

The Victorian Newsletter

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Cover: On the anniversary of the death of Thomas Hughes, "An Old Boy," a touch of *Tom Brown's School Days*

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Gender, Race, and Colonial Discourse in the Travel Writings of Mary Kingsley

Salome C. Nnoromele

Susan L. Blake in an essay on Mary Hall asks: "In the relation of European travelers to empire, what difference does gender make?" Encoded in the question is the belief that women see and interpret the world and experiences differently from men, that "women, colonized themselves by gender, recognize and oppose colonization based on race" (19). Blake compares Mary Hall's *A Woman's Trek* to Ewart S. Grogan's *From Cape to Cairo: The First Traverse of Africa from South to North* (1900) and Frank H. Melland and Edward H. Cholmeley's *Through the Heart of Africa* (1912), and concludes that narration of incidents—the fiction of the traveler-protagonist encountering Africa—indicates pronounced dichotomies between male and female writers' relations to empire (20).

Recent scholarship has tended to reinforce this gendered reading of colonial travelogues. Bonnie Frederick and Virginia Hyde argue that "the journeys prove significant transits in which each woman's gender invests her journey with a meaning that both comments on and differs from that of men's journey" (vii). The consensus seems to be that female travelers, although endorsing empire, did so less emphatically than men. While seemingly complying with the imperial agenda of dominating other races, they questioned or undercut racist colonial discourses through their feminine readings and perception of differences (Mills 94; Strobel 36-39; Blake 21).

The implication of these gendered analyses of travel literature is to perceive female travelers as responding to the colonized Others with parity and reciprocity in contrast to the male protagonists, who objectify them. Male travelers see themselves in constant combat with colonial spaces. They stalk and kill dangerous animals, cut through a thousand miles of papyrus swamps, overcome hostile natives, whip chiefs and rulers into submission, and torture their porters into alacrity (Blake 22). Women, on the other hand, aware that they lack the typical male traveler's advantages of firearms and whips in dealing with colonized peoples, negotiate power with the locals, relating to them with attitudes of non-coercion and empathy (Blake 28-29).

This essay uses the writings of Mary Kingsley, the now crowned queen of Victorian travel writers, to evaluate and interrogate these feminist assumptions about women's views of and role in empire building. Close readings of Mary Kingsley's travelogues reveal no gendered differences in male-female relationships to Others on the colonial landscape. Evaluations of representative passages from her two major books—*Travels in West Africa* and *West African Studies*—will show that Mary Kingsley never responded to colonial spaces with attitudes of parity and reciprocity. Her perception and interpretation of the relationship between the traveler and

African Other as seen through her narration of encounters contain all the imperial brandishments of power that feminist critics see as typically male.

Mary Kingsley, similar to male travelers, saw herself as being in constant combat with the locals. She strove incessantly to maintain the identity of power given her by her color, thus objectifying rather than reciprocating Africa. Similar to the male travelers, Mary Kingsley saw Africa as a thing to be studied and manipulated. Consequently, the encounters between the Self and the African Other are described and interpreted as relationships of power and of domination. One example occurs during Mary Kingsley's second visit to West Africa. Receiving information that it is the fishing season in Corisco island, she thinks that joining the fishing party would enable her to view and collect some fish specimens for Dr. Gunther of the British Museum.¹ After making the journey to the island, Mary Kingsley encounters the inhabitants and describes the first meeting:

On arriving at Corisco Island, I "soothed with a gift, and greeted with a smile" the dusky inhabitants. "Have you any tobacco?" said they. "I have," I responded, and a friendly feeling at once arose. (WAS 77)

On the surface, one could read the scene as a dramatization of powerplay between two parties, strangers to each other. The inhabitants of Corisco island have the upper hand since they are the lords of the land; Mary Kingsley's position is one of vulnerability, even subordination. She is the alien, unfamiliar with the environment. She seeks hospitality and acceptance. These she subsequently achieves as she is able to negotiate friendship with the people through her gifts and is allowed to join the fishing party. Such a reading, however, would be terribly superficial if not carried further.

Mary Kingsley's narration dramatizes the subtle conflict between the objective description of an encounter and the interpretive framework of colonialist discourses. It also portrays how well Mary Kingsley was immersed in the imperialist politics of race. What is significant in this encounter is that Mary Kingsley does not achieve success by relating to the people on the level of parity. Through the language of imperialism, she negotiates her way through a construct of interpretations that ostensibly reverses the positions of authority between her Self and the Corisco Others. The words "soothed with a gift" and "dusky inhabitants" transform the encounter from that of mere strangers seeking mutual acceptance or reciprocity to one in which issues of class and race are foregrounded.

The phrase "soothed with a gift" introduces the situation

¹Before Mary Kingsley left England for West Africa, she had met with Dr. Gunther, the director of the British Museum of Natural History. Unable to dissuade her from going, he had persuaded her to collect fish specimens for

the institution. Mary Kingsley agreed to the task. As she later wrote, she went to West Africa to study "Fish and Fetish."

of an adult-child relationship, giving readers the image of a superior trying to placate a potentially unruly and dangerous child—a rather familiar image of Africa in the English imperialistic mind. “Dusky inhabitants” introduces the issue of color. It conjures images of racial difference and the supposed inferiority of the African people—“dusky” as compared to white Mary Kingsley or white Europeans. Employing vocabularies with established meaning and references in imperialist discourse, Mary Kingsley empowers and elevates her Self to a position of superiority and imperial authority. Doing so negates her vulnerability, restores her imperial identity, and gives her a claim of superiority in a situation where she saw herself as vulnerable.

Ian Baucom in “Dreams of Home: Colonialism and Post-modernism” illustrates that the tendency to use imperialist rhetoric to negate situations of vulnerability was a common gesture of European imperialists in Africa during the colonial period. One of the many challenges confronting the colonists in the vast space of Africa was the “excess” of the “native” presence pressing on them. The effect of this presence is aptly described by Joseph Conrad in *Heart of Darkness*:

Think of a decent young citizen in a toga . . . coming out here in the train of some prefect, or tax-gatherers, or trader even—to mend his fortunes. Land in a swamp, march through a woods, and in some inland post feel the savagery. The utter savagery had closed round him—all the mysterious life of the wilderness that stirs in the forest, in the jungles, in the hearts of wild men. There’s no initiation either into such mysteries. He has to live in the midst of the incomprehensible which is also detestable. And it has a fascination too, that goes to work upon him. The fascination of the abomination—you know. Imagine the growing regrets, the longing to escape, the powerless disgust, the surrender—the hate. (10)

Conrad’s choice of words in the above passage, “savagery,” “incomprehensible,” “mysterious,” “powerless,” and repetition of “wilderness,” are particularly revealing because they emphasize the intensity and the overpowering nature of the colonial spatial landscape. Other words such as “disgust,” “growing regrets,” “surrender” and “hate” point out that the presence was extremely uncomfortable for Western travelers. What made it particularly uncomfortable was the feeling of being alone and misplaced in an alien geographical space. Elsewhere in the novel, Conrad describes the experience as “hints of nightmares” (17).

According to Baucom, the colonists felt “negatively transparent,” powerless and vulnerable in the colonial space (9). To them, as shown in *Heart of Darkness*, it was literally and metaphorically suffocating: literally because the traveler could not comprehend it and felt terribly alienated; metaphorically because it had the power to marginalize, consume and obliterate the Self—its “utter savagery seemed to approach them,” Conrad writes.

In this suffocating environment, the encounter between the Self and the Other becomes ultimately a struggle for survival and power in which the colonists reassert their authority and re-invent their identities by evoking images of the “authorizing and authoritarian presence” of imperial England

through the use of imperialist rhetoric, objects, or both (Baucom 9). Baucom cites a story narrated by Henry Stanley about his experiences in the Congo to illustrate the point. In May 1877, Stanley was in Mowa, Central Africa. As a habit, he kept a journal in which he noted words from the local language as well as narrated some of his experiences and impressions. Stanley’s writing caused a stir among the local inhabitants. One evening, he found himself surrounded by several hundred armed men who rebuked him for the danger his inscriptions posed to their community and demanded that he burn the book:

I told them to rest there, and left Safeni [an African who had befriended Stanley] in their hands as a pledge that I would return. My tent was not fifty yards from the spot, but while going towards it my brain was busy in devising some plan to foil this *superstitious madness*. My note-book contained a vast number of valuable notes; plans of falls, creeks, villages, sketches of localities, ethnological and philological details, sufficient to fill two octavo volumes—everything was of a general interest to the public. I could not sacrifice it to the *childish caprice of savages*. As I was rummaging my book box, I came across a volume of Shakespeare (Chandos edition), much worn and well thumbed, and which was of the same size as my fieldbook; its cover was similar also, and it might be passed for the note-book provided that no one remembered its appearance too well I took it to them.

“Is this the tara-tara (paper), friends, that you wish burnt?”

“Yes, yes, that is it!”

“Well, take it, and burn it or keep it.”

“M-m, no, no, no. We will not touch it. It is fetish. You must burn it.”

We walked to the nearest fire. I breathed a regretful farewell to my genial companion, which during many weary hours of night had assisted to relieve my mind when oppressed by almost intolerable woes, and then gravely consigned the innocent Shakespeare to the flames, heaping the brush-fuel around it with ceremonious care.

(*The Congo* 162; qtd in Baucom 6, emphasis added)

Baucom believes that this was a situation in which Stanley felt negatively transparent, surrounded by the gaze of several hundred armed African men. In what was typical in most of these colonial encounters, Stanley gained control of the situation through the process of invoking the authoritarian and authoritative presence of the “innocent Shakespeare” (6). This colonialist gesture of re-inventing the Self by invoking signs of the absent home assumes a talismanic significance in any colonist discourse because it involves a perpetual production of a “metonymy of presence” (Baucom 7).

In Conrad’s description cited earlier, the narrator invokes signs of the absent home and attempts to undercut the powerful presence of the African landscape through the use of such racist words as “utter savagery,” “hearts of wild men,” and “the fascination of the abomination.” In the Corisco scene, Mary Kingsley’s “talisman” is the English tobacco which “pacified” the indigenous of Corisco. The hegemonic significance of tobacco offered to the natives, coupled with her

imperial vocabulary in the narration, restores her sense of identity. It is not difficult to see that Mary Kingsley’s “soothed” and “dusky inhabitants” echo Henry Stanley’s “the childish caprice of savages” and “superstitious madness,” and Conrad’s “utter savagery” “hearts of wild men,” and “the fascination of the abomination.”

A study of Mary Kingsley’s language of reference in other encounters shows that the subjugation of the presence of the Other through the use of imperialist vocabularies and objects was so entrenched in her attitude that she often reverted to it whenever an opportunity arose for the defining of the African, even under non-threatening circumstances. The description of an encounter between Mary Kingsley and a local doctor who needed her help at night further illustrates this behavior:

Well, my friend *the witch doctor* used to call on me, and I apologetically confess I first thought his interest in me arose from material objects. I wronged the man in thought, as I have many others, for one night, about 11 p.m., I heard a *pawing at the shutters*—my African friends don’t knock. I got up and opened the door, and there he was. I made some observations, which I regret now, about *tobacco* at that time of night, and he said, “No. *You be big man*, suppose person sick?” I acknowledged the soft impeachment. “Pusson sick too much; pusson live for die. You fit for come?” “Fit,” said I. “Suppose you come, you no fit to talk?” said he. “No fit,” said I, with shrewd notion it was one of my Portuguese friends who was ill and who did not want a blazing blister on, a thing that was inevitable if you called in a *regular white medical man*, so picking up a medicine case, *I went into the darkness with my darker friend.* (WAS 103, emphasis added)

This passage illuminates the imperial attitude of power that governed Mary Kingsley’s perception of the relationship between Self and the Other. If there was any argument concerning Mary Kingsley’s belief in the inequality of the races or her subscription to the “masculinist” objectification of Others, her language in this scene settles the issue.

Mary Kingsley’s rhetoric indicates the continued marginalization of the claims and personhood of the African as well as her tendency to see any encounter as a contest of power in which the Other has to be subjugated. She is always ready with her talisman, tobacco, flashing it as most male colonists would flash their whip. It serves as a constant reminder of her identity.

Somebody “paws”² at Mary Kingsley’s shutters around 11 o’clock at night. She opens the door, sees the doctor, and the first thing that comes to her mind is that he needs tobacco. With this frame of mind, Kingsley creates an imperialist context for the encounter. As in the Corisco encounter, she displays her supposed weapon of superiority—the talismanic

tobacco—and taps into the hegemonic racist perception of Africans as the “degraded brutes” continuously given to drink and tobacco.

Patrick Brantlinger, in “Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent,” describes how one of the primary gestures of imperialism was to devalue and marginalize other people’s experience and claim to equality through the stratification of the language of reference between Self and the Other. In almost all Victorian travel writings, African kings were demoted to “chiefs,” local doctors became “witch doctors” (179). In this encounter between Mary Kingsley and her friend, Mary Kingsley indicates how much she suffered from this imperialist attitude in the choice of adjectives she uses to describe persons involved in the same profession. The indigenous doctor, for the mere fact of his Africanness, is a “witch doctor”; his European counterpart for the sake of his whiteness, is a “regular white medical man.”

The discourse between Mary Kingsley and her doctor friend is important not only because it reveals a great deal about Mary Kingsley’s imperial psychology, how much her perception and construct of interpretation subscribed to the nineteenth-century male imperialist culture, but also because it offers us a glimpse into the response of the perceived. Until recently, it has been the critical tendency to neglect the reactions with which Africa met imperialism during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Such neglect has led writers like Leonard Woolf to argue that the reason imperialists succeeded in the exploitation of Africa between 1800 and 1900 and did exactly what they liked there was that neither Africans nor their institutions offered any obstruction or resistance. “The African, physically and mentally, was absolutely unable to resist the European; and in Africa, therefore, the European had clear ground, a virgin field,” Woolf states (*Imperialism and Civilization* 94-95).

However, as recent critics have shown,³ Africa did offer resistance to imperialist incursions on their state sovereignty and identity physically as seen in the now well-documented wars waged against Britain and other European nations by the Ashantis, the Sierra Leonians and other ethnic groups in Africa. There was also intellectual resistance. As the doctor’s response to Mary Kingsley’s marginalization of his Self in the above cited encounter indicates, Africans did understand the context of the relationship between them and the West, interrogated and philosophically tried to reject the Western attempt to define them and their experiences. The major reason imperialism had its way in West Africa was that the West had the superior weapon of war, maxim guns to be exact.

The doctor’s response to Mary Kingsley’s flashing of her talisman, tobacco, her imperial reminder of assumed superiority, is one of cynicism. “You be big man” is an acknowledgement that the relationship between him and Mary Kingsley is one of power not of parity. It also interrogates Mary Kingsley’s perceptions and interpretations. “Suppose

²Chinwe Achebe in “An Image of Africa” points out how colonial writers attributed animal qualities to Africans as a way of emphasizing the differences between Europe and Africa. Europeans speak, Africans “exchanged short grunting phrases. Europeans knock; Africans paw like cats” (6).

³Within the last decade, it has increasingly been recognized that what is

important in the field of literary studies is not only the role of the perceiver, but that of the perceived as well. The responses of the perceived gathered from scattered bits and pieces of information provided by literature of the time give us significant insights as to how Africans understood the incursions of imperialism. See Curtin, Boahen, and Rotberg and Mazrui.

person sick?" admonishes Mary Kingsley that all relationships do not have to be power-based. It tells Kingsley that, perhaps, it might be necessary, even more productive to evaluate encounters not on the basis of power-play in which one tries to dominate the Other, but as an encounter of equals with valid needs. "Suppose somebody is dangerously ill? Is it not reasonable to come asking for your help? the doctor basically asks Mary Kingsley. Mary Kingsley verbally acknowledges that admonition ("I acknowledged the soft impeachment"), but her concluding phrase—"I went out into the darkness with my darker friend"—indicates her unwillingness or perhaps inability to perceive the relationship as anything other than racial.

This last phrase embodies all the nineteenth-century racist ideologies about the African continent and its peoples. Mary Kingsley's language of reference in the passage, again, calls to mind Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Chinua Achebe in his highly controversial essay on the image of Africa in *Heart of Darkness* gives accounts of what "darkness" means in the official language of imperialism. It projects the image of Africa as "the other world," "the antithesis of Europe," "as a place of negations," "remote," "vaguely unfamiliar," "incomprehensible," "inscrutable," "mysterious," "primordial" (3). Patrick Brantlinger in "Victorians and Africans" suggests that within imperialist discourse, darkness locates Africa as "hell on earth" (193). Consequently, applied to the relationship between the doctor, "darkness" introduces the issue of race, color, Otherness, and power. By using the word "darkness" to describe the doctor, Kingsley immediately distinguishes and dissociates herself from him on the basis of color and race. Its usage here is similar to the word "dusky" used to describe the Corisco people in the encounter cited earlier. The word "darkness" immediately sets up the doctor as an antithesis to Mary Kingsley's Self. To Mary Kingsley, her African "friend" is darker than the darkness—an immediate symbolic denial of equality based on racial stratification. The English public to whom Mary Kingsley wrote no doubt felt that the description was quite befitting, for the African is darker than night, more mysterious, savagely mysterious, shadowy, embodying all the horrors and degradation of primordial man. The attitude is descending. Her ultimate implication seems to be "how dare he, a black man, question my perception of him and my interpretation of him?"

Hence, Mary Kingsley's doctor "friend," first demoted to a witch doctor, at the end becomes a foil for her imperial Self, a point of antithetical comparison and reference. If we add Kingsley's response to the doctor to her attitude towards the Corisco people, we begin to see a pattern of reference emerge. It suggests that Mary Kingsley always saw the encounter between her Self and the African Other as a confrontation of power in which the Self must win. Feeling transparent and vulnerable in the presence of the doctor's interrogation of her perceptions, and the confrontation between her Self and the Corisco Others, Mary Kingsley found refuge in using the language of imperialism to achieve a dissociation that enabled her to maintain her imperial equilibrium and identity. This is a direct manifestation of her subscription to the colonists' perpetual production of Ian Baucom's "authorial presence" of home. There is nothing reciprocal or empathetic about her attitudes.

The last narrative encounters I choose to evaluate are those between Mary Kingsley and two Rembwe young men, Obanjo and Prince Makaga in *Travels in West Africa*. These perhaps serve as the most revealing constructs of Otherness in Mary Kingsley's writings. Mary Kingsley was traveling on foot from Rembwe to Garbon when she and members of her crew decided to take a short rest in a small Rembwe village. She describes the incidents thus:

It was a pleasant-looking village, with a clean yellow beach which most of the houses faced. But it had ramifications in the interior. I being very lazy, did not go ashore, but watched the *phantomime* [sic] from the bamboo staging. The whole flock of goats enter at right end of stage, and tear violently across the scene, disappearing at left. Two minutes elapse. Obanjo and his gallant crew enter at right hand of stage, leg it like lamplighters across front, and disappear at left. *Fearful pow-wow behind the scenes*. Five minutes elapse. Enter goats at right as before, followed by Obanjo and company as before, and so on *da capo*. It was more like a fight I once saw between armies of Macbeth and Macduff than anything I have seen before or since; only our Rembwe play was better put on, more supers, and noise, and all that sort of thing you know. It was a *spirited performance* I assure you and I and the inhabitants of the village, not personally interested in goat-catching, assumed the role of audience and cheered it to the echo. While engaged in shouting "Encore" to the third round, I received a considerable shocking well-modulated evidently educated voice saying in most perfect English:

"Most diverting spectacle, madam, is it not?"

Now you do not expect to hear things called "diverting spectacles" on the Rembwe; so I turned round and saw standing on the bank against which our canoe was moored, *what appeared to me to be a English gentleman who had from some misfortune gone black all over and lost his trousers and been compelled to replace them with a highly ornamental table-cloth*. The rest of the wardrobe was in exquisite condition, with the usual white Jean coat, white shirt and collar, very neat tie, and felt hat affected by white gentlemen out here. *Taking a large and powerful cigar* from his lips with one hand, he raised his hat gracefully with the other and said:

"Pray excuse me, madam."

I said, "Oh, please go on smoking."

"May I?" he said, offering me a cigar-case.

"Oh, no thank you," I replied.

"Many ladies do now," he said, and asked me whether I "preferred Liverpool, London or Paris."

I said, "Paris; but there are nice things in both the other cities."

"Indeed that is so," he said; "they have got many very decent works of art in the St. George's Hall."

I agreed, but said I thought the national Gallery preferable because you got such fine representative series of works of early Italian schools. *I felt I had got to rise to this man whoever he was, somehow, and having regained my nerve, I was coming up hand over had to the level of his culture* when Obanjo and the crew arrived, carrying goats. (339-40, emphasis mine)

Mary Kingsley's descriptions of these encounters with Obanjo and Makaga raise interesting questions about perception. Why the fascination with Obanjo's activities? Why does Mary Kingsley transform the routine of an ordinary chore—herding goats—to a stage performance in which the locals are the actors and she both the writer of the scene and the audience? Why does she call it a "phantomime"? Why the enthusiastic relish of the "performance" as seen in the language of her description? Why the comparison between the imaginary "Rembwe play" Kingsley writes to Shakespeare's *Macbeth*?

What begins to emerge in response to these questions is what Homi K. Bhabha describes as "the fetish of presence"—an attempt to re-inscribe in the external space of the colony the cultural space of England. The motive force which drove Mary Kingsley to transform an ordinary chore to a stage performance is the same which led her to use the language of imperialism to repress the claims of the Other in other encounters. These metonymic inscriptions of presence on the colonial space are disposed as effects of power, as means of articulating authority, according to Bhabha. The inscriptions deploy a double play of authority that must "fill" a lack and repress an excess. Turning to one side, the colonists confront the absent origins of England; turning to the other, they confront the disturbing excess of the African presence they wish to repress. Writing on the center's presence, therefore, allegorizes the absent home and authorizes the European while normalizing the "native."

The process of colonial allegorization as an act of normalizing the "subject" achieves or attempts to achieve its effects of power through a recourse to fetishism. This introduces images of the displaced European space as a comparison to the colonial presence. Mary Kingsley attempts to do exactly this as she compares the performance she has constructed out of Obanjo's activities to Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Shakespeare performs the double function of fetish: he is deployed as a means of controlling African cultural production and a standard against which the "normalized" African can be measured. Consequently, the British play involves people fighting with people—armies of Macbeth against armies of Macduff; the Rembwe "phantomime" is staged with people fighting against goats—"a spirited performance," Kingsley calls it, "with ramifications in the interior." Shakespeare, as cultural fetish, becomes a means of repression; Mary Kingsley's inscriptions become a means of objectification of the Other in the attempt to normalize its disturbing presence.

Mary Kingsley's aesthetic objectification of the African presence in the Obanjo encounter helps to explain why she is shocked to hear Prince Makaga describe the scene she has constructed as "a most diverting spectacle." Makaga's phrase transforms the very images of Mary Kingsley's thoughts into words—a thing she admits she never expected to hear on the Rembwe. Mary Kingsley, however, sees Makaga as a "combatant" whom she must challenge. How Mary Kingsley meets the challenges posed by the presence of Prince Makaga is most revealing as it confirms the point I have tried to make throughout this essay: that Mary Kingsley saw herself in constant combat with the African Other and that her language is a projection of her struggle to overpower the presence of the Other which like other male travelers she saw as threatening to obliterate her Self and identity.

Turning to meet Makaga, Mary Kingsley describes him as appearing as "an Englishman who had from some misfortune gone black all over and lost his trousers and been compelled to replace them with a highly ornamental table-cloth." Why does Mary Kingsley see being black as a misfortune? Why does she represent the fact that Makaga was attired in a traditional dress rather than trousers an anomaly? Do trousers represent culture and the wrapper Makaga was wearing the antithesis of culture? Responses to these questions point to Mary Kingsley's marginalized reading and representation of Otherness. They also show the limitations in her articulation of racial difference. To her, blackness is the negative antithesis of whiteness, with the implication that to be black must be a state of unfortunate existence. Such an articulation strategically creates a space into which Makaga, this Other that challenges her perception, is defined and contained. "I felt I had got to rise to this man whoever her was, somehow," Mary Kingsley writes.

Mary Kingsley's framework for representing and interpreting colonial encounters as illustrated in this essay can only be defined as arrogant and pugnacious. There is little question that she perceived every encounter in the colonial space of Africa as a repertoire of positions of power and resistance to which she, as a representative of her imperial majesty, must rise. The ideological ramifications of her attitude are difficult to miss, especially since they are reinforced by the advice she expeditiously gives to potential English travelers to the continent: "Never be afraid of a black man," she writes. And if you happen to be "Don't show it." She continues:

It is not advisable to play with them . . . an never, never shoot too soon. I have never had to shoot, and hope never to have to; because in such a situation, one white alone with no troops to back him means a clean finish. But this would not discourage me if I had to start, only it makes me more inclined to walk round the obstacle, than to become a mere blood splotch against it, if this can be done without losing your self-respect, which is the mainspring of your power in West Africa. (*Travels* 330)

There is nothing that hints at reciprocity in this passage. The language is one of confrontation and combat. It sounds more like advice given to a soldier going into war than advice to a traveler visiting another country. But then that is the point. Just as most male imperial travelers see themselves as engaged in a war of survival in Africa, Mary Kingsley sees Africans as "obstacles" that must be overcome. The ultimate goal in this politics of power is to maintain one's sense of Self and imperial identity at any cost, either through the literal or metaphorical "shooting" of the African Other or both.

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The Source of Callicles:

Plato's *Gorgias* and Arnold's "Empedocles on Etna"

Carol Poster

The character and sources for the character Callicles in Arnold's "Empedocles on Etna" have been widely discussed in the critical literature, but the longer scholars discuss the issue, the farther away the goal of consensus recedes. A precise identification of Callicles is, however, necessary for understanding both the poem's content and its generic category.¹

Of the three characters who speak in the poem, two, Pausanias and Empedocles, are readily identifiable historical characters. The third, Callicles, is assumed by most contemporary critics to be an invention of Arnold's. Not only is the assumption that Arnold included an imaginary character in a discussion between two historical personages somewhat incongruous, but it overlooks the cultural context in which Arnold was writing.

The literary education of most upper middle-class Victorian men, including Arnold himself, was classical. Formal public school training in both the composition and the reading of poetry occurred exclusively within the context of Greek and Latin classes. English prose style was taught at Rugby and Winchester only as part of exercises in translating from classical languages into English (Horner and Curtis). The critical lens through which literature was viewed in such pedagogical

contexts was neither expressivist nor objectivist, but instead what Abrams has termed "rhetorical." Arnold's audience not only read rhetorically, but, in a tradition running in unbroken succession from the grammarians of late antiquity through the Renaissance humanists down to the Victorian public schools, was trained to search for obscure classical allusions. As Grafton and Jardine have pointed out (83-89), employing and discovering recondite classical allusions were central to the humanist enterprise. Even the most cursory perusal of Arnold's works provides ample evidence that Arnold frequently referred to classical authors, often quite indirectly. Given Arnold's own classical education and interest in the classics, as well as his propensity to assume a similar background on the part of his readers, the obvious place to search for Callicles is in the classical works familiar to Arnold specifically and educated Victorian gentlemen generally.

Callicles: The Problem of Identity

Although critics have discussed Callicles's identity and its thematic implications, only the most general assertions about his nature are held in common by contemporary scholars: that he is modelled on Keats and that he exemplifies

a sort of youthful innocence.²

Burnham and Zietlow both note that several paraphrases of Pindar occur in Callicles's songs. Since Pindar (518-438 B.C.E.) was approximately twenty years older than Empedocles, presenting Callicles as a younger poet influenced by Pindar is quite credible; however, the problem of the precise identity of Callicles is not solved. Even Anderson, who also identifies the Pindaric elements in Callicles, and cites several classical sources for individual lines in "Empedocles on Etna," does not locate a specific source for Callicles as a character.

The scholars cited above all approach Callicles ahistorically. They assume that Callicles is an invented character placed in a dramatic situation with two historical figures, and then proceed on that assumption without first investigating the possibility that Callicles was, like Empedocles and Pausanias, also derived from classical philosophical literature.

Empedocles on Etna: The Dramatic Date

The first step in looking for a historical model for Callicles is to pinpoint the actual period in which to search. Just as it is commonplace in Platonic scholarship to assign a "dramatic" date, as well as a date of composition, to each dialogue, so in order to locate Callicles historically, it is necessary to assign a dramatic date to "Empedocles on Etna."

Since Arnold's poem is presumably located as a dialogue occurring immediately prior to Empedocles's death, the dramatic date is the date of Empedocles's death. Were the date of the death of Empedocles, or even the veracity of the story upon which Arnold bases his poem, a matter of certainty, assigning a dramatic date to Arnold's poem would be a trivial task. Unfortunately, such is not the case.

Arnold appears to have drawn his biographical information about Empedocles from two main sources, Diogenes Laertius (8: 51-77) and Simon Karsten.³ Diogenes offers several mutually contradictory accounts of Empedocles's dates. His only consistent chronological claim is that Empedocles flourished in the 84th Olympiad (444-441 B.C.E., which, given that *flourit* refers to a person's fortieth year,

implies an approximate birthdate of 485-480 B.C.E.). Karsten, however, like Wright (1-2) argues on the basis of Eusebius (*Chronicle*) and Aristotle (*Meta. A*) for a 495-490 B.C.E. birthdate. Dismissing the possibility that Empedocles died at 109 as an obvious confusion with Gorgias (Wright yields two possible ages for his death, 60 and 77 (Diogenes (7: 74), resulting in a range of 495-480 B.C.E. for Empedocles's birth and 435-403 B.C.E. for his death. To pinpoint a specifically Arnoldian chronology, one must investigate both Arnold's notebooks and the text of "Empedocles on Etna."

Two historical characters other than the *dramatis personae* themselves are mentioned in Arnold's poem, Parmenides and Gorgias. Both are of use in determining the temporal location of Arnold's poem. Empedocles's final speech mentions Parmenides:

And yet what days were those, Parmenides!
When we were young, when we could number friends
In all the Italian cities like ourselves,
When with elated heart we join'd your train,
Ye Sun-born Virgins! on the road of truth. (235-239)

The historical Parmenides here is invoked through Karsten's reading of the Eleatic school as mystical philosopher/poets. Lines 238-39 clearly refer to the poem to Parmenides's "Waty of Truth."⁴

The mares that carry me, as far as impulse might reach,
Were taking me, when they brought and placed me upon
the much-speaking route,
Of the goddess . . .
. . . even while the maidens, Daughters of the Sun, were
hastening
To escort me, after leaving the House of the Night for the
Light . . . (DK28b 1-10, trans. Gallop)

Plato's *Parmenides* (127b) dates Parmenides's birth to approximately 515 B.C.E.⁵ Two of Arnold's sources, Diogenes (8: 55-56) and Olympiodorus ("On Gorgias" 24 in Routh 557) mention that Empedocles was a student of

²Roper, for example, presents Callicles as a poet of ". . . Keatsian natural magic deficient in the moral profundity Empedocles so obviously possesses (10). Harrison, in a detailed examination of the character of Callicles, also notes the relationship of Callicles to Keats: "Callicles is Arnold's Strayed Reveller—who grappled with the difficulties of choosing the poetic vocation—now fully constituted as a poet. . . . Even Callicles' name, which is Greek for 'beauty,' confirms the fact. . . . Callicles is the perfect 'camelion poet' as Keats described him" (35-36). While both Roper and Harrison consider Callicles in relation to Keats, and thus in relation to the Romantic poetic tradition that was Arnold's immediate poetic inheritance, neither place Callicles within the context of the classical period to which Empedocles and Pausanias belong, thus attributing to Arnold an oddly anachronistic insertion of a nineteenth-century Romantic figure into a poem ostensibly located in classical Sicily. Such an ahistorical reading is even more strongly advocated by Burnham: ". . . Callicles represents the idealistic, trans-historical, or transcendental side of Arnold's mind that seeks to find deliverance from the cycles of history in a human ideal of the best known and thought in the world. . . ." (1). Zietlow notes the obvious Pindaric references in the songs of Callicles and uses these to interpret his significance within the poem: "Callicles remains in the ethos of 'the old religion of Delphi' and speaks with 'the calm, the cheerfulness, the disinterested objectivity' of 'early Greek genius'" (242-43).

³The following analysis of "Empedocles on Etna" aims to establish dates which Arnold would have considered probable. Since the issue being discussed is Arnold's interpretation of classical figures rather than late twentieth-century historiography, I rely on the sources available to Arnold. Recent scholarly works about Empedocles include O'Brien, Lambriidis, Wright, and Johnstone. Of most use to Victorianists are O'Brien's chronologically organized (1805-1965) extensively annotated bibliography of Empedoclean studies and Johnstone's appendix which cross references the standard (contemporary) Diels Kranz numbering system for pre-Socratic fragments with Karsten (Arnold's source) and other numbering systems. Diels and Kranz also cross reference Karsten. Allott (91) discusses the degree to which Arnold relies on Karsten's introduction.

⁴DK28b1-10 are equivalent to Karsten 1-10. Because this text has not been substantially emended since Karsten's edition, I reference the DK numbers due to their greater accessibility to contemporary scholars. The most widely available contemporary translations of Parmenides are Freeman, Kirk et al., Gallop, and Barnes.

⁵Plato claims that Socrates, when he was "quite young," met Parmenides when Parmenides, at age sixty, came to the Great Panathenaea. Since Socrates's dates are 469-399 B.C.E. (*OCD*), most scholars (e.g. Kirk et al. 240) place this event ca. 450 B.C.E., resulting in a date of ca. 515 B.C.E. for the birth of Parmenides.

¹Although Arnold did place "Empedocles on Etna" among his dramatic poems in 1885, his 1853 "Preface" indicates that he did not find its action or plot structure dramatic in the sense of Greek tragedy.

Parmenides.⁶ Assuming with Marrou (76-136) that advanced philosophical studies were normally pursued by men in their early twenties, roughly the same age at which Victorian men entered universities, would place the line "And yet what days were those, Parmenides!" ("Empedocles" 235) in the actual historical days ca. 470-455 B.C.E.

The tradition that Empedocles was the teacher of Gorgias (Olympiodorus, "On Gorgias" 24, in Routh 557) also clarifies the dramatic date of the poem.⁷ In the first scene of "Empedocles on Etna," Callicles tells Pausanias:

The sophists are no enemies of his [Empedocles];
I hear, Gorgias, their chief, speaks nobly of him,
As of his gifted master, and once friend . . .

(146-48)

These lines are further explicated in Arnold's notes on Empedocles, paraphrasing Diogenes 8: 57: "For he [Empedocles] was a potent natural philosopher, skilled in medicine, & such, wrought: he was a mighty speaker, the inventor of Rhetoric, Gorgias' master . . ." (Tinker & Lowry 290).

If Empedocles was the "master" of Gorgias ("Empedocles" 148), Gorgias would be the younger of the pair, making the earlier of Empedocles's possible dates (born 496-490 B.C.E., died 435-413 B.C.E.) and the later of Gorgias's (born 485-480 B. C. E., died 385-371 B. C. E.) most consistent with Arnold's dramatic structure.⁸

A certain otherwise cryptic number within Arnold's notes about Empedocles may further refine this chronology:

—In the end of his [Empedocles's] life character had begun to dwindle and the influence of the Sophists to extend itself among the Greeks. He is one of the last Orpheuslike religious philosophers. (420)

(Tinker & Lowry 290)

Given the probable range of dates offered by Victorian classical scholars for Empedocles, it is difficult to read "420" in this context as anything but a date for "the end of his [Empedocles's] life," thus pinpointing Arnold's dramatic date for "Empedocles on Etna."

Callicles: 420 B.C.E.

There is only one Greek character named Callicles of the

correct age in the extant Greek literature, the Callicles of Plato's *Gorgias*.⁹ Superficially, the two characters have little in common. Plato's Callicles is a middle-aged cynic who appears to have nothing by contempt for such frivolous pastimes as philosophy and poetry, while Arnold's character is an idealistic young poet fascinated by the philosopher/poet Empedocles. However, such differences do not preclude the identity of the two characters. Just as in contemporary America it is not unknown for a long-haired radical idealistic young poet to mature into a staid conservative bank vice president over the course of two or three decades; so in ancient Greece, or Victorian England, it was quite possible for such apparent personal transformations to occur over time. Indeed, Arnold himself appears to have undergone just such a transformation.

Plato's *Gorgias*: The Dramatic Date

Guthrie summarizes the modern consensus concerning the dramatic date of Plato's *Gorgias*: "Conflicting historical allusions (listed in Dodds 17f) show that Plato was either indifferent to the dating of this conversation or that, as Cornford thought, his vagueness is deliberate" (285).

However, within the Arnoldian context, rather than twentieth-century Platonic scholarship, it is possible to assign a probable dramatic date to the dialogue. Pericles's death in 429 B.C.E. supplies a firm *terminus post quem* and Socrates death in 399 B.C.E. supplies an equally firm *terminus ante quem*. The reference at *Gorgias* 474a to the events of 406 B.C.E. as "last year," make it possible to date the dialogue's dramatic date to 406-404 B.C.E.¹⁰

Were Callicles born ca. 447-437 B.C.E., he would be a young man in Arnold's poem and middle-aged (younger than Socrates and Gorgias but still with a history of political activity) in Plato's dialogue. In the opening of Plato's dialogue (447b), Callicles mentions that Gorgias is staying at his house. If we combine Arnold's story with Plato's, we can imagine either that Callicles met or heard about Gorgias during his well-known embassy to Athens in 427 B.C.E., and that provided the impetus for Callicles to seek out Empedocles, or that Callicles and Gorgias (known to have traveled widely and frequently) may have met in Italy during a time either directly before or after Arnold's poem. Either possibility would provide additional continuity to the narrative.

(Turner).

¹⁰Irwin (109ff) and Dodds (17ff) review the chronological issues in some detail. Thompson (123n) cites discussions of this issue by Athanaeus and Casaubon. Since Thompson claims that most of his notes on Plato's *Gorgias* were written ca. 1860, his views and sources could be assumed to be close to those accessible by Arnold. The chronological problems are considerably simplified if we accept Casaubon's reading of the statement discussing Pericles's death:

ΚΑΛΛ. Τί δὲ; Θεμιστοκλέα οὐκ ἀκούεις ἄνδρα ἀγαθὸν
γεγονότα καὶ Κίμωνα καὶ Μιλτιάδην καὶ Περικλέα τούτων τὸν
νεωστὶ τετελευτηκότα, οὗ καὶ σὺ ἀκήκοας; (Plato, *Gorgias* 503c)

Since Miltiades died in 489 B. C. E., Themistocles in 462 B. C. E., and Cimon ca. 450 B. C. E., " " could well refer to the relative recentness of Pericles's death in 429 B. C. E.

Arnold, in a November 12, 1867, letter to Mr. Henry Dunn, emphasizes the historical nature of his poem:

You . . . appear to assume that I merely use Empedocles and Obermann as mouthpieces through which to vent my own opinions. This is not so. Empedocles was composed fifteen years ago, when I had been much studying the remains of early Greek religious philosophers . . .

(Tinker & Lowry 288)

The historicity of Callicles can be supported by biographical as well as textual evidence. Rather than draw parallels between the very young Callicles of "Empedocles on Etna" and the middle-aged prose Arnold, perhaps we ought to view the young (20-30) Callicles of "Empedocles on Etna" in relation to the young Arnold, author of *The Strayed Reveller* and *Empedocles on Etna and Other Poems*, and regard the older Arnold, of the later poetic and prose works, in light of the older Callicles (31-43) of Plato's *Gorgias*, with 1853, Arnold's thirty-first year, which Trilling calls "the year of crystallization of great intellectual changes in Arnold" (140), marking a transition between the two.

Trilling, in his analysis of Arnold's melancholia and intellectual evolution in 1853 suggests: "Arnold did indeed go forward to *Tuchtigkeit*. But as he progressed, he left poetry behind" (141). While Arnold gradually abandons the writing of poetry without explicitly, in his works written for publication, providing an account of this action, Plato's Callicles strongly rejects poetry and philosophy as tasks unsuitable for mature men:¹¹

CALLICLES: For when I see philosophy in a young lad [*meirakion*] I approve of it; I consider it suitable, and I regard him as a person of liberal mind: whereas one who does not follow it I account illiberal and never likely to expect of himself any fine or generous action. But when I see an elderly man still going into philosophy . . . that is the gentleman, Socrates, whom I think in need of a whipping.

(*Gorgias* 485c)

Callicles's notions are not unusual. Jaeger suggests "Callicles typifies his own social class . . . the upper class and bourgeoisie of Athens" (319). Similar reservations about the appropriateness of childish studies to mature men, or even advanced students, are expressed by Isocrates (*Antidosis* 265-68).

Callicles, speaking as one friendly to Socrates (*Gorgias* 485e), gives two reasons why Socrates should abandon

¹¹The citation from Euripides at *Gorgias* 484e shows that Callicles intends to reject not only philosophy but also *mousike* (the arts over which the Muses preside, which would include both poetry and music as practiced by Arnold's Callicles).

¹²Even the specific wording of Arnold's rejection of his own "Empedocles" is Platonic. The phrase "the dialogue of the mind with itself" is taken from Plato's *Sophist* 263e:

Ὀυκοῦν διάνοια μὲν καὶ λόγος ταῦτόν; πλὴν ὁ μὲν ἐντὸς τῆς
ψυχῆς, πρὸς αὐτὴν διάλογος ἄνευ φωνῆς γιγνώμενος τοῦτ' αὐτὸ ἡμῖν
ἐπανομάσθη, διάνοια?

philosophy, one moral and one practical. The moral reason is that Socrates, due to his involvement in philosophy, neglects his civic responsibilities and does not "advise any gallant plan for his fellow" (486a). This notion is similar to the ethical consciousness developing in Arnold in the 1850s. According to Dietrich: "Arnold's future writings, beginning with the *1853 Preface*, emphasize and develop the recognition already implicit here, that the poet has a social responsibility and that poetry has an ethical function" (319). The poet has a moral responsibility not to retreat into a Tennysonian "Palace of Art," but to act in the *polis*, even if such action eventually completely subsumes his poetic impulse.

The second argument Callicles uses to dissuade Socrates from philosophy is practical:

CALLICLES: . . . if somebody should seize hold of you . . . and drag you off to prison, asserting that you were guilty of a wrong you had never done, you know you would be at a loss what to do with yourself . . . and when you came up in court, though your accuser might be ever so paltry a rascal, you would have to die if he chose to claim death as your penalty. (*Gorgias* 486a-b)

Both the Arnoldian and the Platonic Callicles predict the death of the philosophers in their respective works. Plato's Callicles warns Socrates that pursuing philosophy may lead to death by means of the law courts, foreshadowing the actual manner of Socrates's death, which was to occur a few years after the dramatic date of the dialogue. Arnold's Callicles worries about Empedocles's mood (4), foreshadowing Empedocles's suicide. In both cases, Callicles is unable to save the philosopher. McGann, in his explanation of Arnold's abandonment of poetry with the rejection of "Empedocles on Etna" in the 1853 "Preface," suggests a possible reason for that abandonment:¹² "But Arnold in 1852 cannot imagine that Calliclean verse could be equal to the task of 'saving' someone like Empedocles" (157). Callicles's rejection of poetry because of its inability to save Empedocles could motivate the evolution in personality from the Arnoldian Callicles to the Platonic one.

Arnold and Plato

The historical evidence for the Platonic Callicles as the source of the Arnoldian one has two significant consequences for interpretation of "Empedocles on Etna." First, it suggests that the influence of Plato on Arnold is stronger than has generally been supposed in the contemporary scholarly litera-

[Well, then, thought and speech are the same; only the former, which is a silent inner dialogue of the soul with itself has been given the special name of thought].

The second century A.D. Platonist Albinus quotes this in the form "Plato defines thought as the dialogue of the soul with itself" (*Didaskalikos* 4). Prior to writing "Empedocles" Arnold studied the neoplatonists Plotinus and Plutarch (Allott). Plotinus repeats the phrase "dialogue of the soul with itself" within his *Enneads*.

⁶The edition of Plato's *Gorgias* most readily accessible to Arnold was Routh's 1784 volume, which included as an appendix "Scholium Olympiodori in *Gorgiam praemissa, e Codice MSio nunc primum edita*," the first modern edition of Olympiodorus's commentary on Plato's *Gorgias*. Routh was President of Magdalen College, Oxford, shortly before Arnold arrived at that university.

⁷George Kennedy translates complete DK fragments and testimonia in Sprague's *The Older Sophists*. Evidence for Gorgias being a student of Empedocles occurs in DK82a2, 3, 10, 14, and b4.

⁸Plutarch (DK82a6) assumes a 480 B.C.E. birthdate for Gorgias. Apollodorus (DK82a10) assigns Gorgias's treatise *On Nature* (or *Non-Being*) to the eighty-fourth Olympiad (444-441 B.C.E.). Gorgias's visit to Athens as leader of the embassy from Leontini in 427 B.C.E., when he was approximately sixty (Guthrie 270, Kerferd 44, Sprague 30, etc), is well documented. Athenaeus (DK82a15a) indicates that Gorgias read the dialogue of Plato's which bears his name, an event that would be dated ca. 385 (Guthrie 269n2).

⁹Editions of Plato's *Gorgias* available to Arnold would include Routh's 1784 Greek edition with Latin commentary, and Mill's 1834 partial translation

ture. Second, it suggests that we might approach the problem of the genre of "Empedocles" by reading it as a Platonic dialogue.

On the basis of purely biographical evidence, Arnold appears an ardent Platonist. Extensive Platonic reading lists appear in Arnold's notebooks. In his early diaries, the following entries appear (Allott)

Dates	Dialogues
Jan.-Mar. 1845	Respublica, Phaedrus
Mar.-Oct. 1845	Respublica, Phaedrus
Oct.-Dec. 1845	Menexenus, Lysis, Two Hippias, Ion

Arnold's notebooks containing reading lists from 1852-1880 show the following Platonic readings:¹³

Year	Dialogues
1867	Apology, Crito, Euthyphro
1868	Phaedo & the Banquet, Theages, Erastae
1869	Protagoras
1871	Gorgias
1875	Ion
1876	Respublica (5 books), Meno, Ion
1877	Republic VI-X, Phaedrus, Parmenides, Ion
1880	Theaetatus (to page 25)
1881	Theaetatus
1882	Philebus, Alcibiades I
1883	Politicus, Alcibiades II
1884	Politicus, Alcibiades II
1885	Crito, Politicus
1887	Politicus
1888	Politicus

Not only is the reading program quite substantial in itself, but it also shows that Arnold read Plato in greater volume and on a more regular basis than any other author. Two contemporary authors discuss the extent of Plato's influence on Arnold. Hipple claims that "Arnold is a dialectician, and that, as Plato's is the archetype of dialectical philosophy, Arnold's may rightly be called Platonic" (5). After citing Hipple, Berlin argues that Arnold appropriates techniques of both Platonic and Aristotelian rhetoric, and notes that in several of Arnold's prose works "The echoes of Plato are striking" (32). And yet, despite stylistic echoes and scattered allusions, Arnold never appears willing to engage Plato either directly or at length in either verse or prose.

The ambiguities of Arnold's relationship with the Platonic dialogues directly parallel those of his relationship

with his own "Empedocles on Etna" in both substance and chronology. Just as Arnold rejects the substance of both "Empedocles" and Plato as providing creeds by which to live, so the chronologies of his rejections of "Empedocles" and Plato are quite similar.

Arnold reads Plato avidly before the publication of "Empedocles" and then stops reading him entirely in 1852, the year in which he composed the 1853 "Preface," then resumes his reading of Plato in 1866, the year in which he decides to restore "Empedocles" to the 1867 edition of his poems,¹⁴ Arnold's trajectories of reception of Plato's dialogues and of his own appropriation of the Platonic Callicles are identical.

The Platonic solution to the relatively straightforward philological problem of finding a source for the Arnoldian Callicles has consequences with regard to the far more complex issues of interpretation of Arnold's *oeuvre*. If "Empedocles on Etna" is a prequel, as it were, to Plato's *Gorgias*, then it seems reasonable to assume that it belongs to the same genre as *Gorgias*, namely that of a philosophical dialogue.

By employing one actual Platonic character and two presocratic thinkers as *dramatis personae*, and mentioning several of the participants in other Platonic dialogues,¹⁵ "Empedocles on Etna" supplies the engagement with Plato lacking in the rest of Arnold's work. The generic identification of the poem with the philosophical dialogue suggests that Arnold's poem should be read as a dialectic, or argument in dramatic form, in which, ironically, Plato has the last and decisive word. Arnold's Empedocles dies, and his Pausanias is dedicated to the practice of civic virtue rather than pursuit of philosophical theory (or art). Callicles, who in Arnold's narrative remains "pure" poet in the manner of Keats or the narrator of Tennyson's "Palace of Art," becomes the cynical politician of Plato's dialogue. Arnold himself also moves from poetry to prose and from aestheticism to civic virtue. Read in the classical rhetorical tradition in which Arnold and his readers were steeped, "Empedocles on Etna" presents logical, pathetic, and ethical arguments for precisely the life that Arnold was to choose for himself, and Arnold's rejection then re-acceptance of both his own and the Platonic Callicles can be seen as exemplifying the trajectory of Arnold's shifting allegiances to poetry and civic duty.¹⁶

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ogy, and *Meno*.

¹⁶A shorter version of this article was presented at the 1994 "Matthew Arnold and Victorian Culture" Conference at the Armstrong-Browning Library. I would like to thank Dr. Howard Fulweiler and Dr. Martin Camargo (English Department, University of Missouri) for several valuable suggestions and the University of Missouri Classics Department for use of their Ibycus computer system and *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* CD Rom. Research for this article was supported in part by a G. Ellsworth Doctoral Scholarship from the University of Missouri.

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¹³Many of this later group of readings are actually re-readings of dialogues that Arnold studied at school, and I assume that the *Gorgias* here is being re-read.

¹⁴See McGann for a complete publication history of "Empedocles."

¹⁵Empedocles is mentioned at *Theaetatus* 152e and *Meno* 76c, *Gorgias* in the dialogue bearing his name and *Meno*, *Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, *Philebus* and *Hippias Major*, *Parmenides* and several passages in *Theaetatus* and *Sophist* and sophists in the majority of Platonic dialogues, but especially *Gorgias*, *Protagoras*, *Hippias Major*, *Euthydemus*, *Sophist*, *Phaedrus*, *Apol-*

Autobiography— A Mill of Words, A Rhetoric of Silence

Susan C. Hines

One of the most compelling problems readers face when encountering a text such as John Stuart Mill's *Autobiography* is how to go about accounting for and discussing that which the author has not articulated. While the difficulty seems at first comically apropos—the just desert of anyone who tries to read what is simply not there—the interpretive endeavor is nevertheless a necessary facet of the process by which readers come to know and understand this author who is his own subject. Because it is the very absence of explanation—the silences—which inform readers of Mill's feelings about some of the most fundamental influences in his life, the *Autobiography* calls for a reconsideration of the purpose of the genre and of the manner in which it reveals a life. For Mill's private life is not discerned at the level of the text; it is intuited by readers who struggle against the author's words, which might otherwise be taken for granted as historically legitimate and ultimately authorized.

The irony of the reading situation should not go unnoticed. Because the *Autobiography* is a text which by deliberately simple syntax and circumscribed diction shows the great pains of its author to be clear and forthcoming, the fact that it sends its readers looking in the margins for a more thorough explanation of Mill is a strikingly eccentric feature of writing which not only purports to be "exact" but actually denigrates language that is "vague, loose, or ambiguous" (Mill 13). Whether or not this self-proclaimed precisionist and world-acclaimed logician would be embarrassed by such a feature is difficult to determine, however. For the irony of the situation may serve its own useful purpose. That is, it may facilitate a process of reading which puts the *Autobiography's* audience in a situation not unlike the intellectual-emotional crisis which occurred at various points throughout the author's life. Like Mill, readers also want to understand and take pleasure in the world—that is, Mill's Victorian world. But they have trouble doing so as a result of the realities Mill affords. Thus the autobiographer does far more than explain the psychic tension in his life. In fact, by *not* explaining, he creates a textual version of it, including his audience in his own difficult search for a largely elusive happiness. While Mill struggles to find "joy" (81) in his life and attempts to reconcile the eighteenth-century rationalist teachings of Hartley, Bentham, and his father, James, with the nineteenth-century romantic sensibilities of his favorite creative writers (namely Wordsworth and Carlyle), readers struggle to enjoy a text that frustrates their comprehension by failing to explore Mill's emotional side in any clear or reasonable fashion.

But the world of the philosopher is hardly an unprincipled one. Having carefully deleted a number of telling passages from the Early Draft of the *Autobiography*—the passages upon which both John and his wife, Harriet, agreed "might be deemed private details" (Stillinger 17)—Mill, as Susanna Egan points out, "shows" by way of his revisions "an increased awareness of an audience" (149), the very kind of

awareness, I would add, that suggests a deliberate rhetorical, if not artistic, strategy of writing. Thus the style of the *Autobiography* (or, as some critics have remarked, its *lack* of style) is much more important than it may at first appear. Because the text necessitates an intuitive or speculative reading of a life story which draws attention to figures or events—such as Mill's mother, his siblings and friends, his father's love, and the death of Harriet—by *avoiding* any meaningful discussion of them, the interpretation of these absences is difficult to sustain or substantiate because readers must inevitably return to the present reality of the text—to what is there, what is written. As a reader of his own life (and autobiography), Mill confronts the same problem. In this way his personal struggle to acknowledge the emotional and imaginative aspects of his personality is conferred upon an audience which is encouraged to make the same acknowledgment.

Yet supporting or validating such an interpretation—which is essentially a feeling about Mill's feelings—is thwarted by a text which is forever constituting itself as an impersonal and even monotonous catalogue of books read and written. For, indeed, books are the utilitarian yardstick by which Mill would seem to judge his professional achievements as well as his personal mental growth. For this reason the author's experiences or reading and writing appear to be the text's primary focus. The two most crucial chapters in the *Autobiography*, chapter 5 (entitled: "A Crisis in My Mental History. One Stage Onward.") and chapter 6 (entitled: "Commencement of the Most Valuable Friendship of My Life. My Father's Death. Writing and Other Proceedings up to 1840."), do not—with the exception of "Writings and Other Proceedings up to 1840"—cover in any detail what their titles accentuate. As the author manages to avoid discussing his feelings about his "mental crisis" by focusing his attention on the literary works of personalities, such as Coleridge, Wordsworth, Byron, and Carlyle, he also avoids contemplating his father's death and, to a certain extent, his relationship with Harriet by choosing instead to discuss his work on and for the *London-Westminster Review*. "I had now to try what it might be possible for me to accomplish without him," Mill says awkwardly of his father's passing, "and the *Review* was the instrument on which I built my chief hopes of establishing a useful influence over the liberal and democratic section of the public mind" (123).

That Mill would prefer to talk about politics and journals above people or the subject of education above love and death does make the *Autobiography* look the part of what he himself calls: "a memorial of so uneventful a life" (3). However, the rhetorical strategies of understatement and redirection are precisely the stylistic maneuvers which augment and recapitulate the tremendous importance of silence in this text. While such a style may only effectively bore or frustrate some readers, Mill's numerous self-effacing and self-evasive pas-

sages in fact "speak" to that silence; they hint at its purposes as well as its origins. By ushering his readers through the circumstances under which Mill says he learned "this lesson of keeping my thoughts to myself" (28) and developed his editorial "system of double redaction" (132), he demonstrates both the necessity and the artifice of silence in his life and work.

In fact a number of critics have already noted and explored the necessarily repressed and passive nature of this writer. James Olney is quick to point out that "Mill seems unwilling to share emotional experiences" (244), the result of which is the repressed narrator's "truly dispassionate" (243) manner of articulation. "In its rational clarity, in its high and dry thinness," Olney continues, "Mill's prose is quite emptied of affective feeling; in its emotional poverty it offers no hook, no variation of texture for the reader's sensory imagination" (243). And yet, readers continue to find Mill's text, in the words of Peter Glassman, "fascinating" (193). Building upon Olney's formal recognition of what he calls Mill's "unwilling" self-analysis, a number of critics have been and continue to be intrigued by the *Autobiography's* curious exploration of self. For it is an exploration which intimates at the causes of the author's emotional crises but fails, evidently, to reveal very much to Mill himself. The author's description of his "mental crisis" is in fact emblematic of his autobiography: "I was thus, as I said to myself, left stranded at the commencement of my voyage, with a well equipped ship and a rudder, but no sail" (84).

Although the rough waters of the crisis of 1826 cause Mill to think, the turbulence does not bring about any substantial change in his character. No renunciation of utilitarianism ever comes. And, while he considers the merits of intuitional metaphysics (which he admired so much in Carlyle), he is not, to use Mill's own metaphor, to be moved by those Romantic, "correspondent breezes." "The image that arises in the *Autobiography*," says Avrom Fleishman, "is that of a thoroughly transparent being, who is nonetheless opaque to himself. There is no room in Mill's intellectual system for inexpressible mysteries or obscure revelations, and there is little wavering in his objective estimation of himself" (139). As many would have it, Mill's *Autobiography* is analogous to psychotherapy that failed. The self he attempted to understand eluded him; the disappointment and grief he had experienced remained, for the author, untranslatable. "We are able to understand, as Mill himself could not," notes Glassman, "that his expressions of bewilderment mask a very clear and very painful comprehension of his father's 'conduct'" (201). Freudian theory, of course, adds credence to such an interpretation. Because Mill was so overpowered and overwhelmed by the will of his father and his father's theories, the passively reticent position he adopts and the passively reticent language he employs to describe that position seem inevitable. "It will be admitted," Mill says of his father,

that a man of the opinions, and the character above described, was likely to leave a strong moral impression on any mind principally formed by him, and that his moral teaching was not likely to err on the side of laxity or indulgence. The element which was chiefly deficient in his moral relation to his children, was that of tenderness. (32)

The writing is realized by a Mill of words which annihilates the self, and particularly the emotional self, by way of a series of abstractions. The abstruse passages actually relay more information about the theories of Bentham, James Mill, and Comte than they do about Mill's own theories or personal life. As Olney has suggested, Mill cannot write a text that would "carry and embody the same sort of truth, recaptured from personal history, as meaningful as fiction might" (244). He cannot do this because he has been conditioned to see the self as entirely beside the point. And, as Janet Carlisle has suggested, such a text cannot be read by him either. As she asserts in her article on "The Life of a 'Bookish Man,'" it is Mill's prejudiced reading of himself (as an ineffectual theorist) and his desire not to acknowledge that he would have preferred to have been a career parliamentarian (a "doer") rather than a critical writer (a "thinker"), which gives rise to the muted and, as Carlisle remarks, "bloodless" (131) quality of the *Autobiography*.

However, the scholarly practice of viewing Mill as a person who is deeply frustrated or motivated by emotions which are, according to Carlisle, "more . . . than he can know" (139) does little to acknowledge John Stuart Mill's highly perceptive nature—that is, the man's intelligence, his sensitivity, his personal integrity. To accept the view that he *was*, as the protagonist of his text, and *is*, as the text's autobiographer, out of touch with his feelings—unaware of his antipathy for his father, his anger toward his mother, his frustration over his choice of careers, his devastation at the loss of his spouse—is, I think, just too easy. Such readings manage to speak for the silences rather than attempt to interpret them. And, while they do tell many of the stories to which the author merely alludes, they are only half the story. That other narrative, which is a story of silence itself (a story that likely evolved from Mill's oppressed and repressed childhood), provides some insight into the style and form and purpose of the *Autobiography*.

The use of silence, while it can certainly signify repression and passivity, may also indicate an aesthetic technique which allows an audience to experience a discovery that was uniquely John Stuart Mill's. As he says in his chapter on the "mental crisis": "I ceased to attach almost exclusive importance to the ordering of outward circumstances . . . I had now learnt by experience that the passive susceptibilities needed to be cultivated as well as the active capacities, and required to be nourished and enriched as well as guided" (86). Because feelings, in Mill's scheme, are not something that people *can have* but are something to which people *are susceptible*, he writes of his feelings only passively, only suggestively. Indeed, he does not explain himself. For the effect of explaining how a person survives parents as strangely neglectful and overbearing as Harriet and James, jobs as dull as those with the East India Company, and a love-life thwarted by a to-be wife's spouse and her early death would likely betray the integrity of Mill's convictions.

Thus to be silent is not to be "bloodless." For Mill's *Autobiography* is fraught with emotion as he chose to express it. The silence is not necessarily powerless but, rather, can be empowering. For, while the absence of words can be a sign of will-lessness and defeat, it can also represent willful self-possession, even rebellion. The younger Mill learned to hold his tongue not exclusively out of awe or fear, but out of a

rebellious sense of selfhood. The "restraints and reticences" (123), as Mill calls them, might have been a method of passive resistance, deployed against a parent who continually forced words on and from his son. Throughout his young life, after all, Mill had to write in the presence, often at the very desk, of his father; he had to "read aloud to him" (10) on a daily basis; he was required to compose poetry: an "exercise" that he recounts was "begun from choice" and "continued by command" (11). "On those matters of opinion on which we differed," says Mill of his father:

we talked little. He knew that the habit of thinking for myself, which his mode of education had fostered, sometimes led me to opinions different from his, and he perceived from time to time that I did not always tell him how different. I expected no good but only pain to both of us, from discussing our differences: and I never expressed them but when he gave utterance to some opinion or feeling repugnant to mine, in a manner which would have made it disingenuous on my part to remain silent. (108)

As the passage bears out, Mill's secret weapon against tyranny of words is wordlessness. The silence is not simply repressive but actually productive. With its passive sentences, its self-effacing remarks, its self-evasive paragraphs, its edited versions and erasures, the *Autobiography* resists the notion that human nature is buried and can only be discovered by the deep digging of self-analysis. Instead, it demonstrates that the self is manifested in the *manner*—in the form and style—in which the individual chooses to define the self. That is, it is not really the subject matter of personal history which Mill discusses in his text that reveals his character, but the way in which that subject matter is discussed—or not discussed.

The rhetorical strategies of understatement and redirection thus signal Mill's indirect attestation of his own complex nature. While, on the one hand, he praises the rational and the logical, he is, on the other, drawn to a metaphysical epistemology. When the empiricism of his father fails him during the throes of "the autumn of 1826" (80), Mill turns to logic's antithesis—poetry. When he cannot make a case for his mental crisis analytically, as is suggested by the Early Draft's observation that the depression experienced was "probably from physical causes (connected perhaps merely with the time of year)" (117n), the author subsequently entertains a number on non-physical causalities.

That the Mill in the text seems baffled by his crisis, (caught in a "cloud" which "grow[s] thicker and thicker" [81]) is simply the Mill of the text's way of demonstrating the impossibility of understanding or communicating irrationality or strong emotions in rational, logical terms. For this reason, the *Autobiography* relies upon the words of others to express what is, for this author, inexpressible. As the works of writers, such as Coleridge, Wordsworth, Byron, and Marmontel suggest, the autobiographer, although he may not have comprehended his emotional situation at the time, understands as well as anyone the many emotional factors which contributed to what Mill calls that "dull state of nerves" (80). The exhaustion, anger, and frustration the author felt are indeed best characterized and transmitted in a manner which elicits in a

similarly beclouded fashion the same feelings from an audience. In other words, readers must first experience the confusion of the crisis, before they can strive to decode its origins. They, too, must stumble upon Marmontel's *Memoirs* as "accidentally" (85) as Mill in order to understand the complicated emotional state of wanting his father's death but not yet knowing how to live without him.

As the rhetoric of silence aids in an understanding of the causes of the mental crisis, it also informs readers of its effects. Not limited to emotional issues, the strategy of silence is also used effectively when Mill describes his philosophical stance as a result of that crisis. Unable to subscribe completely to Benthamite utilitarianism or the mysticism or religiosity of the Romantics, the author chooses to define his relativist position. This credo, borrowed in part from Goethe, and called in the Earl Draft a philosophy of "manysidedness" (21), is defined not by what Mill is, but by what he is not. What Mill calls his "new way of thinking" (90), which is his acknowledgement of an unseen, unheard world antithetical to logical positivism, is a philosophy disseminated by negations and absences which incorporate and moderate the philosophical extremes to which he could not fully subscribe. As his long discussion of Comte in a later section of the *Autobiography* illustrates, the author defines himself and his position only by way of mild agreement or disagreement with other philosophers (126-28).

It stands to reason, then, that the position of which Mill was most proud in his life was that of moderator. During his brief stint as a member of parliament, he could at least realize his talent. As the moderate figure between the Tory government and the working classes during the Hyde Park incident, Mill is celebrated in the *Autobiography* as the embodiment of his own philosophy—the understated hero of his own work. "I found the fabric of my old and taught opinions giving way in many fresh places," he says in the chapter on his "Mental History," "and I never allowed it to fall to pieces, but was incessantly occupied in weaving it anew" (94).

The artistic metaphor of re-working and *fabricating* ideas "anew" is not only appropriate in Mill's philosophy of moderation. It also informs his readership of the text's aesthetic aims. The style of the *Autobiography* itself—the dry, deliberate passages of prose juxtaposed with the "unwilling" gaps and silences—encourages a "manysided" reading, a reading which relies as heavily upon the suggestions of style and form as it does upon the commands of content. And it is in this manner that Mill and his readership struggle against the tyranny of words and the authority of authorship—together. By allowing for the experience of the most democratic reading possible, Mill combats what he calls in the *Autobiography's* finale the "deeprooted selfishness" which "existing institutions . . . foster" (139). In one of the most selfless autobiographies written in the nineteenth century, he demonstrates how silence—which can be secretive or stingy—may also be exceedingly generous.

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Clym Ancient and Modern: Oedipus, Bunyan and *The Return of the Native*

Charles Swann

That Clym is a type of modern man may seem to need no arguing—so modern as to point to the future—given what Hardy so famously tells us about his appearance:

In Clym Yeobright's face could dimly be seen the typical countenance of the future. Should there be a classic period to art hereafter, its Phidias may produce such faces. The view of life as a thing to be put up with, replacing that zest for existence which was so intense in early civilizations must ultimately enter so thoroughly into the constitution of the advanced races that its facial expression will become accepted as a new artistic departure (169).¹

At the same time critics appear to have had no trouble relating Hardy's deployment of classical mythology to this theme of modernity (if often with the help of Freud)—despite his assertion that "the truth seems to be that a long line of disillusion centuries has permanently displaced the Hellenic idea of life, or whatever it may be called . . . [W]hat their Aeschylus imagined our nursery children feel" (169). Thus Robert Langbaum in his recent *Thomas Hardy in Our Time* insists on the significance of Oedipus:

Mrs. Yeobright's . . . admonition, "Your are blinded, Clym," begins a series of allusions to Oedipus which eventually become explicit when Oedipus is named . . . Clym in a deep psychological sense blinds himself as self-punishment for having abandoned his mother by marrying Eustacia. . .

Hardy generalizes the conflict as explicitly as Freud might have done: "Hardly a maternal heart within the four seas could, in such circumstances, have helped being irritated at

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that ill-timed betrayal of feeling for a new woman" The words that follow, "'You are *blinded*, Clym . . . It was a bad day for you when you first set eyes on her'" [Langbaum's italics] make sufficient impression on Clym to become self-fulfilling. If we recall that blinding according to Freud can substitute for castration as in the Oedipus myth . . . , we can understand why Clym, when he becomes blind, seems to have lost sexual power.²

Many readers, I suspect, will not before have realized that Clym had actually gone blind: "A quiet firmness, and even cheerfulness took possession of him. He was not to be blind; that was enough" (251). Many readers too, until now, will have seen no reason to doubt the doctor's diagnosis—that "the disease" was "acute inflammation, induced by Clym's night studies, continued in spite of a cold previously caught, which had weakened his eyes for the time" (250).³ Leaving aside the question of the plausibility of Freud's hypothesis, it is hardly clear what the textual evidence is for Langbaum's suggestion that Clym has lost his sexual power.

But Langbaum has not finished with his Oedipal Clym:

Susan Nunsuch's little son who accompanies Mrs. Yeobright . . . reports her dying words that she was "a broken hearted woman and cast off by her son" . . . Overhearing this report, Clym . . . plays out the remorse of Oedipus who blinded himself. The already purblind Clym blinds himself psychologically a second time: "his eyes lit by a hot light, as if the fire in their pupils were burning up their substance." "I sinned against her, and on that account there is no light for me," he tells Eustacia. . . (107)

Langbaum goes on to quote the sentence that might seem to

¹I am greatly indebted to the scholarship of Gatrell and Barrineau.

²I have to admit that Langbaum is anything but alone in relating Clym to Oedipus. For example, see McCann and Benway. Langbaum refers to neither piece.

³Though it certainly can be argued that the ill-feeling between Eustacia and

Clym's mother helps to make for those late nights: "Amid these jarring events, Yeobright felt one thing to be indispensable—that he should speedily make some progress in his scholastic plans. With this view he read far into the night during many nights" (250).

clinch his argument: "The pupils of [Clym's] eyes, fixed steadfastly on blankness, were vaguely lit with an icy shine; his mouth had passed into the phase more or less imaginatively rendered in studies of Oedipus" (327).

However, it is highly questionable whether "I sinned against her. . ." is best interpreted in the light of the Oedipus story for two reasons. One is that, as I shall be arguing, it may be that the passage is best interpreted in terms not of Greek but Christian mythology. The other is a textual matter. Without stepping too far into the troubled waters of the debates about final authorial intention, attention needs to be drawn to the fact that the early editions of the novel had "Laocoon" rather than "Oedipus"—and Laocoon's is a very different story from that of Oedipus. "Oedipus" replaced "Laocoon" only in 1895—some seventeen years after the first (the serial) publication—and Hardy could have made the change either when preparing copy for the first book edition of late 1878 or for the one-volume edition of 1880. He certainly made other changes. More importantly, the sentence still bears traces of its first version—even meaning. "Laocoon" surely suggests the sculpture rather than the mythological story, a key visual rather than thematic moment—a look of agony—especially to a contemporary reader, given the sculpture's nineteenth-century fame. And are there any famous sculptures or pictures of Oedipus? In support of this point, I would argue that in any case the language of the sentence invites the reader to visualize Clym's face (and especially the mouth) in the light of a known image rather than in terms of a mythical narrative: "his mouth had passed into the phase more or less imaginatively rendered in studies of the Laocoon." But to combine the idea of a look of agony with the concentration on the mouth, coupled with the guarded "more or less" and the oddly evasive "studies," suggests that there may be a literary reference to the visual here—even that Hardy had read about rather than seen the Laocoon either as reproduction or in an illustration (for surely there is only one really well known study of the Laocoon). If there is any plausibility to this, there is one text which comes immediately to mind—Lessing's *Laocoon*—which not only deals with painting and poetry and their differences but starts from a statement (one with which

Lessing concurs at some length) of Winkelmann's about Laocoon's mouth: "He utters no horrible scream as Virgil's verse makes his Laocoon utter: the opening of his mouth does not show this: it is rather a subdued anguish . . . (59).⁴ Hardy, when describing Clym's face, writes "The observer's eye was arrested, not by his face as a picture, but his face as a page. . . ." (169). Barry Bullen, referring to this argues that "The invitation to 'read' the meaning of Clym Yeobright's face is developed in the narrative through use of the visual metaphor . . . Sometimes this picture is classical" (he quotes "The pupils. . ." sentence with the "Oedipus" ending), "sometimes biblical." Bullen gives as an example of the biblical visual metaphor Clym after his escape from the weir appearing "like a figure from Sebastiano's *The Raising of Lazarus*" (114).⁵

It may well be an open question whether the Lazarus reference is specifically to the Sebastiano painting, but Bullen is obviously right to point to the importance of the visual and the significance of the Bible (indeed, to the Christian tradition). And, while Clym can certainly see things in terms of classical mythology, he explicitly repudiates its relevance as a way of shaping his experience: "Now don't you suppose, my inexperienced girl, that I cannot rebel in high Promethean fashion against the gods and fate as well as you. . . . But the more I see of life the more do I perceive that there is nothing particularly great in its greatest walks, and therefore nothing particularly small in mine of furze cutting" (257). It is worth noting that this comes in a chapter with a title which recalls Bunyan's Christian (however unBunyan-like Clym's choice of song): "He is set upon by Adversities; but he sings a Song." This is not to deny, of course, (who could?) the relevance of classical mythology to the novel and particularly to the presentation of Eustacia where the relevance is made only too clear in prose of regrettable lushness.⁶ But to focus on the Oedipus story even as filtered through Freud is too often to ignore another discourse, another mythology, which is at least as present in the novel (if less ostentatiously so) and at least as applicable (if sometimes so internalized as to be less immediately obvious)—that of the Bible.⁷ For example, Hardy explicitly places Clym as "a John the Baptist who took

enoblement rather than repentance for his text" (174), and readers can hardly avoid noticing that Clym knows his St. Paul: "'I get up every morning and see the whole creation groaning and travailling in pain, as St. Paul says'" (177).⁸ More important is the way in which the Bible is internalized within a character's dialogue without any signalling to the reader—as in what is arguably the key debate in the novel:

"And yet you might have been a gentleman if you had only persevered. Manager to that large establishment—what better can a man wish for? . . . I suppose you will be like your father: like him, you are getting weary of doing well."

"No," said her son, "I am not weary of that—though I am weary of what you mean by it. Mother, what is doing well?" (178)

As Raymond Williams says, "The question is familiar but still after all these years no question is more relevant or more radical" (10). But the terms of the question are older than Williams realized, for, as Nancy Barrineau notes, Mrs. Yeobright has paraphrased Galatians 6: 9 "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." As Barrineau says, "Clym is questioning her materialistic interpretation of the verse" (433). That Clym is closer to the Bible meaning than his mother the next verse of Galatians makes clear: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*. . ." This internalizing is not the only example in the novel as Barrineau's scrupulous notes make clear.

Here I want to return to Clym's statement about his mother which Langbaum tries to assimilate to his Oedipal argument: "I sinned against her, and on that account there is no light for me" (313) and to argue that Clym is using a Christian—a Protestant—moral vocabulary and that Hardy means Clym to be placed in that tradition—if at the fag-end of that tradition. This can be seen if Bunyan is brought into play—a Bunyan already mentioned in the novel (if in, of all things, a dream of Eustacia's)—just as the moral terms brought into play by Clym are accentuated, secularized and half-remembered versions of a Protestant vocabulary. This comes from Bunyan's *The Doctrine of the Law and Grace Unfolded*:

Doest thou know what the unpardonable sin (the sin against the Holy Ghost) is? and when it is committed?

It is a sin against light.

That is true: yet every sin against light is not the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Say you so?

Yea, and I prove it thus: If every sin against light, had been the sin that is unpardonable, then had *David* and *Peter* and others sinned that sin: but though they did sin against light, yet they did not sin that sin; therefore every sin

against light is not the sin against the Holy Ghost, the unpardonable sin. . . . (201)⁹

It is not only that Clym feels he has sinned against his mother and associates that with deprivation of the light. It is clear too that he feels "despair"—despair from having committed a secular equivalent of the unpardonable sin (though he clutches at the excuse of the supernatural in the form of a fiend):

Despair had been added to his original grief by the unfortunate disclosure of the boy who had received the last words of Mrs Yeobright . . . He continually bewailed his tardy journey to his mother's house, because it was a error which could never be rectified, and insisted that he must have been horribly perverted by some fiend not to have thought before that it was his duty to go to her, since she did not come to him. (312)

Despair is precisely what the unpardonable sinner—or one who thinks he is an unpardonable sinner—feels as *The Pilgrim's Progress* shows. When we come to the ending of the novel, the references to Christ and the sermon on the mount are so explicit as to be crudely clumsy—or ironically parodic: "This was the first of a series of moral lectures or sermons on the mount, which were to be delivered from the same place every Sunday afternoon as long as the fine weather lasted" (411). The pagan Blackbarrow of Chapter II has been returned to but this is not a circular narrative but (however problematically) linear, as the pagan barrow has been transformed if only metaphorically (and only metaphorically) into the "mount" as Clym has replaced Eustacia as a figure in the landscape. But Clym—whose full name is Clement with any implied meaning that may have—is hardly a Christ-figure any more than he is Oedipus—even a Freudian one. Yet he ends up as a secular preacher/moralist but one who seems no longer to be susceptible to the earlier authorial judgment that he was too much in advance of his time, as he finds "enough and more than enough to occupy his tongue in the opinions and actions common to all good men," and one who sounds in the description of where he preaches as much like a parodized Bunyan as anyone else: "from market-crosses, from conduits, on esplanades and on wharves, from the parapets of bridges, in barns and outhouses, and all other such places in the neighbouring Wessex towns and villages." How can one speak from a conduit? ("An artificial channel or pipe for conveying water, etc.; an aqueduct, a canal" [*OED*])? Is it sensible (or likely) that a speaker would choose to discourse from the parapet of even one bridge? How much irony is here in the narrator's information that Clym spoke on "morally unimpeachable subjects"? (412). If this is modernity, then it is an evolutionary one and a very gradual evolution at that—and one that the narrator seems to be subtly or not so subtly subverting. There is certainly no radical modernity

⁴This was at least the third translation into English. Hardy would have learnt of *Laocoon* from G. H. Lewes's *The Story of Goethe*: "Instruction in the theory of Art he gained from . . . *Laocoon*, the incomparable little book which Lessing . . . carelessly flung upon the world. Its effect upon Goethe can only be appreciated by those who early in life have met with this work, and risen from it with minds widened, strengthened, and inspired." Lewes appends a footnote to his encouraging words: "Lord Macaulay told me that the reading of this little book formed an epoch in his mental history, and that he learned more about Art from it than he had ever learned elsewhere" (43). Hardy is known to have read and taken notes from this edition. Given the language of Lewes's recommendation, given the reference to Macaulay, given that Macaulay was among those authors Hardy read in his studies of style, it would seem only too natural that he would read a book with the subject-matter described by Macaulay and with Lewes's imprimatur.

Perhaps Hardy was also thinking of the description of the Laocoon in Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*: "Nothing pleased him, unless it were the group of the Laocoon, which, in its immortal agony, impressed Kenyon as a type of the long, fierce struggle of Man, involved in the knotted entanglements of Error and Evil, those two snakes, which (if no Divine Help intervene) will be sure to strangle him and his children, in the end. What he most admired was the strange calmness, diffused through his bitter strife. . . . Thus, in the Laocoon, the horror of a moment grew to be the Fate of interminable ages. Kenyon looked upon the group as the one triumph of Sculpture, creating the repose, which is essential to it, in the very acmé of turbulent effort"

(ch. 43). Hardy owned a 1872 edition of the Hawthorne novel. It is tempting to think that Hardy would have concurred with E. H. Gombrich's statement about the Laocoon story: "It is one of the stories of senseless cruelty perpetrated by the Olympians against poor mortals which are quite frequent in Greek and Latin mythologies" (74). In one version of the Laocoon story (referred to by Lessing) Laocoon is blinded.

⁵Bullen acknowledges a debt to Smart. Hardy describes Clym as "a thin, pallid, almost spectral form, wrapped in a blanket and looking like Lazarus coming from the tomb" (380).

⁶Eustacia Yee was the raw material of a divinity. On Olympus she would have done well with a little preparation . . . She had Pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries . . . In dim light . . . her general figure might have stood for that of either of the higher female deities. The new moon behind her head, an old helmet upon it, a diadem of accidental dewdrops round her brow, would have been adjuncts sufficient to strike the note of Artemis, Athena, or Hera respectively, with as close an approximation to the antique as that which passes muster on many respected canvases" (63, 64).

⁷Nor is "mythology" too strong a term to apply to Hardy's attitude to the truth claims of the Bible: "[I]n these Bible lives and adventures there is the spherical completeness of perfect art. And our first, and second, feeling that they must be true because they are so impressive, becomes, as a third feeling modified to, 'Are they so very true after all? Is not the fact of their being so convincing an argument, not for their actuality, but for the actuality of a consummate artist who was no more content with what Nature offered than Sophocles and Pheidias were content?'" (Florence Hardy 171).

⁸Eustacia even goes so far as to compare Clym with St. Paul in a blackly comic exchange of dialogue with Wildeve: "'He's an enthusiast about ideas, and careless about outward things. He often reminds me of the apostle Paul.' 'I am so glad to hear that he's so grand a character as that.' 'Yes; but the worst of it is that though Paul was excellent as a man in the Bible he would hardly have done in real life'" (284). And, had Eustacia encountered Paul in

"real life," she would no doubt have disapproved of his tent-making. 'If it is objected that there is no evidence that Hardy read this work of Bunyan's, I offer this from *The Pilgrim's Progress*: "I sinned against the light of the Word . . ." This is spoken by the man in the Iron Cage, who is "now a Man of Despair, and am shut up in it. . . ." (165).

here. But perhaps that is the tragedy of the novel—that modern man cannot break from the discourses of the past yet cannot believe in the old language of belief—strangled by the serpents of skepticism.

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Am I My Sister's Keeper? Sexual Deviance and the Social Community

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It is too painful to think that she is a woman, with a woman's destiny before her—a woman spinning in young innocence a light web of folly and vain hopes which may one day close round her and press upon her a rancorous poisoned garment, changing all at once her fluttering, trivial butterfly sensations into a life of deep human anguish.

(*Adam Bede* 256)

That intolerable dread of shame, which is the last token of departing modesty, to what will it not drive some women! To what self-control and ingenuity, what resistance of weakness and endurance of bodily pain . . . blunting every natural instinct, and goading them on to the last refuge of mortal fear—infanticide. (Dinah Mulock Craik 209)

Fallen-women literature depicts perhaps no more enigmatic figure than Hetty Sorrel (*Adam Bede*, 1859), a character Felicia Bonaparte calls "innocently fatal" (180) and I regard as "fatally innocent." Like Mary Voce, the convicted criminal on whom George Eliot based the character, Hetty is presented as a vain and self-centered unwed mother capable of child-murder.¹ Accordingly, critical responses to Hetty's character generally regard her as an impediment to a union between Eliot's "pet characters," Adam and Dinah (Haight 187). The

ideas that Hetty is unquestionably guilty of infanticide and possesses "no spiritual or physical gifts that will draw the reader's sympathy . . . Hetty is emotionally insentient" (Auerbach, *Woman and the Demon* 174) effectively promote the interests of the comparatively deserving Dinah Morris. But Eliot's punishing Hetty by incarcerating her away from the social community, transporting her, and "killing her off" through illness even after she pays her debt to society fails to provide a truly convincing denouement. Instead, the issues raised by Hetty Sorrel's character throughout the narrative remain unresolved by the novel's conclusion.

This discussion of Hetty Sorrel considers her departure from the literary convention in which unwed mothers find redemption through maternal ideology. The presence of illegitimate offspring produced by the period's deviant subculture posed a moral and ethical dilemma: did Victorian society valorize motherhood above all else, or does illegitimacy's insistent evidence of deviancy prod what Nina Auerbach calls the Victorians' "bad conscience" (*Romantic Imprisonment* 150) in some other way? Hetty Sorrel inspires readers' sympathy even though she is not redeemed by any of the usual means—celibacy, maternalism, transportation, or death. Further, Hetty's fallenness is distinguished by her lack of "maternal instinct," an apparently more serious charge than

cepts. Salvationist rhetoric permeates Taft's account of Mary's confession and repentance, obtained under extreme emotional duress by a contingent of persistent Christians, and her subsequent transformation into one who blesses everyone from "the Lord" to her executioner. In this account, her guilt (for either "crimes" or "sins") is unquestioned.

illicit sexuality. This raises several pertinent questions: Do maternal issues supersede sexual issues? If so, how is this complicated by unwed motherhood? Since middle- and upper-class legitimacy issues are threatened by lower-class illegitimacy, is infanticide a viable solution to the problem? My analysis considers Eliot's fallen-woman character as a vehicle through which to investigate the broader cultural problems that coalesce in this unresisting figure.

Perhaps my dissatisfaction with Hetty's presentation and its critical reception stems from the narrative's binary split between the "analytic narrator" and the "sympathetic narrator," an uneasy alliance resulting in a "disjunction of power and sympathy" (Bonaparte 180). Dorothea Barrett agrees, noting that "What George Eliot tells us elevates Dinah and condemns Hetty, [but] what she shows us tends to question Dinah and vindicate Hetty" (44). As a result of this narrative ambivalence, Hetty is a compelling and unforgettable character, particularly in her challenge to "motherhood as the great overriding impulse that need ask no questions about itself" (Auerbach, *Romantic Imprisonment* 216). Further, Hetty's character represents less an individual deviation than a reflection of a major cultural shift—in this case, the demise of agrarian economy. In light of this broader cultural context, Eliot's case for infanticide is unconvincing as presented because it ultimately suggests Hetty is failed by—rather than a threat to—her community. Both a symbol of cultural demise and an omen for an uncertain future, Hetty Sorrel provides a convenient scapegoat for a society that excels in blaming the victim.²

This absence of communal responsibility covertly characterizes Eliot's portrayal of Hetty's fall, although the narrative strongly urges readers to situate that fall in Hetty's narcissistic vanity and upper-class pretensions. But Hetty's ambitions are quite guileless, being limited to the possession of fine lace and white stockings rather than power or status: what Hetty really wants is the trousseau, not the sexual responsibility it represents. Hetty Sorrel is a child who is judged as a woman despite her appalling lack of knowledge about sexual and class ideologies. No enlightenment is forthcoming from Hayslope's prominent male citizens: the Reverend Mr. Irwine is Arthur's mentor, not Hetty's (and, accordingly, politically aligned with upper-class interests), while Adam's idea of Hetty is as unrealistic and illusory as Hetty's is of Arthur; Uncle Poyser believes his responsibility ends with taking the orphaned Hetty into his home. To his credit, Adam understands the unsavory class connotations of Arthur's attachment to Hetty, but his warning comes too late.

²Adrienne Rich writes, "The scapegoat is different from the martyr; she cannot teach resistance or revolt. She represents a terrible temptation: to suffer uniquely, to assume that I, the individual woman, am the 'problem'" (278).

³Darwinian theories of evolution served to justify class stratification by equating one's social status with one's degree of civilization. This implies that upper-class men like Arthur betray their lineage both by succumbing to the eroticized "power of beauty" of lower-class women and by marrying strictly for wealth or rank rather than for the middle-class value, love. As a basis for marriage, however, the romanticized notion of love so popular during the nineteenth-century is a notoriously slippery term of constantly shifting meaning, depending on one's class and gender, and economic stature or potential.

⁴Mariana Valverde's "The Love of Finery: Fashion and the Fallen Woman in Nineteenth-Century Social Discourse" is an illuminating study of this

Arthur understands those connotations as well ("No gentleman, out of a ballad, could marry a farmer's niece," [184]), yet acts against his judgment and Hetty's best interests nevertheless.³

Similarly, Hayslope's female community also fails to provide Hetty with the sort of guidance appropriate to sexual rites of passage. In fact, Hetty's prettiness sets her apart from the other women in an interestingly class-inscribed way. According to Mrs. Irwine, "She's a perfect beauty! What a pity such beauty as that should be thrown away among the farmers . . . I daresay . . . she'll marry a man who would have thought her just as pretty if she had had round eyes and red hair" (319)—red hair such as that of Dinah Morris (117), the woman who successively assumes each communal position Hetty vacates, most pointedly as wife to Adam Bede. Even women of her own class regard Hetty's beauty as a liability: "That child gets prettier and prettier every day," says lady's maid Mrs. Pomfret. "The more's the pity. She'll get neither a place nor a husband sooner for it. Sober well-to-do men don't like such pretty wives" (180).

This cultural distrust of ostentatious display in favor of more utilitarian qualities assumes sexual and moral connotations as well. Eliot presents Hetty's vain parading in her shabby finery and her petty triumphs over rivals like Mary Burge as evidence of her inherent unsuitability as a "respectable" wife rather than as relatively normative behavior in a society shaped by class-consciousness.⁴ Hetty's only women mentors are Aunt Poyser and cousin Dinah Morris, both of whom reject Hetty's concern with her appearance and neither of whom provides her with the sort of guidance she needs; instead, both are intent on goading her into adjusting to and conforming with community standards. For Dinah, the standard is religion, and for Aunt Poyser, it is domesticity. Underpinning both is the maternal ideology that narratively haunts Hetty from her less-than-nurturing response to Totty and baby animals to her later imprisonment for infanticide.

Aunt Poyser has little positive effect on Hetty, which is unfortunate considering she is the most likely person to fill the maternal role for her niece. Aunt Poyser's *raison d'être* is her consummate domesticity (as opposed to motherhood), and this is her primary focus with Hetty: "for I've taught her everything as belongs to a house, an' I told her her duty often enough" (201)—"duty" referring to domestic, not sexual, economy. Ironically, the proliferation of highly polished furnishings in the Poyser household—Aunt Poyser's particular vanity—provides Hetty with as many mirrored surfaces as she could wish in which to study her pretty face (117).

dynamic. As a class—rather than sexual—issue, Hetty's love of finery is linked directly to its association with social status, privilege, and leisure, a lifestyle particularly appealing to a hard-working farm-girl. Valverde's article exposes the class anxiety that underscores Victorian discourse concerning "finery." Middle- and upper-class women's attention to dress signified their respectability; the same attention in lower-class women designated potential and/or realized sexual fallenness. This leads to the understanding that the well-dressed leisure of one class is only possible through the hard work of the less-well-dressed class. Interestingly, the threat to preserving class stratification posed by lower-class love of finery was stated in sexual, rather than socio-economic, terms. Perkin notes, "Vanity and materialism are shown in this novel to be class privileges; such behaviour has severe consequences for those of the lower orders who adopt it" (51).

¹According to Henry Taft's account of Mary Voce (executed in 1802 for infanticide), "though in the most agonising distress, she remained as hardened and impenitent as ever, persisting in denying her guilt" (*Adam Bede*, Appendix II, 589). Taft's agenda—that this criminal confess her sins against God's laws (as distinct from human)—ignores the glaring disjunction between "agonising distress" and "hardened and impenitent," hardly synonymous con-

Hetty is not Mrs. Poyser's niece, but Martin Poyser's, which may account for the lack of genuine connection between the two women. In fact, the Poyser's enthusiasm "with regard to Adam" reveals that Hetty is considered less a daughter than a servant or burdensome relative: "... though she and her husband might have viewed the subject differently if Hetty had been a daughter of their own, it was clear that they would have welcomed the match with Adam for a penniless niece. For what could Hetty have been but a servant elsewhere, if her uncle had not taken her in and brought her up as a domestic help to her aunt?" (143). Thus, Hetty's position in the Poyser household lies somewhere between disenfranchised relative and maid-of-all-work, while the Poyser's guardianship is strictly pragmatic and utilitarian in quality.⁵

Critical analyses have made much of Hetty's lack of enthusiasm towards little Totty, as if that renders the subsequent infanticide of her own child inevitable; yet Totty is Aunt Poyser's child, not Hetty's, and we might more usefully question why Aunt Poyser is always so anxious to hand Totty over to someone else. Conceivably, Hetty's lack of "maternal instinct" and filial gratitude results logically from her never having been nurtured herself, and from the powerlessness of her orphaned status, although it does not follow that she is a murderess.

Aunt Poyser aligns with Dinah against Hetty on a crucial point, although for different reasons: "there was no weakness of which she was less tolerant than feminine vanity, and the preference of ornament to utility" (118). Despite this disclaimer, Aunt Poyser gazes at Hetty's charms "on the sly, fascinated in spite of herself" (128), then turns away "without speaking" (231), behavior that conveys some curiously mixed messages to Hetty. This is not to suggest that Aunt Poyser's intentions are anything but well-meaning—she is clearly "anxious to do well" by her niece—but she does nevertheless fail Hetty by refusing to acknowledge any perspective or world-view other than her own, and especially by her lack of insight regarding Arthur.⁶

The same is true of Dinah; from her first words about Hetty—"that poor wandering lamb" (78)—Dinah's patronizing attitude reveals her to be as lacking in sensitivity as Aunt Poyser. Although they are peers, Dinah regards Hetty with a "calm pitying face" (186) and pretentiously calls her "dear child" (187). "The Two Bed-Chambers" scene (ch. 15) poses Hetty's vanity against Dinah's religious fervor, proving how

alien are their comparative perspectives. Dinah speaks to Hetty in ominous tones about the doomed path on which she sees her headed, but succeeds only in making her cry ("Why do you come to frighten me? I've never done anything to you" [206]). Like Aunt Poyser, Dinah is well-intentioned towards Hetty, yet she is more intent on promoting her own agenda than on appealing to Hetty on a level she can comprehend.

Dinah's limited vision is borne out in Hetty's conversion scene following the trial. She repeatedly refers to Hetty as "the poor sinner" (passim, 494-502) although, oddly, Arthur is "that poor young man!" (528). The extreme pressure to confess and convert that Dinah imposes on Hetty's already broken mind and spirit falls little short of Inquisition tactics, and is typical of the sorts of confessions required of foundling hospital and workhouse (parish) petitioners. Dinah needles and pressures Hetty until she breaks, a conversion characterized less by the spiritual glow Henry Taft ascribes to Mary Voce than by a desire to be left in peace. Dinah describes Hetty's conversion with a quality of self-aggrandizement generally ascribed to Hetty herself: "she is contrite—she has confessed all to me"—not to God, and "... she leans on me for help"—again, not on God (502). Considering Dinah's questionable motives (like Barrett Browning's title character Aurora Leigh, she wants the fallen woman's partner for herself), her words evidence an unsavory spiritual ambitiousness.⁷ Interestingly, the same spirit of ambition condemned in Hetty signifies superior character in Dinah, Mrs. Poyser, and Adam Bede. In this text, clearly, vanity is not limited to personal adornment alone.

Adam Bede is noted for its depiction of England's dramatic cultural transition from agrarianism to industrialism, yet its fallen woman is presented as either about-to-fall, falling, or permanently fallen—a curiously static quality at odds with this text's theme of cultural change. This inconsistency is best compared with the presentation of Dinah, whose sexual awakening transforms her from a pale preacher to a rosy matron instead of a prostitute or murderer. The taciturnity of Hayslope's code of sexual conduct is inconsistent with the community's strict observance of class differences in other regards. Hetty Sorrel's community fails to provide her with sufficient knowledge about sexual and class ideologies and then categorically rejects her when she breaks the unarticulated rules. Hetty's individualism poses a threat to social

cohesion; the community expends no effort to understand her because, in light of the imminent demise of agrarian communities like Hayslope, difference represents change, and change generates fear. But blaming the individual rather than broader cultural, political, and economic factors is like treating the symptom and not the disease. As Felicia Bonaparte argues, Hetty is victimized both by "her own nature and the general human condition" (182)—in other words, by the disparity between private and public ideologies that are themselves continually affected by cultural fluctuations. Thus, Hetty Sorrel may be a convenient scapegoat, but the problems she represents do not go away with her imprisonment, her transportation, or even her death because they are larger than all these factors.

The uneven quality of Eliot's narrative is largely responsible for the enigma of Hetty Sorrel's character. The text's initial emphasis is on the community symbolized by families like the Poyser's, the work-ethic as evidenced by Adam Bede, and religious ideology as represented by Dinah; posed against these community values, Hetty is a misfit and an outsider in every respect. It is not until Hetty's "Journey in Hope" and "Journey in Despair" (chs. 36-37) that the narrator permits any meaningful insight into Hetty's perspective; yet even that is short-lived, as the focus shifts back to what others have to say about Hetty and away from what she has to say for herself.

But despite its brevity, this glimpse into Hetty's experience effectually weakens the united front to which Eliot opposes her character. According to one critic, "The intense concentration on Hetty's experience during [these] two chapters . . . creates a sympathetic identification with her which is not dispelled by Eliot's insistence throughout the novel on her vanity and materialism" (Carroll 50-51). As a result, the narrative's bias against Hetty seems so painstakingly contrived that it at times loses credibility. Eliot associates Hetty with smiles and dimples, kittens and ducklings, babies and springtime—and, oddly, violence: Hetty's is a beauty "you feel ready to crush for inability to comprehend the state of mind into which it throws you" (127). Hetty has a "false air of innocence" (128), implying that she is sexually experienced: this seems unlikely, although given her compliance with Arthur's seduction the suggestion is a potent one. This link between violence and infantile sensuality is perhaps intended to prepare us to accept Hetty's guilt for infanticide; but it also functions as a disturbing metaphor for Hetty's child-like trust that she will be taken care of, a trust which is broken more than once.

Hetty's vanity is another factor used to discredit her character. Lower-class love of finery is a convention of fallen-woman literature signifying that a woman is concerned less with others than with herself, and that she has inappropriate, upwardly-mobile class ambitions. In a village like Hayslope, "A woman was deficient in female qualities" insofar as she "aimed at putting the body on display," for

"display" led her to being "valued for her body and its adornments, not for the virtues she might possess as a woman and wife" (Armstrong 75). Yet despite its ostensible rejection of superficial merit,⁸ Hetty's community conveys the message that her value and worth are indeed measured by her physical attractiveness: "Hetty was quite used to the thought that people liked to look at her. She was not blind to the fact. . ." (141). Of course Hetty is vain—everything about her environment tells her she has reason to be so; she is on display, and is thoroughly objectified in varying degrees by everyone in the community from bashful farmboys and the Reverend Mr. Irwine to Adam Bede and (most lethally) Arthur Donnithorne, no less than by Hayslope's women characters.

As a class issue, Hetty's beauty distinguishes her in a way that fuels her ambitions for a more privileged lifestyle. Accordingly, her awareness of her beauty's "power" over men provides her with a illusory sense of being in control: "She liked to feel that this strong, skilful, keen-eyed man was in her power, and would have been indignant if he had shown the least sign of slipping from under the yoke of her coquettish tyranny" (143). At this point in the narrative, Hetty's attitude towards Adam Bede is strictly materialistic—"Hetty's dreams were all of luxuries; . . . if Adam had been rich and could have given her these things, she loved him well enough to marry him" (144). Eliot's conflation of erotic appeal with material considerations anticipates shifting value systems which culminate in the middle-class romanticization of sexual and economic relationships. Hetty's behavior and attitude can also be seen as resistance to this unwanted match, while becoming pregnant with another man's child is of course a far more emphatic form of resistance.

Although Eliot's presentation encourages readers to regard Hetty's superficiality as a factor central to her fall, this quality is not specific to her character alone. Characterized as the deserving lover crushed by Hetty's selfishness, Adam values her not for spiritual or moral qualities, but rather for the beauty that sets her apart from Hayslope's other girls; that quality of Hetty's beauty which aligns her with upper-class standards conveniently serves Adam's professional ambition to improve his social rank by becoming Arthur's steward.⁹ Like Hetty, Adam lives in a dreamy existence of romanticized notions of love and marriage which have no basis in reality (198), and he too is "hard," uncompromising, and overly proud (514). Adam's response to Hetty's imprisonment is to rush to her aid; but once there, he wallows in self-pity, unable to leave his room for mourning "the deepest curse of all . . . it can never be undone . . . she can never be my sweet Hetty again" (468). Posed against such monumental issues as life and death, Adam's grief over Hetty's lost virginity demonstrates that this text's interplay between superficial and substantial values is clearly not gender-specific.

Arthur Donnithorne's attitude is also unabashedly shallow: he is "ready to pitch everything . . . for the sake of surrendering himself to this delicious feeling" (178) Hetty

⁵Mason Harris argues that the Poyser's fail in their "parental responsibility" to Hetty, who remains "childishly dependent" on the communities at Hall Farm and Hayslope—both of whom reject her—through the novel's end: "Mentally she is a child, a case of arrested development, not responsible for her actions, and thus a victim no matter what she may finally do" (180). As a result, her attitude towards the Poyser children is a case of sibling rivalry, and she is experientially aligned with Totty's egocentrism. In a "grim parody" of communal values, Hetty "denies that she has had a child" just as Uncle Poyser flatly disowns his "fallen" niece (188). And, like her unwilling role model, Aunt Poyser, Hetty too wants someone else to assume responsibility for her child.

⁶Aunt Poyser is most anxious to retain Hall Farm when Arthur inherits the estate; see ch. 32. With this motivation, she practically pushes Hetty into his arms: "you are very kind to take that notice of her . . . whenever you're pleased to dance with her, she'll be proud and thankful" (129). It is during that fatal dance that the young couple arrange for the rendezvous that changes all their lives; see ch. 26. Later, the Poyser's anxiety over Hetty's "disgrace"

concerns the threat it poses to their continued possession of Hall Farm, a matter of domestic, rather than sexual, economy. To the Poyser's, social dishonor was "a misfortune felt to be worse than death," leaving no "room for any compassion towards Hetty" (459). Accordingly, concern for Hetty's personal state is strikingly absent.

⁷Dorothea Barrett writes, "There is something either unconvincing or unhealthy about Dinah's indiscriminate and forced loving . . . Her decision to love is just that—a decision, not a spontaneous emotional reaction . . . this seems selfless to the point of masochism but beneath it lurks the egoism of the martyr" (45). Is Dinah an "admirable woman" or a "repressed egoist who unconsciously disguises her egoism as altruism, her sexuality and vanity as religious vocation, and her desire for ascendancy over Hetty . . . as a sincere and disinterested desire to help?" (46). Is Hetty "crucified for the sins of others, not least of women like Dinah who falsify their own, and by extension their gender's true motives and desires?" (46-47). These are important points that deserve further consideration.

⁸Effectively demonstrating yet again the mixed messages conveyed to Hetty by both familial and communal role models, the working class rejects "superficial merit" among its own while admiring it in the privileged classes, and while aspiring to obtain it for themselves.

⁹According to Mr. Casson, landlord of Hayslope's pub, Adam is "an uncommon favourite wi' the gentry . . . But he's a little lifted up an' peppery like" (61). Adam, like Hetty, assumes "airs" that signify class ambitiousness.

inspires. But after their sexual relations, Arthur asserts he "had not yet seen the woman who would play the lady-wife to the first-rate country gentleman" (484). In fact, he is chagrined by Hetty's marital expectations: "her vision was all spun by her own childish fancy . . . but Hetty might have had the trouble in some other way if not in this" (358), a disturbing trivialization of Hetty's ruined life and Arthur's role in the tragedy. On this point Arthur is hard and uncompromising, remaining conventionally class-bound through the novel's end. The narrator implicates the character flaws of neither Adam nor "that poor young man" Arthur in the events of Hetty's fall, although both exhibit the very traits for which she is condemned.

In view of the Romantic period's radical shift in world-view and perspective, Hetty's disruption of the community ultimately represents more far-reaching consequences than sexual deviation alone implies. The sequence of events leading to Hetty's imprisonment and trial for infanticide provide significant insight into the nature of those consequences. Hetty's pregnancy, and her infant's birth and death, are no more convincingly presented as proof of her crime than her "hard-hearted" characterization. While I in no way condone Hetty's alleged behavior, I maintain that it remains alleged, but not conclusively established. This suggests an over-eagerness on Eliot's part to condemn the fallen woman that is not convincingly displaced onto the community.

Eliot details at length Arthur's struggles with his conscience about the inappropriateness of acting on his desires, while remaining pointedly silent about Hetty's possible introspection; however, this is no indication of moral superiority since Arthur always dissuades himself from the resolutions he makes. Irresponsibility is a well-established pattern in Arthur's character: earlier, we are told that whenever Arthur "spoils" a woman, he sends her "expensive bon-bons, packed up and directed by his own hand" (170). The situation with Hetty intensifies even as Arthur anticipates returning to the army, and events conspire to bring the two together with an alarming inevitability and swiftness. From their first kiss—"his lips are meeting those pouting child-lips, and for a long moment time has vanished" (182)—to his birthday celebration a month later, we know little except that Hetty now has a secret cache of jewelry, gifts from Arthur that she cannot with propriety wear in public. This has a decidedly unsavory aspect to it, considering that we know something Hetty does not know: she believes "Captain Donnithorne loved her so" (296), which to her mind leads, of course, to marriage. But Arthur has no intention of marrying her, even should a child result from their union. What he calls "love"—"He was getting in love with Hetty" (178)—is in fact sex which he pays for in increments, effectually rendering Hetty Sorrel a prostitute, while she interprets both gifts and sex as promises of marriage.

Although Hetty does not seem to have been coerced into a sexual relationship with Arthur, he is accountable for her seduction and ruin in that his social position, formal education,

and comparative worldliness provide him with a clearer perspective on the social consequences of illicit sexuality. He knows what results from upper-class seduction of farm girls, a ruin of the sort hardly repaired by a box of bon-bons. Arthur also claims to understand the mind-set of people like the Poyzers, "to whom a good name was . . . precious" (184), a factor he conveniently overlooks while seducing Hetty. Reputation and integrity are codes by which Hetty Sorrel lives as well, for despite her relations with Arthur (or, conversely, because of the upward social mobility this relationship signifies to her), personal dignity and communal respect are ultimately more important to her than even Alençon lace. Hetty may be "hard," but Arthur is inflexibly class-bound, and there is no hardness so uncompromising as that of the Poyzers, who reject her absolutely when her fall becomes public knowledge. In this sense, Hetty's attitudes are, in the phrase of Mason Harris, but a "grim parody" of her community's values (188).

At his birthday celebration, Arthur dreads Hetty's tearful response "when he told her what he had to tell her" (330)—that their meetings must cease. But as we later learn, what he in fact tells her is, "I shall come again at Christmas, and then we will see what can be done" (365). Thus, Arthur postpones an uncomfortable scene, while Hetty's dreams of marriage, luxury, and social elevation continue unchecked. There can be no doubt of their relations at this point; Arthur worries about a nameless "dread" (pregnancy), but pragmatically decides "It was just as likely to be the reverse" (361). Arthur's code of honor as a gentleman is hardly germane to the laboring class; he ponders the fact that "Adam was deceived"—meaning Hetty's virginity is no longer intact—"deceived in a way that Arthur would have resented as a deep wrong if it had been practised on himself." But the most serious deception of all remains unacknowledged: Arthur's part in the permanent and irreversible ruin of Hetty Sorrel, in this or any other community.

Hetty's realization of her "swift-advancing shame" (410) occurs "some weeks" after her November betrothal to Adam Bede. The timing is significant because if Hetty were as heartless and mercenary as the narrative encourages us to believe, she would have earlier secured Adam (whom she was well aware was hers for the taking) in an attempt to present her "great dread" (411) as Adam's child. Further, despite the fact that Hetty earlier seemed to think more of the gifts than of the giver,¹⁰ her distress at Arthur's desertion shows that she is quite broken by the collapse of her romantic dreams. If Hetty cared only for what Arthur could materially provide her with, she had ample opportunity to act on that form of compensation. In his farewell letter he writes, "If any trouble should come that we do not now foresee, trust in me to do everything that lies in my power" (378). But at this point, Hetty does not want jewelry or money, she wants marriage—"Reasons why he could not marry her had no existence for her mind" (379). The fact that she undertakes the "Journey in Hope" at all emphasizes her continued desire to marry Arthur rather than to

receive material support from him. Hetty Sorrel's behavior towards both her fiance Adam and her lover Arthur thus reveals not mercenary but rather appallingly naive and mis-directed motivations.

Another reason the time-frame of Hetty's pregnancy is significant is that it suggests her ignorance of procreative processes. Admittedly, it is certainly odd that a farm-girl does not comprehend the inevitable consequences of sexual relations, although it seems unlikely that Aunt Poyser's concept of telling Hetty her "duty" extends beyond the realm of butter-making into issues of sexuality. In this matter, Hetty places her trust in Arthur, whose assumption that the odds of her being pregnant are roughly equal to the odds that she is not is chillingly casual. If Hetty's agreeing to marry Adam is a sincere effort to put the past behind her and go on with her life in a way that will satisfy the community and ameliorate her transgression of its moral code, then her innocence is not, contrary to Eliot's term, "false," but blatantly compromised by comparatively worldly characters.

What is certainly astonishing and difficult to assimilate is that Hetty is at the very least seven months pregnant when she leaves Hayslope, ostensibly to go trousseau shopping for her March wedding to Adam. How is it possible, given the close physical proximity of these people who daily live and work together, that no one notices Hetty's condition? Considering the extreme scrutiny under which we know Hetty lives, whether that is Aunt Poyser's severely critical eye or the admiring gaze of the Hayslope community, how can such an increasingly obvious condition go unnoticed, particularly since people she subsequently meets on her journey are immediately aware of it?

But Hetty is not destined to endure strangers' speculative stares for long, as she delivers the child shortly after leaving Hayslope. The abruptness of this event, while jarring, can be credibly accounted for. Several factors are likely to have contributed to post-natal complications resulting in the infant's death. Hetty is barely eighteen when she gives birth, she is herself still a child and, although earlier described as in "blooming health" (381), Hetty's physical immaturity (and, more speculatively, Arthur's possible aristocratic genetic debasement) could have produced a less-than-hardy infant.¹¹ Further, Hetty's child is born prematurely, in February, after only seven months gestation—even with today's advanced medical technology, circumstances which seriously diminish the potential for survival. The sheer physical grind of Hetty's "Journey in Hope" and "Journey in Despair" (chs. 36 and 37) and her wavering suicidal thoughts induce her labor: "The exercise and the occupation . . . were a stimulus to her" (432), and "she was getting less and less able to bear the day's weariness" (435). Without food, sleeping in sheep's hovels in

mid-winter, she looks like a "wild woman" (434). Nevertheless, witness Sarah Stone testifies that she took Hetty into her home *because* of "her prettiness, . . . her condition . . . and something respectable about her clothes and looks" (477)—an interesting commentary on the importance of one's appearance for which Hetty was earlier criticized. Hetty gives birth during the night, attended only by Mrs. Stone, who "didn't send for a doctor, for there seemed no need" (478). When Hetty got a bit flushed," Mrs. Stone was "afraid of the fever"—puerperal fever, an often mortal affliction of post-partum women during the time *Adam Bede* takes place—and leaves to consult a friend; when she returns, Hetty and the baby are gone. Thus, the possibility of "child-bed fever" or any other post-natal complication is not medically verified,¹² yet another factor that weighs the evidence against Hetty more heavily.

The effect of Mrs. Stone's evidence on both Adam and the reader is "electrical" (479) since it proves "Hetty could not be guilty of the crime—her heart must have clung to her baby. . . . The little creature had died naturally, and then she had hidden it: *babies were so liable to death*" (my emphasis). Hetty Sorrel is accused of infanticide on the basis of her presumed rejection of the child who symbolizes her ruined life; but why then does she take the child with her? Would not abandonment be the more obvious choice?

According to the testimony of John Olding, Hetty does abandon the infant. Olding sees Hetty wandering about—"she looked a bit crazy" (479)—then hears "strange" animal-like cries (the child? or Hetty?) whose source he cannot locate. When he finds the child it is dead, and he returns next day with the constable to find Hetty sitting there crying, "but she never offered to move. . ." (481). Although the effect of Olding's account is also "electrical," it is used as proof of Hetty's guilt rather than as evidence of her traumatized state. The fact that Hetty got up immediately from child-bed to travel by foot, in winter, with no food, shelter, or money and an infant to care for demonstrates either remarkable fortitude or advanced delirium. Significantly, while it is true that she left the child only temporarily (whatever her motives, they remain debatable), her return to what is now a crime-scene is not regarded as a point in her favor.

The idea that Hetty's post-partum trauma accounts for her behavior is based in part on the discrepancy between Olding's and Hetty's accounts concerning the circumstances of the infant's abandonment. Olding claims only an hour passed before he found the child; unsure whether it is alive or not, he took it home to his wife, who verified its death. Oddly, Olding's inability to distinguish living from dead does not undermine his credibility as a witness. Hetty later explains she found a hole under a tree "like a little grave" where she

¹¹"Poor health, inadequate nutrition, stress . . . increase one's chances of having a premature delivery . . . Low-income women and teenagers . . . are more likely to deliver prematurely than middle-class women"; 70% of infant deaths are due to low birth weight and associated with "those who may be unable to carry a fetus to term (e.g. young teenagers whose bodies are not yet developed enough)" (*Boston Women's Health Book Collective*, 453). See also Janet Bode, *Kids Having Kids* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1980).

¹²Traditionally, childbirth was midwife-assisted by attendants who specialized in the birth process only. Male physicians' appropriation of obstetrics (seventeenth-century onward) and the subsequent shift from home-births to

lying-in hospitals paralleled a dramatic rise in puerperal fever. Lacking a conceptualization of sepsis, surgeons went from patient to patient without washing their hands, spreading bacteria that proved fatal to newly-delivered women. This affected poor and working-class women primarily; with the outlawing of midwifery and the prohibitive costs of home delivery by a physician, poor women were forced into notoriously dangerous hospital deliveries; "safe" home deliveries were now a privilege of the rich. Although Hetty delivered at home—assisted by a woman of dubious medical judgment—the potential for postpartum complications still existed. Mary Wollstonecraft died of puerperal fever in 1797. See also Rich, 151-55.

Hetty learns, in no context does money equate with power and respect more than for a woman travelling alone. See chs. 36 and 37.

¹⁰To finance her desperate journey to search for Arthur and to salvage some self-respect, Hetty sells Arthur's gifts, thus avoiding what is to her a fate worse than unwed motherhood—the workhouse or "going on the parish." As

placed the infant: but "when I got out into the fields, it was as if I was held fast—I couldn't go away" (499). Both her fear of "him in a smock-frock" (Olding) and her hope he would find the baby and look after it prompt Hetty, "very sick, and faint, and hungry," to leave in search of food. Hetty's derangement is shown in her claims that, although she is gone a day and a night, she continues to "hear" the cries of the infant Olding claims was already dead, and later in her astonishing denial of having birthed a child at all. That Hetty continues to be a victim of her traumatized mind throughout the trial and sentencing—as opposed to the sort of belligerence suggested by such phrases as "this pale hard-looking culprit" (477)—is evidenced by her plea, "Dinah, do you think God will take away that crying and the place in the wood, now I've told everything?" (500).

Elaine Showalter discusses the phenomenon of puerperal insanity (which may be a more aggressive form of what is now called post-partum depression) as a violation of all "Victorian culture's most deeply cherished ideals of feminine propriety and maternal love" (58). That the maternal condition produced perversions of female behavior which so directly violated feminine ideology could only be accounted for as criminality. Along with its links to severe depression and suicide (Hetty made several unsuccessful attempts to drown herself), puerperal insanity is a "mental disorder occurring within the month after confinement [in which] the woman evinced . . . 'negligence of, and . . . aversion to, her child'" (57). Showalter notes that such factors as illegitimacy, poverty, and brutality were "taken into account by Victorian judges and juries, who were reluctant to sentence infanticidal women to death, and who responded compassionately to the insanity defense generally used in their behalf" (59). This was not, interestingly, the case for Hetty Sorrel, who was popularly condemned even before her trial; an "insanity defense"—or any other defense—was not a factor in her case.¹³

Further, the court's interpretation of Hetty's attitude during the trial—she stares down at her hands with no sign of emotion—demonstrates its bias against her. Because Hetty's behavior "proves" her guilt, there "was no recommendation to mercy. . . . the sympathy of the court was not with the prisoner: the unnaturalness of her crime stood out the more harshly by the side of her hard immovability and obstinate silence" (482). This evaluation implies Hetty could have defended herself but refused to do so—in effect, as if she were passively committing the suicide she failed to accomplish earlier. The fact that Hetty's lack of response is not seen as fear, despair, or panic over a situation so thoroughly beyond her control emphasizes that the court regards her guilt as a foregone conclusion. But Hetty's silence could also reflect the child-like state of her mind, behavior consistent with her pas-

sive acceptance of Arthur's sexual overtures, of Adam's marriage offer, and of public condemnation. The court's assessment mirrors society's betrayal of women like Hetty Sorrel, and is typical of the categorical denial of legal and political protection to fallen women. The legal system, threatened by the social deviancy infanticide represents, condemns her to death; the Hayslope community, which pities favorite sons Adam Bede and Arthur Donnithorne for their brush with the "little huzzy," ostracizes her; the Poysers, to whom reputation in the community is paramount, reject their own blood relation; and Arthur, through exposing her to sexual experience, unwed motherhood, and illegitimacy, effectively renders her a permanent outcast in any community. As Loren C. Bell argues, Hetty's "lonely ordeal at last revealed her to be more child than woman . . . who, after all, had wanted only to return home" (87). Ultimately, those "pouting child-lips" (182) were powerless to speak defensively against such a formidable wall of opposition.

Adding to the narrative's ambivalence towards Hetty, the confession scene in prison emphasizes her child-like fragility. Hetty Sorrel is guilty, not of the sort of aggressive act of violence associated with the term "infanticide" but of temporary neglect, the circumstances of which are so tenuous as to render her trial a travesty of justice. Hetty's own words suggest the extent of her fatalistic submissiveness: "the little baby was born, when I didn't expect it; and the thought came into my mind that I might get rid of it, and go home again" (498). Hetty is unsure what she feels for the baby—"I seemed to hate it" (499)—but the one thing she is certain of is "I longed so to be safe at home."

Significantly, this least maternal of fallen heroines does respond to her child: "I went back because it cried . . . I didn't kill it. . . . its crying went through me, and I daredn't look at its little hands and face" (497). Evidence of the "maternal instinct" in fallen mothers raises complex and contradictory issues: maternity is promoted as the greatest of all woman's accomplishments, but illegitimate motherhood is as much a perversion of sexual ideology as prostitution, which is why its use as a medium for redemption is so potent. The only behavior worse than either is infanticide, which explains the often conflicted quality of Eliot's narrative.

Hetty's last words, which demonstrate her continued mental confusion, speak eloquently for her lack of criminal intent. In this final piece of her story, we learn of her return to the child, compelled by the cries that exist only in her mind: "when I'd put it there, I thought I should like somebody to find it, and save it from dying; but when I saw it was gone, I was struck like a stone with fear . . . My heart went like a stone" (500). The stone imagery is consistent with Eliot's characterization of Hetty's hard-heartedness, but the emotion

and "going on the parish," or public support of both mother and child. Although "most women accused of infanticide were acquitted . . . bearing a dead child without witnesses was defined as infanticide" (115). Still-birth, in other words, was considered a crime regardless of extenuating circumstances. In January 1859, according to *The Magdalen's Friend*, there were 12,353 "illegitimate pauper children" living in the workhouse system: "and thus commences a continued increasing stream of pauperism; the question becomes one of vast importance to the country" ("Workhouse Girls," *Ninth Report of Rescue Society*, qtd. in *Magdalen's Friend*, 314).

of fear differs radically from the attitude of rebellious intractability by which the court assesses her.

Hetty Sorrel acts from desperate compulsion, not informed judgment, resulting in a worst case scenario—the child died—while her returning for the infant, rather than mitigating her guilt, instead implicated her more fully. But what were Hetty's options? What choices did nineteenth-century unwed mothers have, particularly those with unwanted children? Some consideration of the practices of the time will prove how limited women's options were—and how loosely defined was the term "infanticide"—during both the novel's Romantic time-frame and the mid-Victorian period in which it was written.¹⁴

Throughout the nineteenth-century, abortion,¹⁵ infanticide, and deliberate neglect (or, passive infanticide), foundling hospitals, and baby farms were the primary means of ridding oneself of unwanted children. Abortions were illegal and therefore unregulated, dangerous, and expensive, and a woman choosing this option was as likely to die from the process as was the fetus. Paradoxically, abortion would have called as much attention to Hetty's condition as child-birth itself; abortionists only initiated the process that took as long as a week to ten days to complete, during which time the woman was incapacitated by her condition. "Baby farming," a practice as notorious as abortion or infanticide in that children generally died from the neglect and abuse of unscrupulous guardians, must also be discounted as an option as it would have required Arthur's financial help.¹⁶ Regarded by some as a relatively humane form of abandonment, baby-farms required substantial monetary contributions in order to guarantee adequate care for the infant. But despite her earlier preoccupation with personal adornment, Hetty seeks social legitimation through marriage, not monetary compensation for

her difficulties.

A third method by which women could dispose of unwanted children was government-subsidized foundling hospitals, although by the turn of the nineteenth-century this practice had declined, and would probably have been available only in large cities.¹⁷ This option was neither physically dangerous nor economically prohibitive. Nevertheless, some women were deterred from applying by an admissions process requiring detailed personal histories of their sexual "falls" and extensive interviews with often judgmental and moralizing officials. Later, the institution of "turning" or "revolving" boxes promised to ensure anonymity and freedom from the humiliating admissions process.¹⁸

However, although promoted as a favorable alternative to infanticide and unscrupulous baby-farmers, foundling hospitals were notoriously mismanaged, as the extremely low survival rate proves. In one such establishment, Martineau notes, "one-fourth of the infants die within . . . six weeks. Of those sent out to nurse, more than half die before they come back to school at six years old"; in another, "Of every eight infants sent up from the country to this institution, seven died." In fact, concludes Martineau, foundling hospitals are more accurately termed "institutions for legalised infanticide" (*Daily News*, Sept. 30, 1863).

Thus, of the options prevalent at the time, neither abortion, baby-farms, nor foundling hospitals offered viable alternatives for Hetty Sorrel, either because of lack of money, availability, or forethought. This leaves only infanticide, which most critics agree is exactly what Hetty is guilty of; Nina Auerbach's characterization of her as "intensely aggressive" (*Woman and the Demon* 174) promotes the idea that Hetty is capable of murder.¹⁹ But I challenge the term "infanticide," which implies a violent and deliberate act, in

¹⁴In 1862, *The Magdalen's Friend* notes that in a single year 1,103 inquests of suspicious infant deaths were held in London alone, while some provincial districts conducted as many as 300 such inquests. E. W. Thomas writes: "That these cases may now be numbered by the thousands annually is proved by the recorded number of inquests held on illegitimate children, a large proportion of whom . . . are actually killed by their own mothers, almost as soon as they draw their first breath, while many more are allowed to pine away in want and neglect till . . . death puts an end to their troublous life" ("The Great Social Evil," *The Magdalen's Friend*, 301). See also Hellerstein 204-205.

¹⁵Harriet Martineau cites Dr. Lankester (a prominent figure in the infanticide debates) on abortion, who notes that in contrast to infanticide, "in the present state of the law, the mother may destroy her infant before birth, and be liable to no consequences under law" (*Daily News* Oct. 19, 1865), meaning that abortion was unlikely to provoke prosecution. Infanticide was more closely linked to murder since it involved an *ex utero* human being; then, as now, the point at which one is regarded as fully human is central to reproductive issues debates.

¹⁶Martineau equates baby-farming with infanticide on the mother's part however passive or indirect: "She leaves her infant in hands in which it is sure to die . . . of improper food, drugs, and neglect. The mother knows it will die, and is relieved when it is gone; and she has no pain of conscience, because she could do no otherwise than commit this child murder" (*Daily News*, Sept. 8, 1865). This comment is consistent with the general discourse of the time in that infanticide—regarded as a women's crime—is as much a matter of passive complicity or even accident as of aggressive action. Despite her commitment to responsible journalism, Martineau does not substantiate her claim that child-murderers—whether passive or aggressive—suffer "no pain of conscience." See also Rich (ch. 10) for a fuller discussion. Rich's discussion of the "psychopathologizing" of not only infanticidal mothers but also non-maternal women is especially pertinent (263).

¹⁷Mary Abbott writes, "Thomas Coram (b. 1668) was moved to endow the Foundling Hospital, which opened in 1741, by the sight of dead and dying

infants abandoned on the streets and dung heaps of London" (27). Unlike the free-enterprise system of baby-farms, such institutions were generally government subsidized and did not require the fees so prohibitive to poor women.

¹⁸A turning or revolving box was installed in the outside wall of the hospital; infants were placed in the box from outside, and the box was then turned to admit the child within the hospital. This ensured the "depositor" anonymity (much to Martineau's disgust: the "feelings" of the fallen did not deserve to be spared embarrassment) and, authorities hoped, eliminated the need for infanticide. Unfortunately, notes Martineau, unwanted children are not the exclusive province of illegitimacy: "A very large proportion of the foundlings received at all such institutions, as well as of the infants murdered, are the children of married parents, who thus cast off the trouble and cost of their maintenance" (*Daily News*, Aug. 8, 1865).

¹⁹One of the difficulties in interpreting *Adam Bede* is that it is set during the *fin-de-siècle* shift away from agrarian ideology, yet its Victorianism is inescapable. Eliot urges readers to apply mid-century attitudes and standards to Hetty's character, exemplified in Martineau's claim that infanticide thrives "in the rudest country districts, where the depressed rural class seem to be only half alive in body and mind, and susceptible of animal and devilish propensities and notions accordingly" (*Daily News* Sept. 8, 1865; see also articles of Feb. 13, 1863, Sept. 30, 1865, Aug. 8, 1865, and Oct. 19, 1865). Similarly, an 1859 review of *Adam Bede* flatly states, "she bears a child and murders it . . . Of course, every-one knows that every sin under heaven is committed freely in agricultural villages" (unsigned review, *Saturday Review* Feb. 26, 1859), vii, 250-51; qtd in Carroll 75).

Although modelled after Mary Voce, ". . . a very ignorant girl who had murdered her child and refused to confess" (*Cross, Journal*, Nov. 30, 1858), a "common coarse girl, convicted of child-murder" (letter to Sarah Hennell, Oct. 7, 1859), Hetty exhibits a refined sensibility and ideological naivete that undercut Eliot's attempts to present her criminality or her sexual profligacy. Neither Hayslope nor Hetty fits these stereotypes, which is why the infanticide episode is tragic but also unconvincing. See also Perkin 50.

¹³Much has been written about the historical accuracy that characterizes *Adam Bede*. But Hetty's conviction and death sentence are anachronistic according to legal standards on and social attitudes towards infanticide at this time; Mary Voce's execution is itself an exception to legal custom. Showalter notes that infanticidal women who were committed to prison for life "were more likely to be released than any other group of the criminally insane" (59). Susan Amussen suggests a plausible rationale for this tendency: "The unwillingness of juries to convict for infanticide suggests that they saw the choice as the lesser of two evils, and that they were unable to condemn those who did not try to keep their child alive" (114). The "two evils" she refers to are infanticide

favor of abandonment, a much more passive version of what was actually Hetty's temporary absence from the infant, who quite likely would have died even had she been there at the time. Such sources as *The Magdalen's Friend* and the prominent physician Dr. Lankester agree that many infant deaths are the result of still-births or natural deaths that occur soon after birth. That "infanticide" applies equally to an unattended woman whose infant is stillborn as well as to an "intensely aggressive" murderer questions the authenticity of the statistics as well as of the concept itself. Complications caused by prematurity, poor pre-natal care, or the mother's physical immaturity could produce such consequences, as would sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), a phenomenon that continues to baffle the medical profession. Hetty Sorrel is ambitious but not mercenary: she is easily led astray, but clearly not aggressive enough to commit murder, as her passive behavior in other respects suggests.

How can the dramatic resurgence of infanticide during the nineteenth-century be reconciled with the maternal ideology that characterizes the period? "Infanticide the Sin of the Age," published in *The Magdalen's Friend* (1862), attempts to answer this question by arguing that Victorian society's "increased refinement and sensitive decorum," far from removing vice, instead exacerbates it by making concealment more necessary. In effect, society is composed of individuals who equate concealment with self-preservation or survival of the fittest, the "first law of nature": it is but a brief step from this idea to the "universal prevalence of infanticide," which for many women in an age of limited options is precisely a matter of survival.

Fallen woman literary conventions consistently indicate that the most significant component of the Victorians' madonna-harlot construct is not sexual but maternal. But class and legitimacy issues are also central. The "Infanticide" author demands, "do married women murder their offspring? Certainly not To the influence of the sin of unchastity"—that is, sex not sanctioned by marriage—is owed the full burden of a practice such as infanticide. Although such behaviors as unchastity, abandonment, and infanticide are not bound by marital status, class, gender, or economics, the stereotype which poses low-class deviance and its resulting illegitimacy against middle-class respectability—i.e. legitimacy—persists nevertheless. This strongly suggests that class and legitimacy issues, thinly disguised as maternal ideology, form the basis of madonna-harlot polarity.

If the preservation of dominant class ideology is in fact the fundamental issue underlying fallen-woman discourse, then the period's obsession with sexual management becomes not a moral issue but an economic one. The possibility prompts some disturbing questions: Does the courts' reluctance to convict for infanticide (see note 13) reflect relief at the elimination of superfluous "offspring of sin?" Is not the

parish thus relieved of the expense of another mouth to feed, the foundling hospital of another child to raise? Such ideas anticipate eugenicists' promotion of birth control for the lower classes (ca. 1900) and, later, "involuntary sterilization" of minority races. The fact that Hetty is saved from the gallows and the court's decision overturned merely by a word from Squire Arthur Donnithorne suggests the plausibility that "race suicide" is in some instances highly desirable.

The "Infanticide" article concludes on a punitive note by complaining that women charged with infanticide are rarely prosecuted because they inspire a "strong and abounding sympathy" in the courts (296). But despite the rarity of women's conviction for infanticide, no "strong and abounding" sympathy is accorded to Hetty Sorrel either by the court or public opinion, much less by her family, friends, or community. Although Eliot purports to explain this by displacing it on "those stern times" (*Adam Bede* 481) sixty years previous, the bizarre 1868 case of Hester Vaughan demonstrates that even nine years after the publication of *Adam Bede*, suspected infanticide had the power to generate the lynch mentality.²⁰

The legal system's power to prosecute women for infanticide regardless of the circumstances surrounding conception and confinement emphasizes the powerlessness of unwed mothers, particularly mothers like Hetty who are themselves orphans. In *A Brief Summary in Plain Language of the Most Important Laws Concerning Women*, Victorian feminist Barbara Bodichon writes that an unwed mother can claim support from the child's father, providing she can legally prove paternity (at the time virtually impossible, particularly when class issues were involved; few women could afford to hire a lawyer, and the medical technology did not yet exist for scientific proof), while in contrast she was required by law to support her children until they reached the age of sixteen (30). Considering the nineteenth century's rampant feminization of poverty, the rise in infanticide results more from misogynistic economic and legal systems than from the vagaries of perverted maternal ideology or "unchastity."²¹ Judith Walkowitz notes that Reform's Bastardy Clauses in effect codified the custom of sexually exploiting lower-class females by protecting "a vile aristocracy, who seduce and ruin more young girls than all the other male population put together" (35). Accordingly, by the conclusion of *Adam Bede* "that poor young man" Arthur has resumed his place at the head of the community, and the unvindicated Hetty Sorrel is dead.

The character of Hetty Sorrel, writes Dorothea Barrett, "became a kind of Frankenstein's monster" for its creator: "Created for a specific and limited purpose, Hetty breaks her confines and threatens to take over the novel. The narrator's lack of sympathy for Hetty defeats its apparent purpose—it wins readers to Hetty perhaps more than a gentler treatment would have done" (43). Alternatively, perhaps Eliot's

"apparent purpose" was to provoke readers' sympathy for Hetty, but through the only means more radical than the "maternal redemption" employed by other writers: the explicit rejection of maternal ideology.

Part of this text's ambivalence stems from the fact that, no less than the Poysers and the Hayslope community, Eliot is guilty of conveying mixed messages, and of the narrative neglect, abandonment, and infanticide of her literary "child." Like Aunt Poyser, Eliot admires Hetty's appeal surreptitiously, only to "turn away" to the ultimate rejection of narrative death: yet she also invites readers' sympathy for Hetty's victimization. Like Mary Shelley's "hideous progeny," Hetty is the central force in this novel precisely because she is so vehemently rejected, outcast, and misunderstood. Both Hetty and Frankenstein's creature are individuals posed against the community and threats to its cohesiveness, yet they are also revealed as psychological entities, and it is this quality that leads us to align sympathetically with the outcast against the community. An 1876 review of *Adam Bede* captures this quality of innocent transgression punished by an indifferent society far in excess of the crime. According to the reviewer, we are conditioned to accept human suffering that challenges "a nature lofty enough to cope," but we are not prepared for "a helpless, frivolous, childish creature, inadequate even to understand, much less to contend with, those gigantic shadows, confronted all at once by despair, crime, remorse, and destruction—things with which soft childlike foolishness and baby character had nothing to do" (*The Westminster Review*, Oct. 1876, qtd. in Holmstrom and Lerner 22-23). The setting in motion of such a "grim machinery, . . . before which we stand trembling and appalled" leaves us anguished with pity rather than inspired with the "nobler sentiments" of a truly heroic struggle. Such cosmic arbitrariness perhaps resonates more recognizably and more disturbingly in the vast majority of us who are not of heroic stature. In this sense, Hetty Sorrel is perhaps the most representative fallen woman in English literature. Ultimately neither a scapegoat nor a martyr, she symbolizes issues with which we all must contend, issues greater than the individual, issues beyond social constructs, issues fundamental to the "general human condition."

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²⁰Englishwoman Hester Vaughan emigrated to America after being abandoned by her husband and raped by another man, to whose child she subsequently gave birth. The circumstances of Hester's confinement were brutal: starving and penniless in a foreign country, she endured childbirth completely alone and without heat during a blizzard. The infant died and Hester was arrested and condemned to death for murder, but the charges were dropped after intense public pressure. The similarities between the cases of Hetty Sorrel

and Hester Vaughan, particularly the circumstances of their confinements, are striking. See Hellerstein 434-37.

²¹A sampling of mother/child legal debates of the time reveals that the primary focus was on the custody and support issues of married women, not unwed mothers. See Bodichon; Oliphant; Anon., "The Law in Relation to Women"; and Blake.

Voice of My Voice: Mutual Submission and Transcendental Potentiality in *Jane Eyre*

Nels C. Pearson

In setting out to discuss any novel that falls into the category of "fictions of female development" (as *Jane Eyre* certainly does), I am always struck by a vivid recollection of the final sentences of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*: "'It is Clarissa,' he said. For there she was" (194). Unlike the protagonist of a *bildungsroman*, Clarissa Dalloway achieves self-affirmation in terms of being, not becoming; in terms of steadfast spiritual identity amid the whirlwind of society, not in terms of individual development versus society. In short, we read Clarissa Dalloway as a woman who has established herself in spite of the cultural and textual conventions that might otherwise define and inform her identity. I submit that we owe *Jane Eyre* the same reading, and that *Jane*'s often debated submissiveness to Edward Rochester at the end of the novel is actually a strong example of Christian humility and spiritual identity that serves as a fitting closure for the theme of resurrection that the novel passionately evokes. In terms of narrative voice, I wish to argue that *Jane*'s autobiographical "I," or her passion for and ultimate possession of a narrative voice, results not from her success or failure as a woman exercising her free will as "other," but from the mutual submission to the will of God and subsequent spiritual rebirth that she and Rochester ultimately achieve.

One of the keys, I believe, to how we read, or misread, *Jane* is in how closely we examine the unexpected and intricately heteroglossic¹ final sentences of the book. *Jane* ends her narrative by quoting a letter from the resolute missionary St. John Rivers, to whom she narrowly escapes betrothal in chapter thirty-four. The final words of St. John's letter come directly from the Revelation of St. John the divine, and they comprise the penultimate sentence of the Bible: "'My master,'" he says, 'has forewarned me. Daily he announces more distinctly,—'Surely I come quickly!' and hourly I more eagerly respond,—'Amen; even so come, Lord Jesus!'" (398). As Carolyn Williams has pointed out, this ending is more than a final appeal to St. John Rivers and a seeming submission (or entrusting of narrative closure) to a male voice. It is, in fact, a coming together of many voices, and, upon closer reading, we notice that these sentences combine the voices of *Jane* (who writes the words), St. John Rivers (whose letter they come from), and St. John the Divine, whose biblical prophecy ends with them (Williams 68). Ultimately, however, the words belong to God, who originally "spoke" them to St. John the Divine during his vision of the Revelation. Thus the book closes with a voice that is at once male and female, but also with a voice that is, first and foremost, the voice of God.

Most importantly, the final words serve as an allusion to resurrection and rebirth in which the narrative authority subtly slips outward from *Jane*, to Rivers, to a Christian prophet, and, finally, to God. If *Jane Eyre* is about submission, then it is *mutual* submission that the text is ultimately working towards.

Turning from the end of the book to the first page, we notice that *Jane* begins her narrative not with the "I" that dominates the book, but with "We": "There was no possibility of taking a walk that day. We had been wandering indeed, in the leafless shrubbery an hour in the morning. . . ." (5). Curiously enough, the pronoun "we" has no clear antecedent. The penultimate chapter of the book ends with the sentence "We entered the wood and wended homeward" (395), and the "we," in this case, refers to the reunited and soon to be married *Jane* and Rochester. Thus the narrative of events leading up to *Jane*'s marriage begins and ends with "we," and the novel itself ends with a potential symbol of a mutual submission to a higher authority (God) out of which something entirely new is created. Perhaps *Jane Eyre* is not, after all, the story of an individual voice "becoming," but the story of a mutual voice restoring its prodigal halves (male and female) into a resurrected "being," so that it can "speak." But such an assertion requires a re-investigation of how we have read *Jane*, and *Jane Eyre* up until this point.

Reading *Jane* as a potential heroine of individual development has understandably inspired many feminist critics to express their dissatisfaction concerning the circumstances under which *Jane* finally returns to Rochester.² Celebrating the manner in which *Jane* has matured, for thirty-seven chapters, by rejecting a series of male authorities, these critics read her eventual marriage to the deformed Rochester as a final act of submission, typical of any Victorian woman, that seriously damages *Jane*'s emergence as a strong and independent heroine. It seems to me, however, that the majority of contemporary debates on *Jane Eyre*'s obvious vacillation between submission and self-actualization assume that we are obliged to describe the process by which she inhabits and rejects phallic authorities in terms of how successful she is in scaling the steps of social or political advancement. That is, we judge her on grounds of becoming. But if we champion *Jane*'s role as "woman becoming," then we are not only setting ourselves up to be disappointed by her ultimate submission to Rochester, but, far worse, we also are limiting *Jane* by attempting to gauge her (and the novel itself) according to traditional patterns of achievement that are both male and secular. Such a

reading is no doubt pre-figured by our culturally, historically, and textually based expectations concerning plots of ascension, and these expectations are understandably strengthened by the first quarter of the novel in which we hear *Jane* confidently beginning to exercise her right to self-expression.

I doubt that we ever see a more openly defiant and outspoken *Jane* than we do in the novel's opening scenes when she confidently lashes out at her guardian, Mrs. Reed: "'How dare I, Mrs Reed? How dare I? Because it is the truth People think you a good woman, but you are bad; hard hearted. You are deceitful!'" (33). If we expect *Jane* to establish a stronger individual voice that this, then we will end up with a jeremiad, and not a *bildungsroman*. This early impression of *Jane*'s emerging voice is one that we do not readily want to part with, but I think that is Brontë's point. Much as she does with Rochester (who eventually loses his hand, his sight, and his agnosticism before marrying *Jane*), Brontë builds *Jane* up only to demonstrate the spiritual value of humility by bringing her back "down."

It is during this same scene, and in a reference to it many chapters later, that Brontë gives us several important clues about the sources and components of *Jane*'s narrative voice, and about the problems we ought to encounter in trying to read her narrator into the role of a male protagonist in a *bildungsroman*. Notice, for example, the somber realization that *Jane* has after she finishes her aforementioned tirade. After her speech to Mrs. Reed, she stands on the same spot where Mr. Brocklehurst (that "black pillar" of male authority) had previously stood. Especially since it follows *Jane*'s strong assertion of voice, this act should function as a symbol of female authority replacing male authority (and of youth replacing adulthood), but *Jane* tells us that she was already uncomfortable with such a pattern of ascension. As the mature *Jane* recalls, "I was left there alone—winner of the field. . . . and I enjoyed my conqueror's solitude. First, I smiled to myself and felt elate; but this fierce pleasure subsided in me as fast as did the accelerated throb of my pulses" (32). She later adds that her outspokenness "gave me a sensation as if I had been poisoned" (32). Clearly, *Jane* has realized early in life that the triumph of individual voice is not much of a triumph at all.

But what gives *Jane* the impetus to break out of her silence and to speak with such defiance in the first place (here and elsewhere in the novel) may be more than just her own developing "female" voice. There is at least the suggestion of a male voice in this scene as well, and it is quite possibly that of the late Mr. Reed, whose supernatural presence had earlier caused *Jane* to scream out in the "red room." In fact, *Jane*'s description of the scene prior to her outburst against Mrs. Reed sounds curiously as if Mr. Reed is more than just in her thoughts as she prepares to speak out against her confinement:

[Mrs. Reed] dared me in an emphatic voice to rise from that place, or utter one syllable, during the remainder of the day.

"What would uncle Reed say to you, if he were alive?" was my scarcely voluntary demand. I say scarcely voluntary, for it seemed as if my tongue pronounced words without my consenting to their utterance: something spoke out of me over which I had no control. (23)

Several times throughout the novel, *Jane* refers to a "voice within" over which she has no control. On this particular occasion, the "voice within" seems mysteriously connected with a male voice, or a male presence. If there is any doubt as to whether or not a male voice is partly responsible for *Jane*'s outburst, that doubt is cleared up nearly 200 pages later, when Mrs. Reed, on her deathbed, recalls the moment and tells *Jane* about the frightening sensation she experienced upon hearing *Jane*'s unusual voice:

"I could not forget your conduct to me, *Jane*—the fury with which you once turned on me . . . the unchildlike look and voice with which you affirmed that the very thought of me made you sick I could not forget my own sensations when you thus started up and poured the venom of your mind: I felt fear, as if an animal that I had struck or pushed had looked up at me with human eyes and cursed me in a man's voice." (210, my italics)

The possibility of a muted male voice throughout *Jane*'s narrative, the theme of disembodied voices, and symbols of male and female voices merging are anything but foreign to the text of *Jane Eyre*. When *Jane* recalls how she returned to Rochester's mansion at Thornfield only to find it destroyed by fire, she adopts a third-person male perspective to compose an extended metaphor for her own sensations upon seeing the charred remains of the house:

Hear an illustration reader.

A lover finds his mistress asleep on a mossy bank; he wishes to catch a glimpse of her fair face without waking her. . . . All is still: he again advances: he bends above her; a light veil rests upon her features: he lifts it, bends lower; now his eyes anticipate the vision of beauty How hurried was their first glance! But how they fix! How he starts! He thought his love slept sweetly: he finds she is stone dead.

I looked with timorous joy towards a stately house: I saw a blackened ruin. (373)

Asking us to "hear" her "illustration," *Jane* is calling attention to her own narrative voice, and the passage that follows is an exercise in constructing an effective metaphor to capture the emotion of the scene in words. But the important thing here is that *Jane*, in one of her longest intimate addresses to the reader, decides that *male* experience, a man's emotions upon finding his lover dead, best explains her own feelings on seeing Thornfield burned and confronting the possibility that Rochester died in the blaze. The best way, or perhaps the only way, for *Jane* to describe metaphorically the female's sensation upon finding the male dead is to describe concretely the male's sensation upon finding the female dead. Thus, for *Jane*, the male and female perspectives are not unique, the loss or separation is *itself* unique, and in recounting the events leading up to the merger of male and female, she can easily slip from a female to a male perspective to describe the sensation of their union, or the anxiety of their separation. In fact, as *Jane* moves from third person male perspective back to her autobiographical "I," she poetically repeats the sentence structure (and very nearly the meter) to emphasize the fluidity of

¹For the sake of context, I have made an educated guess at the adjectival form of the term "heteroglossia," which Mikhail Bakhtin coined to describe a text, or parts of a text, in which any number of "voices" are represented in what otherwise seems to be a single layer of narrative.

²See London. According to London, while the novel is revolutionary in that it insists on portraying feminine psychology and establishing a female voice, the subject of the novel nevertheless remains *Jane*'s (or Brontë's) ultimate sub-

mission to both the literary and social conventions of the Victorian era. London contends that while *Jane* has established her literary voice, she only uses it to "document and produce the docile body approved for Victorian womanhood, a body organized for social use: to serve, to suffer, to sacrifice, to (silently) obey" (199). Also see Zare, in which the author argues that *Jane*'s final submission to Rochester makes for "painful reading" for "readers with feminist concerns" (205).

the transition: "He thought his love slept sweetly: he finds she is stone dead. I looked with timorous joy towards a stately house: I saw a blackened ruin" (373).

In chapter nineteen, Jane encounters Rochester in the disguise of a gypsy woman, and she notices something peculiar about the gypsy's voice: "The old woman's voice had changed: her accent, her gesture, and all were familiar to me as my own face in glass—as the speech of my own tongue" (177). This is actually a multiple figuration of the androgynous voice.³ Rochester speaks in a woman's voice, while Jane describes the features of Rochester's male voice that slip through his feigned female voice as "the speech of my own tongue." Not unlike her earlier experience with a "voice within," however, Jane is mystified by the sensation of feeling uncontrollably connected with a male voice. It is not until the "call scene," in which she hears the disembodied voice of Rochester crying, "Jane! Jane! Jane!," that she immediately responds to a male voice, follows its commands, and returns, without reservation, to be united with its source. Jane leaves Rochester after discovering that he is already married, but, during their separation, Jane is preparing to marry the "cold, hard, ambitious" St. John Rivers when she hears a voice on the wind calling her:

"What have you heard? What do you see?" asked St. John. I saw nothing but I heard a voice somewhere cry—"Jane! Jane! Jane!" nothing more. . . . it did not come out of the air—nor from under the earth—nor from overhead. . . . And it was the voice of a human being—a known, loved, well remembered voice—that of Edward Fairfax Rochester, and it spoke in pain and woe wildly, eerily, urgently.

"I am coming," I cried. "Wait for me! Oh, I will come!" (369)

The important thing about the call scene, as we find out in chapter thirty-four when we hear Rochester's version of the event, is that *each* lover hears the *disembodied* voice of the other. St. John's inability to hear the voice proves that Rochester is "speaking" to Jane through some medium altogether removed from the physical world. This is a symbol of the potential for *spiritual* union that was absent during the entire tenure of the couple's relationship at Thornfield.

In the gypsy scene, Rochester's disguise functions as a symbol of how his desire to be spiritually attached to Jane is actually a masquerade of the truth, which is that he is already married. Thus the symbol of the androgynous voice is suggested, but the actual spiritual coalescence of male and female cannot be realized until he confesses that what he is really proposing to Jane is adultery, and until he admits that no true union of spirit and flesh can be achieved under such circumstances. But Jane has her own impediments to admit. Looking back at her desire for Rochester at Thornfield, Jane tells us that she too was incapable of submitting to a full spiritual commitment:

My future husband was becoming my whole world He stood between me and every thought of religion, as an eclipse intervenes between man and the broad sun. I could not, in those days, see God for his creature: of whom I had made an idol. (241)

Jane's mature words remind us that, throughout much of the novel, the typically Victorian and myopically secular problems of the flesh—of social status imposing upon and impeding the physical consummation of "true love"—have clouded the minds and souls of *both* Jane and Rochester. Thus we cannot say that either Jane or Rochester is more to "blame" than the other for the couple's inability to achieve love in the spiritual sense, nor, in light of the call scene, can we say that one "gets" or "wins" the love of the other. In short, it ought to be very difficult to politicize their relationship, seeing as each must surrender his or her stubborn individuality, and sacrifice his or her role as man or woman "becoming" in secular society, to gain a higher understanding of a transcendental reality.

The best explanation, I think, for why the disembodied voices achieve chiasmic unity on the wind is that during their separation Jane and Rochester have each come to a more complete understanding of the spiritual nature of their attraction, and of human attraction in general. Once the couple is reunited, Rochester tells Jane that he has recently confessed his sins to God: "I began to see and acknowledge the hand of God in my doom. I began to experience remorse, repentance; the wish for reconciliation to my maker." Most importantly, he tells Jane that after saying his "brief but sincere" prayers, he longed for her "both with soul *and* flesh" (393, my italics). Jane, on the other hand, overcomes her concern with *individual* physical submission, and longs to embrace the mutual joys of both the spirit and the flesh, when she realizes that a marriage to St. John Rivers on terms of "principle" alone would be a "murderous martyrdom" in which "the spirit is quite absent" (356). In fact, Jane ultimately bases her decision to leave St. John on the impossibility of merging with him in both the spirit and the flesh. "I can not marry you and become part of you," says Jane (359). She rejects him not because she refuses to submit to him, but because she cannot go through with a marriage in which mutual submission is not the rule. Marriage to St. John would be a spiritual death, but marriage to Rochester is ultimately a spiritual resurrection.

Many contemporary readings of *Jane Eyre*, however, tend to disagree strongly with that statement. Critic Bonnie Zare, whose recent essay entitled "*Jane Eyre's* Excruciating Ending" gave me the initial impetus to do the research for this article, tells us that "to readers with feminist concerns, the ending may make for painful reading" (205). I would argue that it is not what side of the gender coin we call as readers that unveils the potential pitfalls of the text. Instead, it is the fact that we are so inclined to define our existence in terms of binary oppositions in the first place that makes the text seem to resist, or blunt, the ways in which we *want* to read it.

Regardless of whether we approach the text with feminist sympathies, the primary reason we read *Jane Eyre* as a blunted exercise in free will is that we come to it with pre-conceived ideas about the relative position of men and women in society, and with ready-made assumptions concerning the "conventions" of marriage. Both culturally and textually, they are plots we know all too well. But our notions about marriage, as well as our awareness of the gender hierarchy, also have some of their deepest roots in our reading of another text—the Bible. But Brontë is out to question the standard interpretation of that text as well, as her 1848 preface to *Jane Eyre* makes abundantly clear: "conventionality is not morality. Self righteousness is not religion. To attack the first is not to assail the last. To pluck the mask from the face of the Pharisee, is not to lift an impious hand to the Crown of Thorns" (1).

Indeed, one of the main conventions that Brontë attacks in *Jane Eyre* is the manner in which Victorian society (specifically the church) interpreted the Bible's approach to marriage. The popular reading was (and, for the most part, still is) that marriage is an act of free will for men, and an act of submission for women. The biblical reading that Brontë bestows on *Jane Eyre*, however, is probably related to the view of marriage as mutual submission that Paul proposes to the Ephesians when he writes that marriage is "submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God" (Eph. 5:12). But the strongest relationship between Brontë's text and arguably "unconventional" biblical stories of marriage is that between Jane and Rochester's "call scene" and the highly sensual dialogue of bride and groom that comprises the Song of Solomon.⁴ The plots of the two stories are curiously similar, as is the manner in which each tale suggests the potentiality of metaphysical discourse between lovers. According to the biblical story, Solomon and his Shulamite bride endure a "lapse and restoration" much as Jane and Rochester do. In fact, almost the entire dialogue of the Song takes place as the two separated lovers search for each other. Drawn by the *disembodied* voice of the bridegroom, the bride passionately pines away for the moment when she can be reunited with him in the flesh: "The voice of my beloved! Behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. . . . My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away" (Song 2: 8-10). What is true for the biblical lovers is true for Jane and Rochester: the disembodied voices of each "other" can establish presence only by achieving a unity that is at once physical and spiritual.

Throughout the novel, then, Brontë has been battling against convention—in a sense the conventions of her own text—to define the equality of Jane and Rochester on terms that are increasingly spiritual, and decreasingly democratic or political. As Jane says to Rochester moments before he makes his *first* marriage proposal, "I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh—it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God's

feet, equal—as we are!" (222). Although the trial of separation must occur before Jane's pleading becomes prophecy, these words anticipate the spiritual harmony that Jane and Rochester ultimately realize. In order to fully "be," or in order to achieve complete "existence" and, ultimately, presence of voice, Jane Eyre must unite herself with her spiritual equal, Edward Rochester. Thus in terms of autobiographical narrative, it is Rochester's voice (the missing male counterpart to her female voice) that Jane must find before she can achieve" her own voice—before she can truly narrate the story not simply of her life, but of *their* life. As Carolyn Williams writes, "the call scene produces the last turn in the plot, its resolution, and thus—according to the logic of first-person retrospective form—the achieved voice which generates the entire narration" (79). According to this reading, the novel is not about the development or becoming of a single voice (male or female); it is about the coming together into being of two separate voices. Instead of seeking to establish equality by tenuously balancing their relative positions on a social hierarchy that is responsible for the creation of sexual "others," Brontë's hero and heroine combine in mutual submission to God, who, by this analogy, becomes the "transcendental other." Or, to be more precise, Brontë's answer to the problem of earthly "otherness" is that if a woman and a man *mutually* submit to the understanding that all humans, regardless of sex or race, are collectively "other" even to the mere *idea* of God, then something "new" can be created. That something "new," in the unique case of *Jane Eyre*, is the text itself, or the authoritative presence of its narrative voice.

But how can we know that Jane's marriage has had such a powerful effect on her when she explains painfully little about the ten years between her marriage and her decision to begin writing her story? If we re-examine the chronology of events in *Jane Eyre*, we realize that Jane does in fact do something of great importance during these ten years. At the end of the first quarter of the novel, Jane's childhood friend Helen Burns, a mysteriously saint-like and submissive Christian, dies of consumption, and Jane writes that "for fifteen years" Helen's grave "was only covered by a grassy mound; but now a grey marble tablet marks the spot, inscribed with her name, and the word 'Resurgam'" (72). Jane is ten years old when Helen dies, at least eighteen when she is married, and at least twenty-eight when she begins her narrative. Thus, Jane erects the stone after her marriage and before she begins to write. The importance of the inscription, Latin for "I shall rise," is that it symbolizes how Jane has finally come to realize the significance of Helen Burns's steadfast allegiance to the virtues of Christian humility. In her formative years at Lowood, Jane was mystified by Helen's seeming stoicism, especially in the face of death. But Helen's final act of submission, Jane finally understands, was not a submission to her disease, but an acceptance of the will of God—an act of sacrificing one's mundane identity and status that, like Jane's own, leads to resurrection or spiritual rebirth. Jane's choice of Helen's

³I use the term *androgynous* somewhat reluctantly. Although it does describe a union of male and female, it does not necessarily imply that any new voice

or new being has been created from the synthesis of the two, nor does it imply a *spiritual*, as well as a physical, merger, both of which I mean to describe.

⁴Although the "Song" never explicitly mentions Christ or the Church, it is often thought to be an allegory for Christ, the bridegroom, ravishing his bride, the church. However, the Song of Solomon is so overtly sensual that many

churches and temples are hesitant to teach it. At one time, the Jewish faith decided that no one should read the song until he or she reaches the age of thirty (Henry 811).

epitaph is actually her first "narration" (since she chooses the words that appear on the stone), and, significantly, the brief narrative on the headstone indicates that Jane has come to a deeper understanding of the connection between submission and resurrection *before* she begins her story. Jane does not mention Helen in the final chapter, but the final words of the book arguably contain the voice of Helen as well as the other voices I mentioned previously. As St. John, anxiously awaiting a reunion with God, closes the book with the words "hourly I more eagerly respond,—“Amen; even so come, Lord Jesus,”” so too had Helen, on her deathbed, told Jane "I count the hours till that eventful one arrives which shall restore me to him, reveal him to me" (71).

In this respect, the last chapter of the book ought to read as a thematic coda, and not a note of dissonance or insignificance. Zare, however, contends that the ten-year time lapse between the wedding and the final chapter indicates that Jane feels that her life after marriage is no longer interesting enough to write about, and that she has sacrificed her individuality to Rochester. She states that the final chapter, with its "shrinking time frame, and matter-of-fact tone," suggests:

a shrinking of fulfillment and creativity . . . It is telling that Jane does not create a tapestry of words to describe her married life. In the pattern of most eighteenth-century heroines, once she is married her communication stops. The disturbing suggestion is that once women are wives, they do not see their experiences as individuated enough to merit description. (213)

I couldn't disagree more. It is exactly the influence of the marriage, or the union of two souls and voices, that has sparked Jane's creativity, for it is under these circumstances that she begins to write. Unlike nearly *all* eighteenth-century heroines, Jane ends by returning to write her own story. Once she is married, her communication *starts*. In fact, Jane suggests that her passion for narrative grows out of her passion for Rochester. As she tells us in the last chapter,

He saw nature—he saw books through me; and never did I weary of gazing for his behalf, and of putting into words the effect of field, tree, town, river, cloud, sunbeam . . . and impressing by sound on his ear what light could no longer stamp on his eye. (397)

With respect to the assertion that marriage is a "deindividuating" experience that does not "merit" description, Brontë's reply is that marriage, in the ideal spiritual sense, is *about* sacrificing our stubborn individuality and becoming

oming "one flesh." Furthermore, the reason Jane doesn't narrate the important details of her marriage is that mere everyday language can no longer tell the "facts" of her story. Or, in Jane's own words,

I have been married for ten years. I know what it is to live entirely for and with what I love best on earth. I hold myself supremely blest—blest *beyond what language can express*; because I am my husband's life as fully as he is mine. No woman was ever nearer to her mate than I am; ever more absolutely bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. (397, my italics)

In other words, the lovers discourse that they share—the impetus for Jane's narrative voice—is at once androgynous and metaphysical;⁵ it is pleasantly "other" to the entire system of language as we know it. "To talk to each other," writes Jane, "is but a more animated and audible thinking" (397). Because common speech is based on binary oppositions, it can neither penetrate nor translate their discourse, nor does their discourse require translation. We might add to Jane's description that Rochester has become "voice of her voice" (and vice versa), for within the mind or soul of each partner forever lies the voice of the other.

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harmony together, spiritually cooperating. If one is a man, still the woman part of the brain must have effect; and a woman also must have intercourse with the man in her. Coleridge perhaps meant this when he said that a great mind is androgynous. It is when this fusion takes place that the mind is fully fertilized and uses all its faculties" (170-71). Jane's gradual surrender of authority makes us aware that to accomplish this act of unity is also to achieve transcendence, and thus to submit to an idea or design beyond the circumambient world.

Sex, Violence and Identity: A. C. Swinburne and Uses of Sadomasochism

Jonathan Alexander

Considering the current rise in interest in sadomasochism and its pervasiveness in contemporary culture, it is not surprising that many Victorian critics are beginning to turn their attention to the prevalence of sadomasochistic elements in literary discourses of the previous century. Indeed, the mid to late nineteenth century witnessed an outpouring of sexually explicit literature and the publication of numerous anonymous texts which depict sexual scenes and episodes which still startle and titillate by contemporary standards. The peculiarly sadomasochistic flavor and content of much of this material has drawn attention from writers such as Steven Marcus, Camille Paglia, and James Kincaid. In *The Erotic Child*, Kincaid discusses the highly sexualized discourse surrounding spanking as it is depicted in Victorian fiction, and Paglia's *Sexual Personae* contains several chapters on Victorian writers as diverse as Emily Brontë, A. C. Swinburne, and Oscar Wilde—all of whom, according to Paglia, explore the dynamic of sex and violence, which become practically interchangeable in Paglia's reading of these writers.

In general, these critics interpret sadomasochistic elements in Victorian literature in terms of Freudian sublimation of repressed desires, which are transmuted into violent acts; for instance, a sexually frustrated adult may delight in corporally punishing a child. Thus, the repression and sublimation translate id energy and sexual impulses into socially acceptable discipline, at least by Victorian standards.

As tantalizing as such discussions may be, it is important to point out that these critics' consideration of sex and violence, particularly the way in which Paglia seems to equate the two, is not true to recent theories of sadomasochism. In fact, many contemporary theorists of the sadomasochistic deemphasize its practice as a sexual act and prefer to speak about it in terms which are hardly exclusively sexual. Noted authority Larry Townsend states that "The physical feelings [generated in a sadomasochistic encounter] are so intense as to be almost asexual, in that most scenes are carried out with neither partner having an erection" (165). Even Michel Foucault, publicly revealing his interest in s/m late in life, maintains that s/m "has as one of its main features what I call the desexualization of pleasure" (qtd. in Miller 263). "Desexualization" is essentially the stimulation of the body in non-sexual, specifically non-genital, terms; it is the understanding that bodies can meet in intense encounters without focus on or attention to genital or sexual contact. Hence, in many s/m encounters, the body is potentially "desexualized," the emphasis of the interaction moving away from genital stimulation. If s/m "erotic" encounters deemphasize their sexual aspects, then how else are we to think of these highly intimate and intense encounters? Perhaps more importantly, what is their function? What purpose do they serve, if they are not primarily forms of sexual sublimation?

A clue may be found in Geoff Mains' *Urban Aborigines: A Celebration of Leathersexuality*, which discusses

sadomasochistic activity less as a sexual practice than as a "culture" comprised of "ritual psychodrama"; according to Mains, "Many participants aren't interested in coming. It's much more of a mind space between two people" (172). The psychoanalyst Robert Stoller comments more specifically that "The art of sadomasochism is its theater: its delicious simulation of harm, of high risk" (19). The "mind space" is essentially a theatrical narrative in which two (or more) people enact "roles" (master/slave, teacher/student, etc.) and "play" at being either dominant or submissive. The narrative and role-playing aspects of the sadomasochistic encounter become, at least for the contemporary theorists, more significant than the Freudian emphasis brought to bear by Paglia and Kincaid.

We can see this shift in emphasis in one of the first books to consider critically the role and place of sadomasochism in Victorian literature, Steven Marcus's *The Other Victorians*. Marcus initially interprets Victorian tales of flagellation in very Freudian terms, ultimately suggesting that the "[flagellation] fantasy is a homosexual one: a little boy is being beaten—that is, loved—by another man. And we must conclude . . . that the entire immense literature of flagellation produced during the Victorian period . . . represents a kind of last-ditch compromise with and defence against homosexuality" (260). For Marcus, flagellation, with its "sexualizing" of the buttocks, is a complex psychological response to homoerotic feelings, in which such feelings are simultaneously allowed some kind of expression while being placed in a punitive and disapproving context. But, at the end of his discussion, Marcus must qualify his interpretation: "this literature existed for sexual purposes; yet sexuality as it is represented therein is so muted, so incoherent, so defracted and so infantile that it is virtually at the point of extinction" (264). Marcus himself seems to realize that his emphasis on Freudian interpretations of sadomasochistic scenes has its limitations, primarily because sex seems to play a role of decreasing importance. Anticipating the arguments of recent theorists, he at one point comments on the "enormous amount of conscious acting or role playing throughout the literature" (257); there are distinct and conscious narratives being employed in s/m encounters, but Marcus's failure to develop these ideas leaves much unsaid.

Picking up where he left off, the more recent emphasis on narrative and role-playing draws attention away from an individual's sublimation of desire and places it on the way in which several individuals simultaneously play with sexual and aggressive impulses and the construction of roles and identities. To wit, the s/m encounter, as erotic as it might be for some, is more about playing with and exploring id energy *within the context of a social role*. For instance, participants in a contemporary s/m scenario consciously choose various roles, such as student and teacher, and play a part; each role is carefully defined by a controlling narrative, and the encounter lasts only as long as each participant adheres to the narrative

⁵In fact, Brontë seems to have answered, by adding the dimension of transcendence, the question of androgynous discourse that would later fascinate Virginia Woolf. As Woolf writes in *A Room of One's Own*, "One has a profound, if irrational, instinct in favour of the theory that the union of a man and a woman makes for the greatest satisfaction, the most complete happiness. But . . . [I] also ask whether there are two sexes in the body, and whether they also require to be united in order to get complete satisfaction and happiness? . . . The normal and comfortable state of being is that when the two live in

or story. The two people playing teacher and student, for example, may enact a story in which the student misbehaves and the teacher decides to paddle him; in the course of the enactment, the two players get to experience natural impulses to violence and their possible consequences—but only in a highly controlled and delimited setting. The individual's impulses toward violence or sexual arousal are channeled into and remain within the confines of a definitive role or part, and they only find expression within the controlling context of the story. There seems to be little sublimation here, but rather the play of sexual and violent impulses within safe limits.

Furthermore, with the emphasis on role-playing, the s/m encounter offers the participants the opportunity to experience the ways in which roles, and thus social identities, are formed by placing limits on the exchange of pain and pleasure; to explain, a "teacher" who explores his violent impulses by administering a spanking remains a "teacher" while the individual who viciously beats another outside the agreed upon narrative context is no longer recognizably identified as "teacher." Also, the s/m encounter points out how our natural impulses toward violence and sexual arousal can be experienced safely but must be placed within an organizing context; otherwise, the free play of such impulses risks destroying the individual in uncontrolled frenzy. Identity, particularly social identity, thus becomes the recognized, not sublimated, interface between simultaneously expressing violent impulses and delimiting them. This is not to deny completely the existence of displacement and sublimation, since sexual and violent energy can be transferred from one object or person to another; Marcus may well be right to note sublimation of homosexual impulses in a schoolmaster's flagellation of a boy's buttocks. But, as more recent theorists would contend, this is not the whole story. Any number of sadomasochistic depictions reveals how sexual and violent impulses can be directly explored, expressed, and channeled in the creation of identity.

At this point it seems vital to turn to a specific text and see what a depiction of a sadomasochistic encounter has to tell us about the relative positioning of impulse and narrative. Within the confines of Victorian literature, perhaps the most logical choice is to use the work of Algernon Charles Swinburne, who is arguably the age's most famous indulger in flagellation—both self and otherwise. The coupling of sex and violence permeates his work, and it has drawn no small amount of critical commentary. Usually, however, the commentary revolves around questions of repressed homosexuality, much as we find in Steven Marcus. Camille Paglia, following a slightly different trail, comments in *Sexual Personae* on Swinburne's "recreational whippings," which are supposedly connected to "his poetic cosmology, which restores the Great Mother to power" (472).

Other critics, such as John Cassidy, are downright indignant, and they speak in very disapproving prose of "the young poet's abnormal sexuality" (70-71). Speaking of flagellation scenes in Swinburne's unfinished novel, *Lesbia Brandon*, Cassidy comments that "Swinburne was . . . expressing and exhibiting the abnormal side of his nature, the side to which, as he had threatened in *Poems and Ballads*, he would give free rein to as a retaliatory measure for his defeat in love"

(111-12). Such musing describes s/m scenes as "perverted," vengeful assault, and clues for biographical psychoanalysis. They tell us nothing, however, about the narrative aspects of these scenes—the narrative aspects which recent theorists of the sadomasochistic find to be of crucial import.

Enough of the critics . . . what of the actual scenes? Do they emphasize sublimated homoeroticism and the violent nature of sex—or are Stoller, Townsend, and Mains "correct" in their concentration on narrative? *Lesbia Brandon*, typical of Swinburne's output, will provide the testing ground for such a question.

The novel deals in large part with the "training" of young twelve-year-old Bertie by his rather sadistic tutor, Denham. Bertie must be prepped before being shipped off to Eton, and Denham is hired to whip the boy into shape—quite literally. The tutor takes great delight in applying the birch rod to young Bertie, and his enjoyment is intensified because of his thwarted love for Bertie's older sister. Rejected by the sister, Denham exacts revenge on Bertie; the narrator tells us, "Her godlike beauty was as blind and unmerciful as a god. Hating her with all his heart as he loved her with all his senses, he could but punish her through her brother, hurt her through his skin . . ." (31). Denham's flagellation of Bertie is patently sadomasochistic in the sense that it couples sexual desire with violence and the administering of pain. There is certainly sublimation here, as a Camille Paglia and a Steven Marcus would point out, but a more careful reading of such passages reveals a decreasing concern with sex and an increasing concern with narration and identity.

Most significantly, we note that the floggings do not take place outside of an organizing context. Bertie is not simply Denham's "whipping boy"; rather, he is Denham's student, and any flogging is administered within this context. There may certainly be sexual motivations, as the narrator suggests, but we are clearly told that "Nothing excessive was in effect expected of the boy; Denham had always a fair pretext for punishment and was not unjust or unkind . . ." (17). I don't want to overdetermine the word "pretext," but it is extremely important because it reveals that Bertie's floggings are framed inside a text, a story, a narrative. Denham punishes Bertie only when Bertie deserves it; each character has a role—tutor and student—and the introduction of anything sadomasochistic remains within the confines of these roles. The story thus establishes the rule that the spanking must be justified in terms of the student/teacher narrative.

After further reading, we discover that violence with sexual overtones is never gratuitous in *Lesbia Brandon*, and the sadomasochistic encounter is always legitimated by the student/teacher role and narrative; Swinburne's narrator explains thus:

These encounters did both of them some good: Herbert, fearless enough to risk, had a natural fear of pain, which lessened as he grew familiar with it, and a natural weight of indolence which it helped to quicken and lighten; Denham eased himself of much superfluous discomfort and fretful energy by the simple exercise of power upon the mind and body of his pupil: and if the boy suffered from this, he gained by it often; the talk and teaching of his tutor, the

constant contact of a clear trained intellect, served to excite and expand his own, he grew readier and sharper, capable of new enjoyment and advance. (17-18)

Any suffering is mitigated, qualified, and morally condoned by the expansion of mind which Bertie receives at the hands of Denham, whose own impulses are used to "whip the boy into shape," to train his mind for the rigors of life at Eton and, ultimately, British adult life. Thus, both student and teacher explore impulses (Bertie's fear of pain and Denham's "fretful energy") which are directly channeled into social roles (of student and teacher) in the narratively controlled exchange of pain.

The necessity of the narrative context in rationalizing the flogging leads to an important aspect of the conjunction between narrative and the sadomasochistic. Specifically, the sadomasochistic encounter takes violent and sexual drives and subsumes them under a narrative to control them. Without the control of the narrative, each participant risks dissolution and self destruction in sexual and violent impulses. In fact, the subsumation of sex and violence under a narrative control constitutes the larger narrative of *Lesbia Brandon*. To wit, any scene depicting uncontrolled violence and/or sexual desire is immediately followed by a scene in which the student/teacher narrative is reasserted to control the potential danger(s) of the free play of sex and violence.

Let us take the following episode as an example. Bertie loves water and is often found (at the beginning of the novel) swimming, unconscious of the dangers of the sea:

At . . . times he would set his face seaward and feed his eyes for hours on the fruitless floating fields of wan green water, fairer than all spring meadows or summer gardens, till the soul of the sea entered him and filled him with fleshly pleasure and the pride of life; he felt the fierce gladness and glory of living stroke and sting him all over as with soft hands and sharp lips: and under their impulse he went as before a steady gale over sand and rocks, blown and driven by the wind of his own delight, crying out to the sea between whiles as to a mother that talked with him, throwing at it all the scraps of song that came upon his lips by chance, laughing and leaping, envious only of sea-birds who might stay longer between the waves. The winter dangers of the coast were as yet mere rumors to him; but the knowledge how many lives went yearly to feed with blood the lovely lips of the sea-furies who had such songs and smile for summer, and for winter the teeth and throats of ravening wolves or snakes untameable, the hard heavy hands that beat out their bruised life from sinking bodies of men, gave point to his pleasure and a sheathed edge of cruel sympathy to his love. All cruelties and treacheries, all subtle appetites and violent secrets of the sea, were part of her divine nature, adorable and acceptable to her lovers. Why should the gods spare men? or she, as sure and visible goddess, be merciful to meaner things? why should any pity befall their unlovely children and ephemeral victims at the hands of the beautiful and eternal gods? These things he felt without thinking of them, like a child; conscious all over of the beauty and the law of things about him, the manner and condition of their life. (9-10)

The essentially violent nature of Bertie's episodes in the sea increases, and his forbidden swims are described in the contradictory terms of "lashing" and "caressing," "scourging" and "kissing." There is certainly something akin to the s/m in these descriptions in that they combine pain and pleasure, violence and (near) sexual delight, but the hyperbole suggests a lack of control—one which threatens to dissolve into unintelligibility as the metaphors proliferate, simultaneously threatening to take the life of Bertie with it. The prose itself is paradoxical, increasingly confusing, drifting toward disintegration.

In a reassertion of control, Denham always steps in to punish Bertie for indulging in his forbidden swimming jaunts:

Finding him gone, Denham had quietly taken a tough and sufficient rod and followed without a superfluous word of alarm. He took well hold of Bertie, still dripping and blinded; grasped him round the waist and shoulders, wet and naked, with the left arm and laid on with the right as long and as hard as he could. (19)

Denham not only reestablishes personal control but narrative control as well. Note the language used to describe Denham: he is focused and deliberate, and he proceeds "without a superfluous word"—in direct contrast to the hyperbolic superfluity of the description of the violent sea. The narrative of teacher and student steps in to control and tame Bertie's dangerous fascination with and natural attraction to the violence of the sea, and Bertie gets a "swishing" in the context of punishment for wrongdoing. The reader can textually perceive the "controlling" effect which Bertie's flogging has on him: "A fresh rod was applied and he sang out sharply: then drew himself tight as it were all over, trying to brace his muscles and harden his flesh into rigid resistance" (32-33). The tensing and rigidity contrast sharply with the liquid dissolution which Bertie faced in the sea. While swimming, he and his body would ultimately have blended into the sea, succumbing to its power; the whipping, on the other hand, "harden[s] his flesh into resistance," allowing Bertie to discover the boundaries of his body and the limits of what his teacher (and society) will tolerate.

In the physical punishment and the setting of such stringent boundaries, the self "hardens," learns its place, and is kept from unseeling through dissolution. Klaus Theweleit records a similar dynamic in his discussion of the training of turn-of-the-century German cadets; the boys quickly discover the power of punishment and pain to shape both their actions and their identities, such that their experience can be summed up in the formula, "I feel pain; therefore, I am" (547). Similarly in Swinburne's text, Bertie feels pain and therefore learns what he is supposed to do, not to do, and ultimately be; he discovers the limits of his role as a student and a human being. Thus, in Bertie's case, the experience of bodily pain is a metonym for the experience of one's own identity; bodily pain becomes narrative identity.

The same dynamic occurs within Denham. The tutor's thwarted desires for Bertie's sister come close to dissolving and destroying him; the narrator describes him as full of

Suffering, self-contempt, envy, and the rage of inverted love and passion poisoned in the spring. . . . A pungent sense of tears pricked his eyelids and a bitter taste was in his tongue when she went out. (31)

In his sexual frenzy, Denham picks up the rod to punish Bertie; note the intensification and transformation:

[Denham's] feet were cold; his head full of hot and sickly fancies; his heart beat as hard as [Bertie's] when they entered the library, though his will controlled and quenched the agitation of his nerves. The likeness infuriated him; but he subdued the fury; eyes of cold anger and judicial displeasure followed the boy's movements. (31-32)

The entrance into the library to administer the flogging signals the transformation in Denham from an overwhelming, body-wracking, suffering sickness to a controlled, subdued, and focused anger—which he channels with “judicial displeasure”—within the context of the student/teacher narrative. The fact that the whipping takes place in a library further underscores the textual and thus narrative nature of the episode. Ultimately, the narrative allows for a controlled release of a tension (which would otherwise destroy) and simultaneously “teaches Bertie a lesson” by curbing his dangerous impulses.

To be sure, sex and violence are powerfully present in such scenes, but they are constantly subsumed under the control of narratives and roles. In terms of the Freudian narrative, there is definitely sublimation and redirection of drives and desires in these scenes, and perhaps all I've done is simply reinterpret a Freudian interpretation. But the shift in emphasis offered by contemporary theorists of s/m is highly instructive; the s/m encounter is about the exploration of sexual and

violent impulses under narrative guidance and control. Ultimately, one can and should argue that the sadomasochistic encounter is less about sexual and violent impulses than it is about the way such impulses are controlled and contained by narrative—and the ways in which the boundaries of the social self are established and affirmed by this control.

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influence might be shown, too, but for Carlyle's virtual subsumption of the poet's blank verse, so that Shakespeare may emerge in ways that cannot be readily citable. Despite the fact that numerous passages from the plays have been noticed, others are nearly untraceably interwoven and exist merely in Carlyle's syntactic and metrical energies. These tend to be out of range of anything but our own senses of meter and prosody, or are only evident in select strains of Carlyle's language-music and in the resonance of his emphatic Anglo-Saxon word order.

Such buried insets, as they may be termed, depend less on source recognition, perhaps, than on a rhythmic awareness that seems to vanish as soon as noticed, much as Brahms will apparently echo and then resolve a half-bar of Beethoven: For the momentarily similar notes of a given sonata possess an ephemeral likeness which dissipates in the following rush of new chords, an appropriate analogy, I think, for an effect continually taking place in Carlyle's striking dramatic cadence,

especially with reference to his own possibly subconscious uses of Shakespeare's melody and chant.¹

* * * *

Of more explicit references, Shakespeare in Carlyle has produced sizable editorial commentary, especially from *Sartor Resartus* and *Past and Present*, where Carlyle's stylized incorporations are sometimes corrected, as when Dr. Altick reminds us with his italicized note, “on not of” (68) for what is really vintage Carlyle, taken from the “We are such stuff / As dreams are made” passage in *The Tempest* (4.1.156-57), a quotation that is invoked by Carlyle like a mantra on numerous occasions. Where Altick assumes “misquotation,” however, he may misconstrue the writer's spirit, because it is the very inexactness of “of” that characterizes Carlyle; and the issue is not whether quotations (if we are technically even to call them that) are “correct,” but what is the artistic gain of a given re-wording, since Carlyle's piquancy and his Gothiness depend on his right to re-cast, to alter, or to surprise us with fragments of new diction. In view of a possible exemption from rule-book grammar and orthography, it is a further question whether such editorial instruction (or its corrective spirit) is appropriately applied to a page of Thomas Carlyle—who was himself such a satirist of this very mechanism and its attendant academic procedure.

To avoid giving the appearance of showing Carlyle merely in a scribal mistake, such source notes might better serve in a glossary, unobtrusive and out of the way of being thought “inaccurate.” But at this point, the two related subjects begin to converge—one is Carlyle's built-in improvisations on melodies from Shakespeare, and the other is our scholastic method of calling them to account. An illustration of the former is Carlyle's total reforging of Horatio's “sheeted dead / Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets” (*Hamlet* 1.1.115) into “why go to Rome for Phantasms walking the streets? Phantasms, ghosts, in this midnight hour, hold jubilee, and screech and jabber” (*Past and Present* 142). Though not noted by Altick, here is captured remarkably the spirit of Shakespeare's language, where only the word “streets” is repeated literally from the poet. But where Shakespeare had paired “squeak and gibber,” Carlyle has matched it with “screech and jabber,” words that re-cast Horatio's effect, theme, and essential rhythm; and this pairing gives an inset idea of the kind of thing lying continually under the surface and nearly out of view. It is a preeminent example of Carlyle's synthesis of new forms made of ringing echo and approximations of diction, and in cases so transmuted, our private responses would seem to depend mainly on synonyms and memories of sound. Surely Carlyle depends on his reader's sonic memory, when he seizes Shakespeare's metrical vitality, unconcerned with—and even in a kind of mockery of—someone's presumed requirements for verbatim transcription.

In *Past and Present* this under-level of allusion has sometimes been missed (in the editorial sense), and I want to suggest how these following new instances may be studied,

not only as re-affirming extent, but as qualities of a style virtually beyond the reach of mechanical note-making; for these “new” citations attest to the strength of Shakespeare's influence, even when Carlyle uses such an obvious phrase as “mind's eye” (14, 17) [*Hamlet* 1.1.112; 1.2.185].

In presenting these examples in list-format, therefore, I have constructed a kind of glossary-essay for the possible special uses of any future complete edition of *Past and Present* or *Sartor Resartus*, and for the interest of any literature or language scholar to whom the subject of influence is of real metrical and derivative importance (and less a matter of merely academic likeness finding). Not cited in any edition of *Past and Present*, these examples will show further how imbued Carlyle's mind actually is, and how ready to sing with the very dynamic of his master—his own Shakespearean hero as poet; and they will indicate how much further Shakespeare really is woven in, and how subtle, and how ultimately self-applied is Carlyle's ruling idea of “the element of Shakespearean melody.”

- (1) “Hugo, in a fine frenzy,” (64) [“The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,” *Midsummer Night's Dream* 5.1.12];
- (2) “under the greenwood tree,” (71) [“Under the greenwood tree / Who loves to lie with me,” *As You Like It* 2.5.1];
- (3) “It cannot come to good,” (111) and “I do not think it can be good,” (230) [“It is not, nor it cannot come to good,” *Hamlet* 1.2.158];
- (4) “Every pitifullest whipster,” (155) [“every puny whipster gets my sword,” *Othello* 5.2.244];
- (5) “thou speakest of nothing,” (162) [“thou talk'st of nothing,” *Romeo and Juliet* 1.4.96];
- (6) “Will you bandy accusations,” (173) [“Do you bandy looks with me,” *King Lear* 1.4.84];
- (7) “Descend, O Donothing Pomp; quit thy down-cushions; expose thyself to learn what wretches feel” (181) [“Take physic, pomp; / Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel” *King Lear* 3.4.33-34];
- (8) “When the brains are out, why does not a Solecism die!” (182) [“the time has been, / That, when the brains were out, the man would die, / And there an end,” *Macbeth* 3.4.78-80];
- (9) “not for nothing,” (247) [“it was not for nothing” *Merchant of Venice* 2.2.24];
- (10) “To the core of our heart,” (247) [“in my heart's core,” *Hamlet* 3.2.73];
- (11) “And is it come to this?” (251) [“That it should come to this!” *Hamlet* 1.2.137];

More Shakespeare in Carlyle

David-Everett Blythe

I

When Carlyle announced in *Past and Present* that the English people had “the element of Shakespearean melody . . . imprisoned in their nature” (159), he might have meant inadvertently his own sensitivity to this characteristic English “element,” since even in *Past and Present*, such “melody” is deeply enough inwrought that many allusions are still not consciously noticed. But this is because Carlyle often catches the vital metrical spirit of the poet while scarcely quoting a single term verbatim—though this feature, too, may be unintentionally what he means by the “element of Shakespearean melody” (in much the same way George Eliot noted that “a national language may be instinct with poetry” [*Adam Bede* ch. 26]).

Carlyle's prose is, in fact, so thoroughly permeated with Shakespearean rhythm and re-wording that its manifest resonance of tag-lines and paraphrase must be ranked alongside his uses of biblical and classical mythology and his much-indebted Germanic studies. The full extent of Shakespearean

¹There is a larger realm of “sounds like” where nothing is really provable; we can but sense old chords ringing momentarily, as if Carlyle's style consisted

of an Anglo-Saxon urgency and an Elizabethan luster—all charged with a mighty German energy.

(12) "then whistle him down the wind to desperation and bitter death," (280) ["I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind / To prey at fortune," *Othello* 3.3.261];

(13) "it is a stern pilgrimage through burning sandy solitudes, through regions of thick-ribbed ice," (287) ["to reside / In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice; / To be imprisoned in the viewless winds," *Measure for Measure* 3.1.121-123];

(14) "Doomsday in the afternoon?" (291) ["executed in the afternoon?" *Measure for Measure* 4.2.129].

* * * *

This listing of additional allusions lends more proof to G. B. Tennyson's suggestion that Carlyle "paraphrases and echoes wherever he goes" (261)—providing, as has been implied, that we readers go with him, since echo and paraphrase require a kind of a previous attunement from us—and would presumably require a fairly extensive reading in much of the literature Carlyle read. For in that regard, there exists a kind of holistic context for all of Carlyle's work, wherein his insertions and allusive reverberations either resound with the rhythms of literature that he studied, or, on the other side, would ring less melodically (and even less naturally), I assume, for anyone reading Carlyle isolated from his own great literary-historical framework.² Any culling of his partial quotations as "mistakes" only, would suggest, therefore, not a slight disengagement from this important central energy of Thomas Carlyle.

II

Carlyle's literary uses present another paradox, however, for just as no other important prose-artist incorporates into his work so much of the literature which vivified his genius, so no style in English is, for all these borrowings, so strikingly original. To some extent, then, Carlyle is the more Shakespearean (as surely more "Carlylean") for Shakespeareizing his tenable source—much as Shakespeare drew wholesale from Plutarch, for example, setting in precisely what fit, in the manner of a Goethean-Carlylean workman, whose only formula is instinct, and who borrowed organically from any source, including his own imbuing, altering memory; and for that reason no kind of critical lien should exist, since what was borrowed was transfigured either via the new context or via some succinct and poetic change in the wording.³

In Carlyle, though, literary influence has its outer form of direct quotation, and its inner essence of hints and inweavings whose principal effects are, as I have said, metrical, for it is the rhythm of Shakespeare, together with Germanized word order and biblical pith, that Carlyle seems (probably subconsciously) to dye into his own inimitable accent, which he calls "a kind of chanting": For "all men have accents of their own," he says, "though they only notice that of others" ("Hero as Poet" 78).

To appraise fully the true outer limits of Carlylean rewording is perhaps not possible, because Shakespeare is synchronized into Carlyle's prose, and virtually beyond a

really comprehensive citation; and not even computer searches are as yet programmable to capture a set of nuances whose existence the searching scholastic readers may not have observed. In further proof, the well-studied *Sartor Resartus* discloses several more uncited passages, not yet identified for the rich insights they offer of Carlyle's mind, his reading, and his prose style.

(1) "heaven-kissing coruscations," (33) ["new-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill" *Hamlet* 3.4.59];

(2) "with all my heart," (55) [*Othello* 1.3.194; 1.3.278; 5.2.34];

(3) "through the cannon's throat," (178) ["even in the cannon's mouth" *As You Like It* 2.7.153];

(4) "overheaped with shreds and tatters," (181) ["a king of shreds and patches" *Hamlet* 3.4.102];

(5) "'To me, in this our life,'" (194) ["And this our life" *As You Like It* 2.1.15];

(6) "Most true it is," (196) ["'tis most true," *Hamlet* 3.1.21];

(7) "to play fast-and-loose" (202) ["that were fast and loose," *Love's Labor's Lost* 1.2.57];

(8) "that we can prate of their whereabouts," (257) ["the very stonies prate of my whereabouts," *Macbeth* 2.1.58];

(9) "with the mind's eye," (264) ["mind's eye," *Hamlet* 1.1.112];

(10) "wisely and well," (272) ["not wisely but too well," *Othello* 5.2.344];

(11) it skills not," (274) (Elizabethan idiom) [*The Taming of the Shrew* 3.2.132, *Twelfth Night* 5.1.288, *Henry the Sixth, Part Two* 3.1.281].

Works Cited

Carlyle, Thomas. *Past and Present*. Ed. Richard D. Altick. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965. (In this edition are cited the majority of references to Shakespeare's poetry: pp. 21, 29, 68, 75, 84, 103, 157, 169, 177, 192, 205, 252, 287, 293 [2].)

_____. *Sartor Resartus*. Ed. Charles Frederick Harrold. New York: Odyssey, 1937.

Tennyson, G. B. *Sartor Called Resartus*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1965.

Thomas More College

modification, of Carlyle's: "He never could lack invention to alter or improve a popular narrative; but he did not wantonly vary from it, when he knew that, as it was related, it would so well apply to his own great purpose" (The Twelfth Lecture").

Books Received

Carpenter, Scott. *Acts of Fiction: Resistance and Resolution from Sade to Baudelaire*. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1996. Pp. xvii + 172. \$35.00 (cloth), \$16.95 (paper). "The present volume undertakes to investigate literary reactions to this cultural shift [that began around the time of the French Revolution]. It focuses on an expanded revolutionary period, ranging from the disintegration of classical models in the second half of the eighteenth century to what might be thought of as the institutionalization of the modern after the middle of the nineteenth. In this space, which both separates and joins two ages, are located works of capital importance: those of Laclos, Sade, Balzac, Nerval, and Baudelaire, among others. These are authors of transition who, confronted with a foundering classical imagination, are unsure how to respond. Nevertheless, in their writings these transitional figures reveal the modes of reaction available to them, as well as the rhetorical gambits they developed for coming to terms with a nascent modernity. Their strategies are invariably plays for power; as such they highlight the articulation between language and authority, between narrative and meaning" (xvi-xvii).

Gibson, Mary Ellis. *Epic Reinvented: Ezra Pound and the Victorians*. Ithaca & London: Cornell UP, 1995. Pp. xvii + 240. \$37.50. "In tracing Pound's connections to his Victorian predecessors, I show how the attempt at writing a postromantic epic engaged at once questions of art and social order and led directly to the problem of Pound's politics. It is not simply that politics impinged thematically on poetry but that, for Pound, problems of poetic form had political as well as poetic consequences. These I explore as they are worked out in *The Cantos*, examining both the formal problems of the poem's increasing need for order and the politics of the poem's utopian vision. My concern is to show how the aesthetic Pound is the political Pound, how Pound the visionary is Pound the historian" (x).

Kipling, Rudyard. *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling Vol. 3: 1900-10*. Ed. Thomas Pinney. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 1996. Pp. xii + 482. \$49.95. More than 300 letters to such recipients as Joseph Conrad, Stanley Baldwin, Conan Doyle, William Henley, Edmund Gosse, Sarah Orne Jewett, H. G. Wells. Includes a chronology for the years 1900-1910, a register of names and correspondents, illustrations.

Lambert, Ellen Zetzel. *The Face of Love: Feminism and the Beauty Question*. Boston: Beacon P, 1995. Pp. xiii + 236. \$24.00. "... how did English women writers in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, at a time when women writers were for the first time writing novels for a largely female audience, deal with the beauty question in presenting their heroines? That was a question I could ask. And with that question in mind, I began writing this book" (xiii).

Ledger, Sally and Scott McCracken, eds. *Cultural Politics at the Fin de Siècle*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995. Pp. xiii + 329. \$59.95 (cloth), \$18.95 (paper). Includes

Terry Eagleton, "The Flight to the Real"; Sally Ledger, "The New Woman and the Crisis of Victorianism"; Laura Chrisman, "Empire, 'Race' and Feminism at the *Fin de Siècle*: The Work of George Egerton and Olive Schreiner"; Stephen Regan, "W. B. Yeats and Irish Cultural Politics in the 1890s"; Ed Cohen, "The Doubled Lives of Man: Narration and Identification in Late Nineteenth-century Representations of Ec-centric Masculinities"; Marcia Ian, "Henry James and the Spectacle of Loss: Psychoanalytic Metaphysics"; Ruth Robbins, "A Very Curious Construction": Masculinity and the Poetry of A. E. Housman and Oscar Wilde"; Anne Janowitz, "The Pilgrims of Hope: William Morris and the Dialectic of Romanticism"; Lynn Hapgood, "Urban Utopias: Socialism, Religion and the City, 1880-1900"; Alexandra Warwick, "Vampires and the Empire: Fears and Fictions of the 1890s"; Carolyn Williams, "Utopia, Limited: Nationalism, Empire and Parody in the Comic Operas of Gilbert and Sullivan"; Judith Halberstam, "Technologies and Monstrosity: Bram Stoker's *Dracula*"; Scott McCracken, "Postmodernism: A Chance to Reread?"; Regenia Gagnier, "Is Market Society the *Fin* of History?" plus an intro., select bibliography and index.

Lockwood, David. *Kilvert, The Victorian: A New Selection from Kilvert's Diaries*. 1992. Mid Glamorgan, Wales: Seren, 1994; dist. in U.S. Dufour Editions, Chester Springs, PA, 19425-0007. Pp. 339. \$25.00 (paper) The selections run from January 1870 to March 1879.

Nardin, Jane. *Trollope & Victorian Moral Philosophy*. Athens: Ohio UP, 1996. Pp. 172. \$34.95. "... Victorian moral philosophers disagree about a variety of important issues and attack one another's views with a great polemical zeal. But they tend to share the belief that the ordinary Englishman's morality is a jumble of more or less irrational prejudices inherited from the past, in need of drastic reexamination. And most believe that an improved morality founded upon basic truths about human nature can be devised. With impressive sophistication, Trollope's novels consider their criticisms and defend England's moral tradition against them" (2-3).

Nunn, Pamela Gerrish. *Problem Pictures: Women and Men in Victorian Painting*. Aldershot, Hants: Scolar P, 1996. Pp. xii + 172. \$49.95. "... a detailed consideration and analysis of the significance of the 'woman question' on critical judgements, pictorial trends, individual reputations and specific works is overdue, and this is what these essays attempt, in primary relation to painting. Artists who contributed to the Victorian discourse of gender, from the famous names of the period to those jobbers who have been all but lost in the mists of time, are brought into play with the growing tension between tradition and modernity, the anxiety and excitement surrounding women's desire for emancipation, and the fundamental power that pictures—especially in fine-art form—exerted over the Victorian mind and imagination" ([1]).

²Carlyle's uniqueness of style must partly explain why historians of the French Revolution never seem to have read his brilliant *The French Revolution*.

³Coleridge says of Shakespeare's use of sources what might be said, with

Pike, E. Holly. *Family and Society in the Works of Elizabeth Gaskell*. American University Studies, Series 4; English Language and Literature Vol. 174. New York, Washington/Baltimore, San Francisco, Bern, Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Vienna, Paris: Peter Lang, 1995. Pp. viii + 165. \$37.95. "I hope to demonstrate that while Gaskell begins her career as a writer with the belief that the family is the ideal social structure, she examines this belief with increasing scepticism as her career progresses. . . . I will argue that the change in Gaskell's attitudes about the family is a result of the realist method of her fiction, for as she continues to examine her society in order to depict it, Gaskell moves from using realist fiction as a vehicle for social reform to using it as a means to social and historical understanding" (1).

Shteir, Ann B. *Cultivating Women, Cultivating Science: Flora's Daughters and Botany in England 1760 to 1860*. Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. Pp. xi + 301. \$29.95. "Of special interest in my study, Flora's English daughters . . . wrote about botany, and their books, essays, and poems are a rich cultural resource for chronicling the experiences of young girls, women, and mothers in the science culture of their day" (4).

Smith, Lindsay. *Victorian Photography, Painting and Poetry: The Enigma of Visibility in Ruskin, Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995. Pp. xiv + 245. \$49.95. "This book . . . explores the representation of a desire to take visual perception 'literally' as played out in the art theory of Ruskin, the early poetry of William Morris, and in paintings of the Pre-Raphaelites. The argument brings together, around debates upon Pre-Raphaelitism, writers and painters for whom it became necessary to restore an interest in the physiological conditions of perception. In so doing, it demonstrates how these writers, for whom a simple acceptance of the metaphorical dominance of the visual sense was insufficient, radically interrogate the means by which vision is made possible. In order to explore the context of such interrogation, the book engages the material circumstances of seeing mediated by optical instruments and by the hugely influential discourse of photography" (2).

Terry, R. C. ed. *Robert Louis Stevenson: Interviews and Recollections*. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 1996. Pp. xxxi + 216. \$24.95. "For the reader's convenience the volume . . . follows a chronological order as far as possible, with reminiscences from each phase of Stevenson's life. Each segment is introduced with relevant details about the contributor and is followed by any necessary explanations or significant additional information. Prefatory material indicates location of excerpts by page numbers of the relevant edition. In all cases extracts are reproduced exactly from the originals" (xxvii). There are 44 extracts, an introduction, chronology, suggested further readings, and an index.

Victorian Women Poets: A Critical Reader. Ed. Angela Leighton. Oxford & Cambridge (U.S.): Blackwell, 1996. Pp. xvi + 329. £45.00/\$50.00 (cloth), £12.99/\$19.95 (paper). Contents: Tricia Lootens, "Hemans and Home: Victorianism, Feminine 'Internal Enemies,' and the

Domestication of National Identity"; Sandra M. Gilbert, "From *Patria* to *Matria*: Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Risorgimento"; Joyce Zonana, "The Embodied Muse: Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* and Feminist Poetics"; Stevie Davis, "The Mother Planet [Emily Brontë]"; Kathleen Blake, "Armgarth—George Eliot on the Woman Artist"; Gill Gregory, "Adelaide Procter's 'A Legend of Provence': The Struggle for a Place"; Jerome J. McGann, "Christina Rossetti's Poems"; Dolores Rosenblum, "Christina Rossetti's Religious Poetry: Watching, Looking, Keeping Vigil"; Terrence Holt, "Men sell not such in any town': Exchange in *Goblin Market*"; Chris White, "The Tiresian Poet: Michael Field"; Linda K. Hughes, "'Fair Hymen holdeth hid a world of woes': Myth and Marriage in Poems by 'Graham R. Tomson' (Rosamund Marriott Watson)"; Katharine McGowran, "The Restless Wanderer at the Gates: Hosts, Guests and Ghosts in the Poetry of Mary E. Coleridge"; Dorothy Mermin, "The Damsel, the Knight, and the Victorian Woman Poet"; Angela Leighton, "Because men made the laws': The Fallen Woman and the Woman Poet"; Susan Conley, "'Poet's Right': Elegy and the Woman Poet"; Isobel Armstrong, "'A Music of Thine Own': Women's Poetry—an Expressive Tradition?"; Margaret Reynolds, "'I lived for art, I lived for love': The Woman Poet Sings Sappho's Last Song."

Wagner, Jennifer Ann. *A Moment's Monument: Revisionary Poetics and the Nineteenth-Century English Sonnet*. Madison, Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson UP; London: Associated UPs, 1996. Pp. 254. \$38.50. ". . . [T]he history of the sonnet in the nineteenth century is more than a decorative strand in this century's textual history. By offering detailed rereadings of some of the major sonnets written during the romantic [*sic*] and Victorian periods, my purpose is to demonstrate that what became a general obsession with the form throughout the nineteenth century is the record of these poets' engagement with the problems of subjectivity, with the relationship of poetic form to temporality, and with the infiltration of aestheticist idealism into the literary ideology.

Furthermore, this study locates the rise and popularity of a particular *mode* of the sonnet with the entry of Wordsworth into a sonnet-writing arena that already existed at the opening of the nineteenth century" (12).

Warry, John. *Warfare in the Classical World: An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Weapons, Warriors and Warfare in the Ancient Civilisations of Greece and Rome*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1995. Pp. 224. \$19.95 (paper). Includes "65 color photographs, 90 color illustrations, 210 black-and-white illustrations, 70 color and black-and-white maps and battle plans, glossary, [and] index."

Weintraub, Stanley. *Shaw's People: Victoria to Churchill*. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1996. Pp. 255. \$29.50. Chapters on Queen Victoria, Oscar Wilde, William Booth, H. L. Mencken, Edith Adams, Yeats, James Joyce, Frank Harris, T. E. Lawrence, Sean O'Casey, Siegfried Trebitsch, Winston Churchill. "A man of more contradictions than most of us, he is seen here in each relationship as a somewhat different Shaw" ([1]).

Victorian Group News

Announcements

The Sixth Annual Conference on Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers will be held 28-30 March 1997, at the University of California at Davis. This conference, established by graduate students, stresses the importance of non-canonical women writers, and has an interest in interdisciplinary concerns, specifically theological, political, legal, medical, and scientific. Inquiries to Jackie Dello Russo, Jennifer Malenky, or Sonya Wozniak, English Department, University of California Davis, Davis, CA 95616. E-mail jadellorusso@ucdavis.edu

The Nineteenth-Century Studies Association sixteenth annual Conference—"Ordinary People, Everyday Lives"—will be held 20-22 March 1997 at Davidson College, Davidson, North Carolina. The conference will explore the artistic, political, philosophical, scientific, literary, theatrical, religious, economic, social, and cultural issues surrounding the interpretation, consideration, and representation of common people and commonplace events that characterized life and society in the nineteenth century. Proposals for 20-minute papers should be accompanied by a brief curriculum vita and a three-sentence abstract by 1 November 1996 to program director: Phylis Floyd, Kresge Art Center, Dept. of Art, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1119. For arrangements contact location director—Carole Kruger, Dept. of French, P. O. Box 1719, Davidson College, Davidson, NC 28036; ph. 704-0892-2457; E-mail cakruger@ davidson.edu.

Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly invites submissions for its 20th anniversary issues, to appear in 1997. Though articles on any theoretical, generic, historical, or cultural aspect of lifewriting are welcome, the editors are especially interested in essays which extend the range of biography, autobiography, hagiography, oral and group history into other fields and disciplines—multicultural studies, regional and national studies, literary history, film theory, social science, science, and technology, marketing and media studies, medicine, law, or any other suitable frame. Manuscripts should be 2500 to 7500 words. Please submit 2 copies; the author's name should not appear anywhere on either copy, but in the cover letter. Decisions about publication will be received within 3 months and comments are provided for all essays received. Submissions to: Center for Biographical Research, c/o Department of English, 1733 Donaghho Road, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822; biograph@hawaii.edu, at 808-956-3774.

Timothy A. J. Burnett and Rikky Rooksby are working on a new edition of Swinburne's unfinished novel *Lesbia Brandon*. They would be grateful to hear from anyone with any new information about the novel and its composition, especially any manuscript fragments of unpublished fiction by Swinburne, and any citations in letters by Swinburne, his circle, Gosse and Wise, etc. Please send material to: Timothy A. J. Burnett, Dept. of Western Manuscripts, The British Library, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG, U. K.

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