Kresge College 155, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA 95064.

"Victorian Anecdotes, Apocrypha, and Hallowed Cliches" will be the topic of the 13th annual meeting of the Midwest Victorian Studies Assoc., to be held in Chicago on 28-29 April 1989. The Assoc. welcomes proposals on any aspect of legends, mythmaking, and gossip, and how they inform (or misinform) scholarly and popular views of the Victorian period. Eight- to ten-page papers or two-page abstracts should be sent no later than November 15 to Micael Clarke, MVSA Exec. Sec., English Dept., Loyola Univ. of Chicago, 6525 N. Sheridan Rd., Chicago, IL 60626.

Back issues of *VN*, at a cost of \$4.00 per copy, are available in limited quantities for the following numbers: 8, 20, 23, 30, 31, 32, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73