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Cover: A caricature of Charles Darwin by Sanbourne published in *Punch* 11 December 1875.

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Death By Drowning

Dennis Sobolev

In the notes to his edition of Hopkins's poetry Robert Bridges writes:

["The Wreck of the Deutschland"] stands logically as well as chronologically in the front of his book, like a great dragon folded in the gate to forbid all entrance, and confident in his strength from past success. This editor advises the reader to circumvent him and attack him later in the rear; for he was himself shamefully worsted in a brave frontal assault. . . . (HP 104)

Since then Bridges's "dragon in the gates" has become one of the most popular metaphors of Hopkins criticism; all Hopkins critics agree that "The Wreck" is indeed difficult and often abstruse. At the same time, most critics believe that the difficulties of this poem are purely technical; they maintain that the content of the poem is completely orthodox, or, at least, is congenial with orthodox Catholicism. In different periods numerous critical works argued for such an untroubled reading of the poem: John Pick's book (40-51) in the thirties, Philip M. Martin's meticulous study of the poem in the fifties (1957), the concordant readings collected by Milward and Schoder in the seventies (1976), and Elanor McNees's analysis in the nineties (78-100). Moreover, this orthodox reading of the poem as an *exemplum*, as the restatement of a Catholic dogma in sensuous terms, has become so unshakable that nowadays many critics consider this interpretation of "The Wreck" as an established fact, and, consequently, they address only the technical questions of the symbolic structures and poetic devices used in the poem.

Nevertheless, a few critics, Kenneth Burke and J. Hillis Miller among them, have challenged this reading of the poem as an *exemplum*. Stressing the passion and poignancy that permeate the poem, they suggested that the subject of the poem is Hopkins's own existential experience along with (or even rather than) a Catholic dogma. J. Hillis Miller, for example, writes:

Nor can there be any doubt that in "The Wreck of the Deutschland" Hopkins is speaking of his own wreck in the sense of personal disaster, fragmentation, or blockage. . . . Hopkins's experience of himself as a wreck was associated with his sense of impotence, with his inability ever to finish anything or to "breed one work that wakes," as in a moving late letter: "And there they lie and my old notebooks and beginnings of things, ever so many, which it seems to me might well have been done, ruins and wrecks" (L-III, 255) (247)

In my view, however, this suggestion does not conform with the biographical evidence. Hopkins's "sense of impotence" and his self-representations as a wreck belong to a much later period than the time of the composition of "The Wreck of the Deutschland." For the first time Hopkins explicitly mentions his "inability ever to finish anything" in the letter to Bridges

written in March 1881 (LI 124); and despite apparent ups and downs, only in the Dublin period did Hopkins begin to feel that his life was a failure. His letter to Baillie, which Miller quotes above, was written in 1885, ten years after "The Wreck of the Deutschland" and the line which Miller cites before it belongs to the sonnet "Thou Art Indeed Just, Lord," written in 1889, shortly before Hopkins's death.

But "The Wreck" was composed in a completely different period: it was begun in December 1875 and completed during the first half of 1876; it was written a year after Hopkins's *Journal* with its ubiquitous light and its celebration of the beauty of nature (the last entry of the *Journal* dates from February 1875). In other words, "The Wreck" was written in the Welsh period; and Hopkins's biographers tend to agree that this period was one of the happiest and the most serene periods in his life. In his letters to his mother, Bridges and Baillie written simultaneously with (or shortly after) the poem nothing suggests that he already considered himself as a wreck. And, finally, the critic must remember that "The Wreck" was followed by the sonnets of 1877-1878 with their ecstatic celebration of divine presence in nature, and that the "terrible sonnets" were still far ahead.

Thus, Miller's straightforward approach to the problem of the identification of a personal undercurrent in "The Wreck" is misleading. At the same time, in my view, Miller is right with regard to the presence of this undercurrent. Moreover, his failure to identify it stems from objective circumstances: in 1985, when Miller's chapter on Hopkins was written, this problem could not be successfully dealt with. However, during the last decade the situation has changed. In 1989 Norman H. MacKenzie published Hopkins's early notebooks, and in 1992 Robert Martin's detailed and comprehensive biography of Hopkins appeared. In the light of these books, the personal undercurrent of "The Wreck" can be named: its name is Digby Dolben.

Hopkins met Digby Dolben, a cousin of Robert Bridges, in Oxford in February 1865. Their acquaintance was immediately followed by a rapidly growing sense of intimacy, which was almost unique in Hopkins's life. No wonder, for, as Hopkins biographers have shown, Digby Dolben was a mirror image, an alter ego of Hopkins. On the basis of Bridges's posthumous introduction to Dolben's poems (i-xcvi), Alison G. Sulloway has pointed out that the portrait of Dolben depicted by Bridges is strikingly similar to that of the young Hopkins (50-51); she says that the "retrospective portrait of Hopkins could have been substituted for Bridges's retrospective portrait of Digby Dolben" (51). Furthermore, the similarity between them was not restricted to appearance; it was internal as well as external.

This similarity was cogently shown for the first time by Paddy Kitchen in her biography of Hopkins (62-103). Fifteen years later Robert Martin's detailed comparison between Dolben and the young Hopkins dispelled the last doubts with regard to the subject (80-120). The similarities are numerous.

At the time of their acquaintance, Hopkins was a student at Balliol, Oxford; and Dolben was going to enter Balliol the next year. Both were passionately religious, and their religious views coincided. As Martin puts it, they "were Tractarian in belief, Ritualist in practice, and so devoted to the Virgin that either might have incurred the charge of Mariolatry that Bridges leveled at Dolben" (93). Besides, both of them practiced asceticism in different forms (85, 94), both adored Savonarola (86; see also LIII 17-18) and dreamed of a religious renaissance in England.

In relation to mundane affairs, they were no less similar. Both of them loved poetry passionately; both were practicing poets; the attitude of both towards the main subject of their poetry, religion, was extremely personal and passionate. And although there is a marked difference between the levels of their poetic performance, their poetic techniques were similar: both the young Hopkins and Dolben treated abstract religious themes in sensuous terms. In other words, though both of them were still Tractarian, their writings exhibited a conspicuous similarity to Catholic poetry. Likewise, their views and tastes were similar; and this similarity comprised even minor predilections: both Hopkins and Dolben, for example, disliked sports and were extremely fond of open-air bathing (83). In short, as Martin puts it, Hopkins's new friend "shared nearly every idea and emotion that was dear to him" (92). Dolben was his *alter ego*; and it is more than plausible that such a sensitive person as Hopkins was perfectly aware of this invisible thread of similarity that connected him to Dolben.

There was one more dimension to this similarity: the problem of homosexuality. The unabridged edition of Hopkins's early notebooks (N), published in 1989, leaves no doubt that Hopkins had a homoerotic leaning. And although the degree of Hopkins's awareness of his latent homoeroticism is not clear, the fact that he always felt guilty and even punished himself for his attraction to masculine beauty seems to indicate a certain level of self-awareness. In the case of Dolben, homosexuality was much more explicit. In his poems Dolben incessantly extols the masculine beauty of Christ and addresses him with words of love which are hardly compatible with the conventions of religious poetry. In one of his poems, for example, Dolben addresses Christ as follows: "Thou my own Beloved / Take me home to rest; / Whisper words of comfort, / Lay me on Thy Breast" ("Homo Factum Est"; Dolben 2). Finally, a considerable part of Dolben's poems, moreover, are related to his love for his friend Martin Gosselin; and there are serious reasons to suspect that this love was not restricted to poetry (Martin 89-91). In any case, Dolben was perfectly aware of his homosexuality, whether potential or actual.

Thus, both Hopkins and Dolben had intense and convoluted homoerotic feelings; and, willy-nilly, these feelings complicated their relationship. On the one hand, because of his apparent homoerotic tendency, Hopkins's fascination with Dolben could not remain entirely on the level of friendship. And the fact that Hopkins's notes written during Dolben's stay at Oxford are replete with the unusual sense of guilt indicates a certain extent of awareness of the erotic side of this friendship. On the other hand, Dolben, a homosexual himself, was unusually perceptive of the erotic implications of Hopkins's

affection for him, implications that might have passed unnoticed by Bridges or Coles. And it seems that being perspicacious with regard to the nature of Hopkins's feeling (maybe even more than Hopkins himself), Dolben hastened to make clear his own indifference. However, all this can be only guessed.

It is clear that after Dolben leaves Oxford, Hopkins's poetry undergoes a radical change both in tone and in subject matter. A brief epigraph "Love me as I Love Thee. . .," written in March 1865, already foreshadows this change: it describes the pain of unhappy love. The poems that follow this epigraph are concordant with it: their main themes are rejected love and separation. These poems are permeated with pain and grief: after the separation from Dolben Hopkins writes his so-called "sonnets of 1865," the poems which for the first time foreshadow his "terrible sonnets." These sonnets of 1865 include a sequence of love sonnets, which is called "The Beginning of the End" and has a transparent subtitle; under the main title of the sequence Hopkins writes in brackets: "a neglected lover's address to his mistress." For a while, the theme of rejected love becomes central to Hopkins's poetry.

It seems that one of the sonnets of 1865 is explicitly addressed to Dolben. About this sonnet ("Where art thou friend, whom I shall never see. . .") Sulloway remarks that it "express[es] some private grief beyond containment" (52). As early as 1937 Humphry House, the first editor of Hopkins's diaries, suggested (xxi) that this poem is related to Dolben. In 1944 this conjecture was reiterated by Eleanor Ruggles (71), in 1948—by Iyengar K. R. Srinivasa (30). In 1949, however, this hypothesis was cautiously questioned by Gardner (v.ii, 79). Nonetheless, in 1972, Sulloway, ignoring Gardner's objections, pointed out once again the relation between the sonnet and Dolben (52). A bit later the Dolben hypothesis was challenged by Rudy Bremer (78-89) in his thesis published in 1978; but in the same year this hypothesis was foregrounded by Paddy Kitchen in her biography of Hopkins. A few other critics also considered Bremer's refutation as vulnerable; it is their resistance that may have made Bremer reiterate his objections in 1980. But this second attack on the Dolben hypothesis was convincingly refuted by Andrew Hickman. Hickman's conclusion was that despite Bremer's supposed refutations the question was still open. And, in any case, whether this sonnet was addressed to Dolben or not, it is more than plausible that its unusual grief is closely associated with the separation from Dolben.

Nonetheless, hope does not die out immediately. After Dolben leaves Oxford, Hopkins begins to write endless letters to him, but he gets no answer. And then Hopkins decides to use his friend Bridges as an intermediary; in August 1865 Hopkins writes to Bridges: "Give my love to [Coles] and Dolben. I have written letters without end to the latter without a whiff of answer" (LI 1). It seems that when he wrote this, Hopkins still hoped that there was an objective (and therefore a consoling) reason that prevented Dolben from writing to him, and that Bridges might explain this reason. But there was none, save for Dolben's complete indifference towards him. And Hopkins prohibits himself not only from writing but even from thinking about Dolben. Later on (in October 1865) he will write in his notes: "Running on in thought last night

unseasonably against warning on to the subject of Dolben, and today and some temptation" (N 192).

Hopkins never met Dolben again. Nevertheless, two years after their only meeting, Dolben changed Hopkins's life once more. In June 1867 Digby Dolben drowned. He was crossing the river with a boy by the name of Walter Prichard, whom he had taught to swim, on his back. Martin describes Dolben's death as follows:

Together they started back across the stream, then Dolben appeared to have a cramp, and Walter noticed that the water was above Dolben's nose. They both sank beneath the surface, and Walter felt Dolben's hand on his shoulder trying to help him. . . . Forty years later Prichard said simply, 'He died trying to save me.' (160)

For any reader, whether Christian or not, the last sentence has clear Christian overtones. The man who died in order to save, especially to save an innocent child, was turned by his death itself into a Christ-figure. Hopkins's earthly and heavenly loves became related.

Hopkins learned about the death of Dolben on 18 July 1867 from Cole's letter (J 149). He never described explicitly the impact of this letter on him; and this reticence is easily explicable, since, as has been mentioned above, Hopkins refused even to think about Dolben. Yet this impact can be guessed from circumstantial evidence. After July 18 the entries in Hopkins's *Journal* undergo a radical change: eloquent verbal landscapes which precede the mention of the death of Dolben make way for brief remarks: "July 19. Dull and threatening; a little rain and sun. / July 20. Dull and threatening; a little rain; showers at night. . . . / July 24. Fair. / July 25. Fair, but threatening in afternoon. / July 26 Rain." (J 149). It seems that Hopkins was almost unable to write. The recurrent word "threatening" is also worth noting. This word is not one of Hopkins's favorites; and the permanent feeling of threat that Hopkins registers tells more about his own condition than about the weather he describes.

A month later Hopkins writes to Bridges: "I looked forward to meeting Dolben and his being a Catholic more than to anything. . . . You know there can very seldom have happened the loss of so much beauty (in body and mind and life) and of the promise of still more as there has been in his case—seldom I mean, in the whole world, for the conditions wd. not easily come together" (LI 16-17). Hopkins represents Dolben as a unique unity of the exquisite beauty of the body and the mind; his description of Dolben reminds the reader of Renaissance sonneteers. Furthermore, in order to estimate the degree of Hopkins's affection, one should bear in mind that Dolben's

virtues were often doubted by both his contemporaries and subsequent critics (Martin, for example, explicitly dislikes Dolben [80-97]). And, therefore, Hopkins's letter quoted above tells much more about his own feelings than about Dolben.

Even more eloquent is the intervening sentence; in apparent contradiction to the previous lines, Hopkins writes that "from never having met him [Dolben] but once I find it difficult to realize his death or feel as if it were anything to me" (LI 16). It is out of place to ask why, despite his moral and stylistic sensitivity, Hopkins chose the expression of his own indifference as the best response to the death of his friend's cousin, and why he "looked forward to meeting" a man, whom he almost did not know, "more than anything." The whole letter is strikingly inconsistent: Hopkins tries unsuccessfully to convince Bridges and himself that both Dolben and his death are nothing to him. These lines might have been written by Marcel about the death of Albertine, or by Proust himself about the death of Agostinelli. In order to understand the full force of pain and poignancy that are hidden in this passage, the reader must simply remember that Hopkins declares his indifference to the death of the person to whom he was writing endless letters without an answer, and about whom he eventually would not allow himself even to think.

A theological tragedy added to this effect. Although Dolben was going to convert to Catholicism, he delayed his conversion in order not to break completely with his family. Thus, Dolben died as a Tractarian; and for such a devout Catholic as Hopkins, this meant that he died as a half-Protestant. In addition, Dolben died without the Last Rites (confession and anointment); moreover, because of his sudden death he was unable to make a prayer of "perfect contrition," which can replace a formal confession to a priest. In total, this meant that divine will interrupted Dolben's life at its turning point, made impossible any formal religious manifestation of his spiritual development, and turned his destiny after death into an unclear and uncertain one.¹ This inevitable divine injustice had to arouse for Hopkins the torturing (and unanswerable in Dolben's case) question of theodicy. It must be stressed that what was at stake was not an abstract theological problem, but rather the destiny of a passionately religious man, of the man who died a Christ-like death, and of the man whom Hopkins loved more than he loved any other person. All this had to make the question of theodicy an obsessive one. The fact that Dolben was Hopkins's *alter ego* must have complicated Hopkins's response still further. In the last analysis, if divine justice prevented Hopkins's double from being saved, despite his passionate faith, this could be the destiny of Hopkins as well.

Eventually, Hopkins found the way of further self-

¹One can only guess what were Hopkins's views in relation to the destiny of non-Catholics in the next world, and to what extent he shared the belief in the damnation of the Protestants. On the one hand, one must bear in mind that the majority of his compatriots were non-Catholics. At the same time, Hopkins's attitude towards Protestantism as such was utterly negative. In one of his letters Hopkins writes: "Disillusion' does exist, as typhus exists and the Protestant religion" (LI 127). In "The Wreck" Hopkins compares Luther to Cain (Stanza 20). Finally, explaining his sonnet "Henry Purcell," Hopkins writes: "I hope Purcell is not damned for being a Protestant, because I love his genius. . . . May Purcell, O may he have died a good death and that soul which

I love so much and which breathes or stirs so unmistakably in his works have parted from the body and passed away, centuries since though I frame the wish, in peace with God! so that the heavy condemnation under which he outwardly or nominally lay for being out of the true Church may in consequence of his good intentions have been reversed (LI 170-71). Hope, uncertainty and the awareness of the dogma surface in this passage. In all probability, Dolben's case caused similar feelings, and his death without confession complicated the problem still further—especially in the light of the special significance that Hopkins attached to the sacrament as such.

perfection and self-sacrifice: the renunciation of the only earthly love that remained to him after Dolben's death, that is, poetry. By means of the analysis of cross references in Hopkins's *Journal* Humphry House has shown (J 537) that for the first time Hopkins decided to destroy his poems and to write no more on 23 August 1868, about a month after he had learned of the death of Dolben. Thus, the impact of Dolben's death on Hopkins's life was not restricted to a temporary fit of silent pain; this death shaped Hopkins's life and poetic career as a whole. At the same time, Hopkins's biographers agree that, since the death of Dolben was simultaneous with Hopkins's renunciation of poetry, it found no poetic expression, except, perhaps, for the *via negativa* of this renunciation. And this seems to be a mistake. Hopkins's repudiation of poetry did not silence his grief, but only delayed its expression. When in 1875, after the seven years of poetic silence Hopkins decided to return to poetry and wrote his great ode, "The Wreck of the Deutschland," all the themes and questions that were associated with Dolben reappeared in this ode, though in a completely changed form.

When Hopkins returns to poetry, he writes his first poem about the same subject that caused his poetic silence: death by drowning. Moreover, his representation of this death focuses on the very themes which were central to the death of Dolben and the understanding of it: the issues of divine justice and the conversion to Catholicism. The first part of the poem centers on Hopkins's spiritual crisis, which, from the biographical point of view, ended in his conversion to Catholicism. In addition, the second part of "The Wreck" ends with a prayer for the Catholic Renaissance of England, about which Hopkins and Dolben dreamed. Finally, the main question that the second part of the ode addresses is the question of theodicy, of divine justice. The concrete details of this theodicean discussion are also related to Dolben's death: in Stanza 31 Hopkins explicitly addresses the issue of death without confession and speaks about his own pain, which is related to this death; he says: "Heart, go and bleed at a bitterer vein for the / Comfortless unconfessed of them" (243-44).

The general atmosphere of the poem is also related to the relationship between Hopkins and Dolben. Walter J. Ong has noted that "Hopkins expresses" a strong "personal relationship with all the victims of the disaster, whom he did not know" (53); and Hopkins's extremely personal attitude towards the tall nun has been noted by many critics as well. In addition, the poem as a whole is permeated with intense and personal grief, which, like the grief of the "Sonnets of 1865," foreshadows Hopkins's "terrible sonnets." Nothing of the kind can be detected in subsequent poems. It should also be mentioned Hopkins represents the wreck of the ship as a cosmic tragedy with clear apocalyptic overtones. These overtones have been demonstrated by Sulloway (158-190); she has also identified in the poem the emblematic colors of the Apocalypse (187). These apocalyptic motifs become more comprehensible in the light of Hopkins's estimation of Dolben as a unique combination of physical and spiritual beauty. The fact that Hopkins never again felt such attraction to another person (and never met another person like himself) can account for this feeling that for his own microcosm the death of Dolben was a cosmic tragedy.

Another ubiquitous feeling in the poem is a sense of guilt: both personal and collective. Stanza 20 brings to the fore the history of the banishment of the nuns: it stresses the human guilt that enabled this seemingly natural tragedy. Hopkins explicitly compares Luther to Cain: German Protestantism which, in its extreme form, was responsible for the Falk Laws and thus for the banishment and death of the nuns is related to the primal crime of mankind. Hopkins's description of himself is also permeated with a sense of guilt: in Stanza 24 he writes, "I was under the roof here, I was at rest, / And they were the prey of the gales" (187-188). It is worth mentioning that the relationship between Dolben and Hopkins was constantly accompanied by a sense of guilt on the part of the latter: from the sense of guilt at the time of their meeting at Oxford to the acute feeling of guilt that caused his repudiation of poetry.

Besides, it has been mentioned that Dolben was turned by death into a Christ-figure; and it is noteworthy that similar figures reappear in the poem. First, Hopkins describes a nameless mariner who died trying to save a woman; he writes, "One stirred from the rigging to save / The wild woman-kind below, / With a rope's end round the man, handy and brave— / He was pitched to his death at a blow" (121-124). This episode reminds the reader of Dolben's attempt to save the child he was carrying on his back. Secondly, the presentation of the tall nun, "the one woman without stain" (237), as an innocent victim who was destined to profess divine justice and mercy from the depth of her suffering and to offer the way of salvation to those who were perishing with her (Stanza 31), makes her another Christ-figure. Thus, in addition to the thematic interrelations, the story of Dolben and "The Wreck" are connected through their protagonists: the deaths of both have unequivocal typological significance.

Furthermore, the link of typology is not the only invisible thread that connects Dolben and the tall nun: there are several similar threads. To begin with, like Hopkins's tall nun, Dolben was passionately religious; and what is especially significant, he even behaved and dressed as a monk (White 109). Secondly, Hopkins mentions Christ as the tall nun's lover; he asks, "Is it love in her of the being as her lover had been?" (195). It has been mentioned at the beginning of this essay that in his poems Dolben addressed Christ as his lover; and his poem quoted above epitomized this practice. In addition, the tall nun and Dolben are related through poetry itself. Hopkins says that the tall nun was "a prophetess towered in the tumult" (136): "prophetess" in the sense of the person who is able to articulate divine truth rather than to predict. Hopkins says that her cry "O Christ, Christ, come quickly" (191) acknowledged divine mercy under the mask of her sufferings ("christens her wild-worst / Best" [192-193]) and the divine presence in the material world (Stanzas 28-29). In other words, she was able to word divine truth, to express divine mercy and divine presence in the world, to do what Hopkins as a religious poet must try to do. The tall nun is represented as the religious poet par excellence; Dolben was also a religious poet.

Finally, both in the poem (Stanza 18) and in his correspondence (LII 14-15) Hopkins represents the wreck of the "Deutschland and the death of the nuns as his rebirth as a

poet;² and this is representation also related to Dolben. As mentioned above, this connection with Dolben is chiasmic. Dolben's death resulted in Hopkins's renunciation of poetry, in his death as a poet. In the poem, however, the death of the tall nun as the rebirth of the poet replaces the death of Dolben as the poet's death. But, in addition, there is a direct connection, which becomes clear in the light of the foregoing analysis. It has been shown that Hopkins's first mature poem is closely associated with the death of Dolben, that this death provided Hopkins with both the subject matter and the emotional atmosphere of his first masterpiece. Thus, it is precisely Dolben's death that did "make words break from [Hopkins] here all alone" (139).³ And, consequently, whether Hopkins was aware of this or not, Dolben's death was for him what he claimed the nun's death to be: the cause of his rebirth as a poet.

The last thread, in addition to the religious and poetic ones, connects Dolben and the tall nun via Hopkins himself. It has been mentioned that Dolben was his *alter ego* and his brother in spirit; Hopkins says that the tall nun was his "sister, a sister calling / A master, her master and mine!" Moreover, this similarity in difference is the pivotal point of the poem as a whole. Its double structure (its first part describes the acknowledgment of divine will by Hopkins; the second—by the nun) brings this complex dialectics of similarities and differences between the tall nun and Hopkins to the fore. As different critics have noticed, the tall nun is Hopkins's *alter ego* with emphasis placed on both parts of the phrase: on both striking similarity and unbridgeable difference. In other words, the tall nun's position in relation to Hopkins is exactly that of Dolben.

Thus, the focus on death by drowning, the choice of a nun as the main character, the narrator's extremely personal attitude towards those who perished, intense grief, the sense of guilt, the problematics of conversion to Catholicism, the question of theodicy, the emphasis upon death without confession, the typological significance of death, passionate religious feeling, the nun's erotic attitude towards Christ, the problem of religious poetry, Hopkins's own rebirth as a poet, and, finally, the complex dialectic or *alter ego*, relate "The Wreck" to the relationship between Hopkins and Dolben. In other words, the poem is not an impersonal edifying *exemplum*, as many critics believe, and it stems from Hopkins's existential experience, which is both extremely personal and poignant. But this conclusion does not mean that the poem is about Digby Dolben rather than about the wreck or about divine justice. To identify this primal and invisible biographical level is only the first step; and this step is similar to the identification of Catholicism as the general ideological framework in which the poem happens.

The next step must be the analysis of the transformation of these extratextual levels (ideological and biographical) into the intellectual and existential dimensions of the poem itself. Yet, a crucial insight into the nature of the text must be gained

already from this preliminary analysis of its origin. The death of Dolben opens a conspicuous gap between Hopkins's religious understanding of the world and his experience; and, in the light of the foregoing analysis, it becomes clear that the poem was written as an attempt, whether conscious or not, to negotiate this gap. Certainly, the question if the gap between the theological and the existential is articulated or effaced by the poem must be answered by a close analysis of the text itself. Nevertheless, the critic must bear in mind that at the time when the text was being written, Dolben had been dead and his posthumous destiny was unclear. This understanding will help to avoid an untroubled reading of the poem, similar to the "theologically correct" interpretations so often proposed in the past.

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²"The Wreck of the 'Deutschland'" as the birth of the poet is discussed and analyzed in Sprinker 96-101.

³This does not mean that Hopkins's descriptions of the strong emotional impact that the wreck made on him (LII 14, LIII 135) should not be trusted; what should be called in question is not this impact itself but its wide-spread

critical interpretation as the single cause of Hopkins's rebirth as a poet. On the contrary, the understanding of the pivotal place of the death of Dolben in the poetic representation of the wreck, can explain, in retrospect, its emotional impact on Hopkins.

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George MacDonald's *Phantastes*: The Spiral Journey to the Goddess

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George MacDonald, though chronologically a Victorian writer, owes an immense intellectual debt to the English and German Romantics. Key elements of the world view he preached are clearly and explicitly derived from Romantic writers. His model of spiritual development as an ascending circle (which he called "Ethical Evolution") closely corresponds to what M. H. Abrams describes as the spiral journey of the Romantics, which "fuses the idea of the circular return with the idea of linear progress" (184). As young children, this model runs, we enjoy a primitive unity with our surroundings in the oceanic bliss of infancy; however, as we develop self-consciousness we fall from this primal unity and begin to see ourselves as divided from and even opposed to nature and our fellows as ego and non-ego, subject and object, etc. Our spiritual education consists of a gradual re-appropriation of unity through the process that is perhaps best known as set forth in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*: consciousness divides into two opposing elements which then synthesize into a third higher state which incorporates, while transcending, the original distinction. As this process continues, we keep returning to the same developmental point, but on progressively higher levels: thus the figure of the spiral, which frequently appears in MacDonald's fantasy and fiction in the form of the winding stair. Abrams notes that the Romantic spiral differs from the Neo-Platonic circle in that the Romantic process occurs entirely in this life, while the journey described by Plotinus culminates only after death, in God. MacDonald's affinities here are with Plotinus rather than the Romantics. Not so, however, in the other distinction Abrams notes: The recovered unity of Plotinus is identical with the primitive unity that was the starting point of the process. For the Romantics, though, the recovered unity is an improvement over our originally blissful consciousness because it incorporates the individuality that has been developed during the process. The final unity is complex, not simple, preserving distinctions, yet without division: Coleridge's "multeity in unity" (186). Mac-

Donald's description of the individual's final relationship to God in his sermon "The New Name" (*Sermons* 1: 100-17) unquestionably favors the romantic development here. At MacDonald's eschaton, when God is finally All in All, one might describe the universal condition as Abrams describes the Absolute, the end-point of the Hegelian dialectic: "that undivided unity which, having overcome yet preserved all preceding individuation, incorporates in itself not less that everything" (187).

Another Romantic tenet in MacDonald's canon is one which he himself labeled "Christian pantheism" and attributed to Wordsworth. In his essay "Wordsworth's Poetry," he explains the term thus: "This world is not merely a thing which God hath made, subjecting it to laws; but it is an expression of the thought, the feeling, the heart of God himself. . . . God is in everything, and showing himself in everything. . . . he has embodied his own grand thoughts thus that we might see them and be glad" (*Orts* 246-47). This notion that God is expressed but not contained in nature is more familiar to modern theologians under the term "pantheism" (Fox 50; Russell, *Lucifer* 34). It was, at any rate, a key belief of MacDonald's, reiterated over and over in sermons, fiction, and fantasy. Because nature is God's direct self-expression, she is an appropriate tutor for the person who wishes to learn of the Divine nature, and it is nature's face, not her secret workings discovered by the analysis of natural science, that best conveys God's heart (*Sermons* 3: 61). God's heart expressed in nature communicates to man's heart more significant truth about the Deity than any doctrinal system could possibly convey to the intellect. As related points, MacDonald's valuing the feelings and intuition over the intellect as a means of perceiving the truth and his correspondingly high regard for innocents close to nature such as children, animals, and the mentally disabled, also echo the preferences of the Romantics. The "rational horizon," MacDonald said, is too narrow to accommodate the truth (Greville MacDonald 336-

39). I think it probable that MacDonald's giving priority to Western culture's *Mother Nature* as Divine self-revelation and his reliance on the heart over the head (traditionally a "feminine" preference) as the guide to truth find expression in his tendency, in his fantasy writing, to portray Deity or Divine forces as feminine. The grandmothers in the *Princess* books and "The Golden Key," North Wind in *At the Back of the North Wind*, the Wise Woman in "The Lost Princess," are only some of the goddess-figures in his fairy tales.

Phantastes was MacDonald's second published literary work, and first published fantasy. Since the author needed to make money, the critical and popular failure of this "fairy romance" determined MacDonald's decision, much lamented by later critics, to devote himself to writing novels, a genre for which his imaginative abilities were much less suited.

Phantastes is widely recognized as having been influenced by Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* and Hoffman's "The Golden Pot." Like them, it is a *Bildungsroman* of a poet, or the tale of a young man following the Way of Imagination. For MacDonald as for other Romantics, the proper exercise of the imagination was vital to humanity's maturation/sanctification, but for MacDonald most plainly the imaginative function was a means and not an end. The journey Anodos makes is, essentially, the journey from infantile narcissism to the blessedness of self-giving, and the theme of the book is summed up in this song of its principal divinity:

Better to live at the water's birth
Than a sea of waves to win;
To live in the love that floweth forth,
Than the love that cometh in.

Be thy heart a well of love, my child,
Flowing, and free, and sure;
For a cistern of love, though undefiled,
Keeps not the spirit pure.

A simple concept and a simple theme, but the concept intellectualizes a spiritual state notoriously difficult to attain. Both the wandering journey of Anodos (who often seems, according to one meaning of his name, truly *pathless*) and the density of MacDonald's symbolism reflect this difficulty. Several writers have applied the concepts of Jungian psychology to illuminate parts of the story, though some fail to note the ways in which MacDonald's psychological/theological concepts, though surprisingly similar to and compatible with Jung's, do in some respects differ from that of the psychoanalyst.¹ Critics such as Max Sutton and Roderick McGillis have also discerned structure in the apparently aimless series of Anodos's adventures. Here, I wish to suggest that the book is built around the spiral pattern MacDonald and other Romantics found so suggestive of human spiritual development. I see the plot of *Phantastes* as tracing a spiral with four turns, each turn a repetition of the basic pattern set by the first, but each describing a more advanced developmental state. The turns correspond, respectively, with the chronologi-

cal periods of youth, young adulthood, maturity, and late maturity. Each turn is introduced by birth or rebirth imagery. The rebirth process introduces a period of nurture and spiritual growth. From this psychic expansion, Anodos advances to achieve some important accomplishment, vision or victory. But his victory quickly leads to a situation he is unprepared to deal with, and he makes a serious mistake. The error, reflecting some flaw in his character, leads to a descent or depression—a dark night of the soul—before yielding, again, to rebirth. As Anodos matures, the turns of the spiral become tighter. The first two, those of youth and young adulthood, each constitutes fifty-plus pages of text, while the third requires only thirty-six and the last, twelve.

Each of these turns is introduced by water imagery: a torrential rain, a stream that grows into a river, the ocean. In the first phase (of nurture and growth) of each turn we find goddesses, the female representations of Divinity that so pervade MacDonald's fantasies. The Woman of the Beech Tree, I will argue, represents God in Nature. The Fairy Queen and her palace are God in Art. The old woman with the young eyes in her island cottage is a figure of God in Christ. In the fourth turn, Anodos is not reborn again through water, but the singing of a maiden who represents his own true soul, his Christ-self or God Within, and whose maturity liberates him to enter the service of his ideal. In this final cycle, his triumph over the wolf (which Sutton, I think correctly, reads as the destruction of his false self) signals his attainment of spiritual manhood and leads to his graduation into the bliss of what C. S. Lewis has called "good Death": the experience of his unity with all creation in an outpouring of "the love that floweth forth."

So read, the text offers a Christianized version both of modern developmental psychology and of the Hindu notion of reincarnation, that is, constant rebirth and return to the cycle of being until one is worthy of Nirvana.

Prologomena

Anodos, we are told as the story opens, is a young aristocrat who has just turned twenty-one and received the initiatory symbol of the keys to his dead father's desk. As he opens a hidden pigeonhole, out steps a tiny woman, who implies that she is his great-grandmother and tells him that she will grant him his wish to get into Fairy Land. When she assumes normal human size and he, struck with her attractiveness, stretches his arms toward her, she warns him, "A man must not fall in love with his grandmother, you know" (17-18).

This encounter, though hardly obviously, introduces Anodos's psychological predicament. He is parentless; his mother died when he was a baby (15, 18). As Sutton observes, parental loss, particularly of the mother, often contributes to the development of neurotic or pathological narcissism, for the young child is thus deprived of the person most likely to reflect back to him his own existence as a person of worth. This "mirroring" function is critical to the child's

¹For a review of recent critics who have used Jungian concepts to elucidate MacDonald's work in general and *Phantastes* in particular, see Cusick.

developing sense of self; if he does not get it, he remains self-centered and grasping for the rest of his life, forever consuming things and people in a desperate search for worthiness, lovability, completion. Anodos's inclination to "fall in love with his grandmother" signifies two inappropriate tendencies. Falling in love implies both emotional fascination and a desire for sexual possession; one's grandmother is both a part of oneself (an ancestress) and an authority-figure. (The grandmothers of MacDonald's fantasies tend to be spiritual authorities of no mean import.) And while indulging in emotional fascination with oneself (or a projection of oneself) is narcissistic, to wish to sexually possess an authority-figure indicates psychic inflation.² It is suggested here, then, not necessarily that Anodos has a character disorder such as full-blown narcissism, but that he is radically immature, perhaps having been deprived of the parenting that would have enabled him to grow up emotionally.

Back to Fairy Land

Anodos enters the Fairy Land the next morning, when his bedroom, which he designed himself, comes alive around him: the carved ivy of his bed becoming real ivy; his wash-bowl overflowing into a small stream bordered by living daisies which used to be a pattern in his carpet. Clearly this indicates that the regions of Anodos's own mind are enveloping him as a second world. He follows the stream back into infancy. The huge unbroken forest, the hut built around live oak trees, from whose chairs and tables "even the bark had not been removed" (22) which is occupied only by the fairy-blooded woman and her daughter: all this suggests infancy, dominated by the raw nature of the unconscious and the feminine presence of the mother. The male principle is present at a distance and in two opposing forms, suggesting a male demon/hero generated by a child from his divided experience of his more distant father: the spectral, threatening Ash, and the knight whom the book in the cottage associates with Percivale. (Interestingly, Anodos's hostess sets the book in the window to screen out the Ash, as though trying to shield her guest from the male demon by means of the masculine ideal.) The flower-fairies Anodos watches in the hut's garden fit a small child's idea of Fairy Land.

The First Turn: Youth and God in Nature

When Anodos leaves the safe area of the woman's cottage, he is terrorized by the Ash in the forest until, having been drenched by a sudden rainstorm (the rebirth symbol in this turn) he is embraced by the Woman of the Beech Tree. Safe in her arms, he learns about the Ash (who devours to fill

"a hole in his heart"), dreams all night "in a trance of still delight" about communing with nature in all seasons, and receives a protective girdle of the Woman's hair (beech leaves by daylight). Anodos goes on his way at daybreak "with a vague compunction, as if I ought not to have left her" (41).

In psychological terms, to be devoured by the Ash is to become the Ash. The interlude with the Beech represents the mothering Anodos has received from God in nature, which evidently provided him with enough sense of his own person and worth to keep the child Anodos from becoming a narcissistic devourer. His vague guilt feelings as he continues his journey suggest both the maturing child's uneasiness at his growing separation from his mother, and the feelings of loss and guilt that might accompany a child's fall into consciousness from his previous unconscious unity with the rest of the natural world.³

Fortified and protected by this encounter with the goddess, Anodos goes on to the major accomplishment of this turn, realizing the power of his imagination.

MacDonald in his essay "The Imagination: Its Function and Culture," denied that humans could properly be called "creative." That particular word he would reserve for acts of God. The human activity that most resembled the Divine creativity was, he said, the finding of natural forms to properly express the ideas that God, from his seat in the subconscious, releases into our conscious minds. In this essay he uses two major images to express imaginative activity: freeing a prisoner and lighting a lamp.⁴ As we will see, in describing Anodos's freeing of the White Lady of the Marble and his seduction by a lamp-illuminated Alder Maid, MacDonald uses both of these images.

After leaving the Beech, Anodos comes upon a little rocky cell filled with a harmony of ferns and moss, with a well in one corner and a mossy mound at one end. He drinks from the well, lies on the mound, and is entertained by a reverie in which "all lovely forms, and colours, and sounds seemed to use my brain as a common hall" (43). Afterwards he notices a representation of Pygmalion on the wall, and, beginning to remove the moss from the stone upon which he has been lying, soon sees the form of a lovely marble woman in the alabaster of the stone, who has a face "more near the face that had been born with me in my soul, than anything I had seen before in nature or art" (45). He speculates that the cave is the "home of . . . essential Marble—that spirit of marble which, present throughout, makes it capable of being moulded into any form" (45). The imagery here suggests that Anodos's reverie has impregnated the receptive "spirit of the marble" with this particular form: his own feminine ideal. Many recent critics agree (as I do) in seeing her as a figure of his anima, the Jungian "inner woman" who, among other things, enables the

imaginative flow. In older terms, we might say she is the personification of his Muse. When he proceeds, literally, to sing her out of her alabaster prison, she evasively flits off into the woods.

To identify the White Lady as Anima explains both Anodos's fascination with her and his final necessity of relinquishing her as a sexual love object. In contrast to MacDonald's Fairy Land, where Anodos may have a direct, personified experience of the anima, males in the real world free their animas into physical existence by projecting them onto living women. (Jung noted that certain women seemed especially liable to attract such projections and so were particularly adept at attracting men).⁵ But a relationship with one's own projection is only a relationship with oneself, thus, an exercise in narcissism. (In his sermon "Love Thy Neighbor," MacDonald observes that only otherness makes real love possible [Sermons 1: 201-212].) As part of himself (in imagery of the book, almost his own child) the White Lady, like Anodos's grandmother, is not an appropriate object for a mature, sexual love.

In thinking of her as *my* white lady, and himself as her deliverer, Anodos is correct in the same sense that a parent is correct in speaking of *my* child or an artist of *my* picture. Yet according to MacDonald, just as a child is born through his parents but is, in the ultimate sense, born from God, the creative flow of the imagination does not originate with the artist. Both the thought that is expressed and the form that the artist chooses to express it come from God: the former from God in the subconscious, the latter from God in nature. Anodos, therefore, is not only mistaken in expecting to be rewarded for his act of deliverance with sexual favors, but is mistaken about his agency in the act itself. In the last analysis, he neither made nor freed the White Lady: God did.

Compare the figures of Serpentina in "The Golden Pot" and Matilda in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. Anselmus's union with Serpentina at the conclusion of the former symbolizes his triumphant entry into the imaginative life despite the bourgeois claims upon him, and Heinrich's marriage to Matilda, the poet's daughter, is coeval with his undertaking the poetic vocation. These women, too, appear to be anima figures, and the symbol of marriage used to represent integration. Novalis's unfinished tale takes the poet's story farther than Hoffman's, for it encompasses Heinrich's loss of his wife—possibly to represent the psychological necessity for getting on with the other tasks of one's spiritual development. In MacDonald's thinking, the imagination as revealer of the truth is primarily of value in forming godly ideals which we may then serve (Oris 35). This revelation of truth is to the will, not the intellect, and the goal of such revelation is deification—that is, voluntary subscription to God's will and consequent divine union. Because for MacDonald imaginative vision is not an end in itself, Anodos must renounce the White Lady as a mate in order to properly integrate her as an internal capacity. (Similarly, in the New Testament, the disciples have to give up Jesus' bodily presence in order to

receive the internal presence of the Holy Ghost.)

The inflation of pride and possessiveness that follow Anodos's imaginative activity in birthing his feminine ideal set him up for his fall: his seduction by the Maid of the Alder. If the White Lady represents Anodos's pure imagination, the Alder Maid symbolizes its corruption: an imagination that has stopped seeking after the ideal and has instead "remained at home to be sensual" (Oris 30). The story she tells Anodos centers in and always returns to "her own loveliness" (53); she desires the love of men only to shore up her conviction of her own beauty. As the White Lady is the female counterpart of the heroic knight, the Alder Maid is the female counterpart of the devouring Ash, for whom she prepares Anodos by destroying his beech-leaf girdle. While the mothering love of the nature goddess could protect Anodos from the narcissism born of a "hole in the heart," it is ineffective against the self-centeredness of a powerful imagination that endlessly returns to "building airy castles of vain ambition, of boundless riches, of unearned admiration," thus working "for evil . . . for falsehood . . . for death" (Oris 30, 29).

What saves Anodos this time is a double confrontation. Consciously, he sees the Alder Maid as a "living sepulchre" (55), while his masculine Ideal comes face-to-face with the hideousness of the Ash (139-40).⁶ Anodos still thinks the Alder Maid is beautiful, but knows her as dangerous, and in horror he rejects the greedy self-involvement and sterile fantasizing the two represent. In fact he is deeply ashamed of his indulgence, which shows his developing moral sense. His next encounter with Fairy Land's inhabitants shows, as well, the developing intellectual complexity of adolescence. The next cottage in which he takes refuge has both male and female inhabitants. Mother and daughter believe in the unseen phenomena of Fairy Land; father and son do not. This family represents Anodos's divided mind; he himself changes belief depending on which individual he listens to (57-61). The kind, genial father and his sneering son suggest that materialism itself is not evil, but generates evil. Though the rest of the family agree that Anodos had better avoid the ogress of nihilism, the son leads him directly to her Church of Darkness where he finds his shadow.

MacDonald's shadow does indeed resemble Jung's concept of that name, but there are significant differences as well. For Jung, the shadow consists of those parts of the personality rejected by the conscious ego, repressed and thereby distorted. Yet they remain real parts of the personality. MacDonald's shadow in *Phantastes*, though, seems clearly to represent, not simply the "bastard self" of our consciousness (as opposed to the "Christ-self," or the real personality made by God, which corresponds closely to the Jungian concept of the self) but, more subtly, Anodos's *consciousness* of that "bastard self." It is the bastard self which, according to MacDonald, clutches and clings, because it does not realize its true relationship to God and to the world. The bastard self is the result of our being "born in sin": that is, in MacDonald's terminology, into ignorance and error. The essential difference between Mac-

²Robert Lee Wolff has noted and explored the Oedipal overtones in many of the incidents of the book. They are strong. However, though certain events seem almost to demand a Freudian interpretation, a Freudian reading of the text leaves many parts irrelevant or incomprehensible (cf. Sutton 12). Cusick argues that Jungian concepts make *more* sense of *more* of MacDonald's work than does strict adherence to Freud (58).

³Baring and Cashford discuss the Eden myth as representing this development of the psyche of humanity as a whole.

⁴MacDonald says that in refining existing literary material to reveal splendidly what it has said only crudely before, poets like Shakespeare "rescued the soul

of meaning from its prison of uninformed crudity, where it sat like the Prince in the 'Arabian Nights,' half man and half marble; they have set it free in its own form, in a shape, namely, which it could 'through every part impress'" (Oris 22). On using the forms provided by nature to express thought, he writes: "God has made the world that it should thus serve his creature, developing in the service that imagination whose necessity it meets. The man has but to light the lamp within the form; his imagination is the light, it is not the form. Straightway the shining thought makes the form visible, and becomes itself visible though the form" (Oris 5).

⁵See "Marriage as a Psychological Relationship," in *The Development of Personality* (Collected Works Vol. 17).

⁶I am more hesitant than Sutton to identify the knight with the Jungian self. It seems to me more likely that the knight represents Anodos's conscious ideal

of manliness, which, according to MacDonald, he ought to try to live out. (See *Sermons* 1: 203-05 on the importance of doing the best one *knows* as the path to further spiritual enlightenment.)

Donald's bastard self and Jung's shadow is that the latter is "real," in some essential sense, and in most cases ought to be brought to consciousness and at least some of its material integrated, while the former is not. The bastard self must also be brought to consciousness, but not to be integrated or accommodated. According to MacDonald it must simply be denied—that is, killed. It is the self of which Jesus was speaking when he told his disciples to deny themselves, take up their crosses and follow him. It is the self that must be crucified (*Sermons* 2: "Self-Denial" 210-32). It is, in agreement with MacDonald's Platonism and mainstream Christian theology, actually "no thing," and to lose it is no loss, but sanctification. In the earlier parts of the book, Anodos's bastard self was represented by the Ash and the Alder, his own potential for self-centeredness and greedy devouring (Cf. Sutton 15-16). The ogress tells him that his seduction by the Alder Maid has made his shadow more likely to find him: in other words, Anodos's *experience* of his own bastard self, combined with the shakiness of his faith in the unseen (which would include his unseen true self), generates a negative self-consciousness—that is, a consciousness merely of his negative self—and that consciousness is his shadow.

In *Robert Falconer*, MacDonald writes:

Men call the shadow, thrown upon the universe where their own dusky souls come between it and the eternal sun, life, and then mourn that it should be less bright than the hopes of their childhood. Keep thou thy soul translucent, that thou mayest never see its shadow; at least never abuse thyself with the philosophy which calls that show life.

The "dusky soul" referred to here is the bastard self, and the shadow of Anodos, his negative self-consciousness, blackens the world. This following part of his adventures constitutes the descent of this turn. The shadow scorches flowers, darkens the sun, makes the wonderful seem commonplace. Anodos sees an alternative to his own situation in his ideal, the knight who "had met the Alder-Maiden as I, but . . . had plunged into the torrent of mighty deeds, and the stain was nearly washed away. No shadow followed him . . . ; he had not had time to open the closet door." But his shadow leads him to distrust ideals (67). Anodos begins to think his darkened perspective is the true one, and to be proud of it as shrewd or worldly-wise, until the episode of the child and her globe.

The incident is particularly interesting in that it recapitulates all that has happened to Anodos till this point in his adventures. The child/woman takes his own role, while he plays the part of the Alder-Maid in his own story. The girl cherishes a harmonic globe in the same way Anodos cherished the White Lady; both are symbols of the imagination. Under the influence of the shadow, Anodos grasps the globe, causing it to vibrate and "sing" until it breaks into blackened fragments, and the child runs off lamenting. In the same way, Anodos's youthful imaginative activity has been broken and blighted; he has lost his White Lady as the child her globe.

Both scenes are highly charged with the imagery of sexual seduction. This episode makes him hate the shadow again. The maid, who as a child on the brink of womanhood, is at about the same developmental stage as is symbolized by this part of the turn, would seem to represent Anodos's own innocence, his true or Christ-self,⁷ which Anodos has been seduced into abusing. Under the influence of the Ash/Alder/shadow, Anodos has become his own corrupter.

Now the descent reaches its lowest point, the "dark night" of this turn. Anodos travels through a sand desert populated by mocking goblins, possibly his own self-hating thoughts. But the low point precedes rebirth. He finds and drinks from a spring which generates a small stream, and, like Coleridge's Ancient Mariner looking at the happy water-snakes, a "kind of love to the cheerful little stream" rises in his heart. He follows it till it becomes a river and has made the desert beautiful countryside, whereupon he cries with joy, falls in love again with Nature and Imagination ("Could I but see the Spirit of the Earth, as I saw once the indwelling woman of the beech tree, and my beauty of the pale marble . . . how gladly would I die of the light of her eyes!") sleeps deeply, and rises "as from the death that wipes out the sadness of life" (71-72). Shortly thereafter he finds the boat that carries him over the river and to the fairy palace.

The Second Turn: Young Adulthood and God in Art

The fairy palace is Anodos's second divine refuge of nurture and education, and seems clearly to be MacDonald's version of the palace of art. Like the White Lady, it is made of white marble, and everything in and around it represents culture at its most beautiful and gracious: lovely architecture, halls and chambers, jeweled baths, fine food served by invisible attendants, and wonderful grounds offering "the most varied and artistic arrangement" of landscape, water, birds and animals. The fairies of the palace, though largely invisible to Anodos, receive him like a prince: he finds his name on a chamber that replicates his own room in his own castle. Here he is home, indeed. But the center of the palace, for him, is the enormous library, where he spends most of his afternoons engrossed in books which absorb him into their own virtual reality.

This library, like all the many impressive libraries in MacDonald's writing, is thought to have been modeled on the nobleman's library in northern Scotland that MacDonald spent a few months cataloguing when he was eighteen. According to William Raeper: "This library introduced MacDonald to all that was to mark him and his writing for the rest of his life: romance, the sixteenth-century divines, romantic poetry and German literature" (49). In MacDonald's fiction, his protagonists' experience with literature and other arts mark important steps in their moral and spiritual education. Here, for Anodos, is a place of rest and spiritual expansion.

The two interpolated stories that Anodos retells from his reading in the palace library bear on his own internal state and foreshadow his own end in Fairy Land. The first describes a

a male child.

world in which each season lasts for years, the men and women live essentially separate lives (infants are found by, not born to, young women) and the women have wings, which, "glorious as they are, are but underdeveloped arms" (87). The general atmosphere of the tale is gentle, yearning melancholy, as it describes a girl who wanders off and dies of longing after hearing about the relations between the sexes in our own world, and another young woman, born in winter, who dies crossing her globe searching for spring. But the tale is also hopeful, for it implies that the people of this planet are reborn into our own world, where at least some of their dreams have a better chance of fulfillment. This tale can be read as a picture of Anodos's current state of psychic incompleteness. In him, the masculine and feminine principles have not matured and come together into a generative union; he has neither learned to master and direct his own impulses, nor to submit to an authority higher than his conscious ego. Consequently, he has borne no fruit of useful deeds. The second tale and its relevance to Anodos has been well analyzed by Sutton (20-21). Like the tale's hero, Cosmo, Anodos must learn to free the one he loves; like Cosmo, he will graduate into death when he releases his egoistic grasp on his lady (anima) and himself. The fact that Cosmo's princess appears to Cosmo in a mirror points to the White Lady's relation to Anodos as an anima projection.

The vision or accomplishment of this turn is actually a re-vision; as a young man Anodos rediscovers in art the divine inspiration that nature held for his youth. Sitting on a throne in a marble hall of the fairy palace, he is revisited with "a succession of images of bewildering beauty" of the kind he experienced in the marble cave (109-110). But this time such experiences are more under his own control. He returns regularly to this hall, where he dreams, acts, invents epics, sings. In the privacy of his own imagination, he has become a poet.

As a climax, the White Lady reappears, freed from invisibility by Anodos's singing, as before she was freed from her alabaster block. In his renewed imaginative activity he reconnects with his anima and rediscovers his feminine ideal. But he still misunderstands the nature of his relationship with her and makes the serious mistake of this turn by trying to grasp her in defiance of the imperative "TOUCH NOT!" inscribed on the pedestal where she appears. The anima, the imaginative flow, is essentially outside the artist's control, and to stay in contact with her one must respect her autonomy.

The White Lady flees—again—and Anodos pursues, through a rough-hewn door marked "No one enters here without the leave of the Queen" (120). The descent of this turn is quite literal, as Anodos follows the White Lady down a hole in the earth, where he finds a desert of rocks and again encounters jibing goblins. This suggests that his revivifying encounter with the Divine through art, both contemplated and created, has devolved into an introspective struggle as Anodos, deserted by his muse, tries vainly to find and possess the source of his inspiration. Finally, defeated, he gives up.

⁷This reminds me of Madeline L'Engle's response to a particularly discouraging period in her writing. Having decided she would simply give it up, she immediately began plotting a new story—about failure.

He relinquishes his claim on the White Lady in favor of that of a "better man." This is the bottom of the pit, and ironically, as soon as he makes this mental gesture, he is (albeit sadly) inspired into song once more—song of renunciation.⁸ Immediately afterward he rejects the temptation to the demonic imitation of imaginative power presented by the ugly old woman who turns herself into a lovely girl, and the rocky desert into a pristine landscape. She might represent, like the Alder Maid, sensuous and self-centered fantasy, or even artificial stimulation of the visionary power of drugs.

After more desolate travel, he squeezes through the last of the rock cavern (birth imagery) to find himself on the bleak shore of a wintry ocean. Determined to renounce his very life before it is forced from him, he flings himself into the waves, to be greeted with "a blessing, like the kiss of a mother," reminding him of the Beech Tree's arms. Rising to the surface he is met by a little boat, which nudges him till he climbs in. After resting, he opens his eyes to a summer sea, with stars above like children's eyes, and in the waters below he beholds the re-creation of his whole past, ending with what seem to be dreams of reunions with dead loved ones. He wakes "feeling I had been kissed and loved to my heart's content" (128-29). This womblike bath of nurturing love, embracing his past, present and future, prefigures the experiences he will have in the next turn, with the goddess of the island cottage.

The Third Turn: Maturity and God in Christ

Anodos is born again onto an island that is full of center imagery:⁹ he seems at the center of his soul, the center of Fairy Land. It is humble, full of "delicate lowly things" such as "the flowers of my childhood," but no trees. It is calm, subject to neither tide nor storm. The cottage is square (typical of Jungian symbols of the self) with a fire in the center of the floor whose smoke issues from a hole in the center of the roof, and over the fire stands a tall, straight woman with a wrinkled face and young eyes, cooking something in a pot. Anodos loves her at once, crying with happiness, and she calls him "poor child," feeds him like a baby, and sings to him:

While she sung, I was in Elysium, with the sense of a rich soul upholding, embracing, and overhanging mine, full of all plenty and bounty. I felt as if she could give me everything I wanted; as if I should never wish to leave her, but would be content to be sung to and fed by her, day after day, as years rolled by. At last I fell asleep while she sang. (135-36)

This could serve as a speculative excursion into the mind of a nursing infant. Such similes are not unusual in describing a mystical experience of Divine presence. According to Julian of Norwich, "Jesus our mother" gave us birth in his passion, feeds us with his own body and shelters us in his wounds

⁸Cf. McGillis, "The Community of the Centre" 56. See this article for the use of center imagery as a key to the structure of *Phantastes* as a whole.

⁷Another MacDonald fantasy-character whose Christ-self is represented in the opposite gender is Tangle in "The Golden Key," who meets her Christ-self as

(*Revelations* 169-70). At conversion¹⁰ and immediately after, the mystic feels embraced and nourished by God as by a mother. The Blessed Henry Suso describes his own early states of spiritual illumination thus:

Whilst he was thinking . . . of the most lovable Wisdom, he questioned himself . . . saying, "O my heart, whence comes this love and grace, whence come this gentleness and beauty, this joy and sweetness of the heart? . . . Come! let my heart, my sense and my soul immerse themselves in the deep Abyss whence come these adorable things." . . . He was like a baby which a mother holds upright on her knees . . . by the movements of its little head, and all its little body, tries to get closer and closer to its dear mother. . . . Thus did the heart of the Servitor ever seek the sweet neighbourhood of the Divine Wisdom . . . altogether filled with delight. (qtd. in Underhill 254)

But like the mystics Underhill describes, Anodos does not linger long in this blissful infant condition. He wakes to see his hostess turn to each of the hut's four doors and evince, in turn, weeping, sighs, dismay, and shuddering; she then feeds the fire and begins to spin. Her facing of the doors indicates her participation in human suffering, while the spinning wheel is the ancient symbol of the goddess as fate, spinning the web of human destiny. This paradoxical combination of images, suggesting that the woman is both a determiner and a partaker of the human condition, is appropriate to the divine/human nature of Christ.¹¹ As Anodos earlier left the Beech's nurturing embrace, he now feels an urge to explore the island, and discovers that in fact his hostess is leading him in an exploration of his own life's experience. The four doors are four ways to God, all the them painful, but most passable. The door of Weeping takes Anodos back to his childhood and the loss of his brother. He returns to the goddess through the door of a barn. The way "back," to childhood and the animals, is a way to God, for it is from God that we and all of Nature originate. The door of Sighs leads Anodos into the private chambers of the (now enfleshed) marble lady and her husband, the knight. This represents the way to God through psychological maturity, the union of opposites in the soul. In renouncing the White Lady as a sexual love-object, Anodos has freed her to take her proper place as the feminine counterpart of his masculine ideal, giving him a complete ideal that he can passionately love as well as intellectually approve. The door of Dismay leads Anodos to witness the symbolic death of a girl he once loved and left, and to pass from her tomb to his own, where he experiences the dead as loving presences. Death, of course, is also a way to God, and to a reunion with lost loved ones in which all the wrongs we have experienced or inflicted can be set right. The fourth door, the door of the Timeless, would appear to lead to a direct experience of God as Transcendent, which Anodos only survives through the mediation of the divine/human goddess who goes through the

door herself to drag him back. As a result, she and her cottage will be covered by the ocean for a year, and Anodos must leave her (though he feels as if he is leaving his mother) to do, as she instructs, "something worth doing." He will, she assures him, come back to her one day (144-45).

This encounter markedly alters Anodos. Not only has he received in full measure the nurturing love he had largely missed in his childhood, but he knows from experience that all of life's weeping, sighs and dismay are given by Love for one's own strengthening and growth in love (as the goddess says, "Past tears are present strength" [149]) and thus are only doors back into Love. He has learned that Love does not cling to its object, but gives and serves without thought of itself. In pursuing the White Lady he was not loving her, but himself; in setting her free he has allowed her to ascend to his ideal. Now, his love for that ideal can go forth into useful action: "something worth doing."

The accomplishment of this turn marks Anodos's entry into maturity. For the first time, he dedicates himself to a cause outside himself (a cause that the old woman with young eyes has arranged for him) in joining with the two brothers to slay the giants. In this cause he finds real human fellowship for the first time. He has also learned that art is God's gift to be given to others, and is not a possession of the artist. He tells the brothers, when they ask him to sing, that he must wait for the power of song to come upon him, and when it does, he sings so that they, too, weep the tears that strengthen their souls for the coming combat. To prepare for death at the hands of the giants, one brother must give up his father, the other, his lady-love; Anodos through his songs helps them to do so.

The three young men kill the giants. The two brothers, as they had foreseen, graduate into death. As Anodos will do later, they have "left their lives to [their] people" (157). Anodos himself is not ready for death yet; he survives. Yet immediately after killing his giant, he again beholds his shadow;¹² that is, his attention turns inward again in an uprush of both vanity and self-deprecation (156)—equally inappropriate, by MacDonald's lights, because equally self-centered. This victory in battle leads to his being received into the court of the king, acclaimed a hero, dubbed a knight, and treated by the young nobles and ladies as one of themselves. And all the time, he is plagued by the shadow's presence. When he leaves the court on a journey, he is met by a larger, stronger version of himself which he knows he should fight, but (in the serious mistake of this turn) cannot. The doppelganger leads him, unresisting, to a ruined tower and shuts him up inside. And Anodos knows that his shadow is both his prisoner and his fellow-prisoner (158-60).

Though Anodos has matured greatly in this turn, he is not a spiritual grown-up yet. In joining with his fellows and accomplishing a genuine good, in assuming the role of a knight and winning a place in a society, he has reached the level that Jung described as typical of adulthood: the develop-

ment of a persona, a social face that identifies one with an accepted cultural role and conforms to cultural mores.¹³ The spiritual downside of this developmental stage is that the persona allows realization to only a very limited part of one's self. Therefore, as has been widely popularized lately in the concept of the mid-life crisis, sooner or later most people begin to feel imprisoned by the very role that earlier in life provided them with an empowering self-definition. Anodos's shadow takes the form of his role, a knight like himself, only bigger and better (a pointed comment on self-images) and shuts him up with only his self-consciousness for company.

The period of imprisonment is the descent of this turn. Anodos is immobilized by his idea of and his pride in his role; he could walk out of the tower at any time, but the idea does not occur to him. Only at night, in dreams and visions, is his spirit free to roam. Then, from the tower, he hears a woman singing a song "like an incarnation of Nature" which soothes him "like a mother's voice and hand" (162) urging him to come from the "narrow desert" to the house of mother Earth, "so high and wide." After listening for awhile, he is reborn as a free man: "Hardly knowing what I did, I opened the door. Why had I not done so before? I do not know" (163).

The Fourth Turn: Late Maturity and God Within

Anodos issues from the tower to discover that the singing woman is the now-matured child whose globe he broke. Her story, again, mirrors his own.¹⁴ She took the pieces of her globe to the Fairy Queen, who sent her to sleep in the white marble Hall of Phantasy and dismissed her; whereupon she discovered that she did not need her globe any longer, for she had internalized it. Now she goes singing everywhere and her songs "do good and deliver people" (163). Similarly, Anodos hoped to regain the White Lady but was instead led to internalize her. Again, it seems that the now-mature maiden represents Anodos's own true self, which has gained enough voice through his stay in the cottage of the old woman with young eyes that its liberating promptings could be heard even within the Tower of Pride. Her story gives him the vision of a new spiritual possibility:

" . . . I could hardly speak to her. . . . She was uplifted, by sorrow and well-doing, into a region I could hardly hope ever to enter. I watched her departure, as one watches a sunset. She went like a radiance through the dark wood, which was henceforth bright to me, from simply knowing that such a creature was in it." (164)

This encounter is supremely healing for Anodos. Having encountered God Within, his self-consciousness is no longer negative: the dark wood of his psyche now becomes bright to him, and he can emotionally afford to discard all that is not truly himself. Like a person on the far side of the midlife

crisis whose motto, according to Gail Sheehy, is often "No more bullshit," Anodos renounces his pretentious claims to knighthood, piles his rusty armor at the foot of a tree, and goes off seeking service as a squire, armed only with a short ax and "the delight of being lowly; of saying to myself, 'I am what I am, nothing more.'" He discovers he has lost his shadow, for now he no longer thinks of himself: "whereas, formerly, my life had consisted in a vain attempt to behold, if not my ideal in myself, at least myself in my ideal." However, in his new work serving his ideal, the knight, "my ideal . . . became my life" (165).

His period of apprenticeship to the knight constitutes the achievement of this turn. Interestingly, the two adventures of the knight which Anodos describes consist of delivering children from peril or persecution. Since children are often MacDonald's symbol for the Christ-self in people (the little girl making wings to fly to her home country seems clearly a child of this sort) the knight, and now, in a humbler capacity, Anodos, are embarked on the same work MacDonald himself felt called to do.¹⁵

In this turn, when Anodos is confronted with a circumstantial test of sorts, we see that he has finally developed passing instincts. Focused on preserving the knight rather than himself, determined to give rather than grasp, he is able to slay the monstrous, wolflike idol of the yew-tree enclosure, which Sutton identifies as a figure of his false self (17). Avoiding the serious mistake that, in the other turns, has led him to a negative descent, he here attains a positive descent: he dies and, "right content," is buried. The rebirth is immediate: in yet more womb imagery he feels the "great heart of the mother [Earth] beating into mine, and feeding me with her own life, her own essential being and nature" (178). Then he rises, first into a primrose and then onto a cloud, knowing that now he can "love without needing to be loved again" (179) and anticipating a future of ministering to all humankind with "the love that healeth" (180). It is at this point of transfiguration that he, with a terrible shudder, dies back into "a bodily and earthly life" and finds himself on a hill above his own castle.

The Fairyland spiral has gone right up into glory, into the bliss of felt love toward all that lives, and the felt power of benediction with which to express that love. In MacDonald's terms, such a state constitutes unity with the God who is, ultimately and fundamentally, Love Itself, and unity with the Divine will, which is, ultimately and fundamentally, to save, to bless, and to gather home all s/he has in love created (*Sermons* 1: 24-25). The turns of the spiral have taken Anodos through the perilous developmental tasks of kindling the imagination, using the imagination to discover true ideals, striving to realize those ideals in human society, finally forgetting (and thus slaying) one's false self in that service, and so freeing one's true self, which shares in and conducts the divine essence, the "love that healeth."

The question presenting itself to Anodos on his return to

¹⁰Not usually in the modern sense of a conversion from unbelief to belief, but conversion from formal religious belief to immediate personal experience of the Divine.

¹¹In Sutton's reading, Anodos does not encounter God or Christ, though he notes that MacDonald, in his essay "Sketch of Individual Development,"

declared that such an encounter was vital for full spiritual growth (*Oris* 48).

¹²"Am I going to do a good deed?" writes MacDonald in "The Hands of the Father." "Then of all times,—Father, into thy hands; lest the enemy should have me now" (*Sermons* 1:184).

¹³See "The Persona as Segment of the Collective Psyche" in "The Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious," *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology* (*Collected Works* Vol. 7).

¹⁴Roderick McGillis has noted the similarity of this part of the girl's story to that of Anodos.

¹⁵Compare the tale of the little girl begging wings from butterflies and the

mindless wooden figures who walk over her with MacDonald's sermon "The Higher Faith" (*Sermons* 1: 50-65) in which he complains that the aspiring child who sees, through imagination, God in nature and humanity, "is often checked by the dull disciple" who objects to any vision not expressly endorsed by his own dead interpretation of Scripture. MacDonald may well have seen himself as the literary knight whose job it was to succor children.

his own world is "Could I translate the experience of my travels [in Fairy Land] into common life? . . . Or must I live it all over again, and learn it all over again, in the other forms that belong to the world of men. . . ?" (181). The text suggests ambiguous answers. If Anodos at times feels like a ghost sent to minister (thus identifying with his last blissful state in Fairy Land) he at other times finds that blessedness "too high for me to lay hold upon it and hope in it" (182). Sutton would apply this question to the problem of how far people can learn from literature: can we really grow spiritually through vicarious experience (22)? I think Anodos's experience in Fairy Land is more analogous to the experiences described in medieval dream-visions than to those garnered from reading, and would suggest that the question also applies to the seemingly inevitable distance between the human spiritual reach and grasp. We can always *see* more than we can *be*. But even a passing taste of the bliss at the water's birth might give anyone what his Fairy Land journey seems most certainly to have given Anodos: an end for which to hope. He hopes to return to the old woman with the young eyes. "I have come through the door of Dismay; and the way back from the world into which that had led me, is through my tomb. Upon that the red sign lies, and I shall find it one day, and be glad" (182). This, I suggest, is MacDonald's literary version of the New Testament's promise of an eternity "with the Lord."

The book ends with a conflation and evocation of two of its goddesses—God in Nature, and God in Christ—and an assertion of faith in Fairy Land. Anodos, resting beneath a "great, ancient beech-tree," begins to hear, in the wind murmuring through the branches, the voice of "the ancient woman, in the cottage that was foursquare," saying "A great good is coming . . . to thee, Anodos." . . . I opened my eyes and, for a moment, almost believed that I saw her face . . . looking at me from between two hoary branches of the beech overhead." Once again, the vision fades into common day, but even in the common day one can see the transcendent gazing through immanent nature: "But when I looked more keenly, I saw only twigs and leaves, and the infinite sky, in tiny spots, gazing through between. Yet I know that good is coming to me—that good is always coming. . ." (182).

Yet I know. It is the affirmation everywhere of romantics and mystics and all others who deduce the Real, not from proofs of sense or logic, but from the yearnings of the heart and the reaches of the imagination. Thus it was that George MacDonald *knew* that the end of the spiral journey, and the fundamental Reality of the universe, was the Goddess of Outgoing Love.

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Swinburne's "Notes on Designs of the Old Masters at Florence": The Exegesis of Icons

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In 1864 Swinburne visited the Uffizi Gallery, where trustees had recently mounted Italian and German drawings long interred in the basement of the Florentine palace. The uncatalogued display prompted Swinburne during his visit to compose "a register by taking hasty memorial notes of all the important designs as they fell in my way" (15: 155).¹ This prefatory statement to Swinburne's commentary on some twenty masters including Signorelli, Ucello, Ghiberti, Lippi, Veronese, and Durer is intended to suggest the casual, almost random, nature of the catalogue, as though little method informs the "desultory notes" (15: 156). A cursory reading of the "Notes" confirms Swinburne's suggested approach: the commentary is nothing more than a "transcript" of those images that "first caught and longest fixed my attention" (15: 156); the "guide" to the assemblage of comments is his "own sense of interest and admiration" of what is "worthiest of notice" and most "precious and significant" (15: 156).

The admitted casualness of his approach, the confirmed subjectivity of his assemblage, however, belies the deliberateness of the aesthetic strategy that emerges during the course of the essay. The visitor to Swinburne's museum of words is initially struck and visually overwhelmed by the crowd of images verbally assembled, the sheer volume of which seems to preclude any informing principle of "worth" and "significance." The comparatively long commentary on the first two artists—Michelangelo and Leonardo—and the last—Andrea del Sarto—the manner in which these three masters' works are appraised, not in and of themselves, but in relation to images depicted by other artists, suggests that Swinburne's registry is more than an assemblage of notes on images that attracted his attention. His acknowledged "aim" "to cast into some legible form my impression of the designs registered in so rough and rapid a fashion" (15: 156) also suggests that his commentary is more than a pastiche of impressionistic responses to mounted images. The "Notes" rather become a complex metaphor for the interrelationship between viewer and artifact in which the act of visual apprehension results not so much in subjective impressions but in artifacts independent of the drawings apprehended.

In attempting to "cast" his impressions of images in concrete form, Swinburne acknowledges a creative rather than a transcriptive process. The "Notes" become a fable of the artistic enterprise. The purpose of the catalogue is not to refine initial impressions hastily noted on first viewing the Uffizi images; such transcription occurred prior to Swinburne's articulation in prose of the "Notes." These rough and rapidly

registered impressions become rather the material from which is shaped Swinburne's own gallery of art. Mute, inarticulate images resurrected from the past and mounted along museum walls inspire the "legible" or voiced commentary of Swinburne's words. How this creative process functions and what Swinburne understands by its essentially ekphrastic character—the verbal representation of a visual representation—are the major concerns of the Uffizi "Notes" and of this essay.

I

Before engaging these aesthetic issues, I want to examine specific terms from the passages already cited from the "Notes." The prefatory comments to the formal register include important qualifying terms. The register, Swinburne comments, is comprised of "memorial notes." The "transcript" attempts "to cast into some legible form" the impressions of the images made during the Uffizi visit. The funerary suggestions of these terms give the impression of someone fashioning a monument to inter the remains of a lost one. A sense of hollowness, however, attends what is fabricated or cast. The verbally constructed shell, symbolic of what has been, resonates with what is absent.²

In the ekphrastic enterprise, of course, such emptiness invites fulfillment, just as silence encourages voice. Emblems of loss satisfy the passion for memorialization, but they also encourage the solipsistic desire to use emptied repositories as habitations for the self of the memorializer. As will become evident later, the essentially romantic orientation of Swinburne's aesthetic encouraged not only the definition of art in funerary terms, but also demanded the transmigration of memorializer into memorial.

In terms of Swinburne's immediate or practical motive for cataloguing the recently disinterred images, the idea of transcribing, casting, or memorializing seems to argue the need to encapsulate what is evanescent or dying, namely his impressions of the Uffizi masterpieces. Walter Pater, for whom Swinburne's "Notes" became the informing idea of *The Renaissance*,³ speaks of the tremulousness of impressions resulting in "relics"; in fact, "it is more truly said that it [the impression] has ceased to be than that it is" (218). Pater's observation indicates that the verbal reliquary is nothing more than a testament of what was, that it is at best a trace of the original now lost and reflects less the passion for permanence than the reality of transitoriness. Swinburne's verbal representations of the Uffizi images approximate the "kindred" Wordsworth identified as the origin of poetry.⁴ If art involves

¹References to Swinburne's prose criticism appear parenthetically within the text and refer to the Bonchurch edition of *The Complete Works*.

²W. J. T. Mitchell points out the significance of ekphrasis of memorialization. What he calls the "textual Other" in this case the painting or image, "must remain completely alien; it can never be present but must be conjured up as potent absence" (699).

³For a discussion of Swinburne's influence on Pater, see Welles 381-82.

⁴In the "Preface" to the *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth writes that poetry "takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility: the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction the tranquility gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind" (74).

an emotion or impression recollected before being cast into legible form, the actual transcription of that emotion or impression is thus twice removed from the original: the legible transcription is kindred to the recollected emotion or impression, which in turn is kindred to the original.⁵ Swinburne's "Notes" in these terms metaphorically represent the artistic enterprise, and the consequent images verbally drawn constitute artifacts fashioned in the ekphrastic encounter.

The recollective process informing the aesthetic act empowers the "caster" of legible forms; by giving voice to the muted image, he revivifies what is fleeting or dead. Swinburne's "Notes" verbally bring back what has been interred in the basement of the Uffizi Palace and what presently hang inarticulately within that Museum. The ekphrastic endeavor gives preeminence to the caster of legible forms instead of to the images verbally represented. The word thus prevails over the image.⁶

Such empowerment, however, is invariably as illusory as the threat of attempting to give voice to the inarticulate visual. Swinburne carefully qualifies his endeavor in the "Notes" by stating that what is memorialized are the relics or remains of "impression[s] of designs." The phrase suggests that Swinburne's museum of words is lined not only with verbal representations of inarticulate images but also with the caster of legible forms himself. In Swinburne's impressionistic aesthetic, artifact comprises what Ferrier called the "object-mecum" (1: 97). The kindred Wordsworth identified as the source of art is not simply a likeness of an object inspiring emotional response, but that subjectively recollected object or object-mecum. For Swinburne, to regard an image or a painting or a note on a drawing simply as an object is to understand but half of the aesthetic experience; the point of view of the artist or the spectator is equally important to the experience. The former provides a view of what McGann calls "glimpsed fractions"; the latter, the totality of the "vast order of universal relations" (17). Ferrier's "object-mecum" suggests that the ekphrastic endeavor, rather than reaffirming the hegemony of the word over the image, synergistically proclaims the equality and significance of both.

The loss consequent upon such fusion though poses significant dangers clearly anticipated by Swinburne's romantic predecessors, including Keats and Tennyson. The romantic expressivist aesthetic orientation encouraged the transmigration of self into objects to be aestheticized with the result that the artist spoke not from his self "but from some character in whose soul I now live" (Keats's 27 Oct. 1818 letter to Richard Woodhouse 1: 387). The consequence of such transmigration was not simply what Fox identified in Tennyson's poetry as "the consciousness of contrast,"—the recognition of the emergent self as "other" than the transmigratory self—but the loss or annulment of self.⁷ Browning's *Pictor Ignotus* allows

the fear of such threat to prevent his engagement in the essence of great art, namely the "seconding my soul" (l. 7). His work becomes purely imitative, not expressive, in an effort to insulate his self against the possible dissolution of identity that occurs when connoisseurs, for example, traffic in artifacts thereby reducing them to merchandise, or when critics, translating artifact as metaphor of self, judge not the work but the artist.

Browning's *Pictor* momentarily entertains, not the danger, but the euphoria of the seemingly endless secondings of self permitted the artist. Weighing the threats "Of going—I, in each new picture—forth" (l. 26), the *Pictor* briefly considers the self's divinized status resulting from the solipsistic transformation of objective reality into metaphors of the artist's self. The thought of such divine plenitude no sooner entertained is dismissed in terror as the *Pictor* likens the self's divinization to "the revels . . . / Of some strange house of idols at its rites!" (ll. 42-43). In the most striking irony befalling practitioners of romantic poetry, the artist in rendering a legible sign—a word—loses his voice, is rendered inarticulate or mute by the very image he attempts to give expression to. Translating the visual, whether images mounted in a gallery or Wordsworthian "picture[s] of the mind" ("*Tintern Abbey*" l. 61) into the verbal, the caster of legible forms is himself cast in and immobilized by the very medium ostensibly used to empower him ekphrastically. The monument or reliquary initially resonating with absence becomes as well the place of internment threatening the ekphrastic practitioner.

Swinburne's analogies in the paragraphs prefacing his formal catalogue of the Uffizi paintings reinforce the painful irony at romanticism's core. The artifacts he catalogues represent the "flower" of Renaissance art (15: 155), the "fruitful vigour, the joyous and copious effusion of" Milanese, Venetian, and Florentine artistic effort. The drawings registered in the "Notes" are "the golden gleanings of a full harvest" (15: 156). The organic metaphors informing Swinburne's characterization of the works catalogued, however, are radically undermined by the mechanistic metaphors he relies on to describe his own critical attempt at casting, translating, and memorializing the Uffizi drawings. The creative and expressivist effort Swinburne associates with memorialization—recollection or transcription embodies self-generated kindred of the idea informing the original catalogued—acknowledges what Coleridge regards as a fundamentally inorganic operation, namely the impression or casting in legible form of a predetermined idea rather than one innate to the materialized image.⁸ The conflation of antithetical metaphors here—the organic and the mechanical—recognizes the peculiar duality of what Swinburne attempts in his catalogue. On the one hand, his sculptural and

sepulchral analogies attest to his conviction that a creative shaping is involved in the process of memorialization; on the other hand, the analogies acknowledge the threat posed to the caster who is himself permanently transfixed in and by the memorialized images.

The resultant paralysis becomes epidemic. Not only is the caster of legible forms transfixed by artifacts catalogued, the artifacts themselves become strangely immobilized. What Heffernan defines as "the Medusan model" of ekphrasis results in Swinburne's "Notes" in the mutual victimization of the visual and the verbal, the object cast, translated, memorialized as well as the translator, memorializer, and caster of legible forms.⁹ The threat of personal dissolution resulting from recollecting what has been memorialized is repeatedly underscored as Swinburne links the seductiveness of looking upon what has been lost to the threat of being immobilized by looking upon artifact. The intentional internment of the memorializing self within the confines of the memorial is not necessarily freely chosen but seductively coerced in the moment of rapt regard. The duality or mutualness of this effect explains the antithetical organic and mechanical metaphors Swinburne employs as well as the ambiguity involved in the process of gazing. In the last analysis, spectators of Swinburne's museum of words must ask who or what is the object of the gaze—the framed images lining the walls of the Uffizi Palace or Swinburne, the caster of legible forms, or both?

II

One of the most notable aspects of Swinburne's approach to the registering of the Uffizi masterpieces is his use of one artifact as commentary on or metaphor of another. Swinburne's juxtaposition of metaphors in his poetic and critical analyses of situations not only clarifies what he attempts to say, but also reinforces his profound sense of the universal relations among the discrete objects in his world. Like Hopkins's dappled world, whose multitudinousness argues an informing idea past change, Swinburne's qualifications of a particular item described in terms of seemingly unrelated objects argues how coherent vision is generated from the synergistic blending of fractional parts.

We should little wonder, then, that in commenting on the three most celebrated artists represented in his museum of words, Swinburne characteristically introduces one artist in an effort to identify the prevailing *virtu* of another. Of the twenty artists celebrated in the "Notes," three receive especial attention, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Andrea del Sarto. Swinburne's comments on the first two open the "Notes" proper; his discussion of the third closes the register. Michelangelo's three sketches of a woman of "tragic attraction" are examined in terms of the Medusa painting attributed to Leonardo and poetized by Shelley. Andrea del Sarto's female portraits (representing his wife, Lucrezia) are examined in terms of Browning's poem about the painter and Alfred de Musset's drama about the artist. The strategy of commenting on the muted visual images in terms of the articu-

late word or poem evidences the dread the commentator must feel on entering upon his ekphrastic enterprise. The effability of the legible or cast word seems ineffectual when compared with the ineffability of the inarticulate visual. In relying on an other's voice to give expression to his own impressions, Swinburne seems to be conceding the impossibility of ever satisfactorily casting in legible form the experience of images he chronicles.

The inadequacy and potential fatality of Swinburne's effort at translation are evident in his remarks about the difficulty posed by ekphrasis, a process he likens to "the struggle of the image to keep afloat in that mighty sea of words" (*Letters* 6: 39). "No task," he writes in "Notes of Some Pictures of 1868," "is harder than this translation from colour to speech when the speech must be so hoarse and feeble, when the colour is so subtle and sublime" (15: 209). The acknowledged febleness of the word in expressing sublimity seems inconsequential when compared with the fatal consequences of legibly casting an image in words. The visual's seeming resistance to the force of the verbal appears futile as the word threatens the image with its volubility. Swinburne's analogy challenges the stereotypical historical view of ekphrasis as privileging word over image. Ekphrasis rather approximates the tyranny of a weaker power (the word) attempting to subsume a stronger (the visual) and threatening it with dissolution or drowning if the image does not capitulate. Actually, Swinburne's analogy, rather than emphasizing the paragonal tension historically characterizing ekphrasis, expresses his profound concern that the word has the potential of fatally distorting the image it seeks to cast in legible form.

Swinburne's concern in this regard is compounded by the fact that the images whose sublimity transfixes him compel him, ironically, to speak. The sublime, which traditionally inspires awe-struck silence, inevitably requires from the muted gazer a voiced response to the image. And recognizing both the inadequacy of legible forms to translate the sublime and the imperative to speak, he learns how the image inspiring the word encourages self-annulment in the resultant sea of words.

This, of course, is the point of much of Swinburne's criticism and poetry—not the inadequacy of words to cast in legible forms the evanescent yet immutable sublime, but the volubility of expression occasioned by the fleeting impression. The net effect of the register provided by the "Notes" is not a definitive list of works resurrected by the trustees of the Uffizi in the nineteenth century, but the mutual gazing occurring as artifact's impression is registered on Swinburne and as Swinburne's impression seeks verbal embodiment in its own kindred legible materialization.

This mutual interchange becomes manifestly clear when Swinburne begins his registry with the juxtaposition of Leonardo's Medusa and Michelangelo's three studies of a tragic woman. Swinburne's commentary on the studies relies for the embodiment of his impression, not solely on his own words, but on the impact as well of Leonardo's Medusa.¹⁰ Also echoing throughout Swinburne's famous description of the Michelangelo studies are the words of Shelley's "On the

⁵For a discussion of the aesthetic basis of romantic kindredness, see Heffernan, "Arts" 15-37.

⁶For a discussion of the historical hegemony of word over image see Hagstrum xv-xx, Krieger Chapt. 1. The supremacy of the verbal over the visual has continued more recently as the struggle for dominance between sister arts has become gendered. For a discussion of the chauvinistic bias of this paragonal struggle, see Heffernan, *Museum* 5-7.

⁷Of Tennyson's frequent "transmigration[s] of the soul" into external objects, William Fox in his 1830 review of the early poetry writes, "He does not

merely assume their external shapes, and exhibit his own masquerading. . . . for a moment the identification is complete, and then a consciousness of contrast springs up between the reports of external objects brought to the mind by the sense and those which it has been accustomed to receive" (77-78).

⁸Coleridge distinguishes between the mechanical and organic. "The form is mechanic when on any given material we impress a predetermined form, not necessarily arising out of the properties of the material. . . . The organic form, on the other hand, is innate; it shapes as it develops itself from within" (1: 224).

⁹For a discussion of the Medusan model of ekphrasis, see Heffernan, *Museum* 108-10.

¹⁰For a relevant discussion of the Medusa image and ekphrasis, see Hollander 210-11 and Michael 708-13.

Medusa of Leonardo da Vinci." The painting, mistakenly attributed to Leonardo, is actually the work of an unknown seventeenth-century Flemish painter. Swinburne's misattribution may owe something to Shelley's error (see Rogers 16-17). The mistake in either case is inconsequential. What is significant is Swinburne's virtual paraphrase of Shelley's poem in an effort to legibly cast the sentiments ostensibly occasioned by Swinburne's regard of the Michelangelo studies. Neither the Leonardo reference nor the allusion to Shelley seems to suffice as Swinburne attempts to cast his impression of the Michelangelo woman. Of the "deadlier Venus incarnate," Swinburne remarks of one of the three studies,

she wears a head-dress of eastern fashion rather than western . . . ; plaited in the likeness of closely-welded scales as of a chrysalid serpent, raised and waved and rounded in the likeness of a sea-shell. In some inexplicable way her ornaments seem to partake of her fatal nature, to bear upon them her brand of beauty fresh from hell; and this through no vulgar machinery of symbolism, no serpentine or otherwise bestial emblem: the bracelets and rings are innocent enough in shape and workmanship; but in touching her flesh they have become infected with deadly and malignant meaning. . . . Her eyes are full of proud and passionless lust after gold and blood; her hair, close and curled, seems ready to shudder in sunder and divide into snakes. . . . her mouth crueler than a tiger's, colder than a snake's, and beautiful beyond a woman's. (15: 160)

Shelley describes the woman's features thus:

And from its head as from one body grow,
As grass out of a watery rock,
Hairs which are vipers, and they curl and flow
And their long tangles in each other lock,
And with unending involutions show
Their mailed radiance, as it were to mock
The torture and the death within, and saw
The solid air with many a ragged saw.

Swinburne's and Shelley's descriptions of this serpentine beauty reveal three important notions the two poets hold in common. First, Medusan beauty, in Shelley's words, is "thrown / Athwart the darkness and glare of pain" (14-15). In Swinburne's words, the figure mingles "refluent evil and good, alternate grief and joy, life inextricable from death, change inevitable and insuperable fate" (15: 158). Here, Shelley notes, "Death has met life, but there is life in death." Second, the "unending involutions" symbolized by the serpentine hair of the Medusa "infect" all that they touch, including otherwise insignificant objects like the jewelry worn by the woman. Third, the origins of this diseased condition, although never examined by either poet, seem to involve the indistinguishableness of the fundamental antithetical elements (like good and evil, beauty and pain) defining life.¹¹ And it is the gaze, the visual "touch," that occasions the infection.

In the brief entry on Leonardo prefacing the commentary on Michelangelo's tragic woman, Swinburne observes of a Leonardo study of Youth and Age: "it may be a young man coming suddenly upon the ghostly figure of himself as he will one day be" (15: 157). The comment becomes significant in understanding what Swinburne, and Shelley before him, meant by the terrifying gaze of the Medusan figure. On the surface, the Medusan myth represents the source of terrifying paralysis befalling anyone who gazes upon the decapitated head Perseus carries about as a shield. That artifact, like anything artistically rendered, initially elicits, not delight, but "fear rather, oppressive reverence, and well-nigh intolerable adoration" (15: 157-58). Threatened paralysis, however, is indistinguishable from seductive pleasure verging on adoration. The lure of an artifact is ultimately its ability to silence into a kind of worship, to fixate into a stare, the gazer in adoration attempting to say his orisons. But silence and catatonic gaze before idols is precisely what the ekphrastic commentator on the Uffizi masterworks—or any artifacts—intends to avoid in registering his impressions. Instead, Swinburne acknowledges, "Delightful beyond words they [the images] become" (15: 158). Every ekphrastic encounter, in other words, concludes with the caster of legible forms suffering the fate of Browning's Duke: seeking verbally to reinforce or underscore his possession of an image, the gazer comes to be possessed by the mute object he seeks to give voice to. Like Browning's Pictor, he is, if only momentarily, rendered inarticulate though painfully conscious of the ghostly figure of self he has suddenly encountered.

Shelley's poem on the Medusan figure, however, reminds us of the anomaly inherent in the act of gazing. In the opening line of his poem, Shelley remarks of the Medusan countenance, "It lieth, gazing on the midnight sky" (l. 1). In the second stanza, he notes that "it is less the horror than the grace / Which turns the gazer's spirit into stone" (ll. 9-10). Heffernan correctly points out that the gazer in this case is both the Medusa figure looking out into the night and the spectator looking into the woman's tragic features (Museum 121-23). Swinburne's comments on the Michelangelo studies of a tragic woman clearly suggest as well the dual understanding of gaze as involving artifact or image and spectator of that image. Both are transfixed, the image by being rendered in some artistic medium, the spectator or critic by casting in legible form not only the image but his own impressions of it. The "seconding of self" Browning speaks of in definition of the artist's function becomes the burden of the critic or commentator's works as well. The paragonal contest, whether understood politically or in gendered terms, concludes in the silencing/voicing of both antagonists, the image and the spectator.

The indeterminacy resulting from a contest ostensibly engaged in for the purpose of determining a victor is reflected in Swinburne's sense that image and spectator struggle inconclusively over irreconcilables. Great art deals with the antithetical elements of life and death, however these forces are defined. Despite the "sea of words" used to give voice to

the mute visual, the gazer on and caster in legible forms of images ends indecisively. "The mind, if then it enjoys at all or wonders at all," Swinburne writes of the transcriber, "knows little of its own wonder or its own enjoyment" (15:158). And the images themselves similarly conclude inconclusively: they simultaneously "unveil" and "reserve" "all their suggestions and all their suppressions" (15:158). These terms suggest that image or artifact conspires simultaneously to disclose and to conceal; that in turning upon itself and gazing at its self, image is doing precisely what spectator, for psychologically protective reasons, feels compelled to do, namely "reserve" from full disclosure whatever he is tempted to voice.

Swinburne's allusion to Shelley's poem, his discussion of Michelangelo's three studies in terms of Leonardo's drawing, suggests a similar reserve. A conspiracy of words and images borrowed from others to give voice to the Medusan woman diminishes the threat of beauty's petrification by articulating the gazer's impression in the words of others. The literary or artistic allusions Swinburne employs from Leonardo and Shelley provide protective cover against the Medusan threat.

III

Swinburne concludes his register by turning back to Florence, "to one of her dearest and noblest names, reserved with love for this last place" (15:190). Andrea del Sarto poses for Swinburne a dichotomy similar to the juxtaposition of antagonistic elements—beauty and death—that characterize Michelangelo's genius. Mingled with the "lyric and elegiac loveliness" of the painter's work is the disturbing void evident by "how much of him was killed or changed, how much of him could not be" (15: 190). The organic plenitude of his "flowering manhood" (15: 190) that marks his "cloistral" period (15: 191) discloses the exuberance and "Elysian beauty" (15: 191) of his soul. The work of his post-cloistral period, however, is simply devoid of soul. Technical perfection betrays sterility and spiritual death.

The images Swinburne catalogues as representative of these two periods in Andrea del Sarto's artistic life are his mural designs of Salome on the one hand, and, on the other, his paintings featuring Lucrezia del Fede. The contrast of these sets of images dramatizes how his life "was corroded by [the poisonous solvent of love] and his soul burnt into dead ashes" (15: 193). In casting in legible form his commentary on the Italian painter, Swinburne relies on Browning and Alfred de Musset's verbal accounts of Lucrezia's influence on her husband. Swinburne's reliance on secondary sources to articulate his impressions amounts, as does his earlier reliance on Leonardo and Shelley, to an admission of the critic's inadequacy in voicing his impressions. The exegete of icons must confess defeat before the mute icon he attempts to envoice. The image, Swinburne must admit, "tells more of the story than any written record" (15:193).

Browning's poetic biography, "Andrea del Sarto," was inspired by John Kenyon's request that the poet find him a copy of a del Sarto painting hanging in the Pitti Palace. Browning instead sent Kenyon a poetic representation of the pictorial representation of Andrea and Lucrezia. The poem itself, however, is not an ekphrastic work. The speaker of the

poem is not engaged in a paragonal contest to obstetrically deliver from some silenced image a message which, in the last analysis, he wishes to remain mute. Dominance of the verbal in its struggle with the visual is not the issue either. The long monologue indicates that Browning's "Faultless Painter" has long ago capitulated to his "serpentine beauty" (l. 26) and that his opening petition to Lucrezia—"do not let us quarrel any more" (l. 1)—signals not cessation of the contest so much as loss on his part. Bitter irony informs Andrea's comparison of his painting of Lucrezia with Raphael's sketches of the Virgin. The Roman's painting inspires the soul to speak, to rise in prayer; Andrea's painting leaves the soul earthbound, frustrated by the ineffectuality of his words. The only consolation Andrea appears to enjoy arises from the fact that his "Virgin was his wife" (l. 179). In Musset's account of the painter's life, consolation derives from the heroic stature poetic license accords the painter who, acknowledging his weak will and immoral deeds, ends his own life.

Like Browning's Duke, Andrea, in the poet's and playwright's versions, appropriates idols and the images they inspire only to discover that rather than possessing them, he is either possessed or dispossessed by them. The origin of this spiritual irony is that Andrea's soul is "fettered" (l. 51) by his earthbound beauty and consequently incapable of aspiring heavenward. Acknowledging the spiritual debility of his being, Andrea nevertheless persists in his loyal affection for his wife, not because he expects freedom from his Medusan figure who "curls inside" his "bared breast" (l. 22), but because practical considerations dictate loyalty. Using Lucrezia as a model saves money, which can finance Lucrezia and her "cousin's" diversions. Andrea's spiritual bankruptcy is matched only by his economic bankruptcy; he works to support another.

The image Swinburne cites as representative of Andrea's cloistral period, before the painter "forfeited" his soul (15: 192) to Lucrezia, is Salome, "an incarnate figure of music," "no tyrannous or treacherous goddess of deadly beauty, but a simple virgin" (15: 192). The analogy to the sister art of music—Salome is "the song of a bird made flesh" (15: 192)—calls to mind Keats's reference to the Grecian Urn as the "unravished bride of quietness" (l. 1) and to Shelley's description of the skylark as an "unbodied joy" (l. 15) pouring forth "unpremeditated art" (l. 5). By comparison, Salome's mother Herodias's beauty is "conscious" and informed by "the voluptuous will of a harlot and a queen" (15: 192). Salome, "the maiden force of nature," though, is "capable of bloodshed," but it is bloodshed, Swinburne contends, "without bloodguiltiness" (15: 192). The analogy to music, however, is introduced to acknowledge the effect of ekphrastic encounters typically associated with verbal metaphors. Both analogies, to music and to the verbal, are intended to gauge the inevitable effect of a paragonal contest between the alleged mute and the ostensible articulate. Dancing before her father, Salome, the incarnation of song and motion, "subdued by the rapture of the soul" (15: 192) her audience. Salome for Swinburne represents the other side of the treacherous Medusan structure, the beautiful unassuming figure whose unselfconscious performance is nevertheless as threatening to the viewer as the serpentine beauty consciously seeking destruction of Andrea's soul. What Swinburne later wrote of Rossetti's 1868

¹¹For a discussion of this dialectical tension in Swinburne, see Donoghue 142.

exhibited paintings can be said of Andrea del Sarto's Salome and Lucrezia: both are "fit raiment for the idea incarnate of faultless fleshy beauty and peril of pleasure unavoidable" (15: 212).

Swinburne's fascination with Medusan figures, whether assuming the form of Andrea's Salome or Michelangelo's tragic woman, attests to the ambiguous nature of artistic gazing as unavoidably resulting in pleasure and pain, adoration and fear, association with the image and annulment by it. What is unavoidable in Swinburne's account of his ekphrastic cataloguing of the Uffizi masterworks is the empowerment to speak afforded by mute images contemplated, memorialized, and translated. In the last analysis, if the visual can be perceived as threatening with silence or annihilation the caster in legible forms of images, it can also be perceived as giving voice to one contemplatively gazing upon these Medusan images. Like Keats's reader of Chapman's Homer, Swinburne's gazer on the Uffizi masterpieces is rendered "Silent" (l. 14) only to speak volubly about his experience.

Swinburne relies on the idea of incarnation to dramatize his understanding of this paradoxical experience and of the relationship between artist, artifact, and gazer or caster that inspires it. Andrea incarnates an idea of beauty of a certain kind and thereby incarnates his soul or lack of soul. Salome the image is music incarnate; Herodias the image is bloodguiltiness incarnate. A critic or gazer's impression is an incarnation of the incarnate idea represented by the image viewed. Swinburne, however, chooses to compound the complexity of multiple incarnations by defining the critic's or gazer's relationship to an image, referring to it as a "transcription" or "memorial jotting" (15: 195) done years ago. Further compounding the reincarnations is Swinburne's transcribing his impression of the Uffizi Michelangelo and Andrea del Sarto through images and impressions rendered by Leonardo, Shelley, Browning, and Musset. The protection afforded by employing literary and artistic allusions to cast Swinburne's own impressions ironically exposes him and any gazer to the volubility such compounding produces. Despite this verbal layering, however, Swinburne apologizes for the lack of "fullness" (15: 195) of his catalogue. An uneasy ambivalence characterizes this exegete of icons: a polyphony of sounds arises from the cataloguer questioning his vocal adequacy.

This inadequacy in the face of volubility prompts us at the close of Swinburne's "Notes" to reexamine the traditional notions of ekphrasis as either a paragonal and gendered contest between word and image or the verbal representation of the visual in an effort, paradoxically, to obstetrically deliver from silence a message the deliverer is nevertheless reluctant to articulate because of the image's Medusan threat. As I have attempted to argue here, Swinburne's giving voice in legible form to images he contemplates defines ekphrasis as the empowerment of the gazer, but it is empowerment qualified by the force of the muted image to silence the gazer. Both word and image thus play equally significant roles in what is less a contest than a synergistic relationship. Neither element is privileged or subservient.

Swinburne's strategy of casting his impressions of images, not necessarily or even solely in his own words but in

terms of literary and artistic references, qualifies the essentially synergistic understanding of ekphrasis in the "Notes" as an irreconcilable tension between equally significant elements. This irresolution explains why Swinburne's exegesis of the Uffizi icons betrays paradoxical features: the sense of personal threat in the face of the artistic sublime, yet the compulsion to break the silence in the face of images simultaneously beautiful and dreadful; the awareness of language's inadequacy to express the ineffable symbolized by the image, yet the need to assert in words the sense of self impressionistically engaged in artifact; the compulsion to express the perceiver's sense of icon, yet the reliance on others' impressions to reinforce or advance one's own articulation. In the last analysis, Swinburne's strategy of relying on Leonardo, Shelley, Browning and Musset to cast his encounter with images is less a protective mask against the Medusan threats posed by the silent image than an acknowledgment that the human, verbal interplay between exegete and image can never be full or complete. That interaction is continually evolving as the idea incarnated in image is reincarnated by each critic or gazer sensitive not only to his own impression of artifact but to the constellation of impressions registered by earlier gazers. For Swinburne, the dread of gaze notwithstanding, ekphrasis is not a paragonal struggle between two forces for domination so much as an affirmation that the exegetical process synergistically coalesces image, gazer, and the legibly cast impression of the exegete.

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Ada Levenson's Wild(e) Yellow Book Stories

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According to recent studies of both Ed Cohen (1993) and Alan Sinfield (1994), the three trials of Oscar Wilde marked the beginning of a new socially recognized male homosexual identity, one which combined aestheticism, dandyism, leisure, effeminacy, and homosexuality—the "queer" Wildean image, as Sinfield terms it (vii). Before Wilde's 25 May 1895 conviction for "acts of gross indecency," effeminate men were not necessarily considered to be gay, but, as Cohen notes, the newspaper coverage of the trials "effectively constituted Wilde himself as a metonym for the 'crime'" of homosexuality (209). Thus, by the third trial's end, the equations spelled out by Wilde's prosecution became indicators by which the larger culture "will be ready to recognize the homosexual" in that "only Wilde is the true queer" (Sinfield 124). In this essay I want to explore the specific instance signaling this paradigm shift in the cultural understanding of Oscar Wilde, his career, and his work, namely Ada Levenson's two *Yellow Book* short stories: "Suggestion" (April 1895) and "The Quest for Sorrow" (January 1896). In these works, Levenson, Wilde's noted friend and confidante, presents the humorous affairs of Cecil "Cissy" Carrington, a foppish, dandified Wildean character. The first story, published the very month the trials began, presents a cooperatively effeminate Cissy, comfortable in the company of women (his sister and her friends) and "of use to the girls": as he admits, "they do nothing—not even choosing a hat—without asking my advice" ("Suggestion" 251). But in the second story, which appeared more than six months after Wilde's conviction, Levenson replaces Cissy's girlfriends with old public school chums, and turns her protagonist's efforts against female society; in pursuit of his desire "to clasp Sorrow in my arms and press her pale lips to mine," Cissy Carrington abuses the affections of young Alice Sinclair ("Quest" 325). Charles Burkhardt notes this change in his full-length study of Levenson; he finds the first story "rich," while the second tale is not "quite so amusing," as "Cecil now becomes pure cad" (*Ada* 75-76). To a more discerning reader, however, the differences between these two stories parallel the change in the social-cultural reading of the Wilde figure. Levenson develops her depiction of Cissy from an effeminate and ironic character to one who appears more openly disruptive of the heterosexual cultural order: Cissy becomes a figure we may read more strongly as "queer."

By the time of the Wilde trials, Ada Levenson's career as a successful humorist had already been associated with the playwright's. Her sketches and parodies appeared in various publications, including *Punch*, and among her more famous pieces are her brief parodies of Wilde's plays *An Ideal Husband* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Burkhardt claims that her work "mocks both the epigrammatic Wilde . . . and the lyric Wilde" ("Ada Levenson and Oscar Wilde" 195; *Ada* 70). The relationship between the parody and source material may be somewhat more complex, however, suggesting alliance more than "mocking" antagonism. Indicative of this connection are Wilde's own reactions to her *Punch* writing: after her parody of his poem *The Sphinx* appeared, he cheerfully nicknamed her "The Sphinx" (Wyndham 25). Clearly, Wilde supported Levenson's parodies, as marked by his 8 January 1895 telegram on her forthcoming "Overheard Fragment of a Dialogue," based on *An Ideal Husband*: "I am so pleased my dear Sphinx, no other voice but yours is musical enough to echo my music. Your article will be worthy of you and me" (qtd. in Wyndham 48). Levenson's pieces do, in fact, literally echo Wilde's writings—and not simply the play texts. For example, the epigram, "If one tells the truth, one is sure sooner or later to be found out," appears in her 12 January 1895 "Fragment," but the line originates from Wilde's "Phrases and Philosophies for the Use of the Young," published in the premier number of the *Journal Chameleon*, not from *An Ideal Husband* itself. Levenson certainly was familiar with the "Phrases," as Wilde himself demanded that her "aphorisms must appear in the second number of the *Chameleon*: they are exquisite" (*Letters* 379). Sadly, there was no second number. A (failed) Oxford literary magazine, *Chameleon* was a more obscure publication than *Punch*, so her readers may not have recognized her direct appropriation. However, the reference denotes Levenson's broader knowledge and depiction of Wilde's "music," in that she conflates the "real" Wilde she knew and read with the characters who appear on his stage. The *Punch* parodies, then, are precursors of Levenson's *Yellow Book* work; the play, in these parodies, is not the thing—the Wildean character is. However, unlike the Cissy Carrington stories, the parodies directly link the Wilde persona to the man himself and his works.

From a late-twentieth-century perspective, this linkage seems to rely on a half-silenced, implied, or even "coded" rep-

resentation of gay sexuality. While neither of the *Punch* pieces overtly deal with male homosexuality, as with other things Wilde, it is hard not to read the existence of sexuality in the textual margins or fault lines. For instance, "Fragment" is less a parody of *An Ideal Husband* than an imaginary meeting between two of Wilde's dandified, witty, and aphoristic characters: the play's Lord Goring and Lord Illingworth of *A Woman of No Importance* (though, of course, the latter is his play's villain). In this *Punch* piece, the two trade *bon mots* of what appears to be a particularly "queer" nature, as twice in the roughly 350-word sketch Goring and Illingworth seemingly refer to the common practice of rich gay men "keeping" their young lovers, what Sinfield classifies as the "cross-class liaison" (149):

LORD ILLINGWORTH: . . . Nowadays it is only the poor who are kept at the expense of the rich.

LORD GORING: Yes. It is perfectly comic, the number of young men going about the world nowadays who adopt perfect profiles as a useful profession. ("Fragment")

The skit ends with Goring complaining that "[i]t is too late to sleep. I shall go down to Covent Garden and look at the roses," off on a journey for what sounds like a *double entendre* for rough trade ("Fragment"). Similarly, Levenson's redaction of *The Importance of Being Earnest* ends with "Mr. Dorian" (interestingly appropriated from *The Picture of Dorian Gray*) misquoting an epigram from Wilde's anonymous list in the 17 November 1894 *Saturday Review*, not from the *Earnest* play text:

DORIAN: To be really modern one should have no soul. To be really mediaeval one should have no cigarettes. To be really Greek—

(*The Duke of Berwick rises in a marked manner and leaves the garden.*)

CICELY: (*writes in her diary, and then reads aloud dreamily*): The Duke of Berwick rose in a marked manner, and left the garden. The weather continues charming. . . . ("Handbag")

Wilde's epigram actually reads as follows: "To be mediaeval one should have no body. To be really modern one should have no soul. To be thoroughly Greek one should have no clothes" (*Letters* 869-70; qtd. in Small 128). Despite Levenson's minor alteration, which also alludes to Wotton's well-known epigram in *Dorian Gray*, the same punch line is implied, and it is the indecent equation of Grecian culture with (male) nudity that causes the Duke of Berwick's sudden departure. Thus, Levenson's direct versioning of the Wildean character, whether he be Dorian, Illingworth, or Goring, relies

on a suggestion of "queerness" and pays homage to such suggestions in Wilde's own work. Indeed, Russell Jackson notes that by referencing *Dorian Gray*, Levenson rewrites *Earnest*, "infusing the new play with decadence" (167), which, for late-twentieth-century readers, means she composes sketches more blatantly "queer" than the plays they reference.¹ Her *Punch* pieces, then, characterize both Wilde and his work as part of a larger cultural domain concerning male homosexuality—at least to those who can read the parodies' code.

And yet the question is whether or not most people—in this case the readers of *Punch*—could read the code. As a warning, Sinfield's "constructivist" argument reminds us that an ahistorical reading of silenced or coded representation risks assimilating "them too rapidly to the model that prevails in our own cultures" (5). Just as Wilde's audiences failed to understand *Earnest*'s Jack and Algy as "camp" figures and instead read them as "heterosexual philanderers" "distinctively exonerated from such suspicions," *Punch*'s readers may not have read Levenson's sketches as "queer" (Sinfield 71). Yet several critics suggest that while these primarily heterosexual audiences did not interpret the characters as gay, Wilde certainly—and purposely, if covertly—suggested that they were. As Christopher Craft writes, "Wilde adopted this writing strategy for political as well as aesthetic reasons; he could only insinuate that which he otherwise could not say" (135).² However, as Sinfield notes—and I think correctly—Wilde could not have insinuated "queer" identity as we know it today, but rather its developmental precursor. Then who, before the trials, read Levenson's parodies and understood them as crystallization of the "queer" potential present in Wilde's most flamboyant and witty characters? The answer is: Oscar Wilde himself. His pleasure in Levenson's work, I suspect, resulted from his recognition of her own recognition of what he originally represented, implicitly or not, in his own work. She was able to transcribe Wilde's "music" from its many performances, both in life and on the stage.

Given the uniqueness of the *Punch* parodies, the *Yellow Book* stories mark Levenson's transposition of the Wildean character from the limited context of Wilde himself to one in which her singular creativity, not her friend's, would be most apparent. Levenson was able to appropriate the Wildean representation from his creator with relative ease, for as Regenia Gagnier argues at length, Wilde "employ[ed] the tactics of advertising and publicity" to depict "the relationship between image and the real, between art and life" (56; 51).³ Wilde's popular self-promotion essentially tied his "real" self to his creations (as mirrored by Levenson's perceptive *Punch* work), but fundamentally he constructed a free-floating signifier, a persona beyond his personal control, to be borrowed at will by others. In his trials, this Wildean figure was used against him, as his works were introduced as evidence of his "crime"

tion and heterosexual culture, see Fineman, particularly pp. 87-90, and Sedgwick, *Tendencies*, 52-72.

³Others have noted the (self)commodification of the Wilde persona. Joseph Bristow writes that Wilde made "the dramatist into a performer. Endlessly promoting his spectacular personality, Wilde brought about a signal change in the relations between the artist and his audience. No longer was the artist the producer of culture, he was now an embodiment of it" (*Effeminate* 32-33). See also Bowlby 151-54 and 157-59, Brantlinger, Smigiel 259-62, and Hope.

(Cohen 127-29; Craft 120-29). But Levenson's appropriation is certainly more benign: in her *Yellow Book* stories, the Wildean character evolves into a broader depiction of a new literary type.⁴

"Suggestion," the *Yellow Book* story published during the course of Wilde's trials, introduces Cissy Carrington, Levenson's Wildean protagonist and narrator. Directive, profligate, and discriminating, Cissy nevertheless allies himself generally with the women of his household, his sister Marjorie, and her friend Laura. Cissy's mother has long since died, yet he feels an unusual bond with the late matriarch, as he reveals in the following passage:

Everyone says I am strangely like my mother. Her face was of that pure and perfect oval one so seldom sees, with delicate features, rosebud mouth, and soft flaxen hair. A blondness without insipidity, for the dark-blue eyes are fringed with dark lashes, and from their languorous depths looks out a soft mockery. I have a curious ideal devotion to my mother; she died when I was quite young—only two months old—and I often spend hours thinking of her, as I gaze at myself in the mirror. (253)

Because his mother died young, she stays pretty, which maintains the memory of both her eternally young beauty and Cissy's own apparently mutable attractiveness. Thus, Cissy's admiration for his mother reveals itself to be self-admiration (a shift marked in the verb tense, as his mother's face *was*, but the eyes *are*), as the visual signifier of the beautiful woman collapses into the vain effeminate boy's reflection. The "curious ideal" seems to be Cissy's self-serving narcissism, as the text implies by undercutting the above monologue: "'Do come down from the clouds,' said Marjorie impatiently," for Cissy "had sunk into reverie" before the mirror (253).

Late-twentieth-century readers cannot help noting the parallel between Cissy's over-identification with his mother and Freudian theories of male homosexual development. Freud's work, while no longer accepted at face value, greatly influenced both early intellectual and more widespread concepts of male homosexuality. Fixated to a woman (usually a mother), the Freudian model claims, the homosexual's identification with her leads him narcissistically to take himself as his sexual object; he will then seek a young man to love as his mother loved him (Freud 11n). But this reading is ahistorical; Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905; English trans. 1910) would not appear in English for over a decade, and the popular understanding of "queer" development had not yet codified. So while Cissy's maternal connection may have suggested a "queer" stereotype to some of *The Yellow Book* readers, Levenson also uses Cissy's "over-identification" (in Freud's terminology) for different purposes. His mother-love mirrors (literally in the passage above) his pseudo-matriarchal role in the story: Cissy is "Suggestion's" dowager match-maker.

Although Cissy claims "'I never marry. . . . You don't know how dreadfully I suffer from my nerves,'" he has mar-

riage plans for both his sister and, it turns out, his father (254). While Marjorie prefers the attentions of aesthete Adrian Grant, Cissy insists that his sister accept the proposal of young (and boring) Charlie Winthrop, for the latter "is a dear person, good-natured and ridiculously rich—just the sort of man for a brother-in-law" (255). While "Suggestion" does not reveal Marjorie's intended, she does abandon her designs on Adrian Grant—leaving him instead to her school-friend Laura, who is also Marjorie's (and Cissy's) step-mother. Laura, Cissy recounts at the story's beginning, believed that old Carrington loved her and desired her hand in marriage; however, Cissy reveals, "[t]he whole thing was done, in fact, by suggestion" (249). During a summer dinner party, Laura attends dressed "in yellow, with mauve orchids," flowers that Cissy himself sent her "anonymously; I could not help it if she chose to think they were from my father" (250). As old Carrington has "the look having suffered that comes from enjoying oneself too much," his "sham melancholy and apparently hollow gaiety" appeal to Laura's "heart" (250). In turn, the widower, according to Cissy, "realised . . . the possible" (249), and the two are soon wed.

At this point, Cissy presents little threat to the bourgeois family for which he labors, hardly what late-twentieth-century readers expect from "queer" characters, coded or otherwise. Indeed, as Judith Roof writes, mainstream narratives tend to follow heterosexually "reproductive" models (those that produce marriages, "children, knowledge and victory"), while homosexuality's entry into said narratives threatens both to destabilize the models and to terminate their goals (*Come xxii*). But Cissy hardly challenges the most reproductive aspect of "Suggestion," its marriage economy, for he is its genesis and driving force. While we may read his match-maker role-play as a kind of camp metaphorical cross-dressing, Cissy's unique social position may not have insinuated gay sexual practices or identity to the 1895 readership (Sinfield 46). Rather, his effeminate match-maker role may have, paradoxically, situated him at institutional masculinity's center.

By acting in place of the absent mother, Cissy makes more apparent what Luce Irigaray terms the masculinist "hom(m)o-sexual economy" in which women are (marriageable) commodities exchanged between husbands, fathers, or brothers, passing "from one man to another, from one group of men"—or family—"to another" (171). Thus, Cissy, for all his Wildean qualities, ends up maintaining a reified, manly status quo, although Levenson mediates this relation. Her exposure of the marriage economy's masculine bias, in fact, functions as a critique of the system; the irony of the story's seemingly active dilettante doubled with the Cissy's paradoxical masculine/feminine role raises more questions than it answers, calling into question the bourgeois family's foundations. But these issues, intriguing as they are, are not the result of Cissy's "queerness" *per se*, and certainly not contingent on our understanding of the narrator as gay.

Instead, we must look elsewhere for clearer hints of Cissy's Wildean characterization. Particularly, we must

¹The connections between Wilde, homosexuality, and decadence have been noted by both Bristow, "Sterile," and Thornton, who writes that "Wilde may be said to have been judged before he was tried, but the whole Decadent movement was on trial with him" (68). Bristow's careful reading of Arthur Symonds's work notes how "Decadence might be . . . defined by a general perversion of male sexuality," a perversion now, after the Wilde trials, read only as homosexuality ("Sterile" 86).

²For more on Wilde's complex negotiation between homosexual representa-

⁴Nonetheless, according to Mix, the first line of "Suggestion" "was read with special interest by the literary wise-acres, who knew of Mrs. Levenson's

satires in *Punch* and her friendship with the playwright" (157).

examine the results of Cissy's matrimonial machinations, for, as even he realizes, they come with a price. Laura, he admits, "little knew what an irritating, ill-tempered, absent-minded person" his father "is in private life; and at times I have pangs of remorse" (250). Further accentuating old Carrington's unpleasant nature, the new husband soon returns to his bachelor ways, visiting "an old friend who lives in one of the little houses opposite the Oratory"—his mistress (251). The newly weds have a falling out, and Cissy acknowledges that "we all three dislike father about equally, though Laura never owns it, and is gracefully attentive to him in a gentle, filial sort of way" (251). Thus, in the Carrington household, stepmother becomes sibling and confidante in the struggle against the father. This, I suspect, is the core of Cissy's mediated "queer" challenge in "Suggestion."

As it turns out, Cissy's pangs of regret are real, and Marjorie, too, admits her responsibility:

"Cissy," Marjorie said, coming one day into my study, "I want to speak with you about Laura."

"Do you have pangs of conscience too?" I asked, lighting a cigarette.

"Dear, we took a great responsibility. Poor girl! Oh, couldn't we make Papa more—"

"Impossible," I said; "no one has any influence with him. He can't bear even me, though if he had a shade of decency he would dash away an unbidden tear every time I look at him with my mother's blue eyes."

... "I came to ask you to think of something to amuse Laura—to interest her."

... "What do you think she really needs most?" I asked.

Ours eyes met.

"Really, Cissy, you're too disgraceful," said Marjorie. (252-53)

Disgraceful or not, the two decide that what Laura needs most is Adrian Grant. Cissy found his stepmother a husband, and now he must secure her a lover.

While there is a sort of general irony in Cissy's searching for a lover for Laura, there also remains a fundamentally revolutionary aspect to his action. Late-nineteenth-century husbands, according to Keith Thomas, were free (though perhaps not encouraged) to seek sexual relations outside of marriage while women had to "recognize that the double standard was in the nature of things, that model wives should turn a blind eye to their husband's liaisons" (196). Meanwhile, single women had to remain virginal and married women kept chaste (particularly if they were bourgeois). Furthermore, "[r]espectable Victorian wives . . . were educated to regard the act of procreation as a necessary and rather repulsive duty" (Thomas 215). When, in the dialogue above, Marjorie and Cissy's eyes meet, Levenson leaves much unsaid, but in context "Suggestion" posits a radical solution to the philandering husband: the end of chastity. However, rather than imagine that the story is a radically feminist narrative, a more accurate reading might parallel Laurel Brake's analysis of *Yellow Book* contributions generally; she believes that although the publication presented a "complex interaction" of social representations of gender and art, fundamentally *The Yellow Book* was

"suffused with male discourses of gender, in works by women and men" (63; 39). While she oddly fails to acknowledge either of Levenson's *Yellow Book* stories, Brake's point seems apt: in "Suggestion," the final decision on Laura's chastity rests with Cissy.

Cissy (and Marjorie, to a point) decide that Adrian Grant is the perfect candidate for Laura's affections. Adrian is clearly fond of her, but he is also somewhat of a poseur. "[V]ery popular and very much disliked," Adrian claims to be a painter, and his studio "gives one the complete impression of being at once the calm retreat of a mediaeval saint and the luxurious abode of a modern Pagan" (255). Yet, remarks Cissy, one also "feels that everything could be done there, everything from praying to flirting—everything except painting" (255). Cissy also observes that, while Adrian is beautiful, fascinating, and has a small income of his own, "nothing could be more incongruous than the idea of his marrying"; indeed, our narrator admits that he likes Adrian, ". . . I like him enormously, I am quite devoted to him" (255-56). Unlike Cissy, however, the painter has strong feelings for a woman, and he desires his friend's help in gaining Laura's affections. In return, young Carrington decides that Adrian must dress as Tristan for an up-coming fancy dress party and charm Laura "at first by her imagination" (257)—a task well within the young beau's powers.

Once all is arranged, Cissy the match-maker feels yet another pang of conscience:

Suddenly I thought of my mother—my beautiful sainted mother, who would have loved me, I am convinced, had she lived, with an extraordinary devotion. What would she have said to all this? What would she have thought? I know not why, but a mad reaction seized me. I felt recklessly conscientious. My father! After all, he was my father. I was possessed by passionate scruples. If I went back to Adrian—if I went back and implored him, supplicated him never to see Laura again! (257)

In this fit of conventional morality, Cissy has the driver turn his carriage around and head straight for Adrian's. But as Cissy's carriage passes the Brompton Oratory, he sees his father headed for "one of the little houses opposite"—his mistress's home (257). Thus, Cissy makes his choice: "'Turn round again,' I shouted to the cabman. And he drove me straight home" (257). Laura will have her lover.

It is not particularly clear how liberating this new affair will be for Laura, as, again, she had little input into any aspect of its genesis. Not only does the decision about Adrian primarily rest with Cissy, but the very negotiation between them suggests the hom(m)o-sexual economy—Adrian asks for Laura's hand in adultery, it seems. While this scandalous reversioning of the marriage economy suggests a challenge to patriarchy, it is a weak one. After all, by merely placing desire outside of marriage's landscape, affairs do not demand the end of marriage itself. Furthermore, Cissy's motivations are less than obvious. Both he and Marjorie wish Laura to be happy, for, Cissy remarks, "[s]ometimes she looks bored, and I have heard her sigh" (252). Yet he plans "to have an onyx-paved bath-room, with soft apricot-coloured light shimmering through the blue-lined green curtains in my chambers, as soon

as I get Margery [sic] married, and Laura more—settled down" (254); Cissy's match-making here seems more an obstacle to the joys of interior design than a serious family matter. Indeed, the young man himself phrases his problem most clearly: "how can I rid myself of the feeling of responsibility, the sense that I owe some compensation to poor beautiful Laura?" (256). It is the *feeling* of guilt and duty he wishes to erase, not the actual results of his suggestive match-making. The story's final scene reinforces this reading, for Cissy shows himself willing to sacrifice Laura's happiness in the name of his own sentimental guilt. Only the visualized reality of his father's monolithic self-centeredness restores Cissy's current convictions. In this way, "Suggestion" presents a Wildean character whose essential narcissism temporarily allies him with the women in his household, but whose dealings indirectly replicate the heterosexual cultural order rather than alter it.

Given the story's plot and protagonist, "Suggestion"'s publication in the April 1895 *Yellow Book* seems simultaneously apt and ironic, as the volume was fraught with its own implied associations with and overt disavowals of the Wilde trials. On 5 April, Wilde was arrested, as one newspaper reported, with a "Yellow Book Under His Arm" (the book has since been identified as a yellow-bound French novel) (May 80; Gardiner 114). Instantly, the periodical was publicly equated with the larger decadent milieu the Wilde trials were about to stigmatize as a realm of "gross indecency" (Cohen 209). Publisher John Lane reacted by ordering the *Yellow Book*'s business manager to pull Aubrey Beardsley's illustration from the April issue, for the artist's absence would signal a visible purgation "of any association of Wildean Decadence" (Beckson 331; Brake 49). Apparently the strategy worked, for one reviewer noted that the April number "is so proper that it might, without seeming impropriety, be taken up the river in a boat and read, yellow and unshamed, beneath some overhanging willow, or on some riverside lawn" (qtd. in Brake 61).⁵ Despite the public linkage between Wilde and the *Yellow Book*, the playwright was never actually a contributor, for Lane, Beardsley, and literary editor Henry Harland had purposely excluded him from the periodical's beginning (Beckson 331). As she was only a contributor, Levenson probably had little involvement in or knowledge of the *Yellow Book* editorial affairs. (According to Wyndham, she was "invited" to write for the journal and found publication in it "most gratifying" [43].) However, unlike the *Book*'s editorial repudiation of Wilde's reputation, Levenson remained his loyal friend.

After Wilde's second trial ended in a mistrial, Levenson and her husband "asked him to stay with us, feeling that he would be more at ease with friends than with relatives" (Levenson, "Reminiscences" 115). During his fortnight stay with the Levensons, both Wilde's wife and Frank Harris implored Wilde to flee the country. Levenson herself

volunteered to help Harris, who owned a small yacht, row Wilde across the channel. But when she sent Wilde "a little note, begging him to do as his wife asked him," he "gave me back my note, saying, 'That is not like you, Sphinx.' And then he began to talk of books" ("Reminiscences" 118-19). By the time her next *Yellow Book* story appeared, Wilde was already in jail, destined for two years of labor and confinement. At this point in time after the trials, male effeminacy and homosexuality begin to correlate and suggest rather clearly what E. M. Forster's Maurice calls "the Oscar Wilde sort," with Wilde as the metonym for the "crime" of homosexuality (Sinfield 3-4; Forster 156). Thus "the Oscar Wilde sort"—the Wildean character—now represents "queerness" more openly for the public at large.

In "The Quest for Sorrow" Cissy Carrington's "queer" potential becomes more overt and more threatening for the heterosexual order, a conflict both textually heightened and made more comedic by Levenson's phrasing and word-play. Often, particularly for late-twentieth-century readers, Levenson seems to construct "coded" moments that gesture to an explicitly articulated "queerness" only to retract that potential by sentence's end. For example, "Sorrow" begins with Cissy's realization that he has a "void in my life," but what seems to be Cissy's playful suggestion of queer desire is in fact a more simple statement: nothing in his life has ever turned out badly (325). As he says, "I had never known grief" (325). This is his so-called problem, but Cissy's solution will require a severe testing of mainstream, heterosexual culture. A product of good fortune and excessive narcissism, Cissy begins his tale by recounting his many excellences. He is attractive and wealthy, and, "unlike the youth of the middle classes," he feels few religious doubts (326). This claim of spiritual well-being seems like a *non sequitur* at first, following such earthy matters as personal attractiveness and financial riches. But as Cissy describes the situation more fully, it becomes apparent that his religious affairs document quite clearly his menacing "queerness." As he explains, "I might have had some mental conflicts, have revelled in the sense of rebellion, have shed bitter tears when by faiths crumbled to ashes. But I can never be insensible to incense; and there must, I feel, be something organically wrong about the man who is not impressed by the organ" (326). Not only does Levenson risk overt *double-entendre* in that last line, but Cissy reveals his own flippant opposition to patriarchal authority's pinnacle—the Christian God: "I love religious rites and ceremonies, and on the other hand, I was an agnostic at five years old. Also, I don't think it matters. So here there is no chance for me" (326). According to Irigaray, the hom(m)o-sexual economy and paternal religion are metonymically intertwined, one often substituting for the other (95; 178).⁶ Thus Cissy's rejection of religion's ideological import—"I don't think it matters"—declares an open challenge to the metonymic Father and his patriarchal law; the *thou shalt* and

⁵According to Brake, the anonymous 1895 review from an unknown source appears in a newspaper clipping on file in the Princeton University Library (63n). Bridget Elliott maintains that this so-called proper *Yellow Book* "never sold as well as those designed and edited by Beardsley (volumes 1-4). Evidently critical outrage fueled sales: eager buyers flocked to see the scandalous contents themselves" (33). Lane, according to Wyndham, blamed the Wilde

affair for the journal's eventual commercial failure (45). See also Casford 18-19, and Mix 139-47.

⁶For a clear and detailed reiteration of the Name-of-the-Law-of-the-Father, its Lacanian roots, and its ideological support of patriarchal authority, see Roof, *Reproductions* 14-24.

shalt nots have little influence over young Carrington. Rather, what really attracts Cissy are the Church's ritual and trappings, its *style*, which provides the High Church with its elements of what we would now identify as camp and drag. In this way, Cissy's liturgical appropriation "queers" both the law-of-the-father and the patriarchal heterosexual cultural order it enforces. Here Levenson first manifests Cissy's more aggressive "queer" nature and hints to its results.

Literature, too provides Cissy with little sense of failure, although he hopes "to have a poem rejected" in order to "get a glimpse of the feelings of the unsuccessful" (327). To guarantee rejection, Cissy avoids submitting his work to any literary publications, "for there it would have stood no chance of rejection. I therefore sent it to a commonplace, barbarous periodical, that appealed only to the masses; feeling sure that it would not be understood, and that I should taste the bitterness of Philistine scorn" (327). The poem, which Levenson presents to us in full, is delightfully wretched; for the reader, Cissy's goal seems assured. Yet by chance, young Carrington picks up a copy of the unnamed "frivolous periodical"—no doubt a veiled reference to *Punch*—and finds his poem on the front page, attributed to his pseudonym, "*Lys de la Vallee*" (328). It appears that literary success is his, but when he arrives home, Cissy finds a letter thanking him "for the *amusing parody on a certain modern school of verse*—and enclosing ten-and six!" (328). Although Cissy acknowledges that he "had written it in all seriousness," the fact of his publication and payment leads him to believe that "literary failure was not for me" (328). Just as religiosity's performance is more important to Cissy than dogma, the professional demands of the author are more important to him than the quality of literature: as in "Suggestion," our protagonist is drawn to (perhaps insincere, certainly unsentimental) role-play. Finally he realizes that he really desires to act out romantic sorrow, "an unrequited affection" and soon just such an opportunity arises (329).

Unlike "Suggestion," this later story removes Cissy from the Carrington household (an uncle's legacy makes him independent) and away from the company of women. Now two old school friends make up his social sphere. Freddy Thompson and Claude de Verney, young men whose demeanors echo Hallward and Wotton of *Dorian Gray*. As Cissy narrates:

Freddy is in the Army; he is two-and-twenty, brusque, slangy, tender-hearted, and devoted to me. De Verney has nothing to do with this story at all, but I may mention that he was noted for his rosy cheeks, his collection of jewels, his reputation for having formerly taken morphia, his epicurism, his passion for private theatricals, and his extraordinary touchiness. (329)

De Verney, an overtly Wildean aesthete, does not play a central role in the narrative at this point; rather, the chummy Freddy provides a new laboratory for Cissy's experimentation on sorrow. The Army officer has "ripping news" to tell his friend: Freddy is engaged to Alice Sinclair, "a romantic, fluffy blonde, improbably pretty, with dreamy eyes and gold hair, all poetry and idealism" (330). After hearing of the betrothal, Cissy asks himself, "Why shouldn't I fall in love with Miss Sinclair? What could be more tragic than a hopeless attach-

ment to the woman who was engaged to my dearest friend?" (330). Of course, to complete this mission, Cissy cannot reveal his plan to Freddy—it would both ruin the illusion and threaten the friendship.

Playing off of Alice's romantic nature, young Carrington begins his secret project. He and Freddy call on the Sinclairs, and in conversation Cissy lets slip, "as though the exclamation had broken from me involuntarily," that he finds Alice "so beautiful" (330). Alice, somewhat surprised by this admission, laughs and blushes, but for "[t]he rest of the visit," Cissy recounts, "I sat silent and as though abstracted, gazing at her" (330). As with his flirtation with religion, Cissy here delights in going through the romantic motions, the ritual role-play of heterosexual amour. He even has a theory that "if you make love to a woman long enough, and ardently enough, you are sure to get rather fond of her at last" (331). But where this very same practice led Cissy to "think" that the Church does not matter, when it comes to infatuation, he admits that "I was progressing splendidly; I often felt almost sad, and very nearly succeeded at times in being a little jealous of Freddy" (326; 331). The role-play, as his language makes clear, is fundamentally unsuccessful, approaching a manifest desire for Alice and the intended, resulting sorrow but never reaching completion. Thus, Cissy finds himself, perhaps unconsciously, raising the stakes in his quest, as he moves from martyr to seducer.

During an outing to an indoor ice arena—"that absurd modern place where the ice is as artificial as the people, and much more polished" (331)—Alice sprains her ankle, and Cissy volunteers to escort her home, while Freddy continues to teach Alice's little sister to skate. During the carriage ride back to the Sinclairs', Cissy finds himself pursuing different aims than when he first started.

Suddenly, to my own surprise and entirely without pre-meditation, I kissed her—as it were accidentally. It seemed so shocking, that we both pretended I hadn't, and entirely ignored the fact: continuing to argue as to whether or not it was treacherous to say I envied Freddy. . . . I insisted on treating her as an invalid, and lifted her out of the carriage, while she laughed nervously. It struck me that I was not unhappy yet. But that would come. (332)

Cissy has transformed himself into a rake, a role identified with effeminacy before the Wilde trials "queered" the matter (Sinfield 71). Rather than focus on his own sentimental masochism, Cissy becomes a romantic sadist, a conqueror of Alice's affections. Unwilling to dwell on sorrow, he has found himself successful once again.

Later, at a dance, Cissy confesses his supposed love for Alice: "Love you?" I exclaimed, lyrically. 'But with all my soul! My life is blighted for ever, but don't think of me. It doesn't matter in the least. It may kill me, of course, but never mind. Sometimes I believe, people *do* live on with a broken heart, and—'" (333). But Alice clearly appreciates his attentions, and he openly admits that he, too, is free of sorrow: "Perhaps on her wedding-day, I should be miserable at last," because he now is too full of "joy" (333). It seems at this point that Cissy is not only seducing Alice, but he too is seduced by the heterosexual romance's game-play: his

"queerness" appears to have been contained and nullified by mainstream cultural order. But the difficulties in this reading are soon revealed when Alice, who believes Cissy sincere, breaks her engagement to Freddy the day following the dance. This new complication brings Cissy little joy:

What! was I never to get away from success—never to know the luxury of an unrequited attachment? Of course, I realised now, that I had been deceiving myself; that I had only liked her enough to wish to make her care for me; that I had striven, unconsciously, to that end. The instant I knew she loved me all my interest was gone. My passion had been entirely imaginary. I cared nothing, absolutely nothing, for her. (333-34)

The masquerade is over for Cissy, and misery—if not sorrow, exactly—is his; as in "Suggestion," he is also plagued with guilt: "How terrible," he cries, "to have wrecked Freddy's life, by taking away from him something I didn't want myself!" (334). In the earlier story, Cissy occupied a position in the hom(m)o-sexual economy in which the incest taboo deflected his desire away from the female "commodity." Not only did the matriarchal match-maker role's implicit femininity mask Cissy's intrinsically exploitative masculinity, but his position *within* the family prohibited even an artificial enactment of desire towards Laura and Marjorie. His actions in this context tended to serve, or at least maintain, the heterosexual cultural order. In "Quest," he functions as a rogue suitor and quickly ruins the *already negotiated* union between Alice and Freddy, and furthermore, once that exchange between father and husband is broken, Cissy clearly refuses to continue his "straight" role: Alice is a commodity, a "something," that Cissy does not want. Thus paternity is undercut and the cultural order disordered; his Wildean "queerness" is an open, understandable threat. It is this narrative moment that prompts Burkhart to judge Cissy a "pure cad" (*Ada* 76).

Levenson, however, is not about to make Cissy a villain, so "Quest" ends with his escape to France. Intending on telling Alice "the whole truth," he writes her a Dear Jane letter, but as he takes up his pen, "the inevitable, uncontrollable desire for the *beau rôle* crept . . . into it" (334). The now-overwrought note professes Cissy's self-banishment, his French exile during which he will pray for the benefit of Alice and Freddy. The affair terminated, Alice returns to her fiancé, who, while not fully cognizant of the situation, imagines that Cissy has done something honorable by leaving. Our narrator, meanwhile, reminds us that despite his note and seeming retreat, "there was nothing extraordinary in 'leaving England' in the beginning of August," for he "had arranged to spend the summer holidays with De Verney" (335). Thus, on vacation with his mysterious, decadent friend, Cissy exits the heterosexual drama for a more exotic narrative terrain only hinted at by the story; as he says, "on the golden sands, with the gay striped bathers of Trouville, I was content to linger with laughter on my lips, seeking Sorrow no more" (335). As Wilde would later, Cissy finds refuge on the continent. But,

of course, Wilde was in both exile and decline, while Cissy is a joyful celebrant free to immerse himself in pleasure. Levenson's Wildean character achieves a certain amount of (fictive) liberty and transcendence far beyond that of the real Wilde.

This is not to say that Levenson's two Cissy Carrington stories are in and of themselves radical narratives. Late-twentieth-century readers familiar with Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's paradigm of "homosexual panic" will note the similarity between her model and the two *Yellow Book* narratives.⁷ According to the paradigm, Cissy's very involvement in the hom(m)o-sexual economy accentuates his Wildean homosocial desires, in this case directed toward Adrian Grant and Freddy Thompson, but sublimated through the marriage economy's exchange of the female commodity (namely Laura and Alice). Cissy's exodus in "Quest" further parallels the paradigm, in that it serves as a formalistic representation of homosexual excess and heterosexual "panic"; the narrative contains his perversity and retains the cultural order. Similarly, Roof contends that "[h]omosexuality, of all perversions, is permitted as narratively useful, necessary to stir up the middle, to make us believe that the hetero no longer holds sway" (*Come* 39). But dominant culture remains in control, despite what Levenson, and the Wildean character, attempt to narrate—as Carolyn Christensen Nelson notes, these are traditionally masculinist stories (91-92). A "queer" Cissy may empower the two stories' plots, but the narratives dominate him.

What Levenson achieves in these stories deserves merit, however. Not only does she recognize and represent the change the Wilde trials wrought on Britain's cultural consciousness, but she does so in a way that is ultimately sympathetic: Cissy is not a scapegoat. That was not always the case for "queer" characters, for Sinfield documents a number of post-trial stereotypes used to persecute gay men as "godless sodomites" (138; see Sinfield 130-60). While Cissy confesses his godlessness and seems a potential sodomite, these "queer" characteristics provide him with a sense of *jouissance*, a pleasurable liberty the stories' other characters lack, at least in degree. It is Cissy who ends "Quest" with the last laugh. To some extent, the laughter was a remnant of the pre-trial days. As Levenson herself asks, "Where, in those days, was the strong silent man? Nowhere! Something weaker and more loquacious was required; and all these exuberant modes were certainly inaugurated by the poet-wit-dramatist Oscar Wilde" ("Reminiscences" 106). Levenson would return to those exuberant days repeatedly throughout her career, creating other Wildean characters. Herry de Freyne in her 1911 novel *The Limit* has been identified as a Wilde figure—he even quotes slightly revised epigrams just as the *Punch* characters did 15 years before (Mix 158; Burkhart, *Ada* 118). Similarly, the dialogue in her early novels *The Twelfth Hour* (1907) and *Love's Shadow* (1908) reportedly demonstrates Wilde's influence as well (Bergonzi; Burkhart, *Ada* 101-106). But Cissy Carrington is the first Wildean character Levenson created whose representation clearly moved beyond Wilde's life and work: a character free to be

⁷For Sedgwick's detailed explanations of the "panic" model, see *Between Men* 1-5, 21-27 and *Epistemology* 182-212.

"queer" and document the change both Sinfield and Cohen observe. The irony that these stories appeared in the *Yellow Book* after its great expurgation of any "queer" or decadent element testifies both to the complications in reading the Wildean signs even after the trials and to Levenson's own excellence as an artist. With Cissy, she did not merely "echo" Wilde's music; she composed her own.

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Books Received

- Arseneau, Mary, Antony H. Harrison, and Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, eds. *The Culture of Christina Rossetti: Female Poetics and Victorian Contexts*. Athens: Ohio UP, 1999. Pp. xxii + 351. \$39.95. Contents: Mary Arseneau, "Introduction"; Margaret Reynolds, "Speaking Unlikenesses: The Double Text in Christina Rossetti's 'After Death' and 'Remember'"; Mary Arseneau, "'May My Great Love Avail Me': Christina Rossetti and Dante"; Marjorie Stone, "'Monna Innominata' and Sonnets from the Portuguese: Sonnet Traditions and Spiritual Trajectories"; Catherine Maxwell, "Tasting the 'Forbidden Fruit': Gender, Intertextuality, and Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market*"; Richard Menke, "The Political Economy of Fruit: *Goblin Market*"; Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, "Visualizing the Fantastic Subject: *Goblin Market* and the Gaze"; Kathryn Burlinson, "'Frogs and Fat Toads': Christina Rossetti and the Significance of the Nonhuman"; Linda E. Marshall, "Astronomy and the Invisible: Contexts for Christina Rossetti's Heavenly Parables"; Julia Briggs, "Speaking Likenesses: Hearing the Lesson"; Alison Chapman, "Father's Place. Mother's Space: Identity, Italy, and the Maternal in Christina Rossetti's Poetry"; Susan Conley, "Rossetti's Cold Women: Irony and Liminal Fantasy in the Death Lyrics"; Margaret Linley, "Dying to Be a Poetess: The Conundrum of Christina Rossetti." Includes a bibliography and index.
- Browning, Robert. *The Complete Works of Robert Browning: With Variant Readings and Annotations*. Vol. 16. Eds. Susan Crawl and Roma A. King, Jr. Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 1998. Pp. xxv + 254. \$65.00 Includes "Parleyings with Certain People Important in Their Day: Apollo and the Fates—a Prologue; With Bernard de Mandeville; With Daniel Bartoli; With Christopher Smart; With George Bubb Dodington; With Francis Furini; With Gerard de Lairese; With Charles Avison; With Fust and His Friends—An Epilogue." Includes "Prefatory Note" to *Poems by Elizabeth Barrett Browning* (1887) and the title page, dedication and contents to *Poetical Works* (1888-1889).
- Clarke, John Stock, compiler. *Margaret Oliphant (1828-1897) Non-Fictional Writings: A Bibliography*. Victorian Fiction Research Guide No. 26. Queensland, Australia: Department English, University of Queensland, 1997. Order from above—Queensland, Australia 4072; fax: 7 3365 2799; e-mail: b.garlick@mailbox.uq.edu.au. Pp. iv + [82]. \$7.00 paper (Australian). There are 664 entries and some addenda for the Victorian Fiction Research Guide No. 11, *Margaret Oliphant* (her fiction), also compiled by Clarke and published in 1986.
- Dunne, Brian Ború. *With Gissing in Italy: The Memoirs of Brian Ború Dunne*. Eds. Paul F. Mattheisen, Arthur C. Young, Pierre Coustillas. Athens: Ohio UP, 1999. Pp. ix + 207. \$39.95. "Untainted by any cosmic view, he [Dunne] wrote of Gissing's daily life in a way no one else has done, and retrieved for us a unique aspect of

Gissing's happiest period, when he seems actually to have been 'cheerful,' 'witty,' and even 'luxury loving.' To explain this it will be helpful to review the conditions under which Gissing fled to Italy, and then to reflect on his encounter with this young American, on Dunne's own life and background, on the friendship that developed between these very different personalities, and on Dunne's later approach to the writing of a memoir of his English friend who had introduced him to H. G. Wells. To understand a memoir, we must also understand the person who wrote it" (3-4). Includes a 42 pp. introduction and 4 appendices and notes.

- Eliot, George. *The Journals of George Eliot*. Eds. Margaret Harris and Judith Johnston. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998. Pp. xxv + 447. \$95.00. "This edition provides the complete text of George Eliot's surviving journals and diaries, which run from the time of her union with G. H. Lewes in 1854 to her death in 1880. She customarily kept a notebook for daily diary entries, and at times took a different book to record particular journeys, to Germany in 1858 and to Italy in 1864, for example. In addition, she wrote more formal essays, most of them entitled 'Recollections' (usually of travels both within Britain and abroad) in the same journal volumes. . . . Only now do the journals appear entire: about one-quarter of the text has not been published previously" (vii). Includes a 26 pp. introduction and a 55 pp. explanatory index as well as notes.
- Field, Kate. *Pen Photographs of Charles Dickens's Readings: Taken from Life*. Intro. Carolyn J. Moss. Troy, NY: Whitson, 1998. [xviii] + 101. \$15.00. A reprinting of the Osgood edition of 1871.
- Gilmartin, Sophie. *Ancestry and Narrative in Nineteenth-Century British Literature: Blood Relations from Edgeworth to Hardy*. Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture 18. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998. Pp. xiii + 281. \$59.95. Chapters are: "Oral and Written Genealogies in Edgeworth's *The Absentee*"; "A Mirror for Matriarchs: The Cult of Mary Queen of Scots in Nineteenth-Century Literature"; "Pedigree, Nation, Race: The Case of Disraeli's *Sybil* and *Tancred*"; "A sort of Royal Family": Alternative Pedigrees in Meredith's *Evan Harrington*"; "Pedigree and Forgetting in Hardy"; "Geology and Genealogy: Hardy's *The Well-Beloved*."
- Howsam, Leslie. *Kegan Paul: A Victorian Imprint: Publishers, Books and Cultural History*. London: Kegan Paul International; Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1998. Pp. xxvi + 218. \$45.00. "This book, the history of a publisher's imprint, tells two connected stories: one about the personalities of a group of London publishers and the impression their characters made on the people who knew them: the other about a remarkable collection of books whose title pages bore those publishers' names over the course of four decades in the Victorian age. It is both a case study in nineteenth and early twentieth-century publishing and a contribution to the method and

theory of the history of the book. The intention is to demonstrate how that history, sometimes characterized as the study of authorship, reading and publishing, can benefit from a focus on the publishers whose purpose it was to bring together the demands of readers with the preoccupations of authors" (11).

Hughes, William, compiler. *Bram Stoker (Abraham Stoker) 1847-1912: A Bibliography*. Victorian Fiction Research Guide No. 25. Queensland, Australia: Department English, University of Queensland, 1997. Order from above—Queensland, Australia 4072; fax: 7 3365 2799; e-mail: b.garlick@mailbox.uq.edu.au. Pp. iv + 73. \$7.00 paper (Australian). The primary bibliography has 361 entries (including mss), the secondary bibliography, 358.

Kramer, Dale, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Hardy*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999. Pp. xxvi + 231. \$54.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper. Includes a chronology; Michael Millgate, "Thomas Hardy: The Biographical Sources"; Simon Gatrell, "Wessex"; Norman Page, "Art and Aesthetics"; Robert Schweik, "The Influence of Religion, Science, and Philosophy on Hardy's Writings"; Peter Widdowson, "Hardy and Critical Theory"; Kristin Brady, "Thomas Hardy and Matters of Gender"; Jakob Lothe, "Variants on Genre: *The Return of the Native*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *The Hand of Ethelberta*"; Penny Boumelha, "The Patriarchy of Class: *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *The Woodlanders*"; Linda M. Shires "The Radical Aesthetics of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*"; Dale Kramer, "Hardy and Readers of *Jude the Obscure*"; Dennis Taylor, "Hardy as a Nineteenth-Century Poet"; John Paul Riquelme, "The Modernity of Thomas Hardy's Poetry."

Lanzano, Ellen Anne. *Hardy: The Temporal Poetics*. Studies in Nineteenth-Century British Literature, vol. 10. New York etc: Peter Lang, 1999. Pp. 157. \$43.95. "To Hardy, looking backward for a better leap forward meant taking a full look at the worst in order to give one's whole might to discovering the best that may yet be. For this reason, the first two chapters rely on poems that clarify this model, for a better leap forward, before discussing the poetry that fully enlists the imagination in giving chase to the factuality that would destroy it. . . .

"In what I call the Dorset poetry in Chapter Three, the earth, people, and animals of Dorset reify the abstract struggle of humanity against the inevitable course of things. . . .

"In the poetry of love, discussed in Chapter Four, Hardy's linear temporalism sometimes fully merges with the line of a rebounding arc that stretches back to a much earlier past when he and his first wife Emma were hopeful and happy in their courtship in Cornwall. . . .

"Where Hardy's idea of himself as a poet is explored in Chapter Five, his proleptic vision again carries him beyond the curb of the present, slipping out of time in a variety of self-distancing ways. . . .

"And in the final chapter on Hardy's historical relativism, his idea of history falls within the context of the views of those Victorians who were forced by the discoveries of their era to reassess the linear pattern of

man's historical existence" (9-10).

Leckie, Barbara. *Culture and Adultery: The Novel, the Newspaper, and the Law, 1857-1914*. New Cultural Studies. Philadelphia: Penn—U of Pennsylvania P, 1999. Pp. 300. \$37.50, £28.50. "This book . . . is a work of literary criticism. I am interested in the role that the novel and the institution of the novel play in shaping what counts as taboo and in negotiating a social and political field in which certain subjects, like adultery, are targeted as transgressive and, therefore, outside the boundary of permissible literary representation. I want to bring novels, novel theory, and a concrete analysis of a specific 'transgressive' practice—adultery—into dialogue with psychoanalysis, historiography, and reflexive sociology to rethink a theory of transgression. I further argue that understanding adultery and transgression, sexuality and censorship, between 1857 and 1914 is best accomplished by a consideration of the three intertwined representational fields: the novel, the newspaper, and the law. One premise of this book is that the specific contours of transgression develop slowly and unevenly and while certain transgressions are, of course, repeatedly named (the taboo against representation of adultery in the nineteenth-century English novel, for example) the specificity of that transgression developed and continues to develop even as its naming seems to bring about an act of definitive closure. Another premise of this book is that censorship, explicitly enforced or only implicitly made clear, contributes to the production of literary categories. In particular . . . it is related to the articulation of a separate aesthetic sphere from which social and political interests—the public morality threatened by representations of adultery—are evacuated. This move may grant apparent freedom to the novelist haunted by the specter of censorship, but the cost for this freedom . . . is higher than cultural critics should be willing to pay" (5-6).

Mitchell, Charlotte, compiler. *Caroline Clive 1801-1873: A Bibliography*. Victorian Fiction Research Guide No. 27. Queensland, Australia: Department English, University of Queensland, 1999. Order from above—Queensland, Australia 4072; fax: 7 3365 2799; e-mail: b.garlick@mailbox.uq.edu.au. Pp. v + 50. \$7.00 paper (Australian). Includes a primary bibliography of 95 entries and a secondary bibliography of 117.

Moss, Sidney P. and Carolyn J.. *American Episodes Involving Charles Dickens*. Troy, NY: Whitson, 1999. Pp. x + 174. \$18.50. Articles (most previously published, but updated where necessary) include: "American Notes: The Book That Inflamed Two Nations"; "South Carolina Contemplates Banning American Notes"; "The American Chapters of *Martin Chuzzlewit*: The Culmination of Dickens's Quarrel with the American Press"; "The American Press Assigns Dickens to Queen's Bench Prison"; "Did John Forster Write the Notorious *Foreign Quarterly* Article on 'American Poetry?'"; "The Authorship of the *Foreign Quarterly* Article on 'American Poetry' and Poe's 'Two Long Interviews' with Dickens"; "Charles Dickens Makes Ticknor & Fields His Authorized American Publisher"; "Kate Field Reports on Dick-

ens' Performances in America"; "Dickens and His Chicago Relatives"; "Frederick Dickens: From Courtship to Courtroom"; "Dickens in America: A Twenty-Five Year Record"; "Gail Hamilton on Dickens's Alleged *Ménage à Trois*"; "Laurence Hutton's Edition of *Letters of Charles Dickens to Wilkie Collins*."

Nassaar, Christopher S., ed. *The English Literary Decadence: An Anthology*. Lanham, New York, Oxford: UP of America, 1999. Pp. xxxviii + 416. \$32.50 paper. Includes selections from: Walter Pater, John Barlas ("Evelyn Douglas"), Aubrey Beardsley, Max Beerbohm, Lord Alfred Douglas, Ernest Dowson, "Michael Field" (Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper), John Gray, Lionel Johnson, Arthur Symonds, Oscar Wilde, Theodore Wratlaw, Joseph Conrad, Joris-Karl Huysmans, Robert Louis Stevenson, Bram Stoker.

Pipes, Richard. *Property and Freedom*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999. Pp. xvi + 328. \$30.00. "The first two chapters deal with the historical evolution of both the idea and the institution of property. The middle part of this book—Chapters 3 and 4—analyzes the relationship between property relationships and politics in England and Russia, two extreme cases which convey forcefully the point I am trying to make. The concluding chapter concentrates on the twentieth century, with emphasis on the United States, and stresses the threats to liberty implicit in the welfare state's striving for social and economic equality" (xiv).

Silver, Carole G. *Strange and Secret Peoples: Fairies and Victorian Consciousness*. New York & Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999. Pp. xiv + 272. \$29.95. "Although its subject is, in large part, the uses of folklore in nineteenth-century Britain, this is not a book primarily about Victorian children's literature or the fairy tales so popular in the period. While such literature serves as an excellent reflector of the dominant ideas, values, and fantasies of an era, and I have mentioned and used some of the works of the Golden Age of Children's Literature, I have focused on other, often less well-known materials for adults. . . . Moreover . . . this book is not a complete study of all aspects of Victorian fairylore. Instead, I have selected segments to examine in detail, culling fragments that enthralled the Victorians and especially interested me. Thus, I have explored questions of the development of interest in the fairy world, looked at issues of origin and of belief, and examined changelings, dwarfs and midgets, fairy-brides, the slough, and other representations of evil rather than such topics as the proliferation of 'flower fairies'" (6).

Starzyk, Lawrence J. "If Mine Had Been the Painter's Hand": *The Indeterminate in Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Painting*. Literature and the Visual Arts: New Foundations, Vol. 13. New York etc.: Peter Lang, 1999. Pp. xii + 299. \$54.95. "The following pages argue the central role in nineteenth-century British art of the indeterminate—'that final skepticism which can find no floor to the universe' Beginning with Wordsworth's reluctant rejection in 1806 of art grounded in or controlled by pre-existing archetypes or patterning forms (a repudiation recanted in his 1811 'Upon the Sight of a

Beautiful Picture, Painted by Sir G. H. Beaumont'), the following chapters [on Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, Lizzie Siddal] examine how the poetry of the indeterminate develops, in large measure, as an exegesis of icons, explaining, rivaling, and ultimately displacing them, until the contest leads in Hardy's works to the conclusion that the verbal and pictorial are merely ungrounded redundancies in a world of uncompanionable form. . . ." (10). The text includes 47 black and white illustrations from 16 artists.

Sussex, Lucy and Elizabeth Gibson, compilers. *Mary Fortune ("Waif Wanderer") ("W. W.") c.1833-1910: A Bibliography*. Victorian Fiction Research Guide No. 27. Queensland, Australia: Department English, University of Queensland, n.d.. Order from above—Queensland, Australia 4072; fax: 7 3365 2799; e-mail: b.garlick@mailbox.uq.edu.au. Pp. iv + 48. \$7.00 paper (Australian). There are 737 entries, plus 6 of secondary material.

Thackeray, William Makepeace. *Catherine: A Story*. By Ikey Solomons, Esq. Junior. Ed. Sheldon F. Goldfarb. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1999. Pp. 254. \$75.00, £55.00. "The aim of this edition of Thackeray's works is, first, to present the text as much as possible as Thackeray produced it and, second, to show the composition and revision of the work.

"The edition of *Catherine* presented here is based on its only publication in the author's lifetime, the serialization in *Fraser's Magazine*. The documentary evidence of composition and revision no longer survives. There are, therefore, no revisions to report, which would normally be supplied in footnotes to the text. . . . The absence of textual complications in this volume has allowed for extra attention to be focused on the sources of the story and the contexts of its origination; for this discussion and these sources, see the Historical Commentary and the appendices" [ii].

The Luck of Barry Lyndon; A Romance of the Last Century. By Fitz-Boodle. Ed. Edgar F. Harden. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1999. Pp. [244]. \$75.00, £55.00. "The Luck of Barry Lyndon, for which the manuscript no longer exists, is edited here from a comparative study of all extant relevant documents from its first appearance to the last edition touched by the author. . . . [T]he base text for *Barry Lyndon* is the earliest extant version (*Fraser's Magazine*, 1844. . .). This text is emended to correct errors detected by the editor and revealed through comparison with the three other lifetime editions of the work. . . .

"The Historical introduction provides a narrative of all that is known about the composition, revision, and republication of *Barry Lyndon* in so far as Thackeray might have been involved" [ii].

Thompson, Nicola Diane, ed. *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question*. Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture 21. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999. Pp. xii + 259. \$59.95. Contents: Nicola Diane Thompson, "Responding to the Woman Questions: Rereading Noncanonical Victorian Women Novelists"; Valerie Sanders, "Marriage and the Anti-

Feminist Woman Novelist"; Anne Humphreys, "Breaking Apart: The Early Victorian Divorce Novel"; Alison Chapman, "Phantasies of Patriarchy in Victorian Children's Literature"; Alexis Easley, "Gendered Observations: Harriet Martineau and the Woman Question"; Monica Cohen, "Maximizing Oliphant: Begging the Question and the Politics of Satire"; June Sturrock, "Literary Women of the 1850s and Charlotte Mary Yonge's *Dynevor Terrace*"; Lyn Pykett, "Portraits of the Artist as a Young Woman: Representations of the Female Artist in the New Woman Fiction of the 1890s"; Dennis Denisoff, "Lady in Green with Novel: The Gendered Economics of the Visual Arts and Mid-Victorian Women's Writings"; Pamela Gilbert, "Ouida and the Other New Woman"; Ann Ardis, "Organizing Women: New Woman Writers, New Woman Readers, and Suffrage Feminism"; Beth Sutton-Ramspeck, "Shot Out of the Canon: Mary Ward and the Claims of Conflicting Feminism"; Amelia A. Rutledge, "E. Nesbit and the Woman Question"; Annette R. Federico, "'An 'Old-Fashioned' Young Woman': Marie Corelli and the New Woman."

Thurin, Susan Schoenbauer. *Victorian Travelers and the Opening of China 1842-1907*. Athens: Ohio UP, 1999. Pp. xvi + 253. \$44.95. "This book is about six Victorians who, in their individual ways, took advantage of Britain's original opening of China and, elbow in the door, describe what they see inside. They personalize the diplomatic opening by describing their own experiences and the character and customs of the Chinese. Whether their knowledge of Chinese culture and language remains superficial or they become fluent sinologues, they are alike in being convinced they can offer a unique interpretation of the 'mysterious content.' . . . Their travel books reveal authors characteristic of their era—mainly adventurous individualists who with a utilitarian purposefulness use their work for research and their leisure for writing. True to the spirit of the time, they link the beginning of modern tourism with the age of imperialism, combining pleasure travel with scientific investigation, business, international politics, and humanitarianism" (2-3).

Vlock, Deborah. *Dickens, Novel Reading, and the Victorian Popular Theatre*. Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture 19. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998. P. xii + 226. \$54.95. "If we imagine the novel and the drama as intimately conversant with each other, rather than in binary relation or in chronological sequence with drama the genre of early modern culture, and the novel, which supersedes it, the product of full-blooded modernity, we must likewise imagine a reading subject constituted otherwise than in the interior spaces of home and privatized imagination. This is what I have undertaken in this book: a repositioning of the Victorian bourgeois reading subject, a re-visioning of the Victorian novel, and a recovery of the conditions in which both novels and novel readers were made.

"At the center of this study lies the theatre, lively, healthy, magnificently vocal—not a thing of the past but

an integral part of the Victorian present" (4).

Waldron, Mary. *Jane Austen and the Fiction of Her Time*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999. Pp. ix + 194. \$49.95. "Because Austen wrote consciously against the grain of contemporary didacticism but within a familiar fictional framework, her narratives become not only ironic but richly contrapuntal; we are conscious of the presence of a number of points of view at every turn. It is perhaps this special narrative complexity that has proved so permanently satisfying even to readers with little or no knowledge of the literary matrix which gave it birth. But an appreciation of the ways in which her immediate predecessors and contemporaries impinged upon her writing adds immeasurably to that pleasure. The following chapters will re-examine her work, dwelling on key passages from the juvenilia and early unfinished narratives and the six completed novels to *Sanditon*, with this in view, referring appropriately to some of the novelists and other writers of her time whose work, from the evidence of the letters and other references, we can be sure she knew, and which offered her an irresistible challenge" (14-15).

Weltman, Sharon Aronofsky. *Ruskin's Mythic Queen: Gender Subversion in Victorian Culture*. Athens: Ohio UP, 1998. Pp. xi + 214. \$45.00. "In this book I demonstrate that the Victorians used mythic discourse to subvert gender dichotomy. In addition to discussions of myth and gender theory, I offer a wide-ranging examination of mythic discourse as a tool for gender subversion in nineteenth-century literature and then, as an exemplar, an in-depth study of the work of John Ruskin. Ruskin is known to many as the foremost voice extolling separate spheres for men and women, but his mythopoetic prose surprisingly yields tools to break down fixed categories of gender. The Victorians' fascination with metamorphosis, blurred boundaries, conflated polarities, and hybrid monsters illuminates their suppressed fascination with sexual intercourse, the consummate symbol of blurred boundaries and union of opposites. Myth offered the Victorians a respectable way to explore the borders between the sexes and even to subvert gender duality, usually inadvertently, as in Ruskin's case, sometimes intentionally, as in A. C. Swinburne's or Michael Field's. Mythic discourse permits a flexibility that phallogocentric discourse does not, or at least tries to avoid" (4).

Wildt, Katherine Ann. *Elizabeth Gaskell's Use of Color in Her Industrial Novels and Short Stories*. Lanham, New York, Oxford: UP of America, 1999. Pp. xii + 158. \$32.50. "Weaving his moral properties of color (the 'sign and seal of perfection,' the 'sanctifying element' of material beauty, and the 'reward' of truth) into his books and lectures, Ruskin affected many of the people who read his books and listened to his lectures. Among these was Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell, certainly a close acquaintance of John Ruskin. In her short stories and industrial novels, Elizabeth Gaskell employed color, shade, and tint words that set a moral tone while at the same time establishing mood, defining character, expressing the feelings of characters, and foreshadowing events" (12).

Victorian Group News

Announcements

The University Press of New England/University of New Hampshire announces a \$1000 prize for the best manuscript submitted for its new publishing series, "Becoming Modern: New Nineteenth-Century Studies." The editors seek lively, interdisciplinary studies that explore the emergence of modernity in nineteenth-century North America and Europe. Although projects need not be international in scope, they should be of interest to scholars on both sides of the Atlantic. Possible topics range from the rise of the modern city to the development of the realistic novel, from the medicalization of sexual orientations to the expansion of consumer culture, from the consolidation of racial categories to the colonization of subject peoples. Institutions studied may be as small as the suburban home or as large as the nation-state. For consideration, send your vita and complete manuscript by 1 April 2000 to Phyllis Deutsch, Acquisitions Editor, University Press of New England, 23 South Main Street, Hanover, NH 03755-2055, USA. Or, direct inquiries to Phyllis.Deutsch@Dartmouth.edu, (603) 643-7100, ext. 222.

Published annually at the University of Queensland for the Australasian Victorian Studies Association, the *Australasian Victorian Studies Journal (AVSJ)* is a peer-reviewed interdisciplinary showcase for articles and reviews by established and up-and-coming authors on varied aspects of Victorian scholarship. The theme of each volume is drawn from the annual conference of the association. Unsolicited submissions on any topic of interest are also welcomed, as are reviews of recent publications. (<http://www.uq.net.au/avsas> has submission details); to subscribe to the journal contact The Editors, AVSJ, Department of English, University of Queensland, QLD Australia 4072. (Email. j.mckenzie@uq.net.au or T.Unwin@mailbox.uq.edu.au)

For information about the *William Morris 2000 Conference*, contact William Morris Society of Canada, 52 Berkeley Court, Unionville, Ontario, Canada L3R 6L9 (905) 475-9370; or Sheila Latham, 42 Belmont Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5R 1P8.

The year 2001 will mark the sesquicentenary of the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the centenary of the death of Queen Victoria. Coinciding with the dawn of a new millennium, these anniversaries provide the opportunity to review our interpretation of the culture of the Victorian period. The Science Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Natural History Museum in London's South Kensington, a cultural quarter itself funded from the profits of the Great Exhibition, will therefore host a great Victorian festival with major exhibitions and an international conference which will interpret the 19th Century for the benefits of the 21st.

The dates of the conference will be 12-15 July 2001. The location will be in South Kensington, London. It is likely that the registration cost will be £100 to £150. For further information or to express your interest, contact j.davies@nmsi.ac.uk.

Notice

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