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Cover: Fred Barnard: Sikes and his dog

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Reading Hodge: Preserving Rural Epistemologies in Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd*

Eric G. Lorentzen

Thomas Hardy's novels often evoke associations with literacy, as readers remember his ornate phraseology, replete with Latinate diction and classical allusion, or his characters who so often seem to battle for an education that might sustain them in a dark, unfeeling world. Indeed, anyone who has suffered through the beautiful but chilling *Jude the Obscure* knows that Hardy had serious reservations about conventional education, but most often his ostensible concern may appear to be one of access, not a question of the quality of traditional education itself. However, Hardy's primary trepidation about conventional education and literacy was not an apprehension that they lacked inclusion. Rather, recognizing the dangers that education held for at-risk populations in terms of the hegemony of a hidden curriculum, he feared that book-learning might be too inclusive.

For Hardy, the population in danger is the rural learner, who is often victimized by modern forms of education, and put at risk by modern (and hence, usually more town-oriented) literacies, theoretical systems, and pedagogical practices. This modern pedagogy frequently elides possibilities for individual agency, and ignores all the rural epistemologies by which communities have flourished for ages. To combat these dangers, Hardy cultivates alternative literacies in his Wessex novels by delineating the many texts that his characters read in nature and community, and juxtaposing their beneficent qualities with the disastrous effects that modern literacies have for rural learners, so often marginalized, as in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, as "the pitiable dummy known as Hodge" (*Tess* 117). One of Hardy's goals in calling attention to this alternative rural textuality was to prevent the further marginalization of these populations that was made possible by this reductive definition imposed from outside the communities themselves. By doing so, Hardy hoped to contest the subsequent rewriting of public memory, by preserving, ironically enough, in book form, the alternative pedagogical sites found in a rural dynamic. In looking back on his novels in the General Preface to the Wessex Edition of 1912, he makes it clear how important it was to remember what he considered the more natural ways of knowing to be found in bucolic locales:

if these country customs and vocations, obsolete and obsolescent, had been detailed wrongly, nobody would have discovered such errors to the end of Time. Yet I have instituted inquiries to correct tricks of memory, and striven against temptations to exaggerate, in order to preserve for my own satisfaction a fairly true record of a vanishing life. *Native* (477)

Far From the Madding Crowd, in particular, offers a remarkable cross section of the ways in which Hardy criticizes con-

ventional education and literacy, while experimenting with alternative natural literacies and texts of memory. Although critics have long noticed Hardy's championing of rural populations, they repeatedly neglect or undervalue this central pedagogical element of his "true record of a vanishing life."

I

Far From the Madding Crowd may be the most revealing of all Hardy's Wessex novels about the disparities between modern town thought and rural epistemologies because of the stable Weatherbury locale. Hardy carefully takes the opportunity to remark about the ways education affects nearly all of the village's inhabitants. The novel takes place in what Raymond Williams calls "a time in which education is used to train members of a class and to divide them from other men as surely as from their own passions (for the two processes are deeply connected)" (207). Conventional education and literacy adversely affect human relationships among the more educated figures in the novel, serving as a source of manipulation, unnecessary pride, and entrapment. Among the workfolk, they serve as aggravating intrusions into a frequently more simple way of life, and as a modern force, originating in tellingly urban dynamics, antithetical to the greater abiding ways of knowing which promote rural access to a more lasting, fundamental happiness.

Education and literacy play a major part in the relations between Bathsheba Everdene and her suitors, for instance. Oak is at a decided disadvantage due to his inferior education; during his proposal to Bathsheba, he stammers "excuse the words. . . . I can't match you, I know, in mapping out my mind upon my tongue. . . . I never was very clever in my inside" (21). Unlike Sergeant Troy, he has no "love phrases" (22) with which to seduce the woman whom her aunt has already labelled "an excellent scholar" (25). In rejecting him, Bathsheba herself will declare, as one of her reasons, "I am better educated than you" (28-29). As Smallbury will notice, she "can speak real language" (94), and as Oak himself is forced to admit, Bathsheba "speak[s] like a lady" (29).

Nonetheless, Oak does possess a small library of nine books made up of such standard fare as a dictionary, an arithmetic primer, and *The Young Man's Best Companion*. However, he also reads the Bible and *Paradise Lost*, narratives which Hardy makes conspicuous in developing Oak's moral obsession with Bathsheba's romantic and sexual life. During his early surveillance of her movements, Hardy's description of Oak's espionage retains traces of his bookish morality: "he saw her in a bird's eye aerial view, as Satan first saw Paradise" (13). The Eve narrative, in fact,

resonates throughout the novel in his transactions with Bathsheba, as do other Biblical narratives which depict woman as a capricious sexuality to be monitored and controlled. After her early involvement with Boldwood, of which he does not approve, Oak laments, "I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets!" (133). Oak's reading allows him to pathologize Bathsheba's sexuality, while justifying his subsequent policing disciplinary role in her private affairs. In fact, all three of her suitors will use literacy as a patriarchal force against her.

Hardy intimates that Bathsheba, too, is adversely affected by books, mainly by how they teach her pride in social position and condescension to her ostensible inferiors. Hardy writes of her ascension in decidedly bookish terms:

But perhaps her air was the inevitable result of the social rise which had advanced her from a cottage to a large house and fields. The case is not unexampled in high places. When, in the writings of later poets, Jove and his family were found to have moved from their cramped quarters on the peak of Olympus into the wide sky above it, their words showed a proportionate increase of arrogance and reserve. (72)

Bathsheba's pride causes her both to look down on Oak, and up toward Boldwood, the only member of the community that conventionally could be considered her social superior. Hardy clearly suggests that she plays her new role here completely "by the book," and that one of the things produced by a literary education is the unmistakable arrogance and reserve that such traditions instill. In a rural community that flourishes by coming together, Bathsheba will need to unlearn some of the boundaries which formal pedagogy has taught her are the norm. The pride involved with the war of gazing that Bathsheba conducts with Boldwood at the market, of course, leads to her next disaster with literacy, the valentine. Hardy foreshadows the profound literary quality of Bathsheba's text with his title for the chapter in which it is written, invoking the Latin "Sortes Sanctorum," or "the oracle of the writings" to describe her valentine. By choosing a seal that she remembers is funny, but cannot actually read, Bathsheba is betrayed by, and the entire tragedy for the rest of the novel is precipitated by, her text—in this case, the two words "MARRY ME."

In turn, Boldwood uses his own words of pride in his various near-maniacal courtships of Bathsheba to repeatedly coerce her to embrace his will. Much like Oak, he employs conventional representations of female duty and virtue to impose a sense of guilt upon her. Hoping to compel her assent to a marriage of which she wants no part, he terrorizes her with incessant verbal traps, such as when he forces her to choose whether she respects him or loves him, or when he constructs a clandestine engagement pact based on the legal

status of Troy's apparent demise.¹ Bathsheba instinctively resists these attempts at linguistic hegemony, recognizing the entrapments for what they are. In a crucially significant response, she stipulates the patriarchal bias in literacy and language, disclosing how words often function as a foundation for male dominance: "It is difficult for a woman to define her feelings in language which is chiefly made by men to express theirs" (308). Bathsheba's insight into the aggression encoded in everyday language underscores Hardy's deep distrust of the ways in which literacy can be appropriated. Samir Elbarbary argues for the central role that Bathsheba's protest plays in understanding Hardy's treatment of women and their relation to language in his fiction:

She refuses to accept an alienating language (an instrument of domination) of man making, that renders woman speechless by imposing meaning on her and constraining the articulation of her nature. Man, patronisingly, wants her to be confined to one domain: that of an existence where love is the be-all and end-all of her life. She wants a language that is free from masculinist bias and which does not pin her down to an identity imposed from without. The implication is also that woman has a right to love spontaneously, not merely in answer to man. The egalitarian and liberationist note is hard to miss in Bathsheba's protest. She is a spokeswoman for her sex. (Elbarbary 62)

In this sense, Hardy draws a parallel between women and rural populations, since each group must resist domination and having their identities inscribed, to their detriment, from without. That literacy and language emerge as the forces that most readily enable colonizing efforts of this sort, in both cases, to succeed, becomes Hardy's main point. After Bathsheba spends even a little time with Boldwood, his influence on, and conquering of, her identity becomes manifest: "He spoke to her in low tones, and she instinctively modulated her own to the same pitch, and her voice ultimately even caught the inflection of his. . . . [W]oman at the impressible age gravitates to the larger body not only in her choice of words, which is apparent every day, but even in her shade of tone and humour, when the influence is great" (129). Hardy develops the same anxiety over influence that he would make far more destructive in the intellectual subservience of Tess to Angel Clare. Similarly, when Bathsheba hears young children singing hymns, she yearns for earlier days before such a recognition of the dangers posed by conventional literacy: "She would have given anything in the world to be as those children were, unconcerned with the meaning of their words because too innocent to feel the necessity for any such expression" (342).

Of course, the primary embodiment of the dangers of conventional education and literacy proves to be Sergeant

importuning as "The catechism he puts her through [which] would hardly be asked unless he is doubtful of a reply in the affirmative" (61). The catechistic method, of course, has long been employed in educational situations wherein coercion and domination are the ultimate pedagogical objectives.

Troy, with his town education. As Liddy recognizes, the "clever young dand" (144) is a "doctor's son, brought up so well, and sent to Casterbridge Grammar School for years and years" (144). He even "[l]earnt all languages while he was there" (144-145). As was so often the case in nineteenth-century society, however, this education has only prepared him to be a more accomplished and polished rogue. Hardy makes it clear that although Troy "reached the brilliant in speech" (147), "he fell below the commonplace in action" (147). His town education, in fact, allows him to prey upon Weatherbury's rural inhabitants. Hardy writes: "He was a fairly well-educated man for one of the middle class—exceptionally well educated for a common soldier. He spoke fluently and unceasingly. He could in this way be one thing and seem another: for instance, he could speak of love and think of dinner; call on the husband to look at the wife; be eager to pay and intend to owe" (147). Oak, on the other hand, recognizes Troy's education as anything but a promising sign. He insists to Bathsheba that Troy's "being higher in learning and birth than the ruck of soldiers is anything but proof of his worth. It shows his course to be downward" (167).

Troy's facility with literacy proves extremely dangerous in his courtship of Bathsheba. Quoting French love phrases of which Oak was not in possession, his version of linguistic entrapment seems to be, in Weatherbury terms, a sense of hyper-literacy.² As her song at the sheep-shearing supper foreshadows, she will encounter a soldier with "a winning tongue" (137). Along with more worldly texts, his ability to co-opt "old country saying[s]" (151) found in literature allows him to counterfeit a rural sympathy. At one point, Hardy makes the bookish nature of Troy's treachery painfully obvious, as the sergeant remarks: "To speak like a book I once read, wet weather is the narrative, and fine days are the episodes, of our country's history" (226). Ultimately, Troy's education merely invests him with "the power of a male dissembler, who by the simple process of deluding her with untenable fictions charms the female wisely" (147). He goes so far as to employ biblical literacy in his seduction of Bathsheba, judiciously choosing a verse which also echoes pastoral idyll: "you take away the one little ewe-lamb of pleasure that I have left in this dull life of mine" (153). Characteristically, Bathsheba, in a comment she immediately recognizes as another linguistic betrayal of herself, remarks, "if you can only fight half as winningly as you can talk, you are able to make pleasure of a bayonet wound!" (152).

Bathsheba's exposure to romance novels and other books seems to do her little good as well. As Poorgrass remarks about the new possessions in Bathsheba's house, there are many "[l]ying books for the wicked" (94). Hardy

later infers that Bathsheba's reading may have had a good deal to do with her series of love tragedies. As soon as she returns to her house after spending a tremulous night in a swamp due to her discovery of Fanny and her dead child, Bathsheba looks for an activity that might afford her solace at this crucial time. When she decides to ask Liddy to bring books to read, Hardy hints that these texts have played a part in Bathsheba's construction of real-life romance:

A faint gleam of humour passed over her face as she said, "Bring Beaumont and Fletcher's *Maid's Tragedy*; and the *Mourning Bride*; and—let me see—*Night Thoughts*, and the *Vanity of Human Wishes*."

"And that story of a black man who murdered his wife Desdemona is a nice dismal one that would suit you, ma'am, don't you think so?" hinted Liddy.

"Now Lidd—you've been looking into my books without telling me! And I said you were not to. How do you know it would suit me? It wouldn't suit me at all."

"But if the others do—"

"No they don't. And I won't read dismal books. Why should I read dismal books indeed? Bring me *Love in a Village*, and *The Maid of the Mill*, and *Doctor Syntax* and some volumes of the *Spectator*." (269)

The first group of texts not only represent the human condition as an essentially sad one, and life as something to struggle through without hopes for better things such as romantic love, they also fit into a male tradition that normalizes violence (Beaumont and Fletcher) and coercion (Congreve) against women as forms of acceptable discipline when it comes to the fair, but often hysterical, gender. In essence, they contain the same kinds of demonizing as Oak's Eve narratives, and result in the same kinds of marginalization for women. When Liddy makes the connection between these books and Othello, which features a male hero perhaps more renowned for his coercion, policing, and violence against the woman he supposedly loves than any other male literary figure, she unconsciously forces Bathsheba into an epiphany about the nature of a patriarchal literary tradition. Instead of offering an intellectual haven in which Bathsheba can find narratives with which she can identify after her most recent ordeal with Troy, and her lifelong difficulties with men, she realizes that these books actually help to create the conditions that compartmentalize women and put them in such danger from male abuse. Bathsheba instinctively realizes that these texts are merely part and parcel of the language that is chiefly made by men, different sites of power in the same patriarchal network. Realizing that these books will not do, she turns her attention to more comic narratives, hoping to escape the

²See Wittenberg 34, who, in an article predominantly concerned with perception and the gendered gaze in *FMC*, concisely summarizes the Boldwood/Troy dichotomy in terms of the ways in which they exert masculine power, discursive and otherwise, over Bathsheba: "Boldwood, with his burning eyes and coercive speeches, is a man of some substance and community standing, so the pressure she receives from him is simultaneously sexual, linguistic, and socio-economic. Sergeant Troy, whose power over Bathsheba seems almost exclusively sexual and rhetorical, is also in certain respects an emblem of the English patriarchy, for his father was a nobleman, his step-father a physician, and he himself a non-commissioned

military officer." See also Stave 6, who connects these concerns to her primary thesis of situating Hardy's two novelistic worlds as corresponding to a Pagan world and a Christian world: "The world view that Hardy sets in antithesis to the Pagan one can be defined as patriarchal, Christian, and cultural. It defines itself in opposition to nature, consequently developing laws that attempt to alter or control natural impulses. Privileging male thought and male being, it predicates itself upon the domination of the female. It values academic education over practical know-how, and it celebrates progress, which results in a perception of time as linear rather than cyclical."

¹See Elbarbary 61, who suggests that Boldwood is "authoritative and coercive. Desperate at being shut out from acceptance by Bathsheba, Boldwood takes advantage of the superior stature their male-female relationship affords him. He coerces her to act towards him as man wants her, to be, to parrot his language." Elbarbary also notices Boldwood's forcing Bathsheba to choose between two oppressive alternatives, and characterizes his

kind of polemic she has just recognized in the former dismal selections. The choice of the *Spectator* here, however, a periodical admittedly aimed toward didacticism and often targeting women, reveals an important similarity between the two groups of supposedly divergent texts. As a result, Bathsheba finds these narratives equally unable to speak to a woman in a time of crisis, since they are impotent to suggest any way to improve her own bleak situation. Hence, she simply cannot read at this point: "Bathsheba sat at the window till sunset, sometimes attempting to read, at other times watching every movement outside without much purpose, and listening without much interest to every sound" (269).³

Along with Bathsheba and her suitors, Hardy details the difficulties, ranging from unwelcome annoyance to severe danger, that conventional education and literacy cause among the workfolk. These folk are often just as likely to use even the Bible for local traditions, like the "key and the book" divination that the women practice to discover future marriage partners, as they are to read it (84). Some of the linguistic mishaps occur in combination with the authority of the church. For example, one of the workfolk's mothers, "not being a Scripture-read woman made a mistake at his christening, thinking 'twas Abel killed Cain, and called en Cain meaning Abel all the time" (72). Cain Ball lives with this stigma of literacy for the rest of his life. Henery Fray, against the authority of "any passing schoolmaster" (49), insists on spelling his name H, e, n, e, r, y, "in the tone of one to whom orthographical differences were matters which had a great deal to do with personal character" (50). Before Oak's arrival in Weatherbury, Joseph Poorgrass used to "prent" Farmer Everdene's waggons with the name "James," only to have the "J's and S's" (98) come out the wrong way, a spectacle that Hardy insists on reproducing visually in his own text, a representation which evokes Pip's letter to Jo in *Great Expectations*. Like Dickens, Hardy manifestly dwells on the problematic nature of memory with regard to literacy. Poorgrass declares "I wasn't so much to blame, for them J's and S's are such trying sons of dogs for the memory to mind whether they face backward or forward; and I always had such a forgetful memory too" (98). The schoolboy who walks past the hiding Bathsheba in the swamp gives the reader a feel for the pedagogical practices to which the villagers are exposed, as he cons a psalter, learning the collect by rote memorization: "'O Lord O Lord O Lord O Lord O Lord': That I know. 'Give us give us give us give us give us': That I know. 'Grace that grace that grace that grace that': That I know" (266). Conventional literacy manifestly disturbs the continuity of life at Weatherbury, rather than improving it. As Mark Clark remarks: "But what with the parsons and clerks and schoolpeople and serious tea-parties the merry old ways of good life have gone to the dogs" (248).

³Hardy's comments in his essay "The Profitable Reading of Fiction" are apt here: "A philosophy which appears between the inverted commas of a dialogue may, with propriety, be as full of holes as a sieve if the person or persons that advance it gain any reality of humanity thereby" (80). Not only can supposedly light fictional dialogue be damaging to those who accept the subtext as reality, but, according to Hardy, this type of danger

Language itself often seems wholly inadequate in Hardy's fictional world. Not only does Oak lack polished language to court Bathsheba, but his reflections make it clear that any language might prove deficient in relaying with accuracy his tender sentiments: "He wished she knew his impressions; but he would as soon have thought of carrying an odour in a net as of attempting to convey the intangibilities of his feeling in the coarse meshes of language" (19-20). Hardy again stresses these disadvantages of words when Boldwood flashes Bathsheba an, "unanswerable" (176) look: "Those who have the power of reproaching in silence may find it a means more effective than words. There are accents in the eye which are not on the tongue, and more tales from pale lips than can enter an ear" (175-176). Some complex truths, evidently, evade simple linguistic expression.

At the same time, the written and spoken word often have the power to bring truths into being that put those compelled to read them or speak them in distinct peril. Bathsheba senses that Troy remains alive after the incident at Carrow Cove, and resists agreeing with the others that her husband has drowned, feeling in a "spirit of prophesy" (286) the contrary case to be true. However, after remaining firm in this conviction for as long as possible, she finally succumbs to the general opinion when the newspaper makes the news official, "making by a methodizing pen formidable presumptive evidence of Troy's death" (288). The binding quality of the written word prevails, effectively causing the final two tragedies in the novel. Similarly, one can be held accountable for the spoken word. Andrew Candle, one of Bathsheba's workfolk, actually chokes on language when he is called on for an utterance. Henery Fray discloses both the reason for this man's stuttering and the cause for Candle's dismissal from his last farm position: "'A's a stammering man . . . and they turned him away because the only time he ever did speak plain he said his soul was his own and other iniquities" (70). To use language, one must use it according to the herd, or risk being punished for deviation. Significantly, the *Cornhill* magazine edition added the words "to the squire" to this passage, emphasizing not just the solidification of power through literacy for the church, but also how language stabilizes class hierarchies.⁴

Hardy challenges the supposed benefits of conventional knowledge and education at seemingly every turn in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, even taking the opportunity to comment on the nature of reason and logic in the aftermath of Oak's disaster with his demised flock of sheep. He utilizes remarkably defamiliarizing language to describe the canine George's son, who became "too good a workman to live" (33), by linking the dog's actions to the nature of human knowledge. The accident becomes merely "another instance of the untoward fate which so often attends dogs and other philosophers who follow out a train of reasoning to its

with regard to novel reading may be the rule instead of the exception, due to a sparsity of suitable fiction: "Unfortunately the two hundred years or so of the modern novel's development have not left the world so full of fine examples as to make it particularly easy to light upon them when the first obvious list has been run through. The, at first sight, high-piled granary sifts down to a very small measure of genuine corn" (80).

⁴ 4. See Hardy, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, 364, note 1 to chapter 10.

logical conclusion, and attempt perfectly consistent conduct in a world made up so largely of compromise" (33-34). This attack on formal knowledge proves indicative of how Hardy portrays learned discourse in the novel. In fact, at two separate points in the novel he employs the word "schooling" as a verb; in each case, the context reveals his dark estimate of the function of school itself. In the first instance, Bathsheba, responding to Boldwood's verbal coercion, tries to reconcile herself to marrying him and trying to love him. Hardy writes: "She had been awe-struck at her past temerity, and was struggling to make amends, without thinking whether the sin quite deserved the penalty she was schooling herself to pay" (139). Later in the novel, he describes how "the severe schooling she had been subjected to had made Bathsheba much more considerate than she had formerly been of the feelings of others" (291). In each case, the idea of schooling could not be further disjoined from happiness, a healthy sense of individual worth and self-respect, any idea of empowerment or equity, or even a modicum of human agency.⁵

II

Regardless of, perhaps even because of, his characters' disconnection with conventional education and literacy, Hardy clearly aspired to make them far more intellectual than the usual depiction of "Hodge." He begins the novel with a parody of the typical notion of Hodge:

When Farmer Oak smiled, the corners of his mouth spread, till they were within an unimportant distance of his ears, his eyes were reduced to mere chinks, and diverging wrinkles appeared around them, extending upon his countenance like the rays in a rudimentary sketch of the rising sun. (4)

From this point on, Hardy will transform the opening generalization into a very particular individual, achieving the same kind of distinction he suggested one would notice in going home to dinner with Hodge in "The Dorsetshire Labourer." As Wotton notes, "the very literariness of the language and Gargantuan imagery reveals the parodic intent. This ideological view is the novel's point of departure from which we are progressively distanced by the gradual revelation of the 'real' Gabriel Oak."⁶ In a note to the first illustrator of the novel, Hardy expressed "a hope that the rustics, although *quaint*, may be made to appear intelligent, and not boorish at

⁵See Stave 24, who writes: "Hardy's agenda appears to be to present a world in which culture—not in its larger definition as the language, religion, and customs of a people, but rather in its more connotative sense of being the codified rules of behavior that allow for a hierarchic categorization of people and activities—intrudes as little as possible."

⁶Wotton 42. Other critics continue to underestimate Hardy's writing against the Hodge figure. See Selby 93-94, who, in writing about the differences between *Tess* and *Far From the Madding Crowd*, although recognizing that the opening portrait of Oak almost verges on caricature, still devalues the workfolk: "While the depiction of rural characters in the early *Far from the Madding Crowd* has these characters as an innocent chorus to the main action, by the time of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* these rural characters have taken on a credibility which places them far beyond the smock-frocked Hedges of the earlier novel."

⁷See Eastman, who writes about the difference between Oak's sense of time and the civilized man's: "Oak's fascination with time is not linear, but cyclical: his interest in time is not that of a businessman checking his watch on

all" (*The Life* 99, original emphasis). So, in direct contrast with the more dangerous elements of institutional discourse, he scrutinizes the natural texts which his rural learners read, recording these literacies for posterity and situating them as counter-hegemonic sites of resistance. Some of these natural texts deal directly with time, memory, and continuity, while others safeguard rural epistemologies for a future public, collective memory. Gabriel Oak reads a text of each variety at the very beginning of the novel. Standing on Norcombe Hill at night, he reads both the hill itself and the stars to tell the time. The continuity to be found in the text of Norcombe Hill contrasts sharply with, to use Tennyson's words, our little systems that have their day and cease to be.⁷ In the hill, Oak reads

a shape approaching the indestructible as nearly as any to be found on earth. It was a featureless convexity of chalk and soil—an ordinary specimen of those smoothly outlined protuberances of the globe which may remain undisturbed on some great day of confusion when far grander heights and dizzy granite precipices topple down. (8)

At the same time, the celestial text appears "remarkably clear"—Oak reads the stars closely, recognizing their continuity as well, as "throbs of one body, timed by a common pulse" (9). Hardy makes the comparison with more orthodox texts conspicuous, since the stars are a text "oftener read of than seen in England" (9). He textualizes these natural sights by considering them living poetry, a designation he will also have in mind for Egdon Heath and Tess Durbeyfield. In this case, Oak's heavenly text becomes "poetry of motion" (9), a clearly intellectual alternative literacy that succeeds in "enlarging the consciousness with a sense of difference from the mass of civilized mankind" (9). After reading "these astral clusters, aloft from the customary haunts of thought and vision, some men may feel raised to a capability for eternity at once" (9). Hardy's terminology insists on approximation, suggesting Oak's text is, at once, both "a useful instrument" (12) and "a work of art supremely beautiful" (12). If, as Philip Collins asserts, "education becomes one more of the abundant causes of unhappiness in the Hardy world" (59), such alternative pedagogy can produce "complete abstraction from . . . the sights and sounds of man. Human shapes, interferences, troubles, and joys were all as if they were not" (12).⁸

the way to an appointment, but that of a man who is concerned with being fully aware of where he is. . . in the cosmic order of things. Oak values time not for where it is going, but for what it can tell him about his present situation with reference to the past" (23-24, original emphasis). As he recognizes, time is deeply interfused with Oak's ability to read alternative texts: "In his characterization of Oak, Hardy merges the ability and the need to know the time with the ability to perceive 'direct message[s] from the Great Mother'" (24); the sense of continuity that Oak achieves directly relates to Hardy's mission to chronicle a vanishing way of life: "Hardy himself was already able to look back into the not-so-distant past and to recognize the passing of an entire species of human time" (32). For aspects of time in Hardy, and Oak's reading the stars, see also Goss 43-53 and Sampson 63-64.

⁸Significantly, the workfolk recognize that Oak's alternative literacies, such as telling time by the stars, make him "clever," a designation at which Oak seems to bristle, until he learns that the comment does not involve book-learning (97).

By far, the most significant alternative literacy is to be found in the famous Great Barn, in which the sheep-shearing takes place. Hardy's language clearly likens this edifice to a text that resists a modern, superficial sense of time, and the quickly worn out creeds that permeate more conventional textuality:

One could say about this barn, what could hardly be said of either the church or the castle, its kindred in age and style, that the purpose which had dictated its original erection was the same with that to which it was still applied. Unlike and superior to either of those two typical remnants of medievalism, the old barn embodied the practices which had suffered no mutilation at the hands of time. Here at least the spirit of the builders then was at one with the spirit of the beholder now. Standing before this abraded pile the eye regarded its present usage, the mind dwelt upon its past history, with a satisfied sense of functional continuity throughout, a feeling almost of gratitude, and quite of pride, at the permanence of the idea which had heaped it up. The fact that four centuries had neither proved it to be founded on a mistake, inspired by any hatred of its purpose, nor given rise to any reaction that had battered it down, invested this simple grey effort of old minds with a repose if not a grandeur which a too curious reflection was apt to disturb in its ecclesiastical and military compeers. For once medievalism and modernism had a common standpoint. The lanceolate windows, the time-eaten arch stones and chamfers, the orientation of the axis, the misty chestnut-work of the rafters, referred to no exploding fortifying art or worn out religious creed. The defence and salvation of the body by daily bread is still a study, a religion, and a desire. (126)

Like the stars, the continuity of this natural textuality lies in both its usefulness and beauty; like Norcombe Hill, it has a permanence that one cannot find in church or castle, the two main sources of human dogma. Unlike the ideologies that are often begotten by book-learning, this text was neither founded on the mistake of artificial intellect, nor inspired by the hatred that accompanies both sacred and secular polemic. Instead of embodying an exploding fortifying art that owed its existence to the human urge to dominate one's fellow man, this text, which offers a superior study, religion, and desire, survives in the spirit of co-operation and community in which it was created. As Hardy would write in "The Dorsetshire Labourer": "it is among such communities as these that happiness will find her last refuge on earth, since it is among them that a perfect insight into the conditions of existence will be longest postponed" (39).

Most important, this text works in conjunction with a variety of other rural texts that coalesce to form a literacy

that privileges, rather than marginalizes, the workfolk. This more comprehensive epistemology preserves a public memory that makes time an ally, instead of an enemy. As Michael Squires argues:

In his ideas on the function of time, Hardy pierces to the center of the contrast between rural and urban. In cities time is an enemy, for it demands rapid changes with a high degree of regularity—styles, theories, interests, tastes. But the rustics view time as a companion because it brings only slight changes to their occupations, traditions, habits, clothing, language, and architecture. Time scarcely affects their culture; and in comparison with cities Weatherbury does seem immutable, without "marked contrast between ancient and modern." Wessex works in harmony with time; London races dissonantly against time. The closer man is to the seasons, the earth, the animals—the more time is a benign force. In Wessex, culture merges *with* time; in London, culture changes as rapidly as time itself and thus becomes submerged in its own impermanence.⁹

The consequent continuity offers a communal frame of reference that brings solidity to everyday life, as opposed to the "ache of modernism" (*Tess* 124). Hardy writes:

The citizen's *Then* is the rustic's *Now*. In London twenty or thirty years ago are old times: In Paris ten years or five. In Weatherbury three- or four-score years were included in the mere present, and nothing less than a century set a mark on its face or tone. Five decades hardly modified the cut of a gaiter, the embroidery of a smockfrock, by the breadth of a hair. Ten generations failed to alter the turn of a single phrase. In these nooks the busy outsider's ancient times are only old, his old times are still new; his present is futurity.

So the barn was natural to the shearers, and the shearers in harmony with the barn. (127, original emphasis)

Hardy's contrast between urban and rural time, which can be read so forcefully in alternative texts like the Great Barn, makes even more sense when one looks ahead to *The Return of the Native*, with Clym Yeobright's return from Paris. The sense of time in the outside world as a corrupting, attenuating influence on the workfolk who must struggle against such contamination becomes even more palpable. In contrast to Eustacia Vye, who will dream of fashionable life in Paris, the Weatherbury folk (and the Egdon Heath community) embrace continuity with regard to both smockfrocks and gaiters, and ideas about happiness, virtue, and knowledge. Unlike the busy outsider, with mutable systems of culture that produce fanciful epistemologies that come and go, this

⁹Hardy's description of the sheepshearing barn, a lengthy passage which essentially compares the building to a church, fosters the idea that what occurs in that barn is holy work, that the yearly ritual involving the animals is a part of the continuing cycle of birth, growth, and death that is celebrated in Paganism" (27).

bucolic harmony with time can be read in any number of natural and communal texts which empower the workfolk by sanctioning their close interaction with elemental forces. If conventional urban pedagogies separate one from such forces with art, these alternative ways of knowing submerge the learner in a literal world of meaning. As Donald Eastman recognizes, the chasm between a pedagogical locale like Weatherbury and a Paris or London is "the difference between a notion of human existence as a continuous, connected, uninterrupted temporal succession, and an image of a more tentative, instantaneous, discontinuous, impermanent human reality" (25).

Of course, Troy is emblematic of the busy outsider, "to whom memories were an incumbrance and anticipations a superfluity" (146).¹⁰ Lest we miss the disparity, Hardy echoes the tripartite description of the workfolk's ability to remember in describing Troy's correspondent penchant for forgetting: "With him the past was yesterday; the future, tomorrow; never, the day after" (146). He becomes the embodiment of modern ideas from outside the community, and all the dangers that go with them. After his hurried marriage with Bathsheba, which significantly must take place in town, Troy finds himself at Weatherbury feeling like "new wine in an old bottle" (207). In describing Troy's new position at the farm, Hardy invokes a pedagogical term which, as we have already seen, carries the ultimate pejorative sense. He "was gradually transforming himself into a farmer of a spirited and very modern school" (226). Indeed, Troy commits the ultimate sin when he considers transforming the farmhouse to meet his town notions of comfort and fashion. He remarks to Oak:

"A philosopher once said in my hearing that the old builders who worked when art was a living thing had no respect for the work of builders who went before them, but pulled down and altered as they saw fit, and why shouldn't we? 'Creation and preservation don't do well together,' says he, 'and a million of antiquarians can't invent a style.' My mind exactly. I am for making this place more modern that we may be cheerful whilst we can." (208)

This passage overflows with the tensions Hardy articulates over modern epistemologies throughout the novel. In a scathing detail, he situates Troy's source of knowledge as a philosopher (one thinks of George's son), who speaks of the crucial tenet of rural literacy, art as a living thing, figuratively rather than literally, thereby missing the terrible irony involved with such theories of "creation." Furthermore,

¹⁰Some critical estimates dismiss the role of education in making Troy the "busy outsider," or deny his place as outsider at all. See Merryn Williams 131, who writes about Troy: "it is a mistake to see him. . . as a destructive urban figure invading a peaceful agricultural community." See also Langbaum 257, who writes that *Far From the Madding Crowd* "does not deal with exactly the same problem as *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *The Return of the Native*, and *The Woodlanders*. Education and the impact of modern ideas are not issues. The returned native of *Madding Crowd* is Sergeant Troy, whose alienation from the community comes not from modern education (though we hear he is educated) but from the traditionally rootless,

Troy's notion of modernity, and his contempt for the antiquarians/workfolk among whom he now finds himself, are exactly the dangerous forces that Hardy berates in the novel, and the systems against which he positions his natural and communal literacies. When one remembers that the Great Barn clearly emerges as the most important of Hardy's alternative texts, Troy's willingness to decimate another edifice that may serve as a vital text capable of communal signification solidifies his status as antipathetic intruder. The wide gap between Troy and Oak, who thinks any change to the building would be a pity, emerges as more than just a difference of opinion about practical and aesthetic matters. Instead, their perspectives about the building emblemize a more comprehensive ideological rift between a colonizing town pedagogy with a goal of conversion, and local continuous epistemologies that resist through preservation.

These alternative texts of collective memory proliferate throughout *Far From the Madding Crowd*. Rural learners can read both natural process and time in the text of Melchester Moor, which Hardy writes as if it were an actual poem, underscoring his notion of natural texts as living poetry:

The retreat of snakes.
The transformation of the ferns.
The filling of the pools.
The rising of fog from the same.
The embrowning by frost.
The collapse of the fungi.
The permanence of the snow. (75)

As with the Great Barn, readers can be in harmony with this text, and benefit from its meanings. Each of the characteristics that announce the organic process of Melchester Moor can be read as an individual text in this larger narrative and, like more traditional fables and tales, seemingly minute and less significant elements coalesce to signify a more profound, transcendent insight into the essence of things. Hardy very seriously regarded the educational value of such organic literacies. As Margery Cornwell-Robinson argues about Hardy's reading of nature:

the magic of nature, as well as its message, is not revealed in the unexamined, the untouchable, the dramatic, but rather in the close and the small—the toad, the pigeon, and the fox. The simple contains the complex. The commonplace is not to be approached with condescension, but respected for purposes of education.¹¹

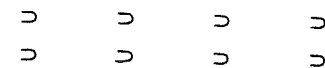
Hardy's pedagogy of the commonplace validates the magic of the natural world, and the epistemologies it provides for rural

irresponsible life of the soldier." As I contend in this essay, education and modern ideas are a primary concern of all of the Wessex novels, and Troy, like Clym in *The Return of the Native*, regardless of his pastoral origins, has become the busiest of outsiders in a pedagogical sense.

¹¹Cornwell-Robinson 53. Cornwell-Robinson is discussing both Hardy and Eiseley in this particular passage. She goes on to add about Hardy: "Hardy [has] concluded that careful and constant familiarity with the commonplace in nature emphasizes the mysteries from which the special human animal has sprung and which this creature must still accept" (54).

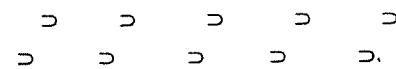
learners, free from the condescension of a dangerous pedagogue and the marginalization of book-learning. The autodidactic nature of this literacy successfully enables its readers to avoid the taint of a more conventional hidden curriculum.

Similarly, Oak and Coggan read the natural texts of Dainty's hoofprints to track Bathsheba's midnight flight to Bath. Although *Cornhill* magazine could not, or at least would not, render his veristic texts in the way he preferred,¹² Hardy evidently insisted on reproducing these transcriptions for the novel edition. He relates specifically how each individual text is interpreted by his rural readers, stipulating that they "were full of information" (184) and "being difficult to describe in words they are given in the following diagram" (184):



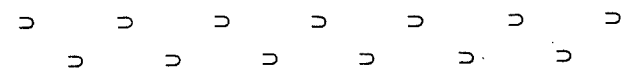
(184)¹³

After their inspection of this first organic text, Coggan realizes that "[t]racks like this mean a stiff gallop" (185). Hence, the folk know they must head straight on. The next text offers them another hermeneutic challenge:

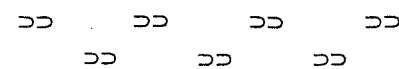


(185)

This second reading of nature's characters results in a second ultimate meaning: "'Tis a canter now. . . . A twisty rickety pace for a gig. The fact is, they overdrove her at starting; we shall catch them yet" (185). The detailed information that the workfolk can discern in this text that would prove inscrutable to so many more "able" readers is remarkable. The next deciphering results in Gabriel's assertion that "That's a trot, I know": (185)



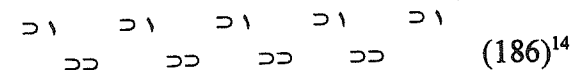
The next page unfolds thus: (186)



(186)

Coggan reads correctly that Dainty "walked up here—and well she might. We shall get them in two miles for a crown"

(186). Finally, the workfolk read the denouement of their narrative:



which results in their collective interpretation, which is thoroughly correct once again, that "Dainty is lamed: the near-foot-afore" (186). Certainly one of Hardy's primary objectives in requiring the inclusion of these visual reproductions of his natural texts in the novel edition, rather than the verbal replacements that the *Cornhill* offered, was to underscore the utter inability of conventional texts like books to approach any authentic verisimilitude in their counterfeiting of such alternative textuality. However, Hardy's rural texts offer far more than a critique of the aesthetic limitations of artistic reproduction. Like Melchester Moor and the Great Barn, these natural texts offer a completely different way of reading and knowing for their rustic decoders.¹⁵ Hence, the natural world abounds with a textuality that privileges a rural reader who can access its meanings, survive, and thrive hand in hand with more elemental forces.

Hardy's alternative natural literacies commonly aid their rural readers in ways that the "illiterate" town-folk cannot comprehend. When Troy falsely tells Bathsheba he has been attending church by sneaking into an obscure doorway, Oak can refute that assertion by reading the sprig of ivy that grows across it. While Troy disturbs farm tradition and continuity by expelling the women from the sheep-shearing supper and forcing the workfolk to match him in dissipation, Oak reads nature, and realizes there will be a rick-destroying storm. Oak first reads a large toad and he "knew what this direct message from the Great Mother meant" (212). He then reads a "huge brown garden slug": "It was Nature's second way of hinting to him that he was to prepare for foul weather" (212). Finally, he turns to the sheep, reading "their tails, [which] without a single exception, were towards that half of the horizon from which the storm threatened" (213). Hardy's pun on reading tails/tales emblemizes the rural hermeneutics which allows Oak to achieve harmony with the natural world. As Hardy writes: "Every voice in nature was unanimous in bespeaking change" (213). However, perhaps even more significantly than his consequent ability to save the valuable wheat ricks, Oak actually becomes the primary text himself in this scene of reading. In reading these natural texts, Oak travels from the particular to the transcendent, as he is forced to make sense of his own psyche, since "man, even to himself, is a cryptographic page having an ostensible

writing, and another between the lines" (213). Hardy makes it clear that these texts can generate similar depths of introspection and philosophical inquiry as can their bookish counterparts, while at the same time avoiding the attendant compartmentalization.

Taken in the aggregate, this natural alternative literacy champions and preserves a village life sorely endangered by conventional education and literacy. In writing about Oak's early flute playing, which very specifically shows him in literal harmony with the natural world, John Alcorn summarizes the heteroglossic quality of Hardy's alternative literacies:

Farmer Oak's flute and the many "voices" which resound in Hardy's world of nature represent the search for a new vocabulary to describe the interior life of man. In Hardy, man's unconscious life is anchored immediately and constantly in physical nature—not only in man's own animality, but in the whole external world of organic life. Hardy's "alphabet" is a language of spiritualized physiognomy, physiology, botany, and topography.¹⁶

Whether these local epistemologies involve the rural knowledge of making lambs "take" (107), the ability to read the message that the ringing of a sheep-bell "signifies to the accustomed ear" (31), the capability in reading the coded communal language "of the old established type" (247) at the local pub, replete with its raps, shouts, and calls of distinct meaning, or even the competence to translate the countenances of rustic neighbors with their own local histories, these ways of knowing offer an alternative literacy to that of book-learning, and provide the pastoral learner with a voice with which to resist its hegemony. As Hardy writes in his notebooks during the publication of *Far From the Madding Crowd* in novel form: "He has read well who has learnt that there is more to read outside books than in them" (*The Life* 110). For Hardy's workfolk, their own country environments provide a *bona fide* corpus of texts full of the promise of liberation, happiness, and the possibilities for autonomous agency.

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¹⁶Alcorn 14-15. See also Siebensschuh 782, who writes about Hardy's idea of place: "first, the idea that the history/associations are physically present in specific places; second, that they can be accessed by memory and/or the imagination; third, that such associations have tremendous power to comfort and sustain a person who has access to them; and fourth. . . that this connection can be broken or fail to exist with what, to Hardy, could be tragic consequences." Although Siebensschuh is dealing primarily with *The Woodlanders*, *Jude the Obscure*, and poems like "Drummer Hodge," his analysis

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¹²See Hardy, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, 377, note 4 to chapter 31.
¹³I have rendered these texts as close to Hardy's inscriptions as I possibly can, without photocopying or scanning the actual novel. Even with very recent word processing capabilities, Hardy's point about the differences between the realities of his natural texts, and the comparatively poor ability of books to reproduce such realities remains well taken close to one hundred and thirty years later.
¹⁴There are no outlines of road here because Hardy's actual text differs—it incorporates a bend in the road, which must have delighted the already put-out typesetters—it certainly stymied me. See note 12 above.

¹⁵See Irwin 14, who briefly comments: "As agricultural workers they know how to glean practical information from what they see. They can read tracks, forecast the weather, tell the time by the stars. Nature is shown to be rich in 'meanings,' of which these are only the most practical examples. Hardy teaches and encourages other modes of 'reading.' His landscapes everywhere offer tacit commentary on the changeability and brevity of life, on conflict and mutual dependence, on destruction and adaptation, on the instinct to survive and procreate, on the processes of ageing and erosion. One inference is that folk who can read nature's simpler messages—and even some who can't—may in some sense apprehend these darker ones."

corroborates my own sense of what is at stake in terms of Hardy's natural and communal literacies. He furthermore argues: "a person with recourse to associations like those described would have a strong sense of participation in a historically continuous community. There would be a ready-to-hand logic to the narrowly geographical universe in which one lived, and such knowledge would almost automatically confer a sense of both identity and belonging. Nothing also seems to have been clearer to Hardy than the fact that this particular source of strength and stability was becoming rarer and rarer" (782).

Unmanned by Marriage and the Metropolis in Gissing's *The Whirlpool*

Andrew Radford

[Hugh] Carnaby was a fair example of the well-bred, well-fed Englishman—tall, brawny, limber, not uncomely, with a red neck, a powerful jaw, and a keen eye. Something more of repose, of self-possession, and a slightly more intellectual brow, would have made him the best type of conquering, civilising Briton. He came of good family, but had small inheritance; his tongue told of age-long domination; his physique and carriage showed the horseman, the game-stalker, the nomad. Hugh had never bent over books since the day when he declined the university and got leave to join Colonel Bosworth's exploring party in the Caucasus. After a boyhood of straitened circumstances, he profited by a skilful stewardship which allowed him to hope for some seven hundred a year; his elder brother, Miles, a fine fellow, who went into the army, pinching himself to benefit Hugh and their sister Ruth. Miles was now Major Carnaby, active on the North-West Frontier. Ruth was wife of a missionary in some land of swamps; doomed by climate, but of spirit indomitable. It seemed strange that Hugh, at five and thirty, had done nothing particular. (W 12)

Published in the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, George Gissing's novel *The Whirlpool* reveals from the outset its author's scathing and jaundiced perception of the crass irrationality imbuing late nineteenth-century nationalist rhetoric.¹ For Gissing, imperialism is an empire of lies rooted in a myth of robust, ruthless masculinity, the "best type" of "Briton" upon whose shoulders the august project of conquest rests.² Hugh Carnaby daydreams of staging "a natural revolt against domestic bondage" (W 15), to locate overseas a form of "manly" authenticity unsullied by the "curse" of "commercialism" (W 19) in what Max Nordau calls in his apocalyptic diagnosis "the vertigo and whirl of our frenzied" metropolitan life (42). *The Whirlpool* asks whether it is possible to evade entirely the humiliating condition of negotiation with "the money-market" (W 231) enforced both by environment and by bodily need.³ Carnaby realizes that to preserve his carefully cultivated identity as a "well-bred, well-fed Englishmen" he must spurn the "common routine" of salon culture, and its rapt reverence for "the artificial and the respectable" (W 78). As his best friend, Harvey Rolfe, declares: "'there's

not one good word to be said for the ordinary life of an English household. Flee from it! Live anywhere and anyhow, but don't keep house in England'" (W 17). The distant periphery of Empire becomes for Carnaby an enchanted realm whose unhusbanded spaces await the domesticating and "civilising" intervention of confident, clear-sighted English practicality. Gissing elaborates with increasingly strident and self-lacerating emphasis how the imperialist impulse affords the bewildered and repressed Carnaby a grandiose fantasy of masculine and racial empowerment, satisfying his nameless longings and reveries of adventurous exploration in which the code of courage, justice and fair play that had once made "his" Britain great might be reinstated. Carnaby, who is considered the "open-air" man (W 162), is seduced by the image of the indefatigable colonial hero, dashing and debonair, insulated from the "sooty smother" of London, with its "tramp of crowds" and "clatter of hot-wheel traffic" (W 301). The colonies are invested with immense therapeutic value, promising an antidote to the enfeebling constrictions of modernity, in which "monstrous cruelties and mendacities [. . .] underlie the surface of this gay and melodious existence" (W 38).

It is no accident that *The Whirlpool* begins and ends with barbed references to the jingoism of Rudyard Kipling, who stands, in Gissing's hostile conception, as the glib, untroubled apologist for imperial nationhood, epitomizing a gallery of crumbling certainties. Carnaby's vigorous and extrovert masculinity, seeking an exotic foreign arena in which it can revel, is contrasted with the bookish pedagogical temperament of his best friend, Harvey Rolfe, who hates "the world's tumult, ever hoping to retire beyond its echo" (W 388) and refine a rigidly ascetic "life of noble simplicity" (W 165). Ensnared in well-appointed chambers that exude the scent of scholarship, Rolfe enjoys a safe haven from the reproductive, familial and economic demands which harass the typical late-Victorian male. Their animated conversation, set in an ambience of pleasurable masculine repose, forms the centerpiece of *The Whirlpool's* second chapter:

An odd and improbable alliance, that between Hugh Carnaby and Harvey Rolfe. Yet in several ways they suited each other. Old-time memories had a little, not much, to do with it; more of the essence of the matter was

mines; the ignominy of the December 1895 Jameson Raid had ensued. Of these events Gissing recorded privately that there would be little political stability "so long as these men of the money-market are permitted to control public life—as they practically do." See Gissing to Eduard Bertz, 9 May 1896, in *Letters* 6: 100-1. See also Green 70-75.

³The novel's title is rich in metaphorical suggestiveness, as Rachel Bowlby notes: whirlpool combines the "endless (ceaseless and pointless) 'whirl of fashionable life' and the equally circular and groundless circulation of money" (23).

their feeling of likeness in difference. Ten years ago Carnaby felt inclined to call his old school-fellow a "cad"; Harvey saw nothing in Hugh but robust snobbishness. Nowadays they had the pleasant sense of understanding each other on most points, and the result was a good deal of honest mutual admiration. The one's physical vigour and adroitness, the other's active mind, liberal thoughts, studious habits, proved reciprocally attractive. Though in unlike ways, both were impressively modern. Of late it had seemed as if the man of open air, checked in his natural courses, thrown back upon his meditations, turned to the student, with hope of guidance in new paths, of counsel amid unfamiliar obstacles. (W 12-13)

Carnaby and Rolfe's "alliance" reflects Gissing's abiding interest in an image of masculinity that has been fractured through the manifold and debilitating pressures of *fin-de-siècle* living.⁴ Carnaby and Rolfe represent two contrasting sides of a male identity that cannot achieve any healthy, wholesome integration in a culture that insists upon segregating intellectual and artistic aspiration from the "baser appetites" (W 22).⁵ This recalls Hardy's polemical purpose in *Jude the Obscure* (1895), though it is the fragmented female that he exposes through concentration on the unrelieved intractability of loss.⁶ Both Sue Bridehead and Arabella Donn are ultimately portrayed as two poles of a dismantled sexuality, whose union is impossible to effect in a hidebound, humourless society which venerates an outmoded, but still stultifying Christian code that inculcates the joyless abstention from worldly pleasure, and reviles the body and senses as gross and animal.⁷ The controlled fury Hardy's *Jude* directs at "the present pernicious conventions in respect of women, customs, religion,"⁸ is no less intense than the satirical salvoes *The Whirlpool* aims at the shallow metropolitan concept of social prestige which drains the

⁴See Greenslade 37-51. Gissing had been obsessed with the nature of masculinity since his first novel, *Workers in the Dawn* (1880). Like Henry James's androgynously named Hyacinth Robinson in *The Princess Casamassima* (1886) the central protagonist, Arthur Golding, cannot reconcile the public imperatives of masculine action with a private, internalized desire to refine his peculiar artistic vision. Gissing continued, most trenchantly in *New Grub Street* (1891), to chart the ways in which the male protagonist's identity might be modified, weakened or destroyed altogether by the balance of power within modern marriage.

⁵Gissing's initial polarization of these two male figures evokes Joseph Bristow's searching critique of E. M. Forster's "opposed interests of the sociable sportsman and the smug intellectual" (61).

⁶In a letter to Thomas Hardy in 1895, Gissing reflected on his own fiction's anxious concern with issues of Empire, national identity, parenthood and his culture's manufacturing of male identity: "One theme I have in mind—if I can ever get again to a solid book—which I want to treat very seriously. It is the question of a parent's responsibility. This has been forced upon me by the fact that I myself have a little boy, growing out of his infancy; the thought of his education—in the widest sense of the word—troubles me day & night" (*Letters* 6: 20). Gissing later wrote to Eduard Bertz, "The theme [of his new novel, initially called 'Benedict's Household'] is the decay of domestic life among certain classes of people, & much stress is laid upon the question of children" (*Letters* 6: 123).

⁷Gissing's concerns here are not dissimilar to those in Hardy's final novels, which dissect the legal and physical relations between the sexes. In an oft-quoted letter from 1893, Gissing diagnoses the lowly and inadequate status of women as a by-product of deficient social conditioning: "My demand for female 'equality' simply means that I am convinced that there shall be no social peace until women are intellectually trained very much as men are. More than half the misery of life is due to the ignorance & childishness of women. The average woman pretty closely resembles, in all intellectual

vigorous manly "energies" Carnaby thinks would be best suited for exploration of "wild country":

Hugh had not even followed up his promise of becoming an explorer; he had merely rambled, mostly in pursuit of fowl or quadruped. When he married, all hope for him was at an end. The beautiful and brilliant daughter of a fashionable widow, her income a trifle more than Carnaby's own; devoted to the life of cities, wherein she shone; an enchantress whose spell would not easily be broken, before whom her husband bowed in delighted subservience—such a woman might flatter Hugh's pride, but could scarce be expected to draw out his latent energies and capabilities. This year, for the first time, he had visited no wild country; his journeying led only to Paris, to Vienna. In due season he shot his fifty brace on somebody's grouse-moor, but the sport did not exhilarate him. (W 12)

Carnaby's nonchalant society wife, Sibyl, is "devoted to the life of cities," and the meretricious attractions they offer (see Huysen). This is a milieu of unnatural and effete display, "a draggled-tailed, novelette-reading feminine democracy" (W 18)⁹ in which the brash bachelor Harvey Rolfe imagines himself ensnared as "a married man, imprisoned with wife and children amid [. . .] leagues of dreary, inhospitable brick-work" (W 27). The novel's heroine, Alma Frothingham, who becomes Harvey's wife, is drawn into Sibyl Carnaby's metropolitan "circle of civilisation" (W 175).¹⁰ Torn between "yearnings for public triumphs" (W 117) as a professional violinist and the guilt-inducing strictures of traditional wifely duty ("She would be a good woman, rule her little house, bring up her child, and have no will but her husband's" (W 389), Alma undergoes moral and physical collapse.¹¹ Alma is prone to what Gissing presents as destruc-

considerations, the average male idiot—I speak medically. That state of things is traceable to the lack of education, in all senses of the word. Among our English emancipated there is a majority of admirable persons [. . .]. I am driven frantic by the crass imbecility of the typical woman. That type must disappear,—or at all events become altogether subordinate. And I believe that the only way of effecting this is to go through a period of what many people will call sexual anarchy" (*Letters* 5: 113).

⁹Thomas Hardy's letter to the Fawcett Society (30 November 1906), qtd. in Sumner 190.

¹⁰Gissing is still often mistakenly portrayed as a ferocious exponent of patriarchal power and privilege. Although 1893's novel *The Odd Women* is imbued with misogynistic sentiments, Gissing is also keenly alert to how the systematic subjugation of women is less shaped essentially by their sex than culturally by their gender, usually through woefully inadequate education. For a recent analysis of this issue, see Kramer 316-30.

¹¹Arnold Bennett, under his pseudonym "Barbara," reviewed *The Whirlpool* shortly after its publication. In a largely lukewarm and guarded review, he singled out the presentation of Alma for especial praise: "The character of Alma is possibly the best thing that Mr Gissing has done. I have seen Alma many times at St James Hall, at vegetarian restaurants, at schools of art [. . .]. There are hundreds of her in London—ineffectual women; women whose very birthright is an impulsive futility; fitful, feverish women. Mr Gissing exposes and expounds her with rare courage and lucidity" (8-9). See also Gosse 3-4. Gosse praised Gissing's incisive chronicle of Alma's deterioration.

¹²In "Women and the Disease of Civilisation," William Greenslade explores *The Whirlpool's* insistence on a "nervous pathology" of modern living (134-50). See also Elaine Showalter's analysis of the "insoluble conflict" between women's desire to "act as individuals and the internalized obligations to submit to the needs of the family and to conform to the model of self-sacrificing 'womanly' behavior" (144).

¹*The Whirlpool* opens in 1886, the year of J. A. Froude's *Oceana* in which he views the colonies as a means by which "the race might for ages renew its mighty youth" (9) and the year of the London Colonial and Indian Exhibition. In March 1895, Gissing read J. R. Seeley's *The Expansion of England*, which breezily anticipated the unification of "English blood" across the globe.

²When writing *The Whirlpool*, Gissing witnessed the squalid self-interest underlying this supposedly "high summer" of relentless Empire-building: Cecil Rhodes and the British South Africa Company had recently been scheming to "relieve" the Boer Republics of their newly discovered gold

tive emotionalism and she eventually dies from an overdose of a remedy for "fashionable disorder of the nerves."¹² The males, compelled by their insistent wives and daughters to participate in the tortuous financial exchanges of imperial London, endure similar psychological and physiological ailments that affect the women, such as Mrs. Leach, whose surname implies the rampant consumerism that results in her husband "working himself to death" so that his family can maintain their "genteel leisure" (W 174-5):¹³

Mrs. Leach [. . .] suffered from some obscure affection of the nerves, which throughout the whole of her married life had disabled her from paying any continuous regard to domestic affairs; this debility had now reached such a point that the unfortunate lady could do nothing but collapse in chairs and loll on sofas. (W 174)

Hugh Carnaby realizes with anguished helplessness that the "years of independence were past; somehow or other, he must make money" (W 56) so as to fund his own wife's conspicuous consumption in sybaritic high society: she "would not be without rings and bracelets" (W 33) (See Showalter and Federico 106-07). Ironically, it is Sibyl Carnaby, a tenacious woman "incapable of sentiment" (W 34) who succeeds in the "survival of the fittest" (W 16),¹⁴ because the metropolitan "whirl of fashion" not only nurtures and sustains, but also lavishly rewards this "most selfish of women" (W 34), a specialist in "base or paltry subterfuge" (W 388). That the egotistical Sibyl is impervious to the promptings of maternal sentiment is stressed by the manuscript version of *The Whirlpool* in a passage deleted from the published novel: "That she was childless seemed merely natural; it would have been difficult to think of Mrs Carnaby as a mother" (88). She knows that her marriage contract is founded upon scrupulously rehearsed artifice, adopting then discarding with spirited insouciance a succession of public or social "masks"—"playing the high part of cold and subtle hypocrisy" (W 339)—and her body another desirable commodity to be purchased by the highest bidder.¹⁵ Women such as Sibyl, "who had sold herself for money" (W 338), are better dissemblers and negotiators, more adroit in the daily manufacture of fraudulent appearances that is the precondition of a lucrative London existence, though it costs her husband immense reserves of physical capital.¹⁶ Failure to "compete" in a world where speculative finance has cor-

rupted the sanctities of domestic life results in, according to the eminent pathologist Clifford Albutt in 1895: "hysteria," "neurasthenia [. . .] fretfulness, [. . .] unrest due to living at high pressure" (241). However much Hugh Carnaby might consider himself a "strong man" (W 172) it takes all his resolve just to survive, let alone thrive, in "the whirl of the railway, the pelting of telegrams, the strife of business, the hunger for riches, the lust of vulgar minds for coarse and instant pleasures" (Allbutt 241).

The years of wandering had put [Hugh Carnaby] hopelessly out of touch with what Sibyl called society. Little as he understood about manufactures, or cared for details of commerce, he preferred to stay down at Coventry with his partner Mackintosh, living roughly, smoking his pipe and drinking his whisky in the company of men who had at least a savour of sturdy manhood. (W 172)

Immersion in large-scale foreign "speculations" and securities does not generate profit but rather scatters "wreck and ruin" (W 44), and exacts a terrible toll on Hugh Carnaby's "sturdy manhood": beneath his "eyes hung baggy flesh that gave him a bilious aspect, his cheeks were a little sunken, and the tone of his complexion had lost its healthy clearness" (W 209). Gissing hints that since the tawdry and enervating process of making money is enforced by unthinking female consumption, it is inherently feminizing, or at least saps the sexual "capital" of Carnaby's "manhood": "his days of sport were gone by; he was risking the remnant of his capital; and if it vanished—But of that possibility he would not speak, even with Harvey Rolfe" (W 172). Harvey Rolfe's acquaintance Abbott suffers from neuralgia which shows on his "pallid, drawn, all but cadaverous visage" (W 10); Cecil Morpew complains bitterly of "indifferent health" in London (W 90); and Rolfe succumbs not only to periodic "degeneracy of stomach and of brain" (W 232), but to the "intellectual disease of the time [. . .] he lost the power of mental concentration" and felt "the headache impression that he was going through a morbid experience" (W 355).

Hugh Carnaby's acute desire for an aggressively masculine field of action is thwarted not only by his society marriage to Sibyl, but by the insidious values of a dissolute metropolitan and suburban milieu that veils unimaginable "horrors" of emasculating ennui: "as he walked the streets of the neighbourhood, Harvey often wondered what

through continuous and often violent biological struggle. In "The Struggle for Existence in Human Society" (*Nineteenth Century*, 23 [February 1888], 161-80), Huxley challenged the simplistic view that man in society could fashion an ethical standpoint from the untrammelled "struggle for existence." Society, for Huxley, differed from "nature" in having a "definite moral object."

¹⁵See Sjöholm, Sloan, Selig, Partridge, Grylls.

¹⁶When Hugh Carnaby meets Mrs. Lant again by chance, she hints that Sibyl has secured a much-needed loan by sleeping once with Cyrus Redgrave, though the narrative seems to suggest this is malicious innuendo. Carnaby goes to Redgrave's suburban villa. Mistaking Alma's presence there for Sibyl's, and "maddened to the point of fatal violence" (W 344), he strikes the millionaire, killing him. Carnaby had stated earlier that "men must not quarrel; women did more than enough of that" (W 279); however the physical alternative to verbal quarrelling proves even more disastrous for Carnaby.

abnormalities [. . .] might be concealed behind the meaningless uniformity of these heavily respectable housefronts" (W 27).¹⁷ Carnaby, who "shows to far more advantage on a ship than in a drawing-room" (W 164; see Gattrell 67-82), believes that the lofty project of Empire exists beyond the myriad financial scandals of trust company culture and what H. G. Wells described as the "fatal excitement and extravagance of the social life of London."¹⁸

"Why didn't I follow Miles into the army? I think I was more cut out for that than for anything else. I often feel I should like to go to South Africa and get up a little war of my own.

Rolfe shouted with laughter.

"Not half a bad idea, and the easiest thing in the world, no doubt."

"Nigger-hunting; a superior big game."

"There's more than that to do in South Africa," said Harvey. "I was looking at a map in Stanford's window the other day, and it amused me. Who believes for a moment that England will remain satisfied with bits here and there? We have to swallow the whole, of course. We shall go on fighting and annexing, until—until the decline and fall of the British Empire. That hasn't begun yet. Some of us are so over-civilised that it makes a reaction of wholesome barbarism in the rest [. . .]

"You'd better not talk like that to Sibyl."

(W 16-17)

The Whirlpool satirizes Harvey Rolfe's smugly self-righteous assumption that Empire has no compromising connection whatsoever to the middle class financial rapacity and chicanery that Carnaby believes is synonymous with the pseudo-Bohemian metropolitan cliques in which their wives participate. That the "British Empire" should imply collusion between capitalist and nationalist interests, "exciting avarice" and "perturbing quiet industry with the passion of the gamester" (W 44) is conveniently glossed over by Rolfe's raucous, reactionary mood in which the "natural instinct" (W 19) of brutal subjugation is extolled.¹⁹ The extract typifies *The Whirlpool's* brooding obsession with the futility of finding an appropriate outlet for Carnaby's "latent energies and capabilities" (W 12), which remain untapped by bourgeois marriage. Although close proximity to London allows Harvey Rolfe access to the soothing confines of the gentleman's club—as Alma puts it, he turns "into a sort of bachelor again [. . .] quite in a boyish way" (W 168)—the range of its amusing diversions cannot console the outdoor-minded Carnaby,

oppressed by a lavishly furnished apartment cluttered with useless feminine possessions, making him "quarrelsome and wish he was on the other side of the world" with an "axe" in his "hand" (W 215).

Gissing measures against the overseas arena of imperialist ambition and images of chaotic metropolitan consumerism the concept of a rustic hinterland in which male energies can secure solace, stability and refreshment close to the rhythms governing seasonal change. In the description of Harvey Rolfe's friend Basil Morton, a flourishing corn merchant and paragon of the "country gentleman" moored in ancient traditions, Gissing seems to endorse the notion that the bucolic homestead should be the prime concern of women, though overseen and regulated by decisive masculine power, epitomized by Mrs. Morton's maxim that a married woman should be guided by her husband's wish. In Morton's Greystone home "Harvey Rolfe knew himself a welcome guest, and never had he been so glad as now to pass from the noisy world into the calm which always fell about him under his friend's roof" (W 304). This idyllic evocation of Greystone and its devoted domestic priestess, Mrs. Morton, the purpose of whose self-improvement is to serve men and the marriage relation, is at best only a static ideal that teeters on the brink of mannered artifice.²⁰

[Basil Morton's] house was spacious, well built, comfortable. The furniture, in great part, was the same his parents had used; solid mahogany, not so beautiful as furniture may be made, but serviceable, if need be, for another fifty years. He had a library of several thousand volumes, slowly and prudently collected, representing a liberal interest in all travail of the mind, and a special taste for the things of classical antiquity [. . .].

Mrs. Morton had the beauty of perfect health, of health mental and physical. To describe her face as homely was to pay it the highest compliment, for its smile was the true light of home, that never failed. [. . .] she conceived her duty as wife and mother after the old fashion [. . .]. She rose early; she slept early; and her day was full of manifold activity. (W 302)

Mrs. Morton is "an excellent housekeeper" (W 22), into whose "pure and healthy mind had never entered a thought at conflict with motherhood [. . .]. She would have felt it an impossible thing to abandon her children to the care of servants" (W 303).²¹ For Mrs. Morton the highest phase of motherhood is self-sacrificing love and embodies an active female citizenship of contribution.²² Significantly, and

¹²Alma's "nerves were so upset again that, when all was over, she had to keep her bed a day or two. At the sea-side she had generally slept pretty well, but now her insomnia returned, and once more she had recourse to the fashionable specific" (W 343). Gissing's depiction of the neurasthenic female trapped within the absurdly prescriptive ideologies of bourgeois respectability also invites comparison with Sue Bridehead's nervous disorder in *Jude the Obscure*. See Jurta, Dutta and Wilson.

¹³On the "female" pathology of nervous disintegration in relation to "aberrant sexuality" and nineteenth-century medical science see Russett, Rothfield, Nead, Mort, Vretos, and Larson.

¹⁴*The Whirlpool* not only suggests Harvey Rolfe's unhealthy fascination with social Darwinian fierceness but also shows the extent to which these ideas permeated middle-class culture, especially through the seminal scientific debate of the late 1880s and early 1890s involving, principally, the biologist T. H. Huxley and the social Darwinist philosopher Herbert Spencer, about the place of ethics in a society conceptualized as evolving

¹⁷See Tosh 176, on the tension between marriage and manly imperial activity.

¹⁸H. G. Wells first met Gissing in November 1896. A friendship quickly evolved which lasted until Gissing's death in 1903. See Wells's wide-ranging review of Gissing's fiction, "The Novels of Mr George Gissing" in *George Gissing and H. G. Wells* (245). Wells also mentions that *The Whirlpool* marks a new stage in Gissing's fiction as it focuses ever more anxiously on onerous responsibilities of "child-rearing" (244).

¹⁹This also becomes a key theme in Gissing's later anti-imperialist novel *The Crown of Life* (1899). See also *Manliness and Morality: Middle-class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*.

²⁰Gissing's presentation of Mrs. Morton has elicited much unsympathetic critical response: see Poole (203) and Linehan.

²¹The cloying sentimentality of these scenes involving Mrs. Morton evoke the numerous "motherhood" paintings that proliferated in the early years of the twentieth century, such as *Maternity* by Thomas B. Kennington (1856-1916) or *The First Born* by Frederick Elwell (1870-1958).

²²For Mrs. Morton motherhood is a moral responsibility and woman's first act of citizenship. Gissing transforms her into a faintly grotesque model of reproductive splendour: "[Mrs Morton's] breasts were the fountain of life; her babies clung to them, and grew large of limb. From her they learnt to speak; from her they learnt the names of trees and flowers and all things beautiful around them" (W 303).

against Carnaby's irrepressible yearnings for colonial adventure, "for holiday," the Morton family "never crossed the sea" (W 303). As the anonymous reviewer for the *Academy* noted, the Mortons are ensconced "away from the whirl and clash of city life and interests; in some peaceful, ancient town, the home of your forefathers, where you have lived from childhood, where you pursue a life of decent business, keep your mind open and alert, and have wife and children as rational as yourself." ²³

If Gissing's highly stylized vision of the Mortons' rustic tranquility hardly offers a credible alternative to the fevered, ceaseless flux of metropolitan experience, driven by the collective feminine drive towards commodity worship (James 15-25), then *The Whirlpool* considers overseas territory as a locus in which stifled male desires might find a productive outlet.²⁴ Before his marriage to Alma Frothingham, Harvey Rolfe revels in his solitary European wanderings, which afford ample opportunity for a gentleman's refined dilettante dabbling. Though before his own son Hughie is born, Harvey announces, with fierce gusto, a very different purpose for his offspring:

"If I had a son," pursued Harvey, smiling at the hypothesis, "I think I'd make a fighting man of him, or try to. At all events, he should go out somewhere, and beat the big British drum, one way or another. I believe it's our only hope. We're rotting at home—some of us sunk in barbarism, some coddling themselves in over-refinement. What's the use of preaching peace and civilisation, when we know that England's just beginning her big fight—the fight that will put all history into the shade! We have to lead the world; it's our destiny; and we must do it by breaking heads. That's the nature of the human animal, and will be for ages to come."

Carnaby nodded assent. (W 16)²⁵

The fact that Harvey smiles at this "hypothesis" may suggest a slyly debunking irony, even as he apparently endorses Empire as the means by which his friend Carnaby might "overcome his wife's pernicious influence" and "break away from a life of corrupting indolence, and somewhere beyond seas 'beat the British drum'—use his superabundant vitality as nature prompted" (W 44).

When Harvey Rolfe becomes a father, his child emerges as a pale, emaciated parody of Carnaby's "superabundant vitality." Rolfe, with magisterial dismissiveness, had earlier argued that "People talk such sentimental rubbish about children [. . .]. They're a burden, a hindrance, a perpetual source of worry and misery" (W 15). But Rolfe is shocked by his own tender feelings for his child, whose birth

counteracts the deadening disappointments of his married life:

Harvey liked to gaze long at the little face, puzzled by its frequent gravity [. . .]. How fresh and young, yet how wondrously old! Babble such as this fell from a child's lips thousands of years ago, in the morning of the world; it sounded on through the ages, infinitely reproduced; eternally a new beginning; the same music of earliest human speech, the same ripple of innocent laughter. [. . .] But he, listening, had not the merry, fearless pride of fathers in an earlier day. Upon him lay the burden of all time; he must needs ponder anxiously on his child's heritage, use his weary knowledge to cast the horoscope of this dawning life. (W 135)

Although Rolfe convinces himself that childrearing is a mode of "production" which transcends the crude and reductive economic logic of the marketplace, his son Hughie grows up with physical frailties reminiscent of those which blight the lives of other metropolitan males in *The Whirlpool*: "Seven years old now; slight, and with little or no colour in his cheeks; a wistful, timid smile on the too intelligent face." (W 417). This recalls Hardy's complex depiction of Arabella Donn's son "Little Father Time" in *Jude the Obscure*:

He was Age masquerading as Juvenility, and doing it so badly that his real self showed through crevices. A ground swell from ancient years of night seemed now and then to lift the child in this his morning-life, when his face took a back view over some great Atlantic of time, and appeared not to care about what it saw. (290)

It is as if Hardy needs to compensate for that absence of a long temporal perspective in *Jude* by introducing an agent of profound dislocation and erasure whose "face took a back view over some great Atlantic of time."²⁶ Both Hardy and Gissing suggest that the son bears the physical traces of spoiled or tainted fertility, in which the truly "natural" is perverted or debased by a culture hurtling towards spiritual suicide. Alma shows little serious interest in her first child, Hughie, suffers an induced miscarriage, and is prevented by part-inherited tendencies from sustaining her second child beyond two weeks of its life: "the child, a lamentable little mortal with a voice scarce louder than a kitten's, held its life on the frailest tenure" (W 360). This affords the starkest contrast to Mrs. Morton, Gissing's unattainable ideal of late-Victorian maternity and sharply debunks the narrator's contention in Grant Allen's *The Woman Who Did* (1895) that motherhood is the "full realization of woman's faculties, the

natural outlet for woman's wealth of emotion" (94). Harvey Rolfe's stymied "manly" vigor results in the "production" of an heir lacking the bodily advantages to cope with the cheerless struggle for survival intimated in the early chapters. It is no accident that when Harvey Rolfe becomes conscious of his growing attraction towards Alma, he expresses this feeling through the language of embattled or enslaved masculinity, an admission of weakness before the mysterious power of the female: "all his manhood [was] subdued by her scornful witchery" (W 95). Carnaby views his wife Sibyl as "an enchantress whose spell would not easily be broken," before whom he "bowed in delighted subservience" (W 12).²⁷ He undergoes symbolic emasculation when robbed by his housekeeper Mrs. Lunt, who steals the very trophies and trinkets that reassure him of his Empire-building potential: "silver-mounted pistols," "cheque-book" and "ibex-hoof made into a paperweight" (W 13).

After the catastrophic "Britannia" financial crash, ²⁸ Hugh Carnaby's "straitened circumstances" (W 12) necessitate immediate relocation, first to the comfortless grandeur of Queensland then to Honolulu, where he languishes among a rarefied emigré clique with whose luxurious ease he grows quickly impatient:

The tropics were not his favourite region, and those islands of the Pacific offered no scope for profitable energy; he did not want to climb volcanoes, still less to lounge beneath bananas and breadfruit-trees, however pleasant such an escape from civilisation might seem at the first glance. A year of marriage, of idleness amid amusements, luxuries, extravagances, for which he had no taste, was bearing its natural result in masculine restiveness. His robust physique and temper, essentially combative, demanded liberty under conditions of rude or violent life. (W 56)

On their return, Sibyl's continued profligacy having prevented any saving, Carnaby is obliged to enter a bicycle-manufacturing business. This trip abroad and subsequent misfortunes, such as incarceration in prison, greatly reduce Carnaby's imperious "manly" stature—literally, he becomes physically emaciated and is infantilized by his wife at opulent society gatherings, who refers to him as her "dear boy" (W 277). Through such scenes Gissing implies it is the intractable problems caused by modern metropolitan mores that preclude Carnaby from exercising his "natural" instincts of sexual competition and bloodthirsty bravado. "Hugh Carnaby" is the "man who had [. . .] laughed by the campfire or in the club smoking-room at many a Rabelaisian story and capped it with another" (W 300). But Carnaby's swaggering masculinity is better equipped to deal with "conditions of rude or violent life" (W 56) than profoundly misleading and slippery female discourses such as scurrilous gossip, whispering campaigns and malicious innuendo.

²⁷Carnaby's unshakeable conviction that his wife is "as pure and innocent as any woman living" is reminiscent of the male type delineated by George Egerton in her 1893 story, "A Cross Line": "his chivalrous, conservative devotion to the female idea he had created, blinds him, perhaps happily, to the problems of her complex nature" (21).

The dilution of "natural" masculine impulse also affects the career trajectory of another of Harvey Rolfe's friends, Cecil Morphew. Morphew's marriage to Henrietta Winter has been delayed for a decade because he is perceived as financially deficient by the fiancée's snobbish parents. The death of her father makes the marriage possible, but Henrietta cancels the engagement after discovering Morphew's illicit liaison early in their engagement with a working-class girl, which produced a child, now dead. Had it not been for a grievous shortage of funds (the constant thematic preoccupation of *The Whirlpool*) and the Winters' dogged defense of the dispiriting, mercenary tenets of genteel respectability, Morphew's sexual energies would not have been so disastrously misdirected. The shock of rejection nearly impels Morphew, arguably the most neurasthenic of Gissing's male characters, towards the "draught of oblivion" (W 414) implied by his surname. "There is a point in the life of every man with brains" he asserts earlier "when it becomes a possibility that he may kill himself" (W 329). It is the pallid, passionless Henrietta, however, who prematurely dies instead, and rather than channelling his urges harmfully inwards, Morphew emigrates to the more "manly" challenges of New Zealand.

The remorseless logic of economic survival which crushes Rolfe's cultural aspirations—he had once envisaged "long years of congenial fellowship, of bracing travel, of well-directed studiousness" (W 22)—provides a critical "lens" through which to assess *The Whirlpool*'s other besieged male figures: Bennet Frothingham, the fraudster who, true to literary type, commits suicide prior to exposure; Wager, who abandons his children when he loses his money in the Britannia crash; Leach, who is physically and emotionally drained by his wife's and daughters' careless spending; and Abbott, who is worked to death by his dependents. The composer Felix Dymes is unusual in securing a financially advantageous marriage to an eighteen-year old heiress, and he becomes affluent through astute exploitation of the mass market's inexhaustible appetite for his vulgar musical jingles.

Harvey Rolfe, in striking contrast to Dymes, believes he is marrying an equal partner in Alma Frothingham, though it is telling that not only Gissing's narrator but Alma herself wishes that Rolfe might act with more forthright "masculine decision, with the old-fashioned authority of husbands" (W 355-6), exerting the commanding physical superiority upon which his friend Carnaby prides himself: "once or twice she had thought (perhaps had hoped) that [Harvey] would lay down the law in masculine fashion; but no" (W 243). Alma "was at heart dissatisfied with the liberty, the independence, which her husband seemed so willing to allow her" (W 235). Rolfe, as a corrosively cynical, voyeuristic observer of, rather than active participant in, metropolitan life, ponders what it means to be a "well-bred Englishman" given his own deep uneasiness with "masculine decision" (W

²⁸The stock market, which breaks the emblematically named "Britannia Loan, Assurance, Investment, and Banking Company Limited" may be Gissing's pointed reference to the near collapse in 1890 of the Baring Brothers, a leading merchant bank.

²³The Mortons represent a sanctuary in a world where it seems "dangerous to take any step in any direction; there is nowhere any simplicity; it is as though a rational human existence were no longer possible" (see Anon. 516-17).

²⁴As Harvey Rolfe observes: "The future of England is beyond seas. I would have children taught all about the Colonies before bothering them with histories of Greece and Rome" (W 98).

²⁵This bullish and belligerent language provides a thought-provoking contrast to the prevailingly anti-imperialist tone of Gissing's next novel, *The Crown of Life*. (See also Hobsbawm).

²⁶Many scholars deplore the violent incongruity of this figure in a novel largely presented in terms of verisimilitude. He is at once "Arabella's boy" (realistic) and "Age masquerading as Juvenility" (symbolizing what is unknown to the conscious mind). But this disturbing collision of disparate literary modes expresses Hardy's pervasive sense of things falling apart, piquant wit sliding into torment, the very form of the novel itself giving way under pressure from modern expressionist techniques which deal in the abstract and the indeterminate.

382).²⁹ He wonders about the type of man into which his son Hughie might grow, given that "manly liberty" in *The Whirlpool* is inevitably dependent on substantial capital. Rolfe is obsessed by the "matter of education" (W 391), and even by the novel's close, though with "heart and mind set on grave, quiet, restful things" (W 388), he has not entirely disavowed the plan of instructing his timorous son to emulate the forceful Hugh Carnaby as a means of coping with an increasingly threatening and unpredictable world.³⁰

"The best kind of education would be that which hardened his skin and blunted his sympathies. What right have I to make him sensitive? The thing is, to get through life with as little suffering as possible. What monstrous folly to teach him to wince and cry out at the sufferings of other people! Won't he have enough of his own before he has done? Yet that's what we shall aim at—to cultivate his sympathetic emotions, so that the death of a bird shall make him sad, and the sight of human distress wring his heart. Real kindness would try to make of him a healthy ruffian, with just enough conscience to keep him from crime. [. . .] It's natural for a boy to be a good deal of a savage, but our civilisation is doing its best to change that." (W 342)

Harvey Rolfe finishes the novel as a lone parent in a world replete with feckless, vacillating and self-absorbed metropolitan mothers. He relocates from what he sees as a London poisoned by the permissive rich to Greystone, learning from the Mortons' superior domestic model of bucolic calm and ancestral pride. In *The Whirlpool's* crucial closing chapter, Rolfe and Basil Morton debate the verbal texture of Kipling's *Barrack-Room Ballads* (1892), the decade's most widely read volume of poetry.³¹ Gissing foresees the imminent emergence of an insatiable mass culture, epitomized by the dazzling commercial success of Kipling's poetry celebrating the ordinary English soldier "Tommy Atkins" and Hugh Carnaby's now-thriving bicycle-factory, producing hundreds of bicycles a week for an increasingly-leisured proletariat.³² Rolfe reacts to Kipling's work with narrow patriotic fervour and declares, "Here's the strong man made articulate [. . .]. It's the voice of the reaction.

Millions of men, natural men, revolting against the softness and sweetness of civilisation" (W 415). He apes the chauvinistic rhetoric of Empire, and ventriloquizes for the "average Englander": "By God! We are the British Empire, and we'll just show 'em what that means" (W 416). His nourishing delusions about "Empire" are peculiarly problematic in the light of Gissing's pointed rebuke to Wells that Rolfe has been redeemed and ennobled through the birth of his son: "the change wrought in his views & sentiments by the fact of his becoming a father."³³ But this disturbing finale implies that Harvey cannot transcend his earlier militant jingoism given his "too exclusive regard for self" and "an inaptitude for sympathetic emotion" (W 44). Rolfe's sense of ruling power, and the theatrical unreality of his cloistered environment, is anchored in the pose of aloof spectatorship, as if scrutinizing the hazardous undercurrents of everyday existence through the safety of a glass partition. Rolfe's bullish defense of Kipling's art is infected by weary resignation, even by a hint of existential emptiness, "[i]dleness—irresolution—the feeling that the best" of his life "is over" (W 316). It is a measure of *The Whirlpool's* sophisticated scepticism that it confronts the dislocating complexities of modernity without offering pious platitudes or the hard contours of a program to realize radical utopias.³⁴ Basil Morton's prediction is gloomy: "If the world at large would suddenly come round to a cultivation of the amiable virtues—well and good. But there's no hope of it" (W 319).³⁵ Harvey Rolfe views his civilization eagerly embracing outdoor pursuits such as bicycling so as to sublimate more antisocial drives:³⁶

"Mankind won't stand it much longer, this encroachment of the human spirit. See the spread of athletics. We must look to our physique, and make ourselves ready. Those Lancashire operatives, laming and killing each other at football, turning a game into a battle [. . .]. We may reasonably hope, old man, to see our boys blown into small bits by the explosive that hasn't got its name yet."

(W 449-50)

The closing chapters anticipate with grisly prescience how men like Hughie Rolfe will fare: "We shall fight like blazes

in the twentieth century" (W 19). The wish expressed in the opening extract that "the best type of conquering, civilising Briton" might cultivate "something more of repose, of self-possession, and a slightly more intellectual brow" is smothered by *The Whirlpool's* sobering and bitterly sardonic finale whose tone mirrors without ever resolving the intricate political and social ambiguities of *fin de siècle* Britain. With a tentative and watchful provisionality of utterance, Gissing dispenses with any neat formal or moral resolution. He shows little faith in realizing a more balanced, temperate masculinity which retreats neither towards the crippling isolation of bookish seclusion nor to the "brute savagery" (W 415) of herd-instinct. That the fragile and painfully nervous Hughie Rolfe might promise a harmonious embodiment of "manly" virtue in the near future seems unlikely.³⁷ "What sort of world will it be for [Hughie]?" Harvey asks (W 143). Twenty years after the publication of *The Whirlpool*, Gissing's elder son Walter, a blueprint for Hughie Rolfe, was killed, aged twenty-four, in the mass carnage of July 1916.

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²⁹Rolfe is capable of reproaching himself for being a habitual "looker-on," frozen in an attitude of cold, clinical detachment: "It occurred to him that it might be a refreshing and a salutary change if for once he found himself involved in the anxieties to which other men were subject" (W 44).

³⁰Basil Morton believes that "our little crabs must grow their hard shell or they've got no chance" (W 319). Rolfe has no lingering reservations however about the other boy for whose education he is responsible: Albert Wager, who "loathes everything but games and fighting" (W 390) is sent into the army.

³¹Gissing's views on Kipling's artistic achievement shifted during these years. When he first discovered *Barrack-Room Ballads* in May 1892, he described it as a "most remarkable book." (See Gissing's letter to Hertz, 20 May 1892 [Letters 6: 38]). After the publication of *The Whirlpool* Gissing felt that contemporary reviewers, including H. G. Wells, had wilfully misconstrued Harvey Rolfe's truculent relish for Kipling's poems. Gissing corrected Wells's review in a letter: "I never meant to suggest that Rolfe tended to the 'Barrack-Room' view of life. In all he says, he is simply expressing his hopeless recognition of facts which fill him with disgust."

³²It is interesting to compare this episode with H. G. Wells's novel *The*

Wheels of Chance, published the year before *The Whirlpool*, whose central protagonist Hoopdriver enthuses about two-wheeled travel and its beneficial effect on his quality of life.

³³Gissing to H. G. Wells, 9 August 1897, in *Letters* 6: 320.

³⁴See, however, Gissing's *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* for a more hopeful perspective towards the project of social amelioration.

³⁵Although Gissing's reactions to his offspring oscillated initially between apathy and concern, by a month after Walter's birth, and still more following the birth of a second son, Alfred, the welfare of his children was to become an overriding theme in Gissing's diary and letters. Gissing fretted continuously about his and Edith's credentials as responsible and caring parents, especially as tensions within their marriage became more pronounced. (See especially *Letters* 6.)

³⁶*The Whirlpool* was composed at the height of the cycling craze. The overwhelming demand for bicycles in this era (stimulated by the development of the pneumatic tyre by J. H. Dunlop in 1888) prompted large-scale speculative investment. H. G. Wells, who tried to teach Gissing to ride a bicycle, remembered a Gissing who "craved to laugh, jest, enjoy, stride along against the wind, shout, 'quaff mighty flagons'" (*Experiment* 2: 571-72).

³⁷John Sloan writes that *The Whirlpool* "stands in the end not as a register of a new knowledge and transformation [. . .]. Yet though Gissing's position within ideology may prevent him from revising his fictional method in a way that might satisfy the demand for moral and epistemological certainty,

it is thus very incapacity to reassure the reader which constitutes the effectiveness of his work. Indeed it is in this context that *The Whirlpool* stands as Gissing's last major work" (143-44).

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Anthony Trollope's *Lady Anna* and Shakespeare's *Othello*

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Anthony Trollope, indefatigable Victorian novelist, found time to read and annotate 257 early modern English plays, especially Ben Jonson's and Shakespeare's (Harvey 256; Epperly *Notes*; Hall 415-18). "It has been said that no English novel can be written without Shakespearian allusions," Ruth apRoberts has noted; "but in Trollope they are legion," she concludes (77). In his *Autobiography* (1883), Trollope confesses, "I have found my greatest pleasure in our old English dramatists,—not from any excessive love of their work . . . but from curiosity in searching their plots and examining their characters" (366-67). The latter part of this admission suggests that Trollope read Shakespeare and his contemporaries because they suggested how he might develop the narratives and personages of his rapidly written novels. In the case of *Lady Anna*, written in May and June 1871 during Trollope and his wife's eight-week voyage to Australia to visit their son Frederic (*Autobiography* 343, 346), Geoffrey Harvey has shown that Trollope's plot and characterization of a "rough-tongued tailor" (Thomas Thwaite) protecting a noble mother and daughter (Countess Lovel and Lady Anna), fallen on hard times through association with a cruel patriarch (old Lord Lovel), and spending all his savings in the process to pay their bills derive from the anonymous Elizabethan play, *The Weakest Goeth to the Wall* (c. 1599). Harvey has further shown that Trollope's representation of the courtroom trial in this novel in which Countess Lovel's virtue is challenged through the claim that her marriage is null and void because of a wicked husband's precontract with another woman owes much to the same scenario in John

Ford's Jacobean play *The Fancies Chaste and Noble* (1635-1636).¹

Neither Harvey nor any other commentator on *Lady Anna* has made a case for the importance of Shakespeare's *Othello* for Trollope's artistry in this novel.² And yet such a case can be made. On 30 June 1871, Trollope wrote this note on *Othello*: "The plot, performance, and language of this play are alike perfect. It is assuredly one of the grandest works of human genius. The manipulation of the character of Iago has perhaps in it as much of the cleverness of a plot,—as many foreseen consequences of each act and word, as anything in fiction, either in prose or poetry" (Epperly *Notes* 122). Since Trollope testifies that he was writing *Lady Anna* in May and June 1871, one concludes that he was likely reading *Othello* at the same time that he was constructing the narrative of this novel.³ William Coyle has noted that twice in *Lady Anna* Trollope borrows Brabantio's phrasing for the Venetians qualified to marry Desdemona: "curled darlings."⁴ Frederic, the young Earl of Lovel, is the direct and indirect referent of this phrase. Early in the novel, Lady Anna muses that, had she not promised to marry Daniel Thwaite, the tailor, "it would have been very sweet to love that young curled darling" Frederic (148). Later, her mother, Countess Lovel, who demands that her daughter marry Frederic, regrets that her daughter "had not been surrounded in her young days, as are those girls from whom the curled darlings are wont to choose their wives" (390). Consistent with the overtones of Shakespeare's phrase, Trollope repeatedly portrays Frederic as a "golden youth" (71), a

nobleman whose cheek is "ruddy," mouth "beautiful . . . with its pearl-white teeth," nostrils "noble [in their curve]," hand remarkable for "softness," and breath full of "sweetness" (108). When jealous Daniel Thwaite admits that Lord Lovel is "beautiful . . . with soft hands, and curled hair, and a sweet smell, and a bright colour, and a false heart" (123, my italics), Trollope plays a variation on the novel's repeated Shakespearean phrase "curled darling."

Trollope's evocation of Shakespeare's language equates Countess Lovel with Brabantio, her daughter with Desdemona, and the working-class artisan Daniel Thwaite with Othello. Before the reader rejects these incongruous equations, I want to describe Trollope's remarkable identification of English Daniel Thwaite as a figurative black man, a Negro. Ruth apRoberts has noted that Trollope's interest in Shakespeare and Jacobean drama stretches beyond plots to an "interest in moral ambiguities" and the various ways in which certain plays represent them (77). Just before he describes Thwaite's appearance, Trollope, in an apparently unrelated context, writes: "It was no part of the duty of the young Earl, or of those who acted for him, to defend the character of the old Earl [Countess Lovel's deceased, debauched husband]. To wash that blackamoor white, or even to make him whity-brown, was not necessary to anybody" (25). Frederic (and Trollope) of course are making a figurative statement, alluding to the old proverb that the blackamoor (here a degenerate English aristocrat) cannot be washed white. Within fourteen pages of this imagery, Trollope describes Lady Anna's lover and Lord Frederic's opposite: "Daniel Thwaite was a dark brown man, with no tinge of ruddiness about him, a thin spare man, almost swarthy, whose hands were as brown as a nut, and whose cheeks and forehead were brown" (38). Later, Trollope informs readers that "Daniel Thwaite was swarthy, hard-handed, black-bearded,—with a noble fire in his eyes, but with an innate coarseness about his mouth which betokened roughness as well as strength" (103). Thwaite is no longer "almost swarthy," but "swarthy."

By being "swarthy," dark brown Thwaite is essentially black. "Of a dark hue; black or blackish, dusky"; "'black,' 'dark,' malignant, dismal"—these are definitions of "swarthy" in *The Oxford English Dictionary*. In his perusal of Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Trollope

read that Proteus considers that his new love Silvia "[s]hows" his old love Julia "but a swarthy Ethiop" (2.6.26). At the end of the novel, when young Lord Lovel says of Daniel Thwaite, on the eve of Daniel's marriage to Lady Anna, "[W]e must make a gentleman of him," his Aunt Julia replies with reference to Thwaite, "My dear Frederic, you can never wash a blackamoor white" (492). When Frederic admonishes, "Let us try," Julia shakes her head and "mutter[s] to herself some further remark about negroes" (492-93).⁵ The English artisan Daniel Thwaite becomes a figurative black man in *Lady Anna* presumably because Shakespeare's *Othello* exerted a pull on Trollope in 1871, of such force that the play becomes a subtext in the novel. The benefit for Trollope's artistry in this case involves reinforcing the barrier of social class with the prejudice of race. By loving Daniel Thwaite and giving herself to him, Lady Anna seems to have crossed a forbidden Victorian racial as well as social class line. Trollope, by evoking elements of *Othello*, thus seems to make Lady Anna violate a Victorian racial taboo (although of course she actually doesn't), not simply a social class injunction. By this means, he raises the stakes in his novel, testing the limits of not only his characters' capacity for tolerance but also that of many of his middle-class English readers. Countess Lovel's progressively monomaniacal resolve that Lady Anna will never marry the low-born tailor to whom she has pledged her love seems even more terrible because it also appears a racial prejudice.

In his *Autobiography*, Trollope comments on the public's less-than-enthusiastic reception of *Lady Anna* in 1874: "[E]very body found fault with me for marrying her to the tailor. . . . The horror which was expressed to me at the evil thing I had done, in giving the girl to the tailor, was the strongest testimony I could receive of the merits of the story" (347). When Trollope's "ideal lawyer,"⁶ Sir William Patterson, the Solicitor-General, and young Lord Lovel gradually accept the prospect of Daniel Thwaite's and Lady Anna's marriage, they argue that one day the well-read, courageous Radical Thwaite might possibly attain the status of a gentleman, a member of Parliament (437, 489, 492, 500-01).⁷ Daniel Thwaite's political radicalism, according to Robert Tracy, is no categorical obstacle to this possibility.⁸ Trollope in essence washes the blackamoor white, suggesting

¹Trollope in the later *Marion Fay* (1876-1877) succinctly focuses the values of this dialogue when postal clerk George Roden imagines the obstacles to his marriage to Lady Frances Trafford: "The country was so constituted that he and these [aristocratic] Traffords were in truth of a different race,—as much so as the negro is different from the white man. The Post Office clerk may indeed possibly become a Duke; whereas the negro's skin cannot be washed white. But while he and Lady Frances were as they were, the distance between them was so great that no approach could be made between them without disruption" (53). Since *Othello* never materializes as a subtext for *Marion Fay* (i. e. George Roden never becomes a black man), this passage from the later novel is likely based on Trollope's recollection of certain sentences he wrote in *Lady Anna*.

²The phrase and argument for it are given by Tracy 142.

³Letwin claims, through citing Trollope's representations of gentleman status in a number of novels, that Patterson's and Lovel's argument is with few qualifications an authorial viewpoint (123-25). In *An Autobiography*, Trollope wrote: "It may be that the son of the butcher in the village shall become as well fitted for employments requiring gentle culture as the son of the parson. Such is often the case. When such is the case, no one has been more prone to give the butcher's son all the welcome he has merited than I myself; but the chances are greatly in favour of the parson's son. The gates

of the one class should be open to the other; but neither to one class or to the other can good be done by declaring that there are no gates, no barrier, no difference" (40).

⁴Robert Tracy has argued that in his depictions of Thomas Thwaite and his son Daniel, Trollope presents two kinds of Radicalism, an older, Romantic (early Wordsworthian) version in the father (of which he disapproves), and a contemporary brand, more thought out and clearly defined, in the son (of which with some qualifications he approves) (147-148). Tracy concludes: "Well read in political theory and in literature (he is able to bandy *Cymbeline* references with Southey and to discomfit the poet), chivalrous, intelligent, sure of his worth, Daniel is the [later] Wordsworthian and Jeffersonian ideal of the educated worker" (148). John Halperin's judgment that "all his life Trollope hated radicals" (20) is refuted simply by describing the novelist's positive characterization of the Radical Daniel Thwaite. Nevertheless, Arthur Pollard, has argued that Trollope's portraits of political Radicals in his novel are either theoretical (Luke Rowan) or incomplete (Ontario Muggs, Daniel Thwaite), in the sense that readers of Trollope don't see a Radical involved in the daily give and take of political life (148). Stephen Wall likewise complains that "[w]e do not see [Daniel Thwaite] in independent political activity deriving from a sense of social obligation" (309).

¹Harvey, "Trollope's Debt" 265; Harvey reprints his analysis of *Lady Anna* in *The Art of Anthony Trollope* (29-32).

²When *Othello* is mentioned at all during analyses of Trollope's work, the Moor is almost always invoked as a source for Louis Trevelyan's monomaniacal sexual jealousy in *He Knew He Was Right* (1869). The most comprehensive accounts of the presence of *Othello* in this novel are those of Edwards 121-23; Gattrell 95-98; and Epperly, *Patterns* 89-91.

³Hall notes that in 1871 Trollope read 34 early modern English plays "(including 28 of Shakespeare's aboard ship en route to Australia)" (415).

⁴(40); see *Othello* 1.2.68. While Coyle is correct in the number of times Trollope cites this phrase from *Othello* in *Lady Anna*, his listing of

Shakespearean phrases and utterances in Trollope's novels is incomplete. Coyle states that Trollope employs the phrase "curled darlings" in only one other novel besides *Lady Anna: The Prime Minister*. But a reading of *Rachel Ray* (1862) shows the phrase turning up in Luke Rowan's thought that he must "carry himself with these curled darlings of society if he found himself placed among them" (342). For Trollope's temperamental attraction to the phrase "curled darling," with reference to its application to Ferdinand Lopez in *The Prime Minister*, see Glendinning (29). In *An Autobiography*, Trollope characterizes the three "wicked boys" with whom he, an innocent, was severely punished for a "nameless horror" as "the curled darlings" of the private school in Sunbury (5-6).

indirectly through the subtext of *Othello* that one day black men might be gentlemen in England. That at least is the logic of his narrative, which can only be vaguely implied by Trollope.⁹ In keeping with this narrative logic, Daniel Thwaite possesses character traits that have counterparts in Shakespeare's Moor of Venice. His "nature [is] hot and his temper imperious" (218). Because he wants "to be free and bounteous to [Desdemona's] mind" (1.3.266), Othello urges the Duke of Venice and Senators to grant his wife's wish to accompany him to the Cyprus garrison. Likewise, Daniel Thwaite repeatedly tells Lady Anna, Countess Lovel, and others determined to break Lady's Anna's promise of marriage to him that she is free to marry either Lord Lovel, or no one, if she so desires (366,382-85). More important is the relevance of the debate in *Othello* over the "unnaturalness" of the Moor's and Desdemona's marriage for the status of Daniel Thwaite's and Lady Anna's betrothal in Trollope's novel.

In Shakespeare's tragedy, Brabantio believes that "[f]or nature so preposterously to err" in marriage choice, Othello must have bewitched Desdemona through witchcraft (1.3.61-65, esp. 63). In Brabantio's racist mind, female "perfection . . . err[s] / Against all rules of nature" because of the Moor's black practices (1.3.101-2). In a similar vein, Iago tells Roderigo that "very nature will instruct" Desdemona to reject Othello because he cannot reflect her "loveliness in favour, sympathy in years, manners and beauties" (2.1.226-33, esp. 226-28, 231-32)—because, in short, they are unnaturally matched. Shakespeare counterpoints these stereotypic beliefs with the beautiful complementarity of Desdemona's and Othello's refined love for one another: "She loved [him] for the dangers [he] had passed" in his terrific adventures; and he, who had never known the tender virtues, "loved her that she did pity them" (1.3.168-69). Othello's confidence in the naturalness of this love between opposites later proves no match for Iago's cunning suggestion that Cassio and Desdemona are committing adultery because he is the kind of man she should naturally have married. Iago insults not only Desdemona but also Othello, to his face, when he says of her,

Not to affect many proposed matches
Of her own clime, complexion and degree,
Whereto we see, in all things, nature tends—
Foh! one may smell in such a will most rank,
Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural.
(3.3.233-37)

Sadly, Othello himself has given Iago the opportunity for this demeaning portrait of Desdemona when, under the weight of Iago's innuendo, he said of her, "And yet how nature, erring from itself—" (3.3.231). Othello's personal tragedy proceeds from the conversion of his belief in the remarkable naturalness of Desdemona's love for him (and of his for her)

into the homicidal conviction that both are radically unnatural.

Invoking this dimension of *Othello* helps resolve the issue of whether Daniel Thwaite's and Lady Anna's betrothal is unnatural, as well as whether either or both of these characters have any insight into this matter. Even as Brabantio thinks that Desdemona will wed a Venetian "curled darling," Countess Lovel thinks that her daughter will love and marry Lord Frederic because her "rank is equal to his" and her "age . . . exactly suited" (82). "What could be more fitting?" (82), she exclaims. "It is natural," Serjeant Bluestone later tells Daniel Thwaite, that Lady Anna's "affections are fixed on her cousin," Frederic (361). Concerning her intention to wed the swarthy artisan Thwaite, Frederic says, "Such a marriage would be unnatural" (186). Mrs. Bluestone resolves not to tell her daughters of Lady Anna's affection for Thwaite, "lest the disgrace of so unnatural a partiality might shock their young minds" (230). With reference to complimentary remarks she once made of Thwaite, before she knew of her daughter's secret betrothal, Countess Lovel asks, "If I praise my horse or my dog, do I say that they are the same nature as myself?" (341). She implies that Lady Anna's marriage would be so unnatural that it could be called bestial. Emotionally divorcing herself from her daughter when it becomes clear that her child will never abandon Thwaite, Countess Lovel exclaims, "[G]o from me, thou ungrateful one, hard of heart, unnatural child, base, cruel, and polluted. Go from me, if it be possible, for ever!" (434). Given the protracted emotional and even physical sadism of the Countess's persecution of her daughter, readers gradually believe that these epithets apply more to the mother than the child.

In a strange way, the seeming unnaturalness of a mother's sadistic persecution of her daughter suggests that Lady Anna's affection for Daniel Thwaite and his for her, like Desdemona's and Othello's, might be natural. But if their mutual affection is natural, it is so in a sense different from that pertaining to Shakespeare's characters. Trollope in this novel never says or implies that Daniel Thwaite's and Lady Anna's love is naturally complementary in a way that resembles Othello's and Desdemona's. Not surprisingly, Daniel has a moment when he believes, like so many persons around Lady Anna, that it would be "natural that she should wish to be a Countess, and she should love a young lord who was gentle and beautiful" (366, my italics). Immediately, however, he dismisses this thought. "But then, again," he thinks, "it was most *unnatural*, bestial, and almost monstrous, that a girl should change her love for a man, going from one to another, simply because the latter man was gilt with gold, and decked with jewels, and sweet with perfume from a hairdresser's" (366, my italics). By having "black" Daniel Thwaite sharply focus in *Lady Anna* the question also posed about romantic love in *Othello*—Is it natural, or unnatural?—Trollope follows Shakespeare by making the

the implied tolerance of "black" Daniel Thwaite in *Lady Anna*. In this respect, the logic of his novel is aesthetic rather than categorically deductive, and it may not have been intended or fully under the author's control.

questioner the lover whose "race" precludes an easy answer.

What is the answer in the novel? At one point in the Countess's cruel treatment of her daughter, Trollope asserts that "[h]ad [she and her allies] confined themselves to the argument of present fitness, admitting the truth and honesty of [Daniel Thwaite],—and admitting also that his love for [Lady Anna] and hers for him had been the natural growth of the familiar friendship of their childhood and youth, their chance of moulding her to their purposes would have been better" (379). In this aside, Trollope suggests that Daniel's and Lady Anna's love, regardless of class differences and physical appearance, is natural because it is the result of the "natural growth" of a childhood friendship in which time spent playing and exploring the landscape of Nature bound the two together. On such a basis, the "truth and honesty" of Daniel Thwaite finds its reflection in the truth and honesty of Lady Anna. The freedom that Daniel gives to Lady Anna to choose to be true either to him or to another is part of the natural growth that Trollope mentions, if for no other reason than that the freedom of two childhood friends in playful experiences of all kinds draws them close to each other.

The adult in the novel who comes closest to understanding this reality is William Patterson, the Solicitor-General. At first, however, he adopts the viewpoint of Countess Lovel and other lawyers concerning Daniel's and Lady Anna's devotion to one another. Frederic, Lord Lovel, is Sir William's client in the legal matters surrounding Lady Anna's legitimacy and right to inherit old Lord Lovel's wealth. Sir William "did not think but what the girl and the girl's fortune would fall into the hands of his client. Human nature demanded that it should be so. That it should be as he wished it, was so absolutely consonant with all nature as he had known it, that he had preferred trusting to this result, in his client's behalf, to leaving the case in a jury's hands" (393). And yet Sir William learns that Daniel's and Lady Anna's mutual love is—to use Trollope's words for his thoughts—"consonant with all nature." Otherwise, Sir William would not later claim that Thwaite's self-administered education, his honesty and constancy, his capacity for leadership, all qualify him to be a gentleman—"Sir Daniel Thwaite" (437)—worthy of election as a Radical to Parliament (427-28,489).

Other episodes in *Othello* have counterparts in *Lady Anna*. Comparing them enriches the reader's interpretation of Trollope's narrative. The sea storm of act 2, scene 1 of *Othello* that separates the ships carrying Othello and Desdemona to Cyprus and threatens to sink them symbolically represents the social disjunction, the danger, that her marriage to the Moor entails. In this context, it is worth recalling that Trollope wrote *Lady Anna* during a sea journey to Australia. Lady Anna and Daniel Thwaite never venture onto the sea. But Trollope introduces into his novel the equi-

⁹Commentators on Lady Anna's leap across the Stryd have variously interpreted its symbolism. Robert Tracy claims that Lady Anna at first "sensibly refuses the traditional leap across" the gully because, in a Wordsworthian setting, Trollope wants to show that she is not a Romantic heroine, but a Victorian one (147). Stephen Wall, however, rejects the attempt to allegorize Lady Anna's jumping across the Stryd as representing "the opportunity of crossing the class divide" (307). I obviously disagree with this claim.

valent of this episode of Shakespeare's play, reproducing that scene's symbolic function but reversing its terms. Visiting Bolton Abbey on a steep wooded bank of the Wharfe river, Lady Anna and Frederic, during his courtship of her, encounter the Stryd, a narrow, deep gully five or six feet across with the black water of the river flowing swiftly in it. Young Lord Lovel urges her to follow him in leaping across the chasm where it is only three feet wide (155-56). After her protest and a long hesitation, Lady Anna shuts her eyes and leaps, striking her foot against the opposite ledge, spraining her ankle, before stumbling into Frederic's arms (156-57). Her injury thus seems related to the leap across class that would have to be made—at least in her opinion—for her to marry Lovel.¹⁰ A reader aware of the undercurrents of *Othello* in Trollope's novel might suppose that swarthy Daniel Thwaite rather than Lord Lovel might better suit the symbolic meaning of this episode. But by giving the Othello role, so to say, to Lovel, who incites the leap in this scenario, Trollope suggests that the real danger for Lady Anna is not the risky leap of marriage to the tailor Thwaite, but the leap to the curled darling that virtually everyone expects her to marry. For were she to make this leap, she would lose her self-respect—her own sense of integrity involved in keeping an old promise of betrothal honestly made.

An episode of *Othello* more relevant for *Lady Anna*, in this case the opening five pages of Chapter 41 (430-34), involves the appearance of Othello, holding a candle, in sleeping Desdemona's bedchamber, at the beginning of the scene in which he smothers her (5.2). In this intertextual situation, the Countess Lovel matches up with Othello rather than Brabantio. At this point late in the novel, her persecution of her daughter has reached a near-homicidal intensity. Enraged, she has exclaimed, "I would sooner see [my daughter] dead at my feet than know that she was [Daniel Thwaite's] wife;—ay, though I had stabbed her with my own hand!" (330).¹¹ Trollope builds suspense in this novel by having Countess Lovel later tell Lady Anna, "You shall never marry [Daniel Thwaite]; never. With my own hands I will kill him first;—or you" (386). And when feverish Lady Anna lies in bed for three days, Countess Lovel, "standing over her and looking at her" says to herself, "'Would it not be better that she should die?' . . . It would,—so thought the mother then—be better that she should die than get up to become the wife of Daniel Thwaite" (395).

Creeping into her daughter's bedroom, bringing a taper with her, and sitting down beside sleeping Lady Anna, Countess Lovel ruminates darkly that "it would be good that [her daughter] should be dead" (431). "Nothing but death could end" her own misery, she concludes (432). As is the case at the beginning of act 5, scene 2 of *Othello*, the sleeping woman over whom a figure with a candle revolves

¹¹In having Countess Lovel make this exclamation, Trollope may have been remembering certain phrasing of Shylock's in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*: "I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the ducats in her ear! Would she were hearsed at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin!" (3.2.83-85, my italics). Lady Anna not only corresponds in the Shakespeare canon to Brabantio but also to Shylock, who has lost a daughter through her love for an alien, who secretly marries her. The alien in this case is a gentile, a Christian, rather than a black man.

thoughts of murder awakens and receives a kiss from the watcher (5.2.19; 433). The appearance of the word "smothered" in the following passage suggests that *Othello* was in Trollope's mind when he composed this part of his novel: "Then [Countess Lovel] seized the girl in her embrace and nearly smothered her with kisses. 'My own, my darling, my beauty, my all; save your mother from worse than death, if you can;—if you can!'" (434). The smothering of Desdemona is evoked by Trollope to stress that he is writing a comedy not a tragedy. The Othello-figure does not kill by smothering the supposedly undutiful woman; instead this figure smothers her with kisses, desperately imploring this woman to save the other's life.

At the crucial moment in this episode, Countess Lovel, hovering over the object of her hatred, "[w]ith her eyes fixed on vacancy, revolving it in her mind . . . thought that she could kill herself;—but she knew that she could not kill her child" (432). By invoking a detailed tableau of *Othello*, Trollope implies that the events of his novel gather into the form of classical tragedy, apparently about to burst into life. But he suddenly aborts this expectation when Countess Lovel smothers Lady Anna with kisses rather than with a pillow. The glimpse of *Othello* seen in, or through, the narrative of *Lady Anna* by contrast informs Trollope's reader—and perhaps Trollope himself—of the kind of literature he or she is reading (and perhaps writing), and of the non-tragic ending that might be expected.¹² That Countess Lovel soon realizes she lacks the courage to kill herself reinforces these ideas, as does the reader's immediate realization that the gunshot wound is superficial that she later inflicts upon Daniel Thwaite. Thwaite's forgiveness of Countess Lovel, whereby he reduces her to submission and completes his mastery over her, seals his ascendancy at novel's end. This former tailor's emergence as a wealthy husband of Lady Anna, a likely candidate for Parliament and a gentleman's life, follows a conventional trajectory of comedy.¹³

And yet Trollope undercuts this feature of comedy, notably Greek New Comedy, by the kind of ambiguity that he presumably encountered in his reading of Shakespeare and other early modern English playwrights. The final sentence of *Lady Anna* suggests that Trollope was thinking of writing a sequel to this novel: "Of the further doings of Mr. Daniel Thwaite and his wife Lady Anna,—of how they travelled and saw many things; and how he became perhaps a wiser man,—the present writer may, he hopes, live to tell" (513). If Daniel is to fulfill Sir William's prediction that he will likely become a gentleman of Parliament, a counterpart perhaps to Phineas Finn of Trollope's *Palliser* novels, he must do so after a long voyage to and from the Antipodes. For a colony on one of the remote rocky islands southeast of New

Zealand is Daniel's and Lady Anna's destination after their marriage (510,512). Concerning the about-to-be-married couple, Trollope writes: "[a]s to any permanent mode of life no definite plan had yet been formed" (510). Daniel Thwaite and his bride will travel to a margin of the world, reversing the tragic journey of Othello from a margin of the Renaissance world to Venice, a supposed center of high civilization.

This association reminds us that Daniel Thwaite, despite his elevated status, is still swarthy, still dark—still a Moor of a kind. Trollope at the end of his novel subtly reminds his readers that the potential for stigmatized identity may keep Daniel Thwaite a denizen of the world's literal and figurative margins, even as it did in the case of Othello. Shakespeare's *Othello* has figured in *Lady Anna*'s beginning even as it does in its close. "Women have often been hardly used by men, but perhaps no harder usage, no fiercer cruelty was ever experienced by a woman than that which fell to the lot of Josephine Murray [Countess Lovel] from the hands of Earl Lovel, to whom she was married in the parish church of Applethwaite" (1). Reconsidering this opening sentence of Trollope's novel after finishing it, the reader aware of the importance of *Othello* for fully appreciating its artistry thinks of Trollope's prototype for his judgment: Desdemona, a woman more "hardly" used by her husband than even the Countess Lovel was by the debauched old earl.

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The Romantic and the Familiar: Third-Person Narration in Chapter 11 of *Bleak House*

David Paroissien

In April 1852 Richard Hengist Horne sought Dickens's advice about a preface he had written. Its object, Horne explained, was to provide a context in which to read a collection of minor poems he hoped to publish. Dickens wrote back assuring Horne that he had considered his remarks "very carefully." The contents of the preface, he thought, were "sound" in principle. But he cautioned Horne about its length. Reduce the preface of "its present amount" by five-sixths, Dickens counseled. The poems should speak for themselves. A man makes a weak case, he continued, "when he writes to explain his work." His writing "should explain itself; rest manfully and calmly on its knowledge of itself; and express whatever intention and purpose are in him." If the writing can't do this, Dickens maintained, "it is held (not unreasonably) to be a shortcoming" (*Letters* 6: 636). Sixteen months later, Dickens took his own advice. In five teasing paragraphs published in August 1853, he defended his treatment of the Court of Chancery, justified the fanciful nature of Krook's death, and reserved the final paragraph to comment in a single sentence on the art of the novel as a whole. "In *Bleak House*, I have purposely dwelt upon the romantic side of familiar things."

For elegance and aphoristic directness the last sentence of the preface has few rivals. Pairing "romance" and the "familiar" results in a binary description that goes to the heart of *Bleak House* and to the novel as a genre. One that famously resists exact definition, the novel at best may be characterized as a mongrel form capable of uniting opposing

strains, seemingly without limitation. It is, as Virginia Woolf stated, "this most pliable of all forms." Long or short, it can investigate a single human consciousness. Alternatively, it can survey an entire society in a panoramic sweep. *Bleak House* achieves both, uniting in a single work strengths conventionally associated with Samuel Richardson and with Henry Fielding. While Esther Summerson, the first person narrator, engages in writing to the moment, revealing a single consciousness in action, her third person counterpart stands back, adopting a posture both aloof and deeply committed. Each balances marvels with the mundane and provides a seesaw mixture of romantic idealism and streetwise social criticism. This double narrative remains one of *Bleak House*'s most original achievements. Depicting a common metropolitan setting, Dickens juxtaposes two kinds of seeing, the urgent self-scrutiny to which Esther submits herself in a finite quest to explore her own identity and the panoramic probing of the third person narrator, whose gaze falls across the infinity of London.

The oscillation between shifting perspectives also operates within a single chapter told by the third person narrator. Of particular interest for this short study is the novel's eleventh chapter. "Our Dear Brother" is the first of three that comprise the fourth monthly installment, two of which belong to the third person narrator and the third to Esther. The incidents in chapter 11 follow immediately on Talking-horn's hesitant entrance into the small, dark room occupied by Krook's lodger and the lawyer's discovery of a man lying

¹²Cf. the conclusion of Simon Gattrell that "[w]hat Trollope does [in *He Knew He Was Right*] with [the] *Othello* parallel is to show that his society was unheroic, that the tragic intensity, the immense nobility of the delusion that Shakespeare was able to create were not possible in Victorian England; and moreover, that though the evil created by jealousy . . . is no less an evil for being unheroic, society itself must take a proportion of the blame for the evil that is produced" (96-97). One could likewise argue that these are the effects of incorporating strands of *Othello* in *Lady Anna*.

¹³R. D. McMaster compares Sir William Patterson's role in the novel to "that of Prospero in *The Tempest* or . . . of the Duke in *Measure for*

Measure; an *architectus* as [Northrop] Frye would say, controlling a type of 'comic action established by Aristophanes.'" McMaster convincingly demonstrates that the "archetypal elements of Greek New Comedy as Frye describes them are strikingly present in *Lady Anna*" (128-29, esp. 128). To this account of the formal qualities of *Lady Anna*, James R. Kincaid adds this qualification—that Countess Lovel's playing out a tragic role in the novel "is like a Webster or Middleton character [out of a Jacobean tragedy] careering about in a drawing room comedy" (163). Kincaid judges that "the inflexible, tragic countess and the imaginatively comic Sir William Patterson. . . . divide the novel between them" (162).

on "a low bed" dressed in "a shirt and trousers with bare feet." The room is "Foul and filthy," as is the air, polluted with the odor of stale tobacco and heavy with the taint of opium (134; ch. 10).

"God save us!" exclaims Mr. Tulkinghorn, shortly after the narrative resumes in the next monthly number. "He's dead!" The lawyer's words, addressed to the landlord of the deceased, make explicit the intimations of death with which the previous chapter closed. Entering the lodger's room, Tulkinghorn had found himself in the dark when his candle went out and with a figure on the bed whose eyes seemed "surely open." The Coroner's Inquest, held "to inquire into the death of a certain man," serves as the anchor for the investigation that follows the discovery of the body in chapter 11. Recounting the legal proceedings, the narrator fuses heightened description, plainspoken dialogue and highly wrought commentary. In part comic, parodic, prophetic, and expressive, his words range from anger to sentiment and to subtly hinted erotic interest. The diction is equally complex, a fusion of Shakespeare, the Bible, *The Book of Common Prayer*, slang, colloquialism and nonsense. As the chapter unfolds, the principal motifs of *Bleak House* reappear. We witness the narrator's scorn for the blindness and incompetence of the law. We see his anger at the country's leaders, indifferent to matters of public health. We also discover his compassion for the victims of a harsh code of sexual morality that threatens both parents and their children. So to adapt the words of Little Swills, the comic vocalist who reenacts the inquest at the Sol's Arms, readers, "if you will permit me," let me begin. I shall start with the truth claims Dickens asserts as characteristic of his art and I shall provide "a short description of a scene of real life."

The introduction of the Coroner in chapter 11 highlights Dickens's use of "familiar things." The phrase signals an emphasis on verisimilitude, a determination to portray life with fidelity and without exaggeration. In this instance, the chapter features a coroner because coroners are required by a law dating back to the twelfth century to investigate the circumstances surrounding any sudden, unexplained or unnatural or violent death. As Dickens's official informs the assembled witnesses: "You are impanelled here, to inquire into the death of a certain man. Evidence will be given before you, as to the circumstances attending that death, and you will give your verdict according to the . . . evidence, and not according to anything else." Further telling details

reinforce the measured legal language.¹ The venue for the inquest is chosen in accordance with Victorian practice, which required investigations to be held as close as possible to the parish in which the death occurred. In the fictional case of the mysterious law copyist who died in Cook's Court, what better site than the "first-floor room at the Sol's Arms, where Harmonic Meetings" took place twice a week? Thus at "the appointed hour," the crown's chosen representative "is conducted by the beadle and the landlord to the Harmonic Meeting room."² This was a large area in an actual tavern, reputedly Dickens's model, near to Chichester Rents, on whose actual topography he based the location of the dead copyist's lodgings, the law stationer's shop, and the residence of Mr. Tulkinghorn in nearby Lincoln's Inn Fields (Shatto 59).

These details establish a realistic framework around which Dickens continues to expand the legal agenda established in the novel's opening chapter: an indictment of the abuses and delays for which Chancery had become synonymous. Correspondences hinted through allusive language broaden the satire as the narrator provides "but a glimpse" of the world of the coroner, whose manner is not so unlike that of his prestigious counterpart in chapter one, the first judge of the realm. While the homely Windsor chair and makeshift long table assigned to the coroner are no match for the dignified Hall occupied by the Lord High Chancellor at Lincoln's Inn, details provided by the narrator link the two sets of legal proceedings.

Isolation and remoteness characterize the presiding figures in both instances. The Lord Chancellor, for example, sees nothing but fog, and sits "softly fenced in with crimson cloth and curtains." The circumstances of a real coroner's working day deny him comparable luxury. Lacking an office from which to discharge their duties, coroners held inquests in rooms requisitioned for the occasion. Local pubs commonly served in that capacity. "The Coroner frequents more public-houses than any man alive," observes the narrator.³

This is a literal statement whose truth the narrator fuses with fictional details that reinforce the parallel between the humble officer originally the guardian of the pleas of the crown and the Lord High Chancellor, the highest legal officer of the realm. The coroner at the Sol's Arms sits in a haze of beer and tobacco smoke no less dense than the fog surrounding the head of the Lord Chancellor, comfortably installed in the Hall at Lincoln's Inn. Thus from inquests in raucous public

houses to proceedings conducted with dignity in the High Court, the legal challenge remains much the same. How can officials best dispense justice in the face of distractions and inefficient, self-serving attendants?⁴ Saluted by the sounds of skittles played on the ground attached to the Sol's Arms, the Coroner has to put up with interruptions—"skittles; they must be stopped, you know, beadle!"—he exclaims at the commencement of the inquest. "Silence there, will you!" barks the beadle on another occasion.⁵ The arrival of "a chubby little man in a large shirt-collar, with a moist eye, and inflamed nose" produces a round of whispers from among the friends of Little Swills. Explains the narrator: "It is considered not unlikely that he will get up an imitation of the Coroner, and make it the principal feature of the Harmonic Meeting in the evening." When darkness falls, the friends of Little Swills will rally round him in a show of support for his "first-rate talent."

Distractions and boredom are equally evident at Lincoln's Inn hall. So dreary is the business of Jarndyce and Jarndyce, when the case comes on "the short-hand writers, the reporters of the court, and the reporters of the newspapers, invariably decamp" (ch. 1). Not so "the two gentlemen not very neat about the cuffs and buttons" for whom the Beadle provides "a special little table near the coroner" in charge of the inquest into Nemo's death. As "the public chroniclers of such inquiries," journalists are specially accommodated in deference to the Beadle's vanity.⁶ He believes that if they are well treated, newspaper accounts of his behavior at the inquest will portray him in a favorable light.

When the coroner in chapter 11 sets to work, he has only an incompetent beadle to assist him and a policeman to keep order. And so with jurors sworn in and the inquest ready to open, he discharges the responsibilities of his office. The body must be viewed, testimony listened to and the jurymen instructed to issue a verdict. Arriving at a settlement proves equally frustrating for both legal officers. The confusing language of Anastasia Piper, a garrulous witness whose worthless and breathless testimony, "chiefly in parenthesis and without punctuation," dampens the pace of the inquest no less effectively than the word-splitting efforts of Mr. Chizzle and Mr. Mizzle in Lincoln's Inn Hall. Their "trickery, evasion, procrastination, spoliation" and all-purpose "botheration" create "a wall of words" incapable of penetration. Equally unhelpful are the slurred responses of

Mr. Tangle, reputedly the foremost authority of the day on Jarndyce and Jarndyce. Asked by the Chancellor if he has concluded his case, Mr. Tangle replies: "Mlud, no—variety of points—feel it my duty tsubmit—ludship." His response proves as helpful as Mrs. Piper's assertion that deceased's "air was feariocious" on account of which he constituted a danger to local children as someone likely to "take a pick-axe from his pocket and split Johnny's head," which he didn't, the witness never having seen "the Plaintive" with a pick-axe or even speak to a child, "(excepting the boy that sweeps the crossing down the lane over the way round the corner which if he was here would tell you that he had been seen a speaking to him frequent)."⁷

Reference to this boy "that sweeps the crossing" clears the ground for the exposure of another contemporary shortcoming of the law: the rejection of child witnesses by magistrates and coroners for "not understanding sufficiently the moral obligation of an oath." When Jo is brought forward for examination, the coroner dismisses him after putting him "through a few preliminary paces." The muddy, hoarse, ragged and ignorant boy in the dock knows that if he tells a lie "something wery bad" will happen to him, "and so he'll tell the truth." But Jo can't spell his name. He has never been to school. And he can't "exactly say what'll be done to him after he's dead."

"This won't do, gentlemen!" says the Coroner, with a melancholy shake of the head.

"Don't you think you can receive his evidence, sir?" asks an attentive Juryman.

"Out of the question," says the Coroner. "You have heard the boy. 'Can't exactly say' won't do, you know. We can't take that, in a Court of Justice, gentlemen. It's a terrible depravity. Put the boy aside."

Boy put aside; to the great edification of the audience;—especially of Little Swills, the Comic Vocalist. (ch. 11)

Scholars have convincingly documented Dickens's use of the dialogue between an alderman and a boy "who appeared about 14 years of age" as the probable source for the exchange between Jo and the Coroner. This encounter, widely reported in the press, and later reproduced in Dickens's own *Household Narrative of Current Events*, occurred on 8 January 1850 in London's Guildhall when "A boy

(Letters 12: 91).

¹Compare the language in which actual instructions were typically given. "You shall diligently inquire and true presentment make of all such matters and things as shall be here given you in charge . . . touching the death of A. B. now lying dead, of whose body you shall have full view; you shall present no man for hatred, malice, or ill will, nor spare any through fear, favour, or affection, but a true verdict shall give according to the evidence, and the best of your skill and knowledge. So help you God. (*Kiss the book*)." (Qtd. in Grindon [1822], 169; see also Forbes [1978], 3.)

²Inquests required a public room large enough to accommodate the coroner, a clerk, jurymen, witnesses, parish officials and spectators. Church vestry rooms were often pressed into service, as were workhouse halls, and, "beginning in 1824 there is evidence that on occasions a public house provided the necessary place of assembly" (Forbes 10). Proximity was of course important given the number of people involved and the need to

examine the body, "minutely and carefully," and then return to the venue in order to hear the evidence and examine the assembled witnesses (Grindon 169).

³W. H. Wills's 1850 contribution to *Household Words* aired concerns Dickens works into this chapter. For example, Wills comments how the "abatement" of the coroner's office occurs daily "without exciting special wonder." Pomp and circumstance characterize the law's majesty "at Westminster," while subordinate officers of the realm, like coroners, "habitually preside at houses of public entertainment." Bring actions related to property or debt and the cases are tried "in an imposing manner in a spacious edifice, and with only too great excess of formality." Attend those concerning "the sacrifice of mere human life," and the law's representatives deem "the worst inn's room" good enough. Clearly Dickens was familiar with Wills's investigation. Further instances of correspondence will be noted as they occur.

⁴Forbes suggests that the years 1788-1829 represented "the nadir of the coroner's system in England and Wales." Coroners lacked professional qualifications; they were often at odds with JPs, and the regulations for the disposal of dead bodies were lax owing to the fact that medical witnesses at inquests were not paid. Their standing improved under the 1836 statute (6 & 7 Will. 4, c. 89) and was further helped by the Registration of Births and Deaths Act of 1837, which introduced tighter regulations for the disposal of the dead. Their conditions further improved in 1843 and then in 1860, when coroners were freed from the influence of JPs and provided with a system for payment (Forbes 3).

⁵Interruptions during the Inquest were not uncommon. Wills writes: "Interruptions—the door being opened with a scream from a female voice shouting, 'please, sir, the beadle's wanted'—threw over the whole affair the air of an ill-played farce" (112). Our wish, Wills added, "is to point out the exceeding looseness, informality, and difficulty of ensuring sound judgment which system occasions." Held in pubs, as was often the case, inquests

were conducted "amidst several implements of conviviality, the odour of gin and the smell of tobacco-smoke" (110).

⁶Wills notes that reporters attended at the pleasure of the coroner. He could, if he chose to, exclude the press and conduct the inquest in secret. This rarely happened; it was more common for the "penny-a-line" reporters to profit from attendance at inquests by taking bribes "from relatives and parties interested in the deceased to 'suppress' their reports." "This generally happens in cases which from their having no public interest whatsoever would not, under any circumstances, be admitted into the crowded columns of the journals" (112).

⁷Wills comments how a lawyer "would have felt especially fidgety," had he attended an inquest and observed how facts pertinent to the case were elicited. "The questions were put in an undecided rambling manner, and were so interrupted by half-mad remarks from the jurors and other parties in the room, that it was a wonder how the report of the proceedings, which appeared in the morning newspapers, could have been so cleverly cleared as it was of the chaff from which it was winnowed" (112).

named George Ruby" was put in the witness box and questioned.⁸ The issue of derivation aside, the relevant matter centers on Dickens's adaptation of the incident to reveal shortcomings of the law in *Bleak House*.

What makes a credible child-witness, Dickens wondered? How should magistrates determine a child's ability to provide reliable testimony in a criminal case? Their one recourse, Victorian authorities seemed to agree, was to insist on the child's ability to demonstrate religious knowledge and familiarity with the Catechism. Evidence under oath had no validity from anyone who didn't attend church, pray, and prove capable of answering questions about the existence "of an Almighty Creator." To show ignorance on such issues disqualified children from taking the stand as a witness.

However, the "rejected witness" is not without interest to the novel's shrewd lawyer. Mr. Tulkinghorn quietly observes this exchange and resolves to question the boy. He would like to learn more about the deceased man, where he came from and any details that might afford "some clue" to connections Mr. Tulkinghorn seeks to establish between him and Lady Dedlock. We overhear Jo's brief answers as the lawyer departs, leaving the boy standing alone "wiping his eyes with his wretched sleeve." The pathos of the scene registers unobtrusively, reinforced by words that become a refrain: "He wos wery good to me, he wos!"

Attention now shifts to the sequel of the inquest, as the "familiar" content scene is replayed in fanciful terms. Several of the locals rally round Little Swills in "the zenith of the evening." We are told how the entertainer describes the Inquest, "with recreative intervals of piano-forte accompaniment to the refrain-with his (the Coroner's) tippy tol li doll, tippy tol lo doll, tippy tol li Dol, Dee!" until finally the jangling piano ceases and Swills and his Harmonic friends retire to bed. Left in peace, the narrator's attention reverts to the lonely figure of Krook's lodger, laid out in preparation for burial the next day and watched only by "the gaunt eyes in the shutters through some quiet hours of night." Abandoned by all, the dead man has only the narrator to summon absent friends and perform a vigil that might have been his under different circumstances. As the dark young surgeon who had previously attended the deceased notes, despite his obviously wretched state, "he must have been a good figure when a youth, and I dare say good-looking." This said, not unfeelingly, he then adds: "I recollect once thinking there was something in his manner, uncouth as it was, that denoted a fall in life" (ch. 11).

We receive little information about the dead copyist, but hints supplied by the narrator offer details crucial to the secrets of the plot. The lines that follow, as Grahame Smith has noted, "require a delicate adjustment of our critical responses" (59) as the narrator conjectures responses typical of mothers and lovers the world over if they were to peer into the future. What "an impossibility the vision would

have seemed," exclaims the narrator, if the mother at whose breast the deceased had nestled, as a child, "with eyes upraised to her loving face," could have seen "this forlorn man lying here." And how equally impossible would it have seemed for the lover of the same figure—a woman who "in brighter days" had held him "in her heart" and who had reciprocated "the now-extinguished fire" that had burned in him for her.

The language remains ambiguous. But reference to fires point to the erotic secrets Lady Dedlock has sought to erase from her life. Had those "brighter days" prevailed, she would have married her lover and so lived happily as a mother and a wife. Bearing a child out of wedlock, she lives otherwise, continuing a tormented existence at odds with her nature. For make no mistake, this striking woman has feeling and passion to match her beauty, a point made obliquely by the narrator in the very first words chosen to describe her. Twenty years the junior of her devoted husband, who married her "for love," Honoria Barbary ambitiously resolved to cover her checkered past. Marriage to Sir Leicester comes at a price, a partnership without passion, a tragic miscalculation contrary to her emotional needs. This "truth" about Lady Dedlock appears subtly disguised in a coarse appraisal by the Honorable Bob Staples, a man whose eye for horseflesh extends to a lascivious appraisal of beautiful women:

Her figure is elegant, and has the effect of being tall. Not that she is so, but that "the most is made", as the Honorable Bob Staples has frequently asserted upon oath, "of all her points." The same authority observes, that she is perfectly got up; and remarks, in commendation of her hair especially, that she is the best-groomed woman in the whole stud. (ch. 2)

Suited to breeding, as the reference to "points" and "stud" makes clear, what could be more tragic than twenty years of marriage to a man with no fire in his loins? Had Sir Leicester been younger and with virility equal to his wife's capacity for childbearing, the Deadlocks would have produced a whole new line. Mismatched, boredom, misery and guilt are the only progeny this wretchedly unhappy woman bears, a poignant fate hinted by the narrator. "She has her beauty still, and, if it be not in its heyday, it is not yet in its autumn." This discriminating verdict suggests an appealing middle ground, of a beauty that retains within its freshness hints of its decline, a state suggestive of the ambiguity represented by Keats in his famous ode.

The ability to combine crude stable talk with an entirely different vocabulary characterizes the art of the third person narrator throughout the chapter. Comic and serious, he also fuses wit with prophecy in a succession of rapid shifts. A single illustration from the inquest chapter deserves comment.

the competence of child witnesses forms a major part of the essay in *The Examiner* and commentary in subsequent issues of *The Household Narrative*. See "The Three Kingdoms," 1-30 January 1850, and 26 February-27 March 1852, p. 64.

Meditative musing about figures absent from the dead man's "last earthly habitation" gives way to anger when dawn breaks. Comes daylight, comes morning, comes noon and "the body of our dear brother here departed" is born off for a pauper's burial. The emphatic repetitions supplemented with phrases from "The Order for The Burial of the Dead" heighten the narrator's mood. In a savage inversion of Christian post-resurrectional belief that the body "is sown in corruption" and then raised up "in incorruption," the narrator rewrites Pauline doctrine about the fate of the soul after death:

With houses looking on, on every side, save where a reeking little tunnel of a court gives access to the iron gate—with every villainy of life in action close on death, and every poisonous element of death in action close on life—here, they lower our dear brother down a foot or two: here, sow him in corruption, to be raised in corruption: an avenging ghost at many a sick-bedside: a shameful testimony to future ages, how civilisation and barbarism walked this boastful island together

These angry words denounce government leaders indifferent to burial practices gravely adverse to public health. They also challenge St. Paul's assertion in his first epistle to the Corinthians that the spiritual seed sown in man does not come to life unless it first dies and what you sow is not the body that shall be, but a naked grain, perhaps of wheat or some other kind (1 Cor. 15: 37-44). Ignoring the nuances of metaphysical language, Dickens's narrator emphasizes instead the physical dangers present in London's overcrowded burial grounds. Inter the dead in "hemmed-in churchyards, pestiferous and obscene, whence malignant diseases are communicated to the bodies of our dear brothers and sisters who have not departed," continue adding corpses in such profusion as to exceed the rate of decomposition of those present, cram coffins one against another, leaving their contents easily exposed for sale to medical students studying anatomy, and you have a recipe for disaster. "Come night, come darkness," intones the narrator, borrowing from Macbeth's invocation to "seeling night" to "Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day" (*Macbeth* 3.2.46-7). "Come struggling lights into the windows," "Come, flame of gas": "It is well that you should call out to every passer-by, 'Look Here!'"

Nobody does, except the "rejected witness." Jo shuffles once again to the burial ground, grasps the bars of the iron gate, pauses for a while and then offers the only token of devotion within his means. Holding an old broom, he "softly sweeps the step, and makes the archway clean, muttering his refrain, 'He wos wery good to me, he wos!'" A purely fictive figure thus delivers a fitting oration the official world would deny the dead, even as its parish and local representatives buried bodies every day in metropolitan graveyards such as the real model, which supplied literal details for this fanciful scene.⁹ As the boy departs, the nar-

⁹The burial ground of St. Martin's-in-the-Field, at the corner of Drury Lane and Russell Street supplied the external details Dickens incorporated into his

rator closes the chapter with a final apostrophe to highlight its principal motifs:

Jo, is it thou? Well, well! Though a rejected witness, who 'can't exactly say' what will be done to him [the copyist] in greater hands than men's, thou art not quite in outer darkness. There is something like a distant ray of light in thy muttered reason for this:
"He was wery good to me, he wos!"

Chapter 11 is fully representative of the dualities that characterize both the voice of the third person narrator and the novel as a whole. Packed with topical issues, *Bleak House* remains a veritable catalogue of virtually every "familiar" issue in the public domain at the time of its composition. But was life in mid-nineteenth century England really like this, readers might exclaim. Claiming the right to manage his atmospherical medium, Dickens both mellows and brings out its lights in order to deepen and enrich the shadows of the picture he presents. The phrasing comes from Nathaniel Hawthorne, whose Preface to *The House of Seven Gables* (1851) describes in several paragraphs a literary agenda Dickens reduced in his to a single sentence. Professing to write a novel, Hawthorne argues that the author presumes "to aim at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course on man's existence." Professing to write a Romance, he might justly claim "a right to present that truth under circumstances, to a great extent," of his own choosing or creation. By managing the "atmospherical medium, mellowing the lights," and deepening and enriching the shadows, one can also mingle the marvelous and the mundane. In *Bleak House*, Dickens convincingly accomplished both.

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description in the novel. See his letter to a correspondent 4 April 1868

⁸The case of George Ruby, the reputed model for Jo, was first reported in *The Examiner* on 12 January 1850 and then later incorporated into the January issue of the *Household Narrative of Current Events*, a monthly supplement to *Household Words*. Full details of the pertinent scholarship are summarized by Shatto (111-12). Discussion of the means of ascertaining

Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, Section 123, and the Submarine Forest on the Lincolnshire Coast

Patrick Scott

Among the most heavily-annotated passages in Tennyson's *In Memoriam* has been the opening of section 123:

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
There where the long street roars, hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

(*Poems* 2: 442)

While tree and street both carry symbolic resonance from elsewhere in the poem (e.g. in sections 7, 39, 119), the primary reference here has long been made to early Victorian geological discourse. Both Christopher Ricks, in his *Longmans/California* edition, and Susan Shatto and Marian Shaw, in their *Clarendon* edition, follow the lead of E. B. Mattes and Walker Gibson in linking the lines to a passage in Sir Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1830):

How constant an interchange of sea and land is taking place on the face of our globe. In the Mediterranean alone, many flourishing inland towns, and a still greater number of ports, now stand where the sea rolled its waves since the era when civilized nations first grew up in Europe. (Lyell I: 255; cf. Mattes 61).

More recently, Michael Tomko has drawn attention also to Lyell's discussion of erosion around the church at Reculver, on the Kent coast (Lyell I: 275; Tomko 116 and 133). This scientific background is of course not the only possible reading-context. Against the common scientific focus may be juxtaposed A. C. Bradley's biblical parallel from Job 14.11, 18-19, anticipating the closer biblical reference, to Isaiah 64.1, in Tennyson's next stanza: "Oh that . . . the mountains might flow down at thy presence" (Bradley 227). A more literary perspective on the poem might choose to emphasize parallels from Shakespeare (Bradley, again), Shelley's *Hellas* (Churton Collins 131), or Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Shatto and Shaw 282).

However, for Tennyson himself there may have been in these lines an additional remembrance of a more experiential, specific and local nature. Just such an interchange of sea and land had taken place on Tennyson's own Lincolnshire coastline. The general importance of the coast for Tennyson's poetry has been discussed by R. B. Martin, who writes that "the surf and sand of Mablethorpe, where he had paddled as a barelegged boy, remained his prototype for the primeval contest for boundary between sea and land" (22-23). But

Mablethorpe showed the young Tennyson much more specific and concrete evidence of these shifting boundaries. Great islands of trees long submerged by the ocean but visible at low tide survived into his youth, and the oral history of the region still attested to the sea's displacement of human settlement. The submerged debris from this changed coastline, surviving all along the north Lincolnshire coast but centering on Sutton-in-the-Marsh, was known as the "submarine forest." Early nineteenth-century discussions show, not only significant contemporary scientific interest, but also specific details that cross-connect to the imagery in other Lincolnshire passages in Tennyson's poem.

The most widely-disseminated contemporary description of the submarine forest occurs in the successive editions of William White's Lincolnshire *Directory*. In his opening general chapter, White notes that, for a long stretch of Lincolnshire coast, "the land formerly extended several miles further into the sea than it does at present," and that the remains of a submerged forest "are visible, during the low ebbs of the neap tides along the whole coast from Skegness to Grimsby, especially at Addlethorpe and Mablethorpe," but he also notes that "whilst the sea is encroaching, on some parts of the coast, it is receding from other parts" (43). Later, in the gazeteer entry for the village of Sutton-in-the-Marsh, White notes that "a great part of this parish, with its original church, is said to have been washed away by the sea some centuries ago"; at the lowest tides, the visitor to Sutton could see uncovered "a great number of islets, chiefly composed of decayed trees" (509).

White refers his readers (rather obliquely) for further information on the submarine forest to a scientific report published in the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society in 1799, and largely reprinted in the more widely-available *Annual Register* for the same year.¹ The report's author was a liberal Portuguese scientist, the Abbe Joseph Correa da Serra, then living in political exile in London, who had visited the Lincolnshire coast with an influential local landowner, Sir Joseph Banks. Banks, longtime president of the Royal Society, had an estate at Revesby, near Horncastle, only a few miles from the Tennyson home in Somersby. In September 1796, Correa da Serra had visited Banks at Revesby, and the two had gone over to Sutton to examine the mysterious islets. They had timed their visit to coincide with the equinoctial full moon, and with the help of local fishermen had been able to land on and examine one of the larger islets. These islets were made up of the "trees, trunks, branches, and leaves" of trees, trapped in a kind of greasy

clay (Correa 146). Some of the trees still stood upright on great knots of exposed root, while the majority were fallen and scattered. The larger islands measured about thirty yards by twenty-five, with deep channels cut by the tides between each island; the whole submarine forest reached about twelve miles along the coast and went about a mile out into the North Sea.

Older maps had marked these islets as "clay huts," from which the small village of Huttoft had been named, but Correa identified the islands as an exposed and eroded portion of a huge clay-forest geological stratum stretching far inland from the Lincolnshire coast, and he went on to ask why and when this section of the coastline had shifted below sea-level. Among the parallels that Correa discussed (153) is the changing Mediterranean sea-level at the Nile delta, near Alexandria, the instance that Lyell also discusses in the passage more usually taken as Tennyson's source. Correa concluded that the forest had been covered in clay at a relatively early period, thus initially preserving the tree trunks and even individual leaves, but that "the inroad of the sea which uncovered the decayed trees" was "comparatively recent" (155). Major landscape changes had therefore occurred within a human time-scale.

Most interesting, perhaps, from the Tennyson perspective, is Correa da Serra's acceptance of the local oral stories about the submarine forest, as these are what Tennyson himself would have heard in his youth:

The people of the country believe, that their parish church once stood on the spot where the islets now are, and was submerged by the inroads of the sea; that, at very low water, their ancestors could even discern its ruins; that their present church was built to supply the place of that which the waves washed away; and that even their present clock belonged to the old church. So many concomitant though weak testimonies, incline me to believe their report (156).

Churches, churchyards, even the entangling roots of the churchyard trees, are among the recurrent images of *In Memoriam* (e.g. sections 2, 39). Here perhaps, in the visual example of a church and churchyard erased by natural change, is one of the imaginative sources for the poem's extraordinary intermixture of the personal, the religious and the scientific.

The published descriptions by White and Correa give us access to contemporary knowledge about the submarine forest and Lyell also noted the phenomenon of submarine forests off the east coast (Lyell 1: 270 and 2: 268), but Tennyson himself was not of course dependent on such print sources. The Lincolnshire coast around Sutton and Mablethorpe was well known to him at first hand. His childhood play on the broad beach is recorded in the poem Hallam Tennyson later titled "Mablethorpe":

Here often when a child I lay reclined:
I took delight in this fair strand and free;
Here stood the infant Ilion of the mind,
And here the Grecian ships all seem'd to be
(*Poems* 1: 541).

In the eighteen-tens and twenties, Mablethorpe and Sutton were a favorite destination for day-trips by parties of Louth schoolboys, as a contemporary Latin school-exercise by James Calthrop attests.² Hallam Tennyson records that Tennyson and his brother Charles had celebrated the publication in 1827 of *Poems by Two Brothers* by hiring a carriage to drive over the wolds to Mablethorpe, shouting their poems aloud to share "their triumph with the wind and waves" (1: 23; cf. Rawnsley 229). A Lincolnshire historian, the late Christopher Sturman, has suggested that Tennyson's early poem "The Kraken" was sparked by the beaching of a forty-foot whale on the same Lincolnshire coast in August 1825 (12-13).

Tennyson continued to visit Mablethorpe in the eighteen thirties and early eighteen forties, as *In Memoriam* was taking shape, especially in periods of emotional crisis.³ As Philip Collins has pointed out, his attitude towards the Lincolnshire coast became progressively more ambivalent (14-16), part of that broader ambivalence about his Lincolnshire roots that is one of Tennyson's major themes of *In Memoriam* (Scott 45,48). The one-stanza published text of his Mablethorpe poem expresses this change ("here again I come, and only find/ . . . dim shores, dense rains, and heavy-clouded sea!"), as does his comment to his Aunt Russell in 1831 putting down Mablethorpe as "a miserable bathing-place on our flat Lincolnshire coast" (*Letters* 1: 88). The fuller manuscript text of the poem, however, circles back in its second stanza in an *In Memoriam*-like resistance to change:

Yet though perchance no tract of earth have more
Unlikeness to the fair Ionian plain,
I love the place that I have loved before,
I love the rolling cloud, the flying rain,
The brown sea lapsing back with sullen roar . . . ,
The phantom circle of the moaning main.
(*Poems* 1: 542n)

There is, then, abundant evidence for Tennyson's continuing awareness of the Lincolnshire coast near Correa's "submarine forest" during the years he was writing *In Memoriam*. Unlike the passages from Lyell's *Principles* or the various biblical, classical and other literary parallels, so specifically local a Lincolnshire reference could hardly be part of the contemporary public meaning or resonance of Tennyson's poem. But the local Lincolnshire coastal changes, the tangled roots of the exposed islets, and the vanished churchyard at Sutton, may well have prepared Tennyson for his response to Lyell's new geological ideas.

¹I am indebted to Carol Winberry for helping me track down Correa as the

source for White's reference and to John Ower for helping me obtain a copy.

²For attribution of this anonymous poem to Calthrop, see Sturman 35.

³Martin 147, 176, 179, 197, 256, 262, etc.; Ricks 2: 310-311 dates section

123 of *In Memoriam* as c.1837, while Shatto and Shaw 281 date it "at least by 1842."

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Coming in

The Victorian Newsletter

Maura Ives, "'Her life was in her books;' Jean Ingelow in the Literary Marketplace

Mary Faraci, "Imagining *Ophelia* in Christina Rossetti's "Sleeping at Last"

Books Received

Ambrosini, Richard and Richard Dury, eds. *Robert Louis Stevenson, Writer of Boundaries*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 2006. Pp. 377. \$60.00 (cloth), \$24.95 (paper). Contents: Richard Ambrosini and Richard Dury, "Introduction"; Stephen Arata, "Stevenson, Morris, and the Value of Idleness"; R. L. Abrahamson, "Living in a Book: RLS as an Engaged Reader"; Richard Ambrosini, "The Four Boundary-Crossings of R. L. Stevenson, Novelist and Anthropologist"; Liz Farr, "Stevenson and the (Un)familiar: The Aesthetics of Late-Nineteenth-Century Biography"; Nathalie Jaeck, "The Greenhouse vs. the Glasshouse: Stevenson's Stories as Textual Matrices"; Glenda Norquay, "Trading Texts: Negotiations of the Professional and the Popular in the Case of *Treasure Island*"; Stephen Donovan, "Stevenson and Popular Entertainment"; Gordon Hirsch, "Tontines, Tontine Insurance, and Commercial Culture: Stevenson and Osbourne's *The Wrong Box*"; Jean-Pierre Naugrette, "*The Master on Ballantrae*, or The Writing of Frost and Stone"; Luisa Villa, "Quarreling with the Father"; Jenni Calder, "Figures in a Landscape: Scott, Stevenson, and Routes to the Past"; Caroline McCracken-Flesher, "Burking the Scottish Body: Robert Louis Stevenson and the Resurrection Men"; Ilaria B. Sborgi, "Stevenson's Unfinished Autopsy of the Other"; Manfred Malzahn, "Voices of the Scottish Empire"; Robbie B. H. Goh, "Stevenson and the Property of Language: Narrative, Value, Modernity"; Ann C. Colley, "Light, Darkness, and Shadow: Stevenson and the South Seas"; Ralph Parfect, "Violence in the South Seas: Stevenson, the Eye, and Desire"; Oliver S. Buckton, "Cruising with Robert Louis Stevenson: The South Seas from Journal to Fiction"; Julia Reid, "Stevenson, Romance, and Evolutionary Psychology"; Olena M. Turnbull, "Robert Louis Stevenson and Nineteenth-Century Theories of Evolution: Crossing the Boundaries between Ideas and Art"; Richard Dury, "Crossing the Bounds of Single Identity: *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and a Paper in a French Scientific Journal"; Linda Dryden, "City of Dreadful Night": Stevenson's Gothic London"; Richard J. Walker, "Pious Works: Aesthetics, Ethics, and the Modern Individual in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*"; Jane V. Rago, "*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*: A 'Men's Narrative' of Hysteria and Containment"; Dennis Denisoff, "Consumerism and Stevenson's Misfit Masculinities"; Michela Vanon Alliata, "'Markheim' and the Shadow of the Other"; Alan Sandison, "Masters of the Hovering Life: Robert Musil and R. L. Stevenson"; Wendy R. Katz, "Whitman and Thoreau as Literary Stowaways in Stevenson's American Writings"; Ann Lawson Lucas, "The Pirate Chief in Salgari, Stevenson, and Calvino"; Daniel

Balderston, "Murder by Suggestion: *El sueño de los heroes* and *The Master of Ballantrae*."

Bivona, Dan and Roger B. Henkle. *The Imagination of Class: Masculinity and the Victorian Urban Poor*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2006. Pp. 208. \$39.95 (cloth), \$9.95 (CD). "In the 1860s and 1870s, the urban poor were 'discovered' by journalists as a fascinating underworld. Many also used the pathos of poverty for many of their most emotionally gripping sensations. In chapter 1 we examine the rhetorical effects of this work as well as its substance. . . . In chapter 2 we discuss how the discourse of 'culturalism' in the 1880s attempts to contain a threat that is coded, not as affective excess, but as emotional deadening. As middle class writers, inspired by what Beatrice Webb calls a 'sense of sin,' descend upon the East End to participate in a variety of 'missions' ranging from C. O. S. through the settlement movement through Charles Booth's famous fact-gathering study of poverty, the East End is constructed as a land of enervation. . . . Nowhere is that redemptive narrative more dramatically contested than in the novels of Arthur Morrison and George Gissing, which we examine in chapter 3. . . . Chapter 4 addresses the dominant phantasmic construction of the urban poor at the end of the century: the East End as 'the abyss.' Here we are concerned with the way a number of male writers (Richard Jeffries, H. G. Wells, Jack London, Charles Masterman) register the historical moment of bourgeois hegemony as a moment of intractable class conflict, resistant to amelioration" (22-24).

Bohan, Ruth L. *Looking into Walt Whitman: American Art, 1850-1920*. University Park, Penn State UP, 2006. Pp. xiv + 261. \$50.00 "In the decades after the first publication of *Leaves of Grass*, an astonishing number of artists—conservatives, moderates and radicals alike, the known and unknown among them—absorbed Whitman into the very fiber of their art. In recovering their stories, this study begins the daunting but exciting task of exposing the myriad new beginnings Whitman fostered across seventy years of visual culture" (10).

Gaskell, Elizabeth. *The Ghost in the Garden Room*. Ed. Fran Baker. Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester. Vol. 86, No. 1 (Spring 2004). Pp. cxxiv + 84. "This edition of Elizabeth Gaskell's story 'The ghost in the garden room' is an updated version of an exercise in scholarly editing which was presented for the degree of M. Phil. in 2001. The edition is based on the first published version of the story as it appeared in *The haunted house*, the *All the Year Round* extra Christmas number for 1859. The story was retitled 'The crooked branch' for its volume publication the following year, and the appearance of this

volume initiated the story's 'double life.' Its parallel existence in two different forms became firmly established in the other editions of the tale which appeared during Gaskell's lifetime. Ultimately the story in its 'Crooked branch' version was enshrined in the Gaskell canon, becoming the only form of the story available to readers of most of the twentieth century" (iii). Includes an "Introduction" with notes on "Composition," "Publication in *All the Year Round*," "Publication in *Rights at last, and other stories*," "Publication in America," "Publication Europe," "Posthumous transmission," "The present edition," "Explanatory Notes," "Editorial Appendix," and a "Bibliography."

Malane, Rachel. *Sex in Mind: The Gendered Brain in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Mental Sciences*. Studies in Nineteenth-Century British Literature Vol. 22. New York etc.: Peter Lang, 2005. Pp. [xv] + 229. \$67.95. "In an 1874 article, Herbert Cowell repeated the question that was at the center of a long-running debate: 'Is there such a thing as sex in mind; and, if so, what mental characteristics correlate the differences in sex?' The 'Woman Question,' ubiquitous in Victorian England, was in part concerned with differences in male and female minds and the consequences of those differences for cultural institutions and social systems. For many people, those differences were central to the contention over gender roles and to the question of whether those roles were, in fact, a product of natural variance between the sexes" (vii).

McCormack, Kathleen. *George Eliot's English Travels: Composite Characters and Coded Communications*. New York & London: Routledge, 2005. Pp. 193. \$109.90. "I divide my conclusion about originals drawn from George Eliot's English travels into three categories: absolute certainties such as the identification of the model for Lowick Manor in *Middlemarch*, pretty good cases like my proposal of the Thames as the primary (or at least initial) model for the Floss, and alluring, probable, but irretrievably speculative suppositions, such as my imagined scene of George Henry Lewes meeting George Eliot's nephew, Frederic Evans, at Oxford in 1868, and during their conversation gaining material for her creation of Fred Vincy in *Middlemarch*" (14).

Richardson, LeeAnne M. *New Woman and Colonial Adventure Fiction in Victorian Britain: Gender, Genre, and Empire*. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2006. Pp. 181. \$55.00. "The adventure novel, written from the perspective of the authoritarian, culturally dominant male, often justifies the subaltern's subordinated status, both by displaying the 'obvious' inferiority of the African or Indian native and by demonstrating the superiority of the British male through his victories over 'savage' landscapes, animals, and peoples. In contrast, New Woman fiction presents narratives written from below, interrogating the inequities of a system that assumes and

asserts the very things adventure novels champion: male superiority, the right to dominate and rule others, paternalistic ideology. So why yoke them together? Because both genres were responding—not symmetrically, but in equally engaged ways—to a complex of cultural forces typically identified (depending on one's vantage point) as 'cultural decline' or 'cultural evolution.' Moreover, reinserting them into literary history in tandem illuminates the terms of the gender debate and imperial politics in late-century Britain" ([1]).

Surridge, Lisa. *Bleak Houses: Marital Violence in Victorian Fiction*. Athens: Ohio UP, 2005. Pp. xiv + 271. \$55.00 (cloth); \$24.95 (paper). "This book . . . traces Victorian novelists' intense engagement with the issue of marital violence from 1828 to 1904. Chapter 1 situates the early works of Charles Dickens against the fallout from the 1828 Offenses Against the Person Act, which brought accounts of working-class marital violence almost daily into the newspapers. Chapters 2 and 3 examine *Dombey and Son* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* in the context of the intense debate on wife assault and manliness in the late 1840s and early 1850s. Chapter 4 reads "Janet's Repentance" in light of the parliamentary debates on the 1857 Divorce Act. The opening of the divorce court in January 1858 made middle-class marital violence a regular item of interest in Victorian newspapers, and chapters 5 and 6 examine how divorce reporting informs *The Woman in White* and *He Knew He Was Right* (both of which derive their structures from marital cruelty trials). Locating the New Woman fiction of Mona Caird and the reassuring detective investigations of Sherlock Holmes in the context of late-Victorian feminism and the great marriage debate of the *Daily Telegraph*, the book's final two chapters illustrate how fin-de-siècle fiction brought male sexual violence and the vitality of marriage itself under public scrutiny" (12-13). 27 illustrations.

Thackeray, William Makepeace. *The Snobs of England and Punch's Prize Novelists*. Ed. Edgar F. Harden. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2005. Pp. 172 + 85. \$75.00; £43.00. "This volume contains two works, separated by a heavier stock colored paper divider. Each volume is paginated separately and each is followed immediately by the critical apparatus that accounts for the work's textual history and its treatment in this edition" [vii]. ". . . this volume of *The Snobs of England* prints a text edited to fulfill Thackeray's intentions in 1846-47." [164]. "In order to facilitate the reader's perception of Thackeray's development as an artist from work to work over his entire career, the edition of which this volume [*Punch's Prize Novelists*] is a part has chosen to print the earliest completed versions of his texts, not versions designed to embody his 'final intentions.'" [79].