

# The Victorian Newsletter

The Victorian Newsletter publishes scholarly articles by many of the most prominent Victorian academics of the last half century. As such, the VN reflects the genesis and development of contemporary Victorian studies. The Victorian Newsletter is a refereed publication featuring innovative analyses of Victorian literature and culture.

The editor welcomes book announcements, review copies, and book reviews, along with announcements of interest to the Victorian academic community.

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Editorial communications should be addressed to:

Dr. Deborah Logan, Editor <[deborah.logan@wku.edu](mailto:deborah.logan@wku.edu)>  
Department of English, Cherry Hall 106  
Western Kentucky University  
1906 College Heights Blvd.  
Bowling Green, KY 42101

Address business communications to: <[victorian.newsletter@wku.edu](mailto:victorian.newsletter@wku.edu)>

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Deborah H. Logan, Editor

Emily Bullock, Editorial Assistant

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Cover Image: Frances Trollope, *Michael Armstrong, Factory Boy*

## *Greetings from the Editor*

*The Victorian Newsletter* #118 marks the first \*official\* International Edition in the journal's history. Although initially I did not set out to publish such an edition, a timely accumulation of work on Victorian literature from some notably far-flung scholars suggested the idea to me. I am most pleased to offer this new work by Victorian scholars from all over the world, including Israel, Iran, Ireland, England, and Turkey. It is my hope that readers will welcome this opportunity to experience new scholarship by our global colleagues as much as I've enjoyed working on this collection, which includes perennial literary favorites, less familiar works, and a variety of analytical perspectives.

Our first article, Galia Benziman's "Whose Child is it? Paternalism, Parenting, and Political Ambiguity in Frances Trollope's *Factory Novel*," contributes to a resurgence in scholarly assessments of author Frances Trollope. Most readily associated with *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832), Trollope was also a social-problem writer situated after Martineau and Tonna and before Dickens and Gaskell. Professor Benziman's analysis of *The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy* (1840) reveals the novel as an over-looked yet pivotal entry in the social-problem genre. Based on parliamentary investigatory committees and related publications of the time, Trollope's novel "aims to expose the flaws of the socio-economic system and stimulate middle-class readers' awareness of the realities of working-class life and the pitfalls of charity and patronage." But Trollope's political radicalism in this novel ventures beyond critiques of patronage-as-remedy for social ills to highlight the novel's singular focus on child labor. Thus far a figure that has garnered little critical attention, the child laborer is foregrounded in this novel's graphic depiction of exploitative, cruel, and unregulated labor practices. Professor Benziman's compelling discussion of Trollope's "radical, potentially seditious work" reflects Victorians' dawning awareness of the plights of poor children, their impact on political economy, and the squandering of the next generation.

Another highly original contribution to this volume is "Charlotte Brooke's 'Mäon' and the Construction of Anglo-Irish Identity" by Lucy Cogan. In 1789, Irish

author Charlotte Brooke published *Reliques of Irish Poetry*, an anthology of Gaelic translations in English that “marks a point of departure for modern, self-conscious constructions of the culture of colonized Ireland.” While Charlotte Brooke does not fit into the Victorian time-frame, her significance to Victorian studies resides in her contributions to “the evolution of Anglo-Irish identity,” contributions that anticipate the better-known, late-Victorian Irish Literary Revival by a full century. Through *Reliques* and her original English-language poem, “Mäon,” Brooke “sought to uncover an authentic, ancient Irish character, which might accommodate her own identity as an Anglo-Irish protestant.” Brooke’s work is among the earliest to record and disseminate Irish language texts, and it evidences that the feminized nationalist trope later popularized as Kathleen ni Houlihan was invoked generations before Yeats and Synge. As Professor Cogan concludes: “the writers of the Irish Literary Revival, who were to witness their country’s difficult birth as an independent nation and were later revered as the progenitors of a new and distinctly Irish cultural identity, were working within a tradition first configured by Brooke.”

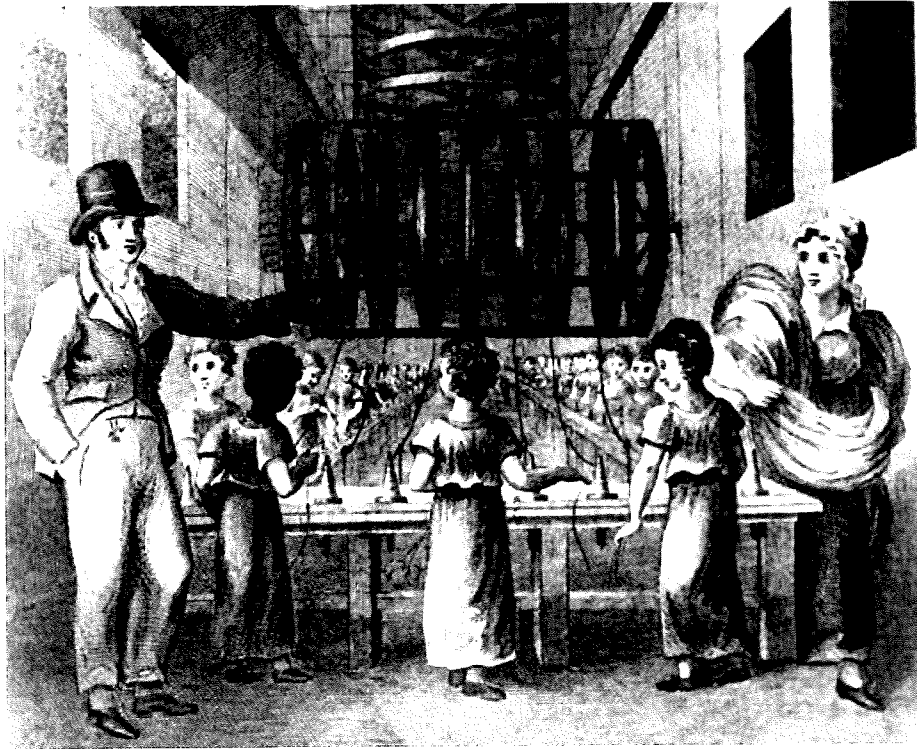
Two of this issue’s articles explore comparatively familiar material through psychoanalytical frameworks. Morteza Jafari’s “Freud’s Uncanny: The Role of the Double in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*” reads these two canonized novels as examples of Freud’s concept of the uncanny. Professor Jafari’s analysis considers human anxieties about mortality and the unique function of the doppelgänger in finding expression for death’s inevitability through arts and letters. Narcissism and mirroring thus serve as point and counterpoint in such doubled characters as Jane Eyre and Bertha Mason, and Catherine Earnshaw and Isabella Linton. But despite the similarities in such analogies, the differences between these examples are dramatized in the relative outcome of each novel. Once freed from her doppelgänger by Bertha’s death, Jane Eyre exchanges that ambivalent counterpart for Rochester—apparently, her perfect soul-mate. Catherine Earnshaw’s example is far more complex: her doppelgänger is ultimately less Isabella than Heathcliff—and in this case, the betrayal of the soul-mate and the self does not resolve into a domesticated happy-ever-after.

George Eliot’s novels may be less firmly canonized than the Brontës’, but they similarly lend themselves to psychoanalytic investigation. Gillian Alban’s “From the

Erotic Blush to the Petrifying Medusa Gaze in George Eliot’s Novels” analyzes the trope of the gaze in *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *Middlemarch*, and *Daniel Deronda*. Throughout these novels, the gaze functions variously, invoking self-regard and the lack, the curse of the Medusa, and the reciprocal gaze involving lovers. Professor Alban employs such theorists as Freud, Lacan, Cixous, and Sartre to analyze the narcissism of Hetty Sorrel and Gwendolen Harleth; the links between the Medusa, Lydia Glasher, and Maggie Tulliver; the rejection of self-regard by Dinah Morris, Maggie, and Dorothea Brooke; and the dangerous territory traversed by those whose gaze wanders to a tabooed object of desire.

Finally, if Sherlock Holmes’ mysteries are not canonized, they are certainly a vital ingredient in popular culture and have remained so for well over a century. Richard Jacobs’ “Republicanism, Regicide and ‘The Musgrave Ritual’” offers a fascinating perspective on Doyle’s insertion of a notorious period in British history, the execution of Charles I, alongside the intrigues of crime detection. Professor Jacobs analyzes “The Musgrave Ritual” as a “piece of mainstream popular fiction” that participates in a broader “editing of history”: in this case, “the fact of a regicide which English history cannot bear to countenance and prefers to forget....The editing out from history of the revolution, regicide and republic” as a consummate “act of forgetting.” The very act of detecting, of course, aims to uncover inconvenient truths, to retrace crucial steps, and to remember what many prefer to forget.

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*Whose Child is it? Paternalism, Parenting,  
and Political Ambiguity in  
Frances Trollope's Factory Novel  
by Galia Benjiman*

Frances Trollope's *The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy* (1840) is one of the early instances of the sub-genre of the Victorian novel that later came to be called "social-problem novel."<sup>1</sup> Together with Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna's almost simultaneous *Helen Fleetwood* (1841), which followed it by seven months, it was characterized by a marked interest in the material and mental effects of industrialism on lower-class children. Its political purpose seems clear: inspired by the first publication of the parliamentary commissions' reports in the early 1830s, which aroused public awareness of the extremely hard living and working conditions of the poor, Trollope's novel aims to expose the flaws of the socio-economic system and stimulate middle-class readers' awareness of the realities of working-class life and the pitfalls of charity and patronage.

Although largely forgotten during the twentieth century, *Michael Armstrong* was probably widely read in the 1840s; a new edition was published as late as 1876. Having published two highly successful bestsellers before—*Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832), and *The Life and Adventures of Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw* (1836), which went through three editions in its first year—Trollope did not repeat this success with *Michael*

<sup>1</sup> According to Kovačević and Kanner, *Michael Armstrong* was the first English novel to describe actual working conditions in factories (157-58); see also Wallins (49) and Childers (129). The few precedents of the late 1820s and early 1830s were shorter works of fiction: Harriet Martineau's "The Rioters," "The Turn-out," and "A Manchester Strike" (1827, 1829, and 1832 respectively), and Charlotte Tonna's "The System" (1827). Though shorter, Martineau's *Illustrations of Political Economy* likely influenced Trollope's industrial fiction.

*Armstrong*. However, although no clear publication data is available, the common assumption among critics is that the novel was widely read, thanks partly to its serialization in shilling parts in 1839, prior to its publication as a book. These critics also argue that *Michael Armstrong* had a major impact on the development of the social-problem novel.<sup>2</sup> Far better known today, later works that belonged to the genre—like Benjamin Disraeli's *Sybil, or The Two Nations* (1845), Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848) and *North and South* (1855), and Charles Dickens's *Hard Times* (1854)—resemble Trollope's work in subject matter and purpose.<sup>3</sup>

The degree of Trollope's subversion in this novel, considered quite radical by mid-nineteenth-century reviewers, has been debated of late. Today, critics mostly share the opinion that later social-problem novels by Gaskell, Disraeli, or Dickens tend to be more conventionally "middle-class" than Trollope's, milder in their account of social injustice, and less inclined to shock their readers with realistic, well-informed facts concerning factory work.<sup>4</sup> Yet they also tend to underline Trollope's own middle-class bias and what they see as *Michael Armstrong*'s class condescension. My essay challenges this view and argues that an examination of the function of the child—so far not seriously treated in discussions of this novel—should offer a richer view of Trollope's complex political outlook.

The focus on child (rather than adult) laborers is one major, and largely overlooked, characteristic of this early social-problem novel. Trollope's use of a working-class child as the protagonist, and the marginal position she assigns to lower-class adults (all major adult characters in the novel being middle-class), creates a synecdochic association between the child and the working class as a whole. This

<sup>2</sup> Trollope was one of the most popular novelists in mid-century Britain (see Kissel, "What Shall" 151 and Heineman 196-206); her works sold steadily through the middle of the nineteenth-century, and her income exceeded that of many of her contemporaries, her son Anthony included (see Wallins 23, 228). Dickens was delighted to have her name listed among the contributors to *Bentley's Miscellany*: "The show of names is excellent" (*Letters* 202). But with the publication of *Michael Armstrong*, he felt less kindly toward Trollope, as I recount below.

<sup>3</sup> For claims about the influence of *Michael Armstrong* on subsequent social-problem novels, particularly those written by Dickens and Gaskell, see Kissel (*Common Cause* 121).

<sup>4</sup> Kaplan (59-60) terms later social-problem novels, especially *Mary Barton*, more conventionally "middle-class" than earlier works by Trollope and Tonna. Wallins argues that with the 1845 publication of *Sybil*, the concerns of social-problem novels changed. *Sybil*, *Mary Barton*, and Brontë's *Shirley* (1849) differ from *Michael Armstrong* and *Helen Fleetwood* by not emphasizing the dangerous conditions in factories and mills and by minimizing the abuses suffered by operatives. Disraeli, for one, was more interested in the broader aspects of social problems (Wallins 52-53).

association has daring implications. The novel's satirical use of the literary and social conventions of adoption and rescue of the poor child, which were conventional forms of narrative closure and political solutions, challenges contemporary middle-class protective and paternalistic approaches to the poor and complicates the political wisdom and ethical value of such resolutions.

Later factory novels by Disraeli, Gaskell, and Dickens were perhaps less disturbing for Victorian readers, not only because of their minimal focus on the details of industrial work, but also because they tended to marginalize the distressing issue of exploitative child labor. In *Mary Barton*, for example, the subject is addressed only obliquely: we are told that the young protagonist's father has refrained from sending her to the mill because of his objection to child labor. We are given to understand that child labor is highly objectionable, but the phenomenon itself is never described. In *North and South*, lower-class children go to school; and, even in the half-starved families of rough operatives such as Nicholas Higgins and John Boucher, children are not sent to work before their late-teens. In *Sybil*, the conditions of children in coalmines are alluded to as a horrifying reality, yet this reality is tackled in one isolated passage that is extrinsic to the plot.<sup>5</sup> In *Hard Times*, the child characters are mostly middle-class and, if not, they are soon adopted by a middle-class family. Child operatives are never described in Dickens's novel, not even as part of the large crowd of male and female laborers going in and out of the factory gates, in stark contrast to the noticeable presence of children among factory operatives in non-fictional descriptions of that period.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast, the only factory work described in *Michael Armstrong* is that performed by children, in a way that seems to serve a political purpose. *Michael Armstrong* represents child labor realistically, minutely, and with a manifest intention to upset middle-class readers and stir them out of their accustomed indifference. The fictional representation of the working-class child as social victim draws from romantic

<sup>5</sup> This brief description of child miners (Disraeli 78), clearly influenced by the *First Report of the Children's Employment Commissioners* (1842), presents no individuated child characters. Disraeli drew heavily on Blue books (see Smith 369 and Wallins 47), while Martin Fido (270-71) argues that the more direct influence was William Dodd's 1842 memoir, *The Factory System Illustrated in a Series of Letters to Lord Ashley*.

<sup>6</sup> Unlike other novelists of the period, Dickens had first-hand knowledge of child labor from his days at Warren's Blacking Factory, yet he refrained from writing about the subject. Bodenheimer notes that he failed to write an article against child labor solicited by the *Edinburgh Review* (*Knowing* 63).

ideology and depicts the child as morally pure and blameless, valuable and vulnerable. This representation serves two purposes: it augments the emotional impact by arousing greater compassion than the character of an adult laborer may generate; and it works to counter widespread anxieties and stereotypes about the working class as menacingly violent, greedy, licentious, and generally immoral.

An analysis of the working-class child's synecdochic function in *Michael Armstrong* is necessary for a renewed interpretation of the political stance of this work. The representation of class oppression while focusing on an exploited child invokes in a most direct—though not unequivocal—way the issue of paternalism, turned almost literal through questions of fatherly protection, biological family ties versus interclass adoption, and a series of parenting dilemmas and guardianship issues that are central to Trollope's plot. In her work on the industrial novel, Catherine Gallagher discusses the "feminization" of working-class characters as a way of insuring their dependence in a paternalistic view of social reform (128-29). In my reading of Trollope's industrial novel, I extend Gallagher's observation and propose to see how it also applies to the representation of the industrial working class as embodied in the very young sector of operatives, regardless of their gender. I shall thus talk about the "infantilization" of the working class, exposed in this novel as a way of protecting them while in fact establishing their status as inherently inferior, immature, and dependent. Unlike what we may expect, the figure of the child in *Michael Armstrong* does not necessarily reinforce protective and paternalistic approaches to the poor as ethically valid or politically desirable, but rather exposes the ambiguity of such attitudes by showing that even a lower-class child may have some needs and desires other than to be materially provided for. Rather than being rescued by wealthy, powerful members of society, such a child may act as an agent in control of his or her own life. The centrality of the working-class child in this novel thus complicates rather than simplifies Trollope's staging of the social problem it sets out to expose.

*Michael Armstrong* is a combination of *bildungsroman*, comedy of manners, and committed social critique (Betensky 66). The generic mix, however, does not veil the novel's firm social agenda, explicitly pronounced in the omniscient narrator's direct addresses to the reader, which render the cause of reform imperative. *Michael*

*Armstrong's* early reviewers did not doubt its outspoken denunciation of the socio-economic system and regarded it as a radical, potentially seditious work. It was received with enthusiasm by the Chartists, who used it as propaganda, while others felt antagonized by its political critique.<sup>7</sup> In a private letter, Trollope referred to this by saying, "I don't think any one cares much for 'Michael Armstrong'—except the Chartists. A new kind of patrons for me!" (cited in Dickens, *The Letters* 507). One of the first reviewers even declared that "the author of *Michael Armstrong* deserves as richly to have eighteen months in Chester Gaol as any that are there now for using violent language against the 'monster cotton mills.'"<sup>8</sup> William Makepeace Thackeray, though confessing in a favourable 1843 review of another novel by Trollope that he did not "care to read ladies' novels, except those of Mesdames Gore and Trollope," charged in that same review that instead of writing her novels of social reform, of which *Michael Armstrong* was the prominent example, she "had much better have remained at home, pudding-making or stocking-mending, than have meddled with matters which she understands so ill."<sup>9</sup> In the same vein, Trollope's own son Anthony, in his 1883 *Autobiography*, disapproved of his mother's decision to write social protest fiction and accused her of being over-emotional and illogical, "neither clear-sighted nor accurate" in her descriptions of society: "in her attempts to describe morals, manners, and even facts, [she] was unable to avoid the pitfalls of exaggeration" (A. Trollope 33).

What undoubtedly added force to Trollope's political critique was *Michael Armstrong's* strong nonfiction element. It was known that the detailed account of factory life and the depiction of the conditions of young apprenticed laborers were based on evidence. Trollope had taken some information from parliamentary reports and had gathered further material during a fact-finding tour to Manchester in February, 1839. As part of her investigations, she visited factories *incognita*, met labor activists and

<sup>7</sup> On the Chartists' response to the novel, see Michael Sadleir (104).

<sup>8</sup> Anon., review of *Michael Armstrong*, *Athenaeum* 615 (1839): 589 (qtd. in Kissel, "What Shall" 159).

<sup>9</sup> Thackeray, review of *Jerome Paturot*, *Fraser's Magazine* 28 (1843): 350 (qtd. in Kissel, "What Shall" 151).

reformers, and interviewed workers.<sup>10</sup> Clearly, Trollope had researched her topic thoroughly, despite some early critics' claims to the contrary.

The setting and several plot details of *Michael Armstrong* are indeed closely based on fact. Ashleigh, the town in which the novel is set, is a precise replica of Manchester. Trollope also modelled the character Reverend Bell of Fairley, a reformist clergyman, after a real Parson, Mr. Bull of Brierly (Heineman 180). Certain scenes in the novel reproduce actual descriptions of child labor in contemporary non-fictional sources. The setting of Deep Valley Mill, where Michael is apprenticed under horrifying conditions, is based on a real place portrayed in the widely-read memoir of an ex-pauper orphan named Robert Blincoe, published in 1832 (177). Blincoe's *Memoir* was the first in a series of autobiographies published in the 1830s and during the following decades, recounting the writers' days as child laborers. As Eric Hopkins notes, Blincoe's *Memoir* was a particularly famous one, consisting of a catalogue of horrors inflicted on the child apprentice Blincoe by his sadistic master in the mills. The authenticity of Blincoe's report was disputed; and even if true, the assumption was that his appalling experiences were exceptional. Yet his book served to arouse public opinion against the norms connected to child employment (Hopkins 84-85) and, as we see here, served to inspire at least one writer of social-problem fiction.<sup>11</sup>

The focus of this paper is on Trollope's representation of the lower-class child's adoption by the upper-middle class and on the rescue plot associated with this theme. Two adoption episodes shape this narrative: one describes Michael's adoption by his vicious employer, and the other presents the adoption of Michael's brother by a compassionate heiress, who later also becomes Michael's patroness. A series of intriguing ethical questions surround these foster-parenting relationships.

The benevolent intentions of the first act of adoption in the novel are explicitly presented as sham. Sir Matthew Dowling, a factory owner who represents the new millocracy in all its ugliness, is persuaded by Lady Clarissa Shrimpton, the only

<sup>10</sup> For an account of Trollope's trip to Manchester, see Chaloner (160-61). Some factory novelists, including Gaskell, visited factory workers personally; others based their novels on Blue books (Elliott 388, n. 3). See also Brantlinger (28-32).

<sup>11</sup> Some scenes and plot details in *Michael Armstrong* were taken from life or from published evidence. For example, an 1836 *Westminster Review* article described sick children being carried to the factory by their parents because they were too weak to walk. The scene in chapter 19 of Trollope's novel is almost identical to that passage in the *Review*, based on a parliamentary report (Wallins 50).

remaining representative of the landed aristocracy in Ashleigh, to adopt one of his operatives, the ten-year-old Michael. Although the local community applauds Sir Matthew's generosity, the actual result of the adoption is Michael's ongoing suffering and humiliation at Dowling Hall under his hypocritical patron's regime of brutality and persecution. Sir Matthew regards Michael as "a detestable burden" (Trollope 31), treats him badly when they are alone, and masks this attitude by a façade of kindness. Michael is homesick, longing to be reunited with his loving and honest widowed mother and maimed older brother, Teddy, who was injured in an accident at Sir Matthew's cotton mill. As part of the anomaly of his situation, Michael has to face not only the haughtiness of the Dowling family but also the condescension of the servants. One exception is Sir Matthew's adolescent daughter Martha, who is kind to Michael and curious to hear about his previous life, although her middle-class bias registers total disbelief regarding the extent of poverty and suffering to which he alludes.

The second adoption in the novel is connected to the only member of the millocracy milieu who discerns Sir Matthew's hypocrisy and Michael's distress. Mary Brotherton, a young heiress and the daughter of a manufacturer, wonders about this "mysterious adoption of the factory-boy" (Trollope 98). Although, like Martha Dowling, Mary is ignorant about the working class, she is intrigued by Michael's misery and conducts some investigations of her own. This soon leads her to some shocking revelations about the true nature of factory work. Her social conscience is awakened, and she begins to feel guilty about her wealth, accumulated by the system of exploitation she now abhors.

When Sir Matthew secretly gets rid of Michael by sending him to the secluded Deep Valley mills, the novel presents a series of horrors: hunger, degradation, and sadistic abuse of child apprentices, all in the spirit of Blincoe's *Memoir*. The remote, little-known valley is a factory-owner's paradise. Boys and girls are uninterruptedly imprisoned there for years, in many cases for life (a rather short life for most of them). For present-day readers, it is a setting disturbingly similar to a concentration camp, where the slightest disobedience or tardiness is ruthlessly punished, and the famished juvenile laborers are literally worked to death. When called to work, the "miserable little troop"

[waits] for no second summons, well knowing that the lash, which was now only idly cutting the air above their heads, would speedily descend upon them if they did; but not even terror could enable the wasting limbs of those who had long inhabited this fearful abode, to move quickly. Many among them were dreadfully crippled in the legs, and nearly all exhibited the frightful spectacle of young features pinched by famine. (186)

The Deep Valley mills operate without any supervision by the authorities and with no questioning on the part of families, neighbours, or social activists.

Following persistent investigations, Mary Brotherton discovers Michael's location and plans to rescue him; due to mistaken identification, he is reported dead, and the plan fails. However, after about five years in Deep Valley, Michael heroically manages to escape by himself. During these years, his mother pines away and dies; Mary, believing that Michael is dead, rescues and adopts Fanny, Michael's friend from Deep Valley, and his brother Teddy, whom she redeems from factory work. After Michael's escape, she becomes his patroness as well. With Sir Matthew's bankruptcy and death, Michael's marriage to Fanny, and Mary's own marriage to Teddy, the novel reaches its happy conclusion.

During the last two decades, much of the critical discussion about *Michael Armstrong* has focused on its sociopolitical position, without assigning particular importance to the function of the child in this work. Among modern critics, Susan Kissel presents a reading that emphasizes the radical aspects of the novel, claiming that Trollope was a conscious and systematic advocate of "deep-seated social reform" ("What Shall" 164). Yet most other contemporary readings question the novel's commitment to reform and detect certain conservative or paternalistic assumptions that underlie its analysis of social problems. Rosemarie Bodenheimer argues that the novel's middle-class paternalism is revealed in the narrative pattern that leads the rich heiress, Mary Brotherton, to act as a "female knight errant" and redeem poor people from their social inferiority, even if failing to reform the factory system itself.<sup>12</sup> Dorice Elliott, too, says

<sup>12</sup> This pattern supports a return to paternalism, based not on masculine power but on a fantasy of feminine protectionism and intervention without power (Bodenheimer, *Politics* 23-25).

that although motivated by a reformist impulse, Trollope, as a middle-class author, aims to bring factory workers under the umbrella of the paternalist middle-class home. Thus, Mary Brotherton comes to believe that it is the paternalistic relations practiced by the country gentry, on which her own household relations are based, "that hold out most hope for the improved welfare of factory workers" (Elliott 386-87). Despite her extensive knowledge of factory conditions, she fails to effect any changes in the system.

The political implications of *Michael Armstrong's* closure yields diverse interpretations. The class and age disparities in the marriage between Michael's brother and the heiress are further complicated by Teddy's physical disability; Michael is himself rescued from poverty by the heiress—in effect, doubly emasculating him as the object of middle-class, feminine patronage; and the emigration of all central characters to Germany implies that social parity is available only outside of England. Kissel, for one, finds the ending highly subversive: she points out that Mary Brotherton manages to achieve a great deal, and upon her departure leaves behind her an enlightened heroine, Martha Dowling, and a practical reform movement that together with Michael she has worked to further—the Ten Hours Movement. Among her actual achievements in effecting change is the establishment of the Wood and Walker mill, based on humane employment practices and representing a model industrial workplace. Kissel further claims that the new home the characters establish in Germany, in which class differences are obliterated, operates as an ideal feminine community of social equality (*Common Cause* 127).

Other critics, though, read the ending as paternalistic and escapist. Bodenheimer regards it as an utter failure of all female subversions vis-à-vis "the novel's emphatically male structures of power" (*Politics* 35). In her classless, non-capitalist little community in Germany, says Bodenheimer, Brotherton can fulfil the fantasy of the female paternalist who is now the head of a family, determining the lives of her grateful, younger, converted working-class followers (29-31). In a similar vein, Elliott talks of Brotherton's decision to emigrate as a retreat from political activity. The marriages at the end, she claims, are part of the author's own retreat from uncompromising struggle, turning instead to the "novelistic conventions of the romance plot" to achieve some kind of resolution (Elliott 387). Carolyn Betensky, too, sees Mary's emigration at the end as a withdrawal from the knowledge she has acquired in her investigations, marking a refusal to act upon this



knowledge. In this respect, says Betensky, Mary echoes Trollope's own declining radicalism during the writing of the novel. Betensky refers here to the disclaimer in Trollope's preface, in which she tells her readers about her decision not to follow her original intention of writing a sequel to *Michael Armstrong* that would describe the mature Michael's constitutional struggles for the amelioration of the conditions of factory workers. The reason Trollope provides for this retraction is the violent riots of dissenting laborers that have been taking place since she began writing *Michael Armstrong*. This change of mind signifies Trollope's "own rejection of what she knows, what she might know but would rather not know, and what her readers might come to know through her writing," a rejection reflected in the career of the fictional Mary Brotherton (Betensky 75-76).<sup>13</sup>

The characters' emigration, however, may be construed as radical for a more important reason. When the sphere of action is a novel, a character's emigration does not really indicate a lesser energy invested in social activism. Mary Brotherton and the Armstrong brothers are not real reformers operating as agents in British social politics, whose departure might impede the struggle. They are literary characters whose potential contribution to the cause of reform may be realized only through the reception of the text. Their "emigration" therefore does not lead them away from the arena of influence, which is the text. Betensky's critique of Brotherton's emigration as a refusal to act upon the knowledge she has acquired evaluates her potential position as a social reformer—a position that she indeed abandons. But rather than seeing Brotherton's radicalism as diminished at the end of the novel, we should focus on the potential impact of her acquired knowledge upon the readers of the novel. Her knowledge of industrialism's vices is not buried with her in her Rhenish castle but remains available, and ready to be acted upon, in Trollope's text.

However, my reading of *Michael Armstrong* calls attention to the fact that the critical preoccupation with the degree of Mary Brotherton's reformism and its reflection of the author's own stance has overtaken the issue of Michael Armstrong's life and adventures as the novel's center of interest. The debate about the novel's radicalism can

<sup>13</sup> The analogy between character and author is further supported by the fact that, several years after the publication of *Michael Armstrong*, Trollope emigrated to Florence. See also Kissel ("What Shall" 162) and Heineman (251).

profit from an examination of the representation of the working-class child as the protagonist of this narrative. Clearly, the degree of the text's commitment to reform cannot be determined, as the ongoing disagreement among critics on this point indicates. Yet the quality, features, and possible limitations of this commitment can be more richly and thoroughly unfolded if we examine Trollope's way of embodying social questions through the figure of a child.

Such a discussion should take into consideration not only the realistic function of the child's character but also its synecdochic role. Adult factory workers are hardly described in the novel; there are several lower-class adults—for example, the servants at Dowling Hall—but they are a distinct class, markedly differentiated from operatives and contemptuous of them, as illustrated by the way they refer to little Michael as no better than a pig (22). The only adult working-class character from the laboring sector that is represented is Michael's mother, an ailing widow who spends her time in bed rather than in the factory. While there are also several reform activists whom Michael meets upon his return from Deep Valley much later in the novel, they are extremely marginal and not individuated. As a social-problem novel preoccupied with the effects of industrialism and addressed to a middle-class readership unfamiliar with industrial workers, the fact that no adult laborer character is developed charges the child figure with an important representative function.

What might be the ideological implications of the authorial decision to use a child, one that "had worked almost from babyhood in the cotton-factory" (Trollope 54), as the sole representative of the laboring class? It is reasonable to assume that this choice would serve to expose, refute, or validate certain assumptions about this class. One such refutation that Michael's character allows the novel to perform is unequivocal: he is consistently depicted as morally innocent and unselfish, intuitively kind and affectionate, and emotionally vulnerable. This representation, influenced by romantic constructs, counters stereotypes and anxieties common among the middle-class regarding the inherent violence and immorality of the poor. Another aspect of the function of the child, which I shall now address at greater length because of its ideological ambiguity, is that of middle-class responsibility. The "infantilization" of the working class, or its being embodied in a child, may serve to justify certain paternalistic assumptions about the

requisite moral and political treatment of this sector. If the poor are like children, then maybe they are weaker, submissive, and inferior in knowledge and understanding; if neglected, they might be easily manipulated and victimized; therefore, in order to protect them, they—just like children—should be guided, supervised, and disciplined. Dependence is their desirable state, for their well-being no less than for the well-being of society as a whole. Some of the critical interpretations of the novel cited above indeed contend that such implications are endorsed by Trollope's novel. Yet my discussion suggests that this is only partly true, and that the very use of the child in this narrative works to undermine or at least question the value, moral justification, and necessity of middle-class intervention.

The issue of paternalism is central to Michael's career through the theme of adoption. A defenceless boy, poor and exploited, is unexpectedly offered an opportunity to transcend his social inferiority through being adopted by a wealthy family. However, the way this theme is developed in the novel complicates both the moral justification for and practical benefits of paternalism, because Michael's adoption is presented from the outset as dishonest, morally flawed, and exploitative. His patrons' disregard of his point of view is central to Michael's first adoption, shown not only in the hostile attitude of the reluctant Sir Matthew but also in the indifference of the allegedly well-meaning Lady Clarissa. It never even occurs to her to inquire whether Michael wants to be adopted. He is ordered to follow her and her rich companion to the Dowling mansion in what seems to be more an abduction than a benevolent, protective act of kindness. Just as he has been objectified and exploited as a hand in Sir Matthew's factory, so is Michael closely controlled and maneuvered now, when forced to abandon his previous life and family for an unclear future. Lady Clarissa's kindness to the boy, awakened by her sense of gratitude after he drives away a cow that frightened her, is depicted as artificial, and she is quick to harness Sir Matthew's means in order to impress her surroundings (and perhaps also herself) with what she sees as her own generosity. When she imposes this adoption upon boy and patron alike, Lady Clarissa thinks neither of Michael's needs nor of Sir Matthew's fury at being forced to adopt what he sees as "a bag of rags out of his own factory" (Trollope 17).

During the initial encounter, the dialogue carefully establishes Lady Clarissa's inattentiveness to Michael's words. He mentions his mother, yet she does not spare a thought about the existence of such a person when she proposes the adoption. When he asks to inform his brother Teddy about his new whereabouts, Michael's new patroness is surprised: "Teddy?—who is Teddy, my little man?" (17). She has evidently not been listening to Michael at all, since he referred to Teddy just a minute previous and told her that he was lame. His further explanations about his brother's physical injury are repeatedly disregarded by both Lady Clarissa and Sir Matthew, who keep referring to Teddy's lagging behind as sloth.

Breeding nothing but ongoing misery and regret to both parties, the adoption of the poor child by the rich man is an inversion of a common plot device, familiar to Trollope's readers not only from fairytales and folktales but also from the fiction of a highly successful contemporary novelist such as Dickens. The unexpected philanthropic intervention of a rich old gentleman in favour of the indigent protagonist features in the two early novels by Dickens that immediately preceded *Michael Armstrong—Oliver Twist* (1838), with its gentlemanly and kind Mr. Brownlow, and *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839), with the cheerfully open-handed Cheeryble Brothers. This motif appears in several of Dickens's later works as well.

Trollope was probably influenced by Dickens, whose popular *Oliver Twist* was the first novel in English for adults whose main character was a child throughout (Tillotson 50, Coveney 127). By 1839, Dickens's sensitivity to social injustice and to the oppression of children in particular was already famous; in fact, Dickens was the first to acknowledge the connection between Trollope's work on the factory boy and his own, unfortunately to the degree of resenting what he saw as too much resemblance between *Michael Armstrong* and *Nicholas Nickleby*.<sup>14</sup> Yet the similarity between the two novels in plot and theme is rather vague, and the accusation of plagiarism seems totally groundless. Although both works attack contemporary oppressive institutions, *Nickleby's* target is the

<sup>14</sup> In 1839, when both *Michael Armstrong* and *Nicholas Nickleby* were serialized in monthly instalments, Dickens declined an invitation to dine with Mrs. Trollope (Letters 499). Angry that *Armstrong* was advertised with *Pickwick Papers* and *Nicholas Nickleby* by their joint publisher Colburn, he claimed that *Armstrong* was a reworking of *Nickleby* (640): "If Mrs. Trollope were even to adopt Ticholas Tickleby as being a better-sounding name than Michael Armstrong, I don't think it would cost me a wink of sleep." Later, he expressed "no further opinion of Mrs. Trollope, than that I think *Mr.* Trollope must have been an old dog and chosen his wife from the same species" (506-07; original emphasis).

Yorkshire schools, whereas Trollope deals directly with industrialization and child labor—a theme Dickens and other contemporary realistic authors avoided. It is true that the boys at Dotheboys school are as cruelly victimized as the ones employed in Deep Valley, but their description verges on the grotesque; further, their suffering is shown to be the direct result of the unique and idiosyncratic aberration of Headmaster Squeers rather than the product of the entire economic system, as is true of the apprenticed child slavery in Trollope's novel. The latter's critique is therefore much more disturbing on the political level, offering no easy solutions; whereas, in the case of the Yorkshire schools, concrete reforms followed the publication of Dickens's novel. In spite of what Dickens thought, *Michael Armstrong* was perhaps more strongly influenced by *Oliver Twist*, mixing as it does social satire with the representation of a touchingly pathetic child protagonist. In terms of combating class prejudice, it is significant that both young characters in the two Dickens novels, Oliver and Smike, who are believed to have poor origins, are revealed at the end to be the sons of respectable middle-class gentlemen. This means that the many good qualities they exhibit do not contradict negative concepts of working-class innate characteristics. Michael Armstrong, on the other hand, is unquestionably, "genetically," working-class; therefore his delicacy, natural tact, and moral rectitude may serve to challenge the bad reputation of his class.

It is significant that in recounting the responses that Michael evokes among his social superiors, both in the initial encounter with Sir Matthew and Lady Clarissa and later on when he is brought to Dowling Hall, the novel avoids certain romantic clichés regarding his ability to charm his adoptive family. Unlike Dickens's Oliver, whose good looks and melancholy expression render him touching and appealing to soft-hearted middle-class figures, Trollope grants Michael a more realistic status as a shabby factory boy, clearly unattractive (although naturally handsome). When describing his indifferent reception into the Dowling mansion, the narrator seems aware that the down-to-earth representation of this encounter diverges from more sentimental depictions of similar scenes in other texts: "Had he been a ragged sailor-boy, or a ragged plough-boy, or even a ragged chimney-sweeper, there might by possibility have been excited some feeling of curiosity and interest; but a ragged factory-boy was of all created beings the one least likely to give birth to such emotions" (21).

The adoption in *Michael Armstrong* inverts the Dickensian pattern in two senses: first, by denying it its function as a magic solution (the adoption creates new problems rather than solving the old ones); and second, by emptying it of its moral content (since here it is not the result of a genuine philanthropic impulse). By invalidating the value of the poor boy's adoption, Trollope's work implies that middle-class paternalism, or private acts of charity, cannot serve as a remedy to social problems. More than this, it might pose a social problem in itself.

Michael's adoption by Sir Matthew exposes both the moral and the legal complexity of what many other novels published in the late 1830s and during the following two decades present as a smooth and potentially desirable process. Dickens's *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), and George Eliot's *Silas Marner* (1861) describe instances in which poor children are taken in by people who are not their parents, without any supervision of the law. This indeed reflects the legal reality of the time: no law for regulating adoption existed in Britain until the early twentieth century, a situation that sometimes led to severe cases of economic and sexual exploitation as well as infanticide. Trollope does not suppress the problematic possibilities of what Dickens or Eliot describe as an unequivocally beneficial act. The fact that Michael's mother is never asked to give her permission to the adoption is made conspicuous by the boy's unattended distress about his mother's anticipated concern for him when he fails to return home. For Sir Matthew and Lady Clarissa, the mother is a non-entity who has no say in the matter. Her being told about her son's whereabouts is purely the result of Michael's insistence that she should be informed (21). Their assumptions depend on stereotypes of the poor, exacerbated by the facts that Michael's only parent is a woman, a widow, and an invalid—hence, an unproductive member of society.

The characterization of Michael's mother further serves to underline the immoral side of adoption in its inversion of some stereotypes connected to working-class parenting. Unlike common views of the poor as bad parents, Widow Armstrong is naturally a good, affectionate, and devoted mother, who instills all the requisite moral and religious principles in her two sons. This characterization challenges the moral imperative to interfere in the domestic affairs of the lower class for their own benefit. The

description of the loving relationship between the widow and her two sons refutes not only some of the biased assumptions that Trollope's readers may have entertained but also those held by almost all of the novel's socially superior characters. When Michael's eyes fill with tears as he thinks of his mother, Lady Clarissa observes that he must be hungry: "plenty of food generally cures all poor people's complaint" (16). Her assumption is belied by Michael's misery at being forced to stay away from his mother—although he is going to be well fed at the manufacturer's mansion—and by his wish to send home a basket of food instead of satiating his own hunger. If working-class parents are as worthy and loving and beloved as Michael's mother, adopting their children is not an act of mercy but of cruelty.

However, the representation of Michael's mother also brings to the fore, and perhaps justifies, certain paternalistic assumptions. The "infantilization" of the working class is demonstrated in the characterization of the widow and bears several implications, some of them contradictory. On the one hand, she is characterized as childlike because she is morally innocent and naïve, good-hearted, gentle and loving. Her spiritual purity is corroborated not only by her religious faith but also by her personal and domestic cleanliness, which is emphasized to counter the stereotypic association of the dwellings and bodies of the urban poor with filth. On the other hand, she is depicted as physically and mentally weak, an invalid dependent upon her young children's miserable income and feeble assistance. Like a gullible child, she is too innocent and trusting to make her own decisions; lacking appropriate guidance, she is tricked into signing the pernicious apprenticeship contract that allows Sir Matthew to dispatch Michael to Deep Valley—sending him, metaphorically, to perdition. What qualifies the paternalistic implications of this episode is the fact that Mrs. Armstrong's error of judgment is the result of the manipulative intervention of her social superiors in her family life. As long as she is not pushed beyond her domestic sphere, she is a good mother who would never do her children any harm: it is broader social interference that is the source of her failure as a mother.

Besides the immoral motivation and flawed procedure of interclass adoption in this case, *Michael Armstrong* also suggests that adoption's supposedly desirable result—the erasure of social differences—carries problems of its own. Unlike what other

narratives may imply, the change of social identity is not an easy process. Michael's adoption by Sir Matthew is represented as a perplexing undermining of social distinctions. Both the rich patron and the indigent boy feel distressed by it. As soon as Michael's identity as a "hand" is discarded along with his grime and ragged clothes, once he is bathed and given a wealthy child's garb, Sir Matthew is in doubt where to put him: "Parlour or kitchen, school-room or factory, drawing-room or scullery?" (57). He resents Michael's social promotion—largely of his own making: "it is disgusting to see [Michael] dressed up, walking about the house like a tame monkey, when I know that his long fingers might be piercing thousands of threads for two shillings a week" (116).

Michael himself is no less discomfited by the blurring of social distinctions. Paradoxically, what he needs to be rescued from as a result of his adoption is the very protection he has received. More than once he ponders about a return to factory life, which he now regards as a blessing compared with his present awkward position. Yet he likes his young gentleman's attire and feels disgusted by the now-strange operative's garb he is forced to resume wearing in Deep Valley.

Mary Brotherton, alone besides Michael himself, realizes the necessity of "rescuing the pale trembling child...from the horrible bondage of Sir Matthew Dowling's charity" (113). Here, both character and author deny the notion that "charity" is beneficial. It is rather shown to be, at least in this case, an aggressive act of exploitation, indifferent to the benefited party's wishes, disconcerting in terms of social and familial identity, and humiliating because of the forced proximity between the assisted party and the prejudiced upper-class milieu that cannot absorb him as an equal.

That upper-class involvement is detrimental for the working-class child is underlined by the fact that even the interference of a well-meaning character such as Martha Dowling causes only harm. Her crucial role in convincing Widow Armstrong, Michael's mother, to sign the apprenticeship contract shows us that middle-class meddling in the domestic affairs of the poor is problematic. Even if well-intended, as in Martha's case, such interference is tainted by ignorance and condescension. Martha's first conversation with Michael, when she offers him food and asks him about the factory, illustrates this clearly: although she is far more compassionate than Sir Matthew or Lady Clarissa and is the only person in the entire household who actually feels sympathy for

Michael, Martha's perspective is shaped by her prejudice against the poor, and she does not regard his account of factory work as truthful or valuable, because of her conviction that all operatives are lazy. Martha's middle-class bias makes her expect certain answers to her questions, different from the ones that the boy actually provides. Thus his point of view is again suppressed.

Yet the denunciation of middle-class intervention in *Michael Armstrong* is not complete, as the second adoption episode suggests. As several critics have claimed, the novel's resolution diminishes the narrative's radicalism and endorses some kind of paternalism toward the working class. Indeed, when examining the theme of adoption it becomes evident that toward its ending, Trollope's narrative evolves into a kind of Dickensian resolution, in which a private act of kindness on the part of a rich individual redeems the working-class character from a life of drudgery. Mary Brotherton's philanthropic intervention should therefore be looked at closely, in order to see if and how it diverges (though much more subtly than Sir Matthew's charity) from the Dickensian model, despite the similarity.

As Mary Brotherton becomes obsessed with rescuing Michael, first from Sir Matthew's grasp and then from the torments of Deep Valley, the plight of this one child grows to epitomize, for her as also for the narrative, the general condition of the poor. Michael's personal fate is emblematic of the general problem, yet it obscures that of the others. Mary's adoption of the now-orphaned Teddy and Fanny, following her failed attempt to rescue Michael, indicates that she now turns to a private sphere of social activity, motivated by her personal involvement in Michael's fate. The children she chooses to foster are those who are related to Michael and serve as his substitutes. In this respect, her act of adoption resembles the Dickensian paradigm, in which the rich philanthropist is motivated by a personal feeling of sympathy for the particular needy child or youth he encounters, rather than by a general stance of political protest. Mary's case, however, evidences a clear awareness of the political dimension of these children's plight.

Although motivated by genuine compassion and care, Mary's adoption of Teddy and Fanny, and her later patronage of Michael after his return, share one problematic characteristic with Sir Matthew's adoption of Michael: it is performed as an entirely

private act, not authorized or looked at by any disinterested party. At the time of adopting Teddy and Fanny, Mary is, we are told,

about twenty-two years old, extremely pretty, and moreover almost childishly young-looking for her age; and whatever she might have brought herself to think of it, most others would very naturally have deemed her adopting a boy of twelve, and a girl of eleven, a most outrageously preposterous and imprudent act. But her situation was one in most respects quite out of the common way. (295)

As in the case of the first adoption recounted in *Michael Armstrong*, this adoption is given to private, potentially capricious enterprise. Yet the text, despite the description of Mary just cited, seems to approve of her acts. Is Mary mature and balanced enough to become an appropriate mother to two traumatized children? Is the absence of any procedure or agency that should look into the matter at all problematic? The fact that a few years later she also marries her adopted child is particularly troubling. Such concerns may be anachronistic, because nineteenth-century social sensibilities were not yet ripe to see or formulate the issue of adoption and the rights of poor children in such terms. Yet the narrative's own deep probing into such questions in its critical depiction of Michael's adoption by Sir Matthew suggests this kind of awareness, which is now, in the case of Mary as Teddy and Fanny's adoptive parent, discarded.

Mary's character seems immune to any critique that the novel otherwise unhesitatingly levels against the rich and powerful. Her paternalism is legitimized, whereas that of others is deplored. A major difference between Mary's intervention and that of others is that Mary's assistance to Michael, Teddy, and Fanny is the result of an ongoing process of social investigation and a growing political awareness. Her acts of benevolence are represented as the least she can do; she is not a smug, self-flattering benefactress but a social activist experiencing feelings of frustration and despair about her inability to solve broader social problems. Mary's acts are perhaps paternalistic, but this paternalism is based on a deep factual knowledge and moral awareness of the conditions of industrial work. She is different from Dickens's paternalistic gentlemen: not

only in being a woman, which makes her, as Bodenheimer suggests, less of a power figure, but also because her sense of guilt at enjoying the riches accumulated by the exploitation of children denies her a position of superiority toward the three former child laborers she supports. She sees her financial and personal assistance not as altruistic or charitable but as an ethically required paying back; according to her judgment, the money she bestows on her protégés is the product of their (or their fellow workers') labor. Her assistance is therefore offered on the basis of social and economic justice rather than charity. Mary's character can also be construed as maternal, even if her actions are economically propped up by paternal money, the fortune accumulated by her industrialist father. She is an unconventional Angel-of-the-House figure, who takes to the streets as reformer, and then retreats back to the domestic realm where she enjoys her role as the supporter of male figures, Teddy and Michael, who can now acquire higher education and social success.

Yet Mary's protectiveness and intervention may be construed as morally complex. Mary is repeatedly described as interested in shaping or transforming the social position of her inferiors: besides socially elevating Teddy, Fanny, and Michael, she also transforms the social rank of her former nurse from domestic servant to companion, a position usually reserved for a gentlewoman. She enjoys dressing up her nurse as a lady and changing her status in the house, causing a scandal among the neighbors (91). As with Michael, Teddy, and Fanny, whom she loves, she has true feelings for her nurse and therefore prefers her to any other potential companion she may select from her wealthier neighbors, being deterred neither by the woman's lower level of education nor by social conventions. However, the fact that Mary enjoys using the powers that her wealth and social standing grant her, and thus repeatedly manipulates the lives and social identities of her inferiors, exposes the complexity of her largely benevolent intervention in other people's lives. This complexity reaches its climax in her marriage to Teddy, who is not only her social inferior and ten years her junior but is also her adopted son, which suggests that she does not hesitate to transgress the accepted boundaries. Metaphorically incestuous, this marriage to a disabled younger protégé suggests that Mary wishes to form an alliance in which she is certain to maintain supremacy. She ends up surrounded by a family of her own making, consisting of her husband and brother- and sister-in-law,

who are all much younger than she is and who owe their wealth, education, and freedom to her. No wonder that the word "grateful" is repeated more than once in the novel's concluding chapter. Mary's generosity is perhaps not entirely unselfish. The text, however, is not critical of these aspects of her philanthropy and indeed, in this sense, seems to corroborate the kind of paternalism she demonstrates.

But in terms of its narrative function, Mary's philanthropic intervention is not granted the position of a magic solution. Trollope constructs a plot in which the working-class protagonist, though young and enslaved, has to fend for himself and prove his own resolution and independence. This is achieved through a contrived coincidence that frustrates Mary's brilliant plan to rescue Michael from Deep Valley. Because mistakenly reported dead, Michael is abandoned there for years, until he heroically manages to escape the mill-prison on his own initiative. By learning to become self-reliant he is, at sixteen, no longer a helpless child; now, he is a resilient and clever adolescent with budding political awareness. As an emblem of the working-class, the child in *Michael Armstrong* is allowed to grow up into an independent and self-reliant manhood based on valiant resourcefulness. If the representation of the class problem through the figure of a child may have suggested an endorsement of the paternalistic model, Michael's relative independence in the last section indicates that middle-class protection is unnecessary. True, Mary's assistance is instrumental in allowing the lower-class characters to acquire education and social advancement, yet for physical, economic, and moral survival, Michael's own powers were sufficient. Since Michael embodies the working class in this novel, the fact that he is shown to grow up not only in age but also in intellect suggests that the novel envisions a potential process of maturation—a de-infantilization—for Britain's poor. However, it is hard to see the grown Michael as emblematic of his original social group: as a wealthy, university-educated gentleman living in Germany, there is not much left of him at the end that can be associated either with the British or with the poor.

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*Charlotte Brooke's "Mäon" and the Construction of  
Anglo-Irish Identity  
By Lucy Cogan*

Charlotte Brooke's *Reliques of Irish Poetry*, an anthology of translations of Gaelic writings published in the seminal year of 1789, marks a point of departure for modern, self-conscious constructions of the culture of colonized Ireland. Her assimilation of mythemes and symbols across linguistic and cultural barriers reveals much about the evolution of Anglo-Irish identity, particularly in the case of her sole, original English-language poem, "Mäon." Anticipating the concerns of the Irish Literary Revival by over a century, Brooke, like Yeats and Synge after her, sought to uncover an authentic, ancient Irish character, which might accommodate her own identity as an Anglo-Irish protestant. Unlike the Ascendancy writers of the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-centuries, however, Brooke was firmly unionist in her politics. Arguably, it is for this reason that her foundational contribution to the Irish literary tradition is often dismissed or ignored. Her work is implicitly judged through the prism of the political schism brought about by the Rebellion of 1798 and the formal subjugation of Ireland to Britain with the Act of Union of 1801—events which occurred after her death in 1793. Yet, while she is routinely held up as an advocate of late-eighteenth-century Anglo-Irish cultural interests, her carefully cultivated public persona—of a reticent protestant lady exceptionally devoted to her father—has faced little scrutiny.<sup>1</sup> Brooke thus exemplifies the often-fraught interaction between cultural, historical, and political discourses in the self-conscious formation of Anglo-Irish literary subjectivities during this uncertain period in Ireland's history. With "Mäon," subtitled "An Irish Tale," Brooke attempts to bridge the

<sup>1</sup> Little is known of the personal life of the elusive "Miss Brooke"; even the date of her birth is in doubt, some placing it as early as 1740 and others as late as 1760.

distance between translator and author, colonized and colonizer, as she enters into a reciprocal artistic relationship with mythic Ireland.

Consciously engaging with contemporary British literary culture, Brooke modelled her collection on Bishop Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765). Her *Reliques* is comprised of four somewhat arbitrarily delineated categories of verse, including Heroic poems, Odes, Elegies, and Songs, the oldest example of which critics have dated no earlier than the sixteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Her style, a blend of heroic narratives and Ossianic Romanticism, conjures up a world primitive yet noble in its simplicity. Brooke's evocation of Ireland's Celtic pre-history satisfied the eighteenth-century fascination with the question of origins, especially national origins, and the notion of a discourse untainted by contemporary political or social concerns. The cultural paradigm created by Brooke, among others, is often judged to be the result of colonial self-interest, as a selfishly-motivated attempt by a ruling minority at cultural assimilation.<sup>3</sup> However, the primacy of this postcolonial narrative in Irish critical writing has resulted in the undeserved marginalization of Brooke and her *opus*, which was among the first scholarly works to record and disseminate Irish language texts.

In the Preface to the *Reliques*, Brooke frames the work explicitly as a service to her country, championing the unique characteristics of the Irish language and apologizing that she cannot convey its "sublime dignity" more faithfully. She acknowledges candidly that the idiom and vocabulary of the language is often resistant to direct English translation: "there are many complex words that could not be translated literally, without great injury to the original—without being 'false to its sense, and falser to its fame'" (v-vi). Brooke also appends her collection of translations with the text of the Irish language works, reflecting a scholarly seriousness that permeates the project as a whole. All original Irish language material was printed using a specially created typeface intended to represent Gaelic letterforms, which became known as the "Brooke" or, more properly, the "Parker" (Fig. 1) after the designer of the typeface (Deane, *Modernity* 101).

<sup>2</sup> See Robert Welch, *A History of Verse Translation* (37).

<sup>3</sup> See Lesa Ní Mhunchaile, "Anglo Irish Antiquarianism and the Transformation of Irish Identity, 1750-1800" (185).



THE  
**Irish Originals**  
 OF THE  
**HEROIC POEMS.**

I.

Teacht Coñlaoich go héinnn.

Caíms tpaé an boiblaó  
 An curató cróda Coñlaoch  
 An rna múnca gárrca ginnn  
 Ó Dhún-rgaéaig go héinnn  
 Fáste durt a laoch lunn  
 U macáoinn áluinn airmginnn  
 Iy corínus le do éaí nari ndáil  
 Go raburr real an reacrám

3 E

(Figure 1) The Parker typeface

Joseph Leerssen and Lesa Ní Mhunghaile speculate that this conscientious treatment of the original works may be partially in response to the controversy surrounding the provenance of Macpherson's *Ossian* manuscript. Brooke ensures that the authenticity of her Irish language sources is beyond doubt; however, in her edition of the *Reliques*, Ní Mhunghaile notes many deficiencies in the presentation of the material itself. In spite of these flaws, Brooke shows a genuine respect for Gaelic literature unusual for her time, coupled with sensitivity towards the responsibilities of the translator.

As the only poem in the collection without the anchor of an Irish language original, "Mäon" is, perhaps, best described not as "translated from but inspired from Irish tradition," in the words of Patrick Rafroidi (170). With it, Brooke moves past the circumscribed obligations of the translator, creating a work that is related to Gaelic culture but not beholden to it; and this marks the beginning of a distinct Anglo-Irish literary mode. In the introduction to the poem, she identifies it as a "simple lay" relating the tale of Mäon and his love, Moriat. Her biographer Aaron Seymour remarks that it is "extravagantly romantic" and praises it for its passion and its "merit of incident" (xliv-xlv). It is written in standard English ballad form, with four line stanzas of alternating iambic tetrameter and trimeter, betraying, perhaps, the depth of Percy's influence on her poetic sensibility. She employs this same ballad metre in the majority of her translations, providing a sense of orderliness and continuity with the British literary tradition which the looser, more haphazard rhythms of the Irish language originals do not.

The narrative of "Mäon" is based on the mythic-history of the High King later known as Labraid Loingseach from the Cycle of Kings. As a child, Mäon's father and grandfather are slain by his uncle, the usurper Cobthach Caol. Mäon is sent into exile to Munster or, in later versions, to France, returning as an adult to seek revenge. The earliest accounts of the legend appear in the *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, *The Book of Invasions*, a collection of Middle Irish writings dating from the twelfth century. Brooke's retelling draws heavily on the work of eighteenth-century historians and antiquarians, namely Geoffrey Keating, Sylvester O'Halloran and Ferdinando Warner. Among Brooke's sources, the most memorable version is undoubtedly that of Keating. Whether he came to it purely by research or partly by invention is the subject of some debate, but it is by far the goriest and easily the most entertaining. Keating expands on the suffering the young

prince endures at the hands of his uncle, describing how Mäon is forced to eat the hearts of his father and grandfather, followed by a live mouse and its young, “to torture him the more” (198). After the horror of this ordeal, the child becomes hysterically mute, rendering him ineligible for the kingship and sparing his life. Warner also briefly mentions that Cobthach’s barbarities deprive the boy of speech, while earlier versions of the legend typically end the episode with a declaration that Mäon, also spelled Maen or Moen, means dumb or mute in Irish. Brooke follows O’Halloran’s account, making only an oblique reference to the child’s ill-health as the cause of his escape.

Brooke’s “tale” is a conventional romance in the English tradition. The romantic subplot involving the chivalrous Mäon, his lost love, and a rival French princess almost overwhelms the revenge narrative, and the more brutal aspects of the myth are diminished or expunged. Brooke even relegates the murkier moral elements of the legend—such as Cobthach feigning sickness in order to lure Mäon’s father to his death—to the annotations. In the body of the poem, she replaces this narrative thread with vague references to the “bloody pomp” and “gloomy horror” of a battle and an extended account of the heroics of Craftiné, the Bard of the court, who throws himself in front of Cobthach’s sword in order to protect Mäon. She also, more clumsily, stifles the violence of the narrative in her account of Mäon’s revenge on Cobthach on the battlefield, halting the drama at its climax in an ostentatious display of feminine squeamishness:

So his young arm, by vengeance brac’d,  
Shook high its deadly blade!  
.....  
But the soft muse, of war no more  
Will undelighted tell. (382)

Brooke first makes reference to the muse in the introduction to the poem, in what appears to be a conventional invocation of the muse of literary tradition. In the annotations to the work, Brooke herself admits that this may appear too “classical” a reference given the nature of the material (387). However, she warns the reader that her muse is no sweet inhabitant of Pindus’ mount—she “mounts the winds, and rides the storms,” a description more evocative of a nature goddess than a goddess of poetry and inspiration. In the

following stanzas, the violent natural landscape associated with the muse becomes the battlefield where she “With the wild War-song fir’d the soul, / And sped the daring blow!” (336). This is no “soft muse,” Brooke suggests, but the muse of war. Yet this characterisation is in direct conflict with her stated aim in the Preface: to “vindicate” the country’s history, and defend it against the “anti-hipernian” critic who would cast the Irish as “barbarians, descended from barbarians, and ever continuing the same” (42). Her attempt to counteract the image of the barbarian Irish unfortunately left her open to the charge that she was consciously emasculating the culture of a subordinate people.

It is true that Brooke’s vision of Ireland is highly romanticized and helped to establish a long-standing popular association between Irish, “Celtic” culture and a distinctly feminized sensibility. And it is also true that her configuration of Irishness, as a model of primitive cultural heritage and Romantic sensibility, involved the expurgation of less desirable traits in the translation of the culture from Irish to English. This is evident in her editorial choices: the bawdy irreverence that characterized a significant strain of contemporary Irish language culture, epitomised by Brian Merriman’s *Cúirt an Mheán Oíche*, has no place in her collection, nor does the robust nationalism of the *Aisling* genre. The antiquarian focus of the *Reliques* implicitly situates the flowering of the country’s native culture in the distant past, recoverable for scholarly and intellectual purposes but inert as a vessel of contemporary national feeling among the native Irish.<sup>4</sup> Yet, in Brooke’s case, the codification of Ireland as passive and feminine may also have been a function of her position as a female writer, in a period when it was not considered an appropriate occupation for a woman.

In the Preface, after expressing her debt to Charles O’Conor, Sylvester O’Halloran, and General Charles Vallancey,<sup>5</sup> Brooke personalizes the traditional notion of the femininity of the translator, professing that, “My comparatively feeble hand aspires only (like the ladies of ancient Rome) to strew flowers in the paths of these laureled champions of my country” (cxxix). Seymour’s “Memoirs of Miss Brooke” is littered with references to her meekness, virtue, and self-denial, and describes a life of edifying

<sup>4</sup> Clare O’Halloran comments that, although she included some relatively contemporary poems in her collection, Brooke detected in all works of Irish poetry “the imprint of antiquity” (119).

<sup>5</sup> Vallancey was a military engineer with the British army.

suffering and pious religiosity. The “Memoirs” end with what Seymour describes as lines written “under portrait of Miss Brooke by a friend,” praising her as:

Religious, fair, soft, innocent, and gay,  
As evening mild, bright with the morning ray,  
Youthful and wise, in ev’ry grace mature,  
What vestal ever led a life so pure. (cxxxviii)

Echoing this sentiment, Joseph Cooper Walker recounts his difficulty in persuading Brooke to translate a “monody” by Carolan for inclusion in his *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards*, praising her for her “modesty” and a “sweet timidity natural to her sex” (320). Ní Mhunghaile points out, however, that in her private correspondence, Brooke is very capable of defending herself when necessary. And she was ambitious enough to attempt to gain entry into the Royal Irish Academy, which did not formally admit female members until 1949. In the introduction to her edition of the *Reliques*, Ní Mhunghaile speculates that the vision of exaggerated feminine passivity put forward by Brooke’s acquaintances may have been an attempt to “humour her” by corroborating her constructed vision of herself (xxiii). Regardless, her maidenly piety and unthreatening literary mode inoculated Brooke against the kinds of moralistic attacks other—more outspoken and flamboyant female writers such as Sydney Owenson—endured. But, though she did not stray beyond the bounds of acceptable subject matter, Brooke does appear to have found a source of strength in her gender-identification with feminine Ireland.

In the introduction to “Mäon,” Craftiné, the narrator of the poem, speaks directly to Brooke. At first it appears that he has taken the place of the more traditional female muse, but it becomes clear that he is acting as an intermediary, at first relating the muse’s intentions to Brooke and then identifying Brooke herself with the figure of the muse. In Craftiné’s speech, Brooke gives the clearest indication that by “muse” she means the female embodiment of the patriotic spirit of the nation:

For oft the muse, a gentle guest,  
Dwells in a female form;  
And patriot fire, a female breast,

May sure unquestion’d warm. (337)

The conflation of patriotism and female strength is further emphasized in a later passage in which he exhorts her not to shrink from her task and “with zeal [her] timid mind support,” as the muse “deigns [Brooke’s] humble strain / The herald of her claim” (338). This emphasis on female, patriotic writing continues in the body of the poem when Moriat composes a song for Craftiné to sing to Mäon to persuade him to return to Ireland and defeat Cobthach:

Mäon, (she cries) behold my ruin’d land!  
The prostrate wall,—the blood-stain’d field:—  
Behold my slaughter’d sons, and captive sires,  
Thy vengeance imprecate, thy aid demand! (363)

Such invocations were typical of the Irish language *Aisling* genre of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries, vision-poems in which Ireland appeared to a musician or poet in the form of the *Spéirbhean* or sky woman. Lamenting the loss of her freedom, she inspires those who hear her to act to alleviate her suffering. This is a ubiquitous trope in nationalist writing up to the period of the Literary Revival, intended to spur the men of Ireland into action. Vowing to fight on Ireland’s behalf to free her, they also, subtextually, vow to free themselves from an emasculating paradigm. Ní Mhunghaile notes that the patriotic strain present in Brooke’s version of the legend is absent from those of Keating and Warner (159). Her muse is, however, no advocate of violent revolution—though Brooke does refer, somewhat vaguely, in the opening section of “Mäon” to an irrepressible yearning for “freedom,” which the muse stirs in both warrior and poet. Instead, the muse (*via* Craftiné) calls on Brooke to use her literary abilities to raise Ireland in the esteem of her British readership by presenting the charms of the Irish muse to her “sister.” To place this plea in the mouth of a third-century Irish bard seems incongruous and draws the reader’s attention to the contradictory currents running through the work as a whole.

In the *Reliques*, Brooke addresses two distinct groups, the intra-Irish or we-the-Irish, as Leerssen terms it (*Remembrance* 34), and an imagined, ambivalent British audience. In an oft-quoted section of the Preface, Brooke elaborates on her intention to

introduce the British literary audience to the literature of Ireland. She suggests that “the British muse is not yet informed that she has an elder sister in this isle” and hopes that these sisters will act as “sweet ambassadors of cordial union” (cxxxiii). The tone of the Preface, at times assertive, at times defensive, is exemplified by this passage—she assumes British ignorance of the productions of the Irish muse yet places the Irish muse in a position of seniority over her “younger” sister. For Cathal Ó Háinle, the urge to persuade the British of the cultural value and significance of their neighbouring island without challenging the political subordination of Ireland to Britain marks Brooke as an exponent of “cultural unionism” (38).<sup>6</sup> Embracing the legacy of Ossian, Ascendancy antiquarians, including Brooke, Vallancey, and Walker, embarked on a process which would result in the creation of a double national identity. Anglo-Irish scholars mediated the assimilation of the native Gaelic tradition into English language literature *via* translations and collections designed to present a more attractive, sentimental vision of Irishness. But this vision also provided the Anglo-Irish with an identity based on a merging of British and Irish cultural modes.

Later, Brooke vividly argues that “the portion” of the blood of the British muse “which flows in our veins is rather ennobled than disgraced by the mingling tides that descended from our heroic ancestors” (cxxxiv). This striking image of the mingling of British and Irish blood carries an uneasy subtext of contamination or miscegenation and may reveal her anxieties regarding British perceptions of her hybrid identity as an Irish protestant. Brooke navigates the complex boundaries of nation and gender manifested in competing visions of Irish cultural identity and offers the imagined community formed by these “sisters” as an apolitical space in which these issues might be resolved. At this point, it is important to recall that the competing identities of the Catholic Irish and Unionist Ascendancy had not yet solidified into the national divisions which came with the Rebellion of 1798.<sup>7</sup> Charlotte’s father, Henry Brooke, expressed self-contradictory political views that defined him, at times, as virulently anti-Catholic, yet simultaneously

<sup>6</sup> In *Inventing Ireland*, Declan Kiberd further suggests that Brooke “published her *Reliques* to stave off an impending uprising” (30).

<sup>7</sup> See also Seamus Deane, “The Production of Cultural Space in Irish Writing” (6-7).

pro-Irish.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, two of the major figures in eighteenth-century antiquarianism were Irish Catholics: Charles O’Connor and Sylvester O’Halloran, a close friend and mentor of Brooke’s. In *Mere Irish & Fíor Ghael*, Leerssen comments on this phenomenon, noting that during the eighteenth-century, the Gaelic tradition “existed in a symbiosis of sorts with Ascendancy antiquarianism” (332).

Ó Háinle does allow that the unionist position he identifies with Brooke might more generously be viewed as an inclusive, pluralist cosmopolitanism (39). The popularization of translations of Celtic myths and heroic texts in the eighteenth century enabled Irish authors, both Catholic and Protestant, to enter into a critical engagement on the nature of Irish identity within an international context. Brooke’s discussion of the relative merits of the Irish, English, and French muses in the section entitled “Thoughts on Irish Song” shows a willingness to move the discourse beyond the binary of the relative merits of English vs. Irish culture. She begins by praising the Bardic literature of Ireland for its “plaintive tenderness” and “epic mastery,” before reflecting that:

The true poet is ever an enthusiast in his art and enthusiasm is seldom witty. The French abound in works of wit and humour;—the English are more in earnest and therefore fall short of the vivacity of the Gallic muse, but infinitely excel her in all that tends to constitute the vital spirit of poetry. (295-96)

Brooke was speaking with some authority in her discussion of French literature as she was proficient in both French and Italian and, according to Seymour, was known for the accuracy of her French translations (xix). Julia Wright suggests that in emphasizing the dissimilarity between the Irish and French muses, Brooke metaphorically assuages British anxieties regarding the possibility of a Hiberno-French alliance (337). But the portrayal of “Gallia” in “Mäon” betrays no such fear. Much of the narrative takes place in the Gallic court, which is depicted as a site of cultural cross-fertilization—Craftiné entertains the court with his Gaelic, Bardic songs, and Mäon himself is related to the

<sup>8</sup> Henry Brooke was accused of Jacobitism due to the contentious themes in his play, *Gustavus Vasa*, which opened in London in 1739. Yet he evinced strongly anti-Catholic views in his *Farmer’s Letters to the Protestants of Ireland* (1745), warning Protestants to be watchful for signs of restiveness in the Catholic population in the aftermath of the Jacobite rising in Scotland.

Gallic king. In the denouement, Mäon enlists the help of the Gallic army to lead a rebellion against his uncle and free the Irish people.<sup>9</sup> In her introduction to the “War Odes,” Brooke outlines her vision of the shared history of the Gaelic Bard and the French Troubadour, tracing a common ancestry back to the Roman accounts of the Celtic Bards of the Gauls. She laments the loss of French and German works of antiquity, which have not been treated with the same care as those of the Irish language tradition. Far from diminishing Irish culture by restricting it to an ancient, pre-modern period, she treats the richness of Gaelic literature as evidence of cultural sophistication.

What emerged in Brooke’s wake was a literature that eschewed the overtly political inflections that characterised manifestations of national sentiment elsewhere in Europe during this period. But to analyze the value of the *Reliques* purely in terms of colonial power constructs is to elide the complexity of this major contribution to Irish literary history. The Irish literary tradition existed, during the late-eighteenth-century, at the point of intersection between conflicting and, at times, incompatible linguistic constructions of identity. Yet the assumption that Brooke intended to provide Englishness with a soft, feminine counterpart—an “Other,” against which to define itself—is only one possible reading of her work. The emergence of the Anglo-Irish tradition, as it is represented by Brooke’s work, is a respectful, if imperfect, attempt at the integration of two cultures within a private, female sphere in which colonial and gender power constructs are scrambled. Furthermore, in introducing the British muse to her Irish sister, Brooke succeeded in opening up the world of Gaelic literature to her Anglo-Irish counterparts, a legacy which was to reverberate for decades to come. Indeed, the writers of the Irish Literary Revival, who were to witness their country’s difficult birth as an independent nation and were later revered as the progenitors of a new and distinctly Irish cultural identity, were working within a tradition first configured by Brooke.

*University College, Dublin*

<sup>9</sup> Given the fast-approaching reality of the French-backed Rebellion of 1798, this particular turn of events takes on an odd resonance.

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*Freud's Uncanny: The Role of the Double in*

*Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights*

*By Morteza Jafari*

Many literary works employ the theme of the double or doppelganger, a device which enables us to examine and explore the conflicts of the personality. The double expresses the opposition between good and evil, beauty and ugliness, reason and instinct. Freud argues that, through the double, one is able to extend oneself; having a doppelganger meant that one was indestructible. For example, in *Jane Eyre*, Bertha Mason acts as a double for Jane, representing two sides of one Self; similarly, Isabella Linton's docile and meek character casts her as a double for the passionate Catherine Earnshaw in *Wuthering Heights*. Sigmund Freud's 1919 essay, "The Uncanny," offers important insights on this topic; as a direct response to the psychiatrist Ernst Jentsch's "On the Psychology of the Uncanny," Freud explores Hoffman's *The Sandman* as an archetypal source for both literary and psychological doubling. The uncanny is associated with a series of related topics such as telepathy, double or doppelganger, death, madness, animism, and claustrophobia. Freud argues that "the uncanny" occurs when something alien is presented in a familiar context or setting or vice versa. For the purposes of this discussion, the terms "doubling" and "alter ego" are interchangeable.

The double refers to a representation of the ego that can assume various forms: shadow, reflection, portrait, and twin. The figure of the double dates back to primitive civilizations, as shown in legends and literature (Zivkovic 122-23); it is essential to Freud's concept of the uncanny, "which appears in every shape and in every degree of development" (Freud 371). Freud borrows an explanation of "the uncanny" from Otto Rank's investigations of "the connections which the double has with reflections in

mirrors, with shadows, with guardian spirits, with the belief in the soul and with the fear of death" (370).

Freud believed that the double often stems from some kind of repressed thought, thus it is an emotion far different than that of fear and deserves another name; by choosing "the uncanny," he associates the experience of the double with the ego's evolutionary development. This is based on the idea that, from man's evolutionary beginnings, the ego has developed in humans gradually, and through this evolution it has developed the double in many forms to protect itself from dying off. In terms of the alter ego, Freud believed that this early stage of psychological evolution was one of overbearing narcissism, the "old surmounted narcissism of earliest times" (370). The ideal being was in love with itself, thus it created the double in a futile denial of the power of death. As humans evolved, the double, rather than protecting against death, reversed itself and became the "harbinger of death" (372), and it is this dynamic that is associated with "the uncanny." According to Freud, man is subconsciously aware of his mortality and finds expression for its inevitability through arts and letters. Thus, in literature, the reason for the use of a mirror to develop the double becomes apparent. The image reflected in the mirror satisfies the soul's narcissistic cravings for a double in order to defend itself from dying out.

### *The "Other Woman" as doppelganger in Jane Eyre*

The literary double was a common phenomenon in the Victorian Age, most famously seen in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Using a double or foil "serves to stress and highlight the distinctive temperament of the protagonist" (Abrams 225); it also implies that there is a deeper level, a hidden side, to the protagonist that the double possibly embodies. A divided self composed of a true self hidden from society and a false self displayed to society is an idea which doubling might lead to: "As Clair Rosenfeld points out, 'the novelist who consciously or unconsciously exploits psychological Doubles' frequently juxtaposes 'two characters, the one representing the socially acceptable or conventional personality, the other externalizing the free, uninhibited, often criminal self'" (qtd. in Gilbert and Gubar 360).

It is in *Jane Eyre's* red room episode that the issue of doubling is first explored. That Jane has a counterpart who acts out her own mental tumult is foreshadowed in the passage when she is looking into the mirror (Gilbert and Gubar 340). As she gazes at herself in the dim light, Jane muses: "I had to cross before the looking glass; my fascinated glance involuntarily explored the depth it revealed" (Bronte, *JE* 9). Jane is treated like a "mad cat": "If you don't sit still, you must be tied down" (7), Bessie warns—an admonition having a deeper meaning than is obvious at first. Literally, if Jane does not calm down inside the red room, Bessie will have to tie her down; but the deeper meaning hints that if Jane does not calm down throughout the rest of her life, society will metaphorically tie her down. Such is the case with Jane's double, Bertha Mason Rochester, who is locked up because she cannot "sit still."

Throughout the novel, there is a mysterious presence in Thornfield Hall that creates an eerie atmosphere of secrecy and concealment. A woman's laugh is described by Jane as "curious...distinct, formal, mirthless...as tragic, as preternatural a laugh as any I ever heard" (Bronte, *JE* 92-93); when Rochester's bed is set on fire, the laugh is "demonic...low, suppressed, and deep" (129). Richard Mason, injured while visiting his sister in the mysterious attic room, is nursed by Jane while Rochester fetches the doctor: "She bit me," cries Mason, "She worried me like a tigress" (208), an image recalling Jane's earlier depiction as a "mad cat." Later, Mason says "she sucked the blood; she said she'd drain my heart" (209). Halfway through the novel, it is finally revealed that there is a "madwoman living in the attic" of Thornfield Hall (Gilbert and Gubar 355), and that this woman is none other than Rochester's wife. Bertha Mason Rochester, a once beautiful and wealthy Creole, has been declared insane and locked in the attic by Rochester, who hopes his secret will never be revealed.

The function of Bertha Mason in the novel is a complex one. It seems likely that Bertha Mason is meant to be Jane's alter ego. She can be viewed as both an external double and a projected double to Jane (Lewis); she is what Jane could be if she marries Rochester on unequal terms. Milica Zivkovic asserts, "as an imagined figure, a soul, a shadow, a ghost or a mirror reflection that exists in a dependent relation to the original, the double pursues the subject as his second self and makes him feel as himself and the other at the same time" (122). By using Bertha Mason as Jane's double, Charlotte Bronte

explores Jane's struggle against the entrapment of marriage and her relation to madness. The main confrontation in the novel is not between Jane and Rochester but between Jane and Bertha: when the two come face to face, Jane must confront her own "imprisoned 'hunger, rebellion, and rage'" (Gilbert and Gubar 339).

The maniacal Bertha Mason actually personifies that part of Jane's personality that longs to live free but is oppressed by society. Drew Lamonica notes, "in many ways, Bertha is the adult personification of the child Jane at Gateshead: she is the passionate dependent who must be restrained; the 'bad animal' who must be locked away; the 'heterogeneous thing' Jane sees in the mirror before her wedding, which recalls Jane's own distorted image in the red room's mirror" (83). Throughout her young life, Jane lives under some form of tyranny. Whether she passes her days as an abused and unwanted ward, a mistreated pupil, or a subdued governess, she never feels truly free. Although she outwardly accepts her lot in life, she often wonders to herself why she must endure pain and why people oppress her; locked in the red room, she asks herself why she is "always suffering, always browbeaten, always accused, forever condemned" (Bronte, *JE* 10) and asserts that her treatment is unjust. Unfortunately, she cannot escape oppression but only alter its form by moving from place to place, each subsequent spatial environment reflecting her internal evolution and psychological maturation.

Bertha Mason's life epitomizes oppression. Locked away in Thornfield's third storey, her only freedom comes when her caregiver, Grace Poole, falls into a drunken sleep, and she can sneak around the house. Bertha is locked as tightly in her secluded room as Jane is locked into her subordinate role; Drew Lamonica states, "while Bertha is victimized by the Rochesters and the Masons for her money and imprisoned in the third storey of Thornfield, Jane is comparably victimized by the Reed family because she has no money, imprisoned in the red room of Gateshead" (84).

Bertha is obviously meant to contrast with Jane dramatically and, in Rochester's vivid description of the two women, the distinction is made clear: "Compare these clear eyes with the red balls yonder—this face with that mask—this form with that bulk" (Bronte, *JE* 290). According to Pat Macpherson, "By juxtaposing these two women [characters], Bronte creates subliminal comparisons, connections, even communications between them, and the reader feels or intimates these as the delicious tension of the

gothic, the extraordinarily pleasurable fear called the uncanny" (11). For Rochester, Jane is everything that is rational, pure, and good, whereas Bertha is passionate, tainted, and beastly. Or, as Gilbert and Gubar explain: "Jane, after all, is poor, plain, little, pale, neat, and quiet, while Bertha is rich, large, florid, sensual, and extravagant" (361). The two women are opposites in many ways, yet Bertha is also Jane's double: she represents Jane's urge to give in to passions, to rebel, to act like a mad cat and not to live up to Rochester's expectations. Bertha also represents the loss of self that Jane fears. The double acts as a representation of a divided self: primarily, it is this sense of the divided self that is reflected in the pervasive image of the doppelganger. In other words, the use of a double for a character symbolizes the idea that the protagonist is somehow internally divided and that this division is mirrored in the (external) double (Zivkovic 123-24). Thus, Bertha's extravagance and Jane's repression are tested through the medium of anger:

Every one of Bertha's appearances...has been associated with an experience (or repression) of anger on Jane's part. Jane's feelings of "hunger, rebellion, and rage" on the battlements, for instance, were accompanied by Bertha's "low, slow, ha! ha!" and "eccentric murmurs." Jane's apparently secure response to Rochester's apparently egalitarian sexual confidences was followed by Bertha's attempt to incinerate the master in his bed...Jane's anxieties about her marriage, and in particular her fears of her own alien "robed and veiled" bridal image, were objectified by the image of Bertha in a "white and straight" dress. (Gilbert and Gubar 360)

This passage makes a central claim: that disguised or latent feelings in Jane are made manifest through Bertha. If Jane can be perceived as an angel in the Thornfield house, Bertha represents its demon; both rebel against their containment within "family enforced prisons." Bertha replays Jane's childhood rebellion, when she rebuked Mrs. Reed "like something mad, or like a fiend"; the mad Bertha burns Rochester's bed and house "in defiance of his control." Both Jane and Bertha draw blood from their blood relations,



Jane in her retaliation against John Reed and Bertha in her attack on her brother Richard (Lamonica 84).

Bertha represents Jane's repressed self, "Jane's truest and darkest double: she is the angry aspect of the orphan child, the ferocious secret self Jane has been trying to repress ever since her days at Gateshead" (Gilbert and Gubar 360). Jane is torn between her love for Rochester and the social conformity required of a "good" woman; but after the encounter with her doppelganger Bertha, Jane knows that she cannot stay at Thornfield Hall and leaves Rochester and the madwoman behind. Here, Jane behaves rationally, refusing either to compromise her integrity through bigamy or to be the mistress of this "sultan." She fears ending up like Bertha—if not literally trapped in an attic then in the red room of Victorian patriarchy as Rochester's mistress. At the end of the novel, after Thornfield and Bertha are destroyed, Jane is financially independent, and Rochester is symbolically castrated by blindness, the two can finally marry. In other words, the patriarchal house of Thornfield Hall and the madwoman trapped inside must be destroyed before Jane can marry Rochester on equal terms. Like the chestnut tree split by lightning, Jane remains rooted in her own integrity by refusing to compromise herself—even, perhaps especially, for love. "To be together is for us to be at once as free as in solitude, as gay as in company" (Bronte, *JE* 445-46)—indicates that the couple are soul-mates, an aspect of doubling more fully developed in *Wuthering Heights*.

### *The Soul-mate as Double in Wuthering Heights*

In the same year as *Jane Eyre's* publication, Charlotte's sister Emily published *Wuthering Heights* under the pseudonym, Ellis Bell. The novel with its Gothic aspects plays with the idea of doubles throughout the story. The rich and lavish world of Thrushcross Grange inhabited by the Lintons offers a dramatic contrast to the stormy and intense world of *Wuthering Heights* where Heathcliff and Catherine grow up. In the words of Gilbert and Gubar, "People with decent Christian names (Catherine, Nelly, Edgar, Isabella) inhabit a landscape in which also dwell people with strange animal or nature names (Hindley, Hareton, Heathcliff)" (259). Likewise, Emily Bronte distinguishes between the passionate and strong-willed Catherine Earnshaw and the ostensibly meek and docile Isabella Linton. Along with the use of doubling in the novel,

Bronte employs the idea of madness to show Catherine's mental deterioration once separated from her other half, Heathcliff.

As a child, Catherine is compared negatively to her counterpart, Isabella Linton. Despite Isabella's docile characterization, the window scene at the Grange is notable for her frantic hysteria, as she and Edgar quarrel over their pet dog. The absurdity of the scene and the two spoiled children's reaction is commented on by Heathcliff: "The idiots!... We laughed outright at the petted things, we did despise them!" (Bronte, *WH* 43). This scene contrasts dramatically with Catherine's reaction when the Linton's bulldog attacks her: "She did not yell out—no!" Heathcliff admiringly tells Nelly. "She would have scorned to do it, if she had been spitted on the horns of a mad cow!" (43). Here, Bronte establishes a radically different image of the two girls than is generally assumed: Isabella is hysterical while Catherine remains dignified; Isabella is weak and spoiled while Catherine is strong and brave. It is also interesting to note that on both occasions, a dog is involved, an animal Isabella later associates with Heathcliff, "the mad dog." As Catherine's double, Isabella "serves to stress and highlight the distinctive temperament" of Catherine (Abrams 225).

When Isabella's rebellious streak prompts her to elope with Heathcliff, Catherine knows that she will never be able to deal with him nor could Heathcliff ever love someone like Isabella. "Isabella's bookish upbringing has prepared her to fall in love with (of all people) Heathcliff" (Senf 92) but not to deal with the consequences. Once again, Bronte shows us the difference between the two women: Isabella is fragile, with fine manners; she is shy and timid in the presence of Heathcliff and represents civilization, while Catherine is wild, cruel, and represents untamed nature. Isabella can be tamed by Heathcliff; Catherine will not.

Catherine's self is torn between what she desires and what she obtains. When Edgar proposes to Catherine, she accepts and tells Nelly that the reason she loves Edgar is because "he's handsome, and pleasant to be with... And because he's young and cheerful... And, because he loves me" (Bronte, *WH* 74). Finally, one of her main motives for entering into a marriage with Edgar is revealed: "And he will be rich, and I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighborhood, and I shall be proud of having such a husband" (74). As Nelly quickly realizes, Catherine's motives are completely superficial,

and her love for Edgar is shallow; but Catherine also feels she is making a wrong decision by marrying Edgar: "in whichever place the soul lies—in my soul, and in my heart, I'm convinced that I'm wrong" (76)—wrong because of her love for Heathcliff. She significantly differentiates between the two men by saying that her love for Edgar is "like the foliage in the wood. Time will change it," while her love for Heathcliff "resembles the eternal rocks beneath." Dramatically, Catherine exclaims: "Nelly, I am Heathcliff!" (77).

Clearly, the Catherine who dies is not the Catherine from the beginning of the novel; Nelly tells Heathcliff, "I'll inform you Catherine Linton is as different now from your old friend Catherine Earnshaw, as that young lady is different from me" (Bronte, *WH* 143). By marrying a man she does not love instead of running free on the moors with the man she does love, Catherine Earnshaw is divided into two people. She has a double identity: what Edgar and Isabella see is a kind and polite, sweet and caring woman; what her family sees is one always ready to hurt. If someone thwarts her, she wants to properly punish that person. The Lintons never see this rougher side to her, except for one occasion, when Ellen Dean does not leave the room quickly enough: "supposing Edgar could not see her, [Catherine] snatched the cloth from my hand, and pinched me, with a prolonged wrench, very spitefully on the arm....She stamped her foot, wavered a moment, and then irresistibly impelled by the naughty spirit within her, slapped me on the cheek: a stinging blow that filled both eyes with water" (61). Although Edgar has been forewarned by this display, he fails to take the hint.

As a result of her progressive madness, Catherine is subject to frenzies; after a confrontation between Heathcliff and Edgar, Nelly finds her on the bedroom floor: "There she lay dashing her head against the arm of the sofa, and grinding her teeth, so that you might fancy she would crash them to splinters...her hair flying over her shoulders, her eyes flashing, the muscles of her neck, and arms standing out preternaturally" (Bronte, *WH* 114). Catherine isolates herself in her bedroom and refuses all food in protest of Edgar and Heathcliff's behavior towards each other. Her theatrics seem staged to provoke a reaction out of Nelly and Edgar. Yet, at times, real madness does overtake Catherine, as in the scene in which she does not recognize her own face in the mirror. When she asks Nelly, "Don't you see that face?" Nelly tries to reason with

her; but "say what I could, I was incapable of making her comprehend it to be her own; so I rose and covered it with a shawl." Despite Nelly's attempt to cover the object of distress, Catherine continues to be upset about the face in the mirror: "It's behind there still!...And it stirred. Who is it? I hope it will not come out when you are gone!" (119).

The scene is reminiscent of Jane's inability to recognize the white face in the mirror in the red room and later, at Thornfield Hall, to distinguish her bridal reflection. The face that Catherine "sees in the mirror is neither Gothic nor alien—though she is alienated from it—but hideously familiar, and...proof that her madness may really equal sanity. Catherine sees in the mirror an image of who and what she has really become in the world's terms: 'Mrs. Linton, the lady of Thrushcross Grange'" (Gilbert and Gubar 283). In other words, Catherine does not recognize herself because Edgar's wife is not truly who she is; her sense of who she is—the other half of Heathcliff—is not reflected in the mirror.

While Catherine, led by social ambition, marries a man that she does not love, Isabella marries Heathcliff to spite Cathy and take possession of Wuthering Heights. Drew Lamonica states, "Isabella's marriage and movement from Thrushcross Grange to Wuthering Heights parallels Catherine's: the two families exchange their daughters/sisters, though Isabella's marriage is not approved by her brother as Catherine's is approved by Hindley" (109). The theme of a divided self is emphasized throughout, even to the end of the novel, where we read that three headstones can be found on the slope of the moor: Edgar's and Heathcliff's, with Catherine's in between—in death as in life, her soul divided between the two men who broke her heart.

The character Bertha Mason represents Jane's repressed self and manifests her anger against Rochester. This doppelganger finds expression when Jane's "darkest" double is replaced by another kind of double: Rochester as her soul-mate. Similarly, if Heathcliff can be considered the main protagonist of *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine Earnshaw is the dominant female spirit that haunts the novel. But as a double for both the ill-fated Isabella Linton and for her own soul-mate, Heathcliff, Catherine's divided self never achieves satisfactory resolution.

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*Republicanism, Regicide and  
"The Musgrave Ritual"*

*by Richard Jacobs*

When settling down to enjoy detective stories generally, and perhaps Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories in particular, readers expect that such texts are unlikely to intervene, explicitly or implicitly, in history or historical debates. At the least, there is a presumed conservatism about the genre, with solutions to crimes metonymically representing support for the status quo. It is in the light of these expectations and assumptions that Conan Doyle's "The Musgrave Ritual" is such an unusual text.

This paper seeks to explore and articulate the unusual nature of this story, its engagement with 17<sup>th</sup>-century history and the contested nature of that engagement, coming as it does out of what appears as both royalist and republican, conservative and radical, perspectives. The paper articulates those contested perspectives in terms of the connection between 17<sup>th</sup>-century history and the 1890s class-system. It is hoped that a reading of "The Musgrave Ritual" as outlined here, which brings together the historical and the psychoanalytic in its discussion of suppressed or repressed events, will contribute to the significant work on this text offered by Peter Brooks in *Reading for the Plot* (1984) and by Nils Clauss in the "Anomalous Narrative" (1985).

English readers of a certain age may remember having to learn at school a rhyme designed to make children memorize the names of the kings and queens of England, from William I to Victoria (when, apparently, history stopped). The couplet dealing with the period between Mary and James II goes like this:

Mary, Bessie, James the Vain,  
Charlie, Charlie, James again.

The rhyme celebrates, in the friendliest possible way ("Dick the Bad" and "James the Vain" are the closest it gets to not tugging its forelock) the unbroken chain of monarchy so that children can internalize it as a genealogy as true as those in the Old Testament and as natural as playground chant. This is a chain intended to be as inseparable from Englishness as the Constitution, the Class-System and the Great Chain of Being. As naturalized history (history masquerading as nature), it's a good example of what Barthes called myth. The unbroken chain in "The Musgrave Ritual" goes like this:

"Whose was it?"

"His who is gone."

"Who shall have it?"

"He who will come." (Doyle 106)

Holmes translates at the close of the tale: "Whose was it?" "His who is gone" as the execution of Charles I. Then, "Who shall have it?" "He who will come" is Charles II, whose advent was already foreseen (115).

The editing out from history of England's revolution and republic is not altogether a surprise. Even today, university students in Britain express surprise on hearing about that history. The execution of Charles I comes as a considerable shock to them. So it is of particular interest that we can take a piece of mainstream popular fiction, a Sherlock Holmes short story, and read it as an engagement with this editing of history—both reproducing that act of forgetting and dramatizing an urgent attempt to recover that history, the history of revolution and regicide. That is what this analysis proposes to do with "The Musgrave Ritual."

This case was Holmes's break-through to successful eminence. His crucial realization is that the ritual, meaningless to the Musgrave family over the generations, may provide the answer to the other puzzles presented to him at the outset, perhaps the "starting-point of this chain of events" (106). By realizing what Brunton has realized, namely that the ritual was designed to preserve the Stuart crown after the execution of Charles I, Holmes reads or re-reads (after Brunton) the ritual, traces Brunton, finds him, extrapolates a possible cause of his death in what the jilted Rachel Howells may (or may not) have done, and restores the crown itself.

This very unusual story has been lucky enough to attract the attention of Peter Brooks, whose well-known analysis in *Reading for the Plot* starts from Todorov's positing that the detective story genre is the "narrative of narratives" (25) in its exemplary demonstration of the relations between *sjuzet* (inquest) and *fabula* (crime). Brooks argues that "The Musgrave Ritual" affords the further opportunity to demonstrate, again in a very pure form, the relations between metaphor (the incomprehensible ritual) and metonymy (the plotting out of its meaning both spatially and temporally, the going over again of the ground).

It is particularly helpful to the historical-psychoanalytic reading offered in this paper that Brooks's discussion is further refined by being placed within a Freudian economy of desire. The desire of the protagonists (Brunton's to obtain, Holmes's to explain), which is mapped in turn on to the reader's desire (to connect everything together, but by diversionary rather than summary means), is identified by Brooks as the figure of Eros, the pleasure principle. And Eros is itself shadowed and completed by Thanatos, the death instinct, in quiescence and closure when the totalizing metaphor-process brings the metonymic chain to a halt.

Brooks also makes the crucial point—one that makes this story highly unusual—that the *fabula* of the apparent crime or crimes opens out onto a "deeper level of *fibula*" (26), history itself in the form of the (metonymic) Stuart crown which the ritual has accidentally preserved, its meaning to be restored as the history of the abolition and restoration of the monarchy itself. To develop Brooks's point, it might be added that the restoration of the monarchy is positioned as the totalizing metaphor of closure that is, in effect, the end of history, and that the story neatly positions the complementary beginning of history in its mention of the oak-tree (central to the plot as plotted space) as having been "there at the Norman Conquest" (Doyle 109), where history, in the children's history-book sense, begins.

This opening out onto history itself is indeed unusual for a detective story, and that should alert us to the highly unusual way in which that history is mediated and indeed contested in the tale, as proposed below. But we might first mention other unusual features of this tale, which have been well-noted in Nils Clausson's important analysis.

Two features that Clausson singles out for comment are, first, the very unusual nature of the crime or crimes (is throwing stolen property into a lake a crime?) and the fact that the crime that would have been much more serious (murder as opposed to theft) is very possibly not a crime at all (it might have been an accident) and nor is it solved (the possible murderer has vanished). Secondly, and very pointedly, Clausson observes that in his "solution" of the crime (which, despite noting that it might not have been a crime but an accident, Holmes insists on twice calling a crime), Holmes resorts not to clinical deduction but to melodramatic invention—the recycling of Gothic clichés in his presumed reconstruction of what Brunton's accomplice Rachel Howells did (or did not do) when she found (or did not find) her ex-lover in her power:

What smouldering fire had suddenly sprung into flame in this passionate Celtic woman's soul...? I seemed to see that woman's figure...flying wildly up the winding stair, with her ears ringing perhaps with the muffled screams from behind her and with the drumming of frenzied hands against the slab of stone which was choking her faithless lover's life out. (Doyle 114)

As Clausson points out, this is exactly what Holmes usually warns sternly against in crime-solving—using fantasy and not deductive logic. Despite the "I seemed to see" and the "perhaps," this is Holmes as bad novelist; as a "solution" (as Holmes himself puts it, he must "reconstruct this...drama" [113]), this is what we might describe as the bathetic level of *fabula* to complement what Brooks calls the "deeper level of *fibula*" (26), the "solution" that is recovered and reconstructed history. The two solutions—what it was that Holmes presumes Rachel did, as melodrama, and what the ritual means, as history—come pointedly together as the double-climax to the "plot" at the end (Rachel / Ritual), and one effect of this is to achieve an uneasy collusion between them. Early Modern History—that strange interloper into the Holmesian discursive realm—becomes, because of Holmes's equally strange excursion into what he normally demonizes (fantasy), a history contaminated or melodramatized.

That process is made clear enough in the last paragraph of the story where Musgrave was, preposterously but appropriately, allowed to pay the British State "a

considerable sum" (Doyle 116) to keep the Stuart crown as a family heirloom. This is appropriate because, in "real" history, that would obviously have been impossible—and the story thus collapses out of history into sentimental melodrama. That collapse is confirmed when Holmes advises Watson, with lordly insouciance, that if he "mentioned my name they would be happy to show it [the crown] to you."

Is this a history discursively presented from a royalist or a republican perspective? It is both, and the effect is that we have a contested as well as a contaminated history. And the contest between perspectives on or readings of history is complemented by contestation at the level of plot between three men (Rachel is a mere plot-device, her Welshness a thin excuse for an "excitable...temperament" [Doyle 101]), the relations between whom are intricately patterned in ways that Eve Sedgwick, in her influential *Between Men* (1985), characterizes as symptomatic in many narratives where male-male relations underpin and shadow the overt heterosexually-driven plot.

A pointedly ambivalent gesture is Holmes's habit—what Watson calls "one of his queer humours"—of indoor pistol practice, "adorn[ing] the opposite wall with a patriotic V.R. done in bullet-pocks" (Doyle 96). Whether representing republican mock-regicide or a royalist salute, "patriotic" may well be an irony lost on Watson. Regina / Regicide / Reginald are signifiers that slide together in this text, as do other names and words. Holmes's pistol practice corresponds to the ambivalence in his relations with officialdom and authority. He represents and enacts (especially for the criminal) state-apparatus style authority (VR as patriotic salute) but he does so by working (in a way that becomes prototypical for later detective fiction) as a free agent, anti-authoritarian in temperament and personal habits, and outside the official structures of authority (VR as republican insolence).

The relations between Holmes and Brunton are intricately established from the start. Watson notes that Holmes's "criminal relics" had a way of "wandering into unlikely positions" (Doyle 96) in their lodgings, and that Holmes was, after his "remarkable feats," subject to "lethargy during which he would lie about with his violin and his books" (97). The second word of the text (well discussed by Clausson) is "anomaly" (96), an idea variously applied to Brunton. Originally a schoolmaster "out of place," the anomaly of a butler with the habit of "wandering into unlikely positions" (in his case

jobs, his master's easy-chairs, hidden cellars) and with "extraordinary gifts—for he can speak several languages and play nearly every musical instrument," a man of "great energy" who nevertheless "lacked energy" (101), Brunton is clearly positioned as someone whom Holmes (feats and lethargy contending) cannot but feel threatened by as rival (as if duplicated, as if Brunton makes Holmes feel "out of place") and whom he must follow after "upon his trail" (110) by, literally, going over the same ground and wandering into unlikely positions.

Holmes is positioned at the outset as "panting" (Doyle 100) for a chance to prove his gifts; Brunton, when we first learn of him, is "insatiable" (101) about matters that Musgrave says should not concern him. Most striking is the duplication (eventually revealed as such to the alert reader) of the highly emblematic picture at the story's climax (about which more below): this is prepared for at the outset when Holmes is seen "squatting down" (97) in front of a large box, throwing back its lid and removing what we then learn are the "relics" of the case that "are history" (98), and that have wandered into their new position in his box.

When Holmes describes how the Musgrave case allowed him to "trace my first stride toward the position which I now hold" (Doyle 99), he establishes his current position of eminence as duplicate and rival to Musgrave's social eminence, thus asserting middle-class brains over upper-class title. But he also establishes the ground-work (what Brooks means by plot in the geographical sense: something to be paced) of the plot of the story. This involves Holmes' tracing and then duplicating Brunton's strides ("on the right road" and "put[ting] myself in the man's place" are the words Holmes uses [109, 112]) towards the position or place where he can finally discover and out-rival Brunton himself, the lower-class servant who "attempted change of place" (Brooks 26).

In his relations with Reginald Musgrave, Holmes is engaged, just as Brunton is, in outdoing and outsmarting the aristocrat; but the contradictory elements in Holmes's opening account of Musgrave reveal a tension between republican and royalist impulses, as well as contradictions in Holmes's middle-class professional's attitude towards this aristocratic, Oxford-educated college-friend. The first odd note struck is that, while Oxford contemporaries disliked Musgrave for his "pride" (Brunton calls himself "proud" [Doyle 99, 103]), Holmes considers it rather to be "diffidence." So which is it? Here

Holmes aligns himself with a royalist reading, as he does in the same passage where he picks out for comment Musgrave's "keen face" and "keen interest" (99)—a word we would more naturally associate with Holmes and his intelligence. It is not only that other descriptors of Musgrave in the passage strike a very different note—"languid," "suave," "bit of a dandy" (99-100)—but the entire plot hangs on the fact that Musgrave and at least most of his ancestors are not at all keen but stupid—specifically, stupidly bad readers of the ritual, with none of the "clearer insight" (107) that Brunton and Holmes bring as readers to that text.

The bad reading is a particularly arrogant kind of obtuseness—here, the unreflecting assumption that a chain of signifiers can be so completely empty of meaning as to serve just to prop up the succession of a series of male aristocrats coming into their property. Holmes, sensing the opportunity for his career that Musgrave is about to offer him, says that he knew he "could succeed where others failed" (Doyle 100). This is, in effect, what Brunton realizes about his employer and his ancestors: as failed readers, they give him, the servant, the opportunity to "master" (Holmes's word) the formula (108).

Relations are also closely established between Musgrave (Reginald / Rex) and the Stuart kings. This is not only clear from the detail, revealed at the end, that the first Musgrave was "the right-hand man of Charles II" (Doyle 115) but is more subtly suggested in Musgrave's opening remark to Holmes: "you probably heard of my poor father's death....He was carried off about two years ago. Since then I have, of course, had the Hurlstone estates to manage" (100). As in the children's rhyme, this reproduces the seamless transition from Charles I (who was carried off in a rather more brutal sense—off the scaffold) to Charles II.

The same seamless transition, the editing out of the republic, is shown again in the passage just cited from the last pages. We hear that the first Musgrave was "the right-hand man of Charles II in his wanderings": we have seen how "wanderings" applies both to Holmes and Brunton (and "relics"). But the immediate point is that in his wanderings Charles cannot, by definition, yet be called Charles II—although he is, as if there was no intervening republic. In the same passage, Holmes observes that "the royal party made head in England even after the death of the king" (Doyle 115). And, as in "carried off," we can't help but notice the potential for a ghoulish pun in "made head."

Peter Brooks's phrase for Brunton's crime is "attempted usurpation" (26), and the word, with its revolutionary implications, is well-chosen. The next task is to develop those implications in light of the patterns (traced above) shared by the three protagonists and the Stuart kings.

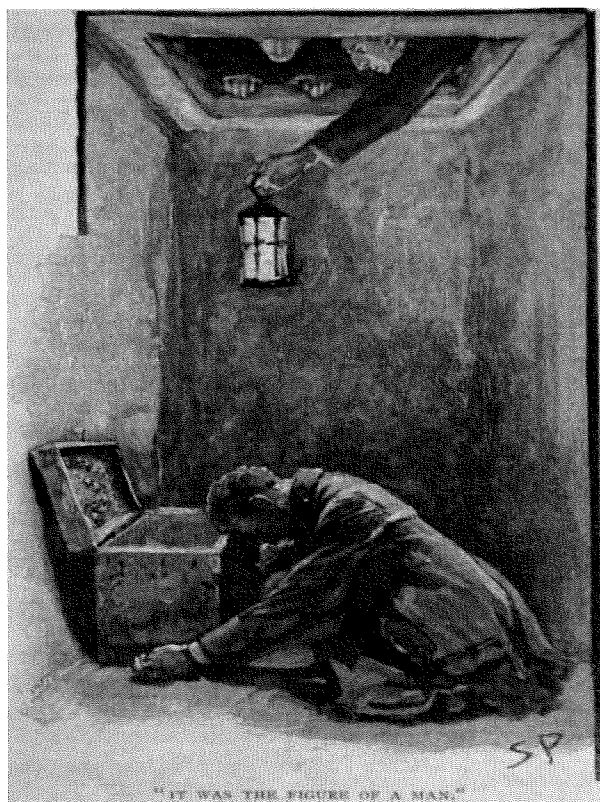
One starting point is the word Musgrave uses when outlining to Holmes the mystery of Brunton's disappearance from the house: it was "incredible...that he could have gone away leaving all his property behind him" (Doyle 105). The larger implication of the term "property" is that what this servant wants is to "master" or assert ownership and power as conventionally represented in the forms of house and land. And not just the house and land of Hurlstone but, on behalf of his class, the houses and lands of the country: for the logic of the reading advanced in this paper is that Brunton is, in the patterns here explored, Cromwell. We do well to remember that it was issues of property, in terms of the right to vote, that divided the leaders of the revolution and the Commonwealth.

What happens to Brunton because of his presumption to Cromwellian usurpation is the richly emblematic figure presented to Holmes at the end of his tracing of Brunton's steps:

It was the figure of a man, clad in a suit of black, who squatted down upon his hams with his forehead sunk upon the edge of the box and his two arms thrown out on each side of it. The attitude had drawn all the stagnant blood to the face, and no man could have recognized that distorted liver-coloured countenance....he had been dead some days. (Doyle 12)

Again, this could be murder or an accident; despite Holmes's coercive reading of it as Rachel's crime of murder, it doesn't really matter, insofar as the emblematic suggestiveness of that picture is more telling than its immediate cause. More to the point, perhaps, this emblem had been significantly prefigured at the story's beginning, with Holmes "squatting down" in front of a large box, from which he takes out the "relics" of the tale and proceeds to tell it (97-98).





But Brunton is dead and the details of the position of his head and his arms in relation to the box are unmistakably those of a man about to be executed. That is, the vengeance meted out to this Cromwell is the duplication of what that Cromwell exacted on Charles I, regicide by execution. This Cromwell, in effect, wanted to usurp Musgrave and Hurlstone; he is punished with Musgrave as His/grave—when (as if hurled down) the “stone...shut Brunton into what had become his sepulchre” (Doyle 114). He (and in effect republicanism) has been buried alive—in a sepulchre, a term with inescapably Christian-royalist connotations.

The tale positions Reginald Musgrave as Charles II and his father as Charles I; Brunton-Cromwell’s first name is Richard, the name of Cromwell’s son who succeeded

him as Protector and died on his estate at Hursley. The Musgrave ritual speaks darkly of an “it” (Doyle 106-07). First-time readers naturally enough assume that this “it” will be the secret that Holmes will find at the end of his tracing of Brunton’s steps. But the “it” of the ritual (and it is not found by Holmes) is the apparent junk thrown into and then fished out of the lake. The crowning event of the story is Holmes’s recognition or reading of the junk as the Stuart Crown. Instead, the “it” that Holmes actually finds is the buried-alive Brunton. This “it” is, in effect, the haunting dread itself of being buried alive, which was for Freud the crowning example of the uncanny. Nicholas Royle notes that the original German in Freud’s essay speaks of being buried alive as “the crown” in instances of the uncanny (143).

Holmes’s discovery of the man buried alive signifies the uncanny as the return of the repressed, the repressed being the emblem of the king about to be executed. The episode is repressed for good reason, as we saw from the outset of this paper, as the fact of a regicide which English history cannot bear to countenance and prefers to forget.

It may be worth adding here, if only as a suggestion for further critical research beyond the scope of this paper, that there are, in other texts, other representations of the uncanny return of that particularly urgently repressed fact of history, the royal figure about to be executed. One example is at the famous climax of Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter* which has been acutely discussed by Larry J. Reynolds in “*The Scarlet Letter and Revolutions Abroad*.” At the end of his Election Sermon, Arthur Dimmesdale “bowed his head forward on the cushions of the pulpit” while at that same moment Hester Prynne “was standing beside the scaffold of the pillory” (Hawthorne 158). Reynolds notes that “scaffold” is the word Hawthorne uses for the pillory itself in the tale (“support me up yonder scaffold” is what Dimmesdale asks of Hester for his own death-scene [160]), and that the word generally connoted public beheading, especially in revolutionary contexts (619-20).

In a particularly telling example, Reynolds cites Marvell’s “Horatian Ode” in which Charles I, on the “tragic scaffold,” “bowed his comely head / Down, as upon a bed” (620). To develop Reynolds’s point, it might be added that Musgrave takes pains to emphasize the “handsome” Brunton’s “splendid forehead” (Doyle 101). The regicide, of course, was in 1649, and we can trace the action of *The Scarlet Letter* and date



Dimmesdale's death to 1649. Reynolds also notes that Hawthorne explicitly connects Hester's scaffold with "the guillotine among the terrorists of France" (Reynolds 42, 622), thereby positioning the action of the novel as symbolically re-enacting or returning to (as if uncannily, obsessively) not just one but two regicidal and revolutionary moments. Clearly, *The Scarlet Letter* is conflicted between libertarian and authoritarian impulses (the latter is clear from the word "terrorists" above), corresponding to the republican and royalist impulses in both Marvell's Ode and "The Musgrave Ritual."

More immediately relevant to the concerns of this paper are Conan Doyle's historical novels and the question of his own ambivalent political sympathies. As a Liberal Unionist opposed to Irish Home Rule, Doyle stood unsuccessfully for election in Scotland in 1900 and 1906 but later remarkably changed his mind and supported Home Rule in 1911. Catherine Wynne refers pertinently to Doyle's ongoing struggle to reconcile British imperialism and Irish nationalism (20, 4). In terms of Doyle's historical novels (which were to him of much greater value than the Holmes stories), *Micah Clarke* 889—just four years before "The Musgrave Ritual") depicts the Monmouth rebellion with considerable sympathy for the Puritan cause, despite its eventual failure. In both these instances, it is hard to avoid the sense that the official Englishness of Doyle's public persona, what Wynne calls his striving "to become more English than the English themselves" (5), was conflicted between a romantic sympathy for the racially and culturally oppressed and his own buried Celtic identity.

The editing out from history of the revolution, regicide and republic, an act of forgetting, is duplicated in "The Musgrave Ritual," particularly on the occasions when it cuts seamlessly (either explicitly or by analogy) between Charles I and Charles II. As for Brunton, his act of "attempted usurpation" (Brooks 26) is an attempt to recover and assert that forgotten history, to insert himself between and among aristocrats and monarchs. This act, in miniature, duplicates and reproduces that history, being driven by the same goals as Cromwell's: republicanism as the desire for what is perceived as just property and propriety.

Holmes's last words about the ritual are that Brunton "tore its secret out of it and lost his life in the venture" (Doyle 116). Insofar as Holmes is also in the business of tearing or at least teasing secrets out of family mysteries (and Brunton's tearing-out is

nothing of the kind but only an act of good reading), it is difficult not to feel that the one ambitious secret-solver, following in closely patterned detail "upon [the] trail" (110) of the other, is a duplicated figure embodying the—in Holmes's case at least partly repressed—republican impulses that literature as well as history prefers to forget.

*University of Brighton*

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*From the Erotic Blush to the  
Petrifying Medusa Gaze in  
George Eliot's Novels  
By Gillian M. E. Alban*

Close reading of George Eliot's novels shows her characters betraying their emotions in a pattern of specular gazes. Certain of her female characters reveal their erotic feelings in a self-conscious blush, expressing the subject's embarrassment at the exposure of her passion. Such libidinal scenes, symbolized by blushing, signify a metonymously displaced orgasm. Eliot uses the blush as an expression of overwhelming passion, shown visually and kinesthetically as well as aurally (when accompanied by music), whether literally in the story or in her narrative commentary. In other, less successful, interactions between characters, the gaze is narcissistically reflected back to themselves either in mirrors or by others serving as mirrors. In such cases, the subject sees herself and her desire narcissistically expressed in others' eyes, indicating an obsession with her self-image leading to aggression and, ultimately, a death wish. Precisely at this third level, the objectifying look of the monstrous Medusa either petrifies her victim or is mirrored back onto the subject.<sup>1</sup> The trope of the gaze in human development is highlighted in Jacques Lacan's "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience," while Jean-Paul Sartre offers insight on the "look" from its most sublimely interactive to its most destructive, calling the latter the Medusa look (430). Sigmund Freud ("Medusa Head" 85) and Hélène Cixous

<sup>1</sup> Sophia Andres' Freudian analysis of Eliot's Medusa trope omits Lydia Glasher of *Daniel Deronda* and the reciprocity of gazes between Maggie and Stephen, both of which points are discussed here.

("Laugh of the Medusa" 399) agree that the Medusa stare is both erotic and petrifying. This paper analyzes these highly-charged, ubiquitous interactions through four major novels by George Eliot.

Of these four novels, the narcissistic gaze is dominant in *Adam Bede* (1859), where both Hetty Sorrel and her lovers are mesmerized by the power of her beauty, leading her to sexual relations with Arthur Donnithorne and the transgression of the *nom du père*. When this results in an illegitimate child, her attractions harden into a petrifying Medusa stare that freezes her ability to act. Maggie Tulliver in *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) is determinedly indifferent to her appearance, which in a youthful trauma becomes Medusa-like. Later, she responds warmly to the eyes of Stephen Guest, thus effectively creating a living mirror, their mutual attraction betrayed by blushes on both sides. Metaphorically carried by the current of her attraction, she literally journeys down the river with him, making a transgression of the *nom du père* possible (the potential action here counting as the actual deed), leading to her ostracization and the final cataclysm. Dorothea Brooke in *Middlemarch* (1871-72) manages not to transgress the *nom du père*, demonstrated in the translucence of her blushes before Will Ladislaw—which he reciprocates—during her first marriage. Dinah Morris of *Adam Bede* is oblivious to the looks of others while offering herself as a conduit for the work of God until nearly the end of the novel, when her sexual response to Adam Bede is indicated by the blushes of both. In *Daniel Deronda* (1876), although the eponymous Daniel betrays his feelings for both Gwendolen and Mirah through his blushes, he early chooses Mirah as love object; but, while Gwendolen expresses libido in her looks towards both Daniel and Grandcourt, her personality remains largely narcissistic. She is particularly susceptible to the powerful Medusa gaze of Lydia Glasher,<sup>2</sup> through which she becomes prey to the sadistic Grandcourt's petrifying stare; the novel is replete with the power of this dual scrutiny over Gwendolen. On the other hand, the gaze of the androgynous Daniel, while initially morally "arrest[ing]" Gwendolen's gambling (*Daniel Deronda* 24), ultimately has a quite different effect, as his judgmental regard is transformed into a warmly sympathetic, if ultimately non-amorous, view of her.

<sup>2</sup> Jules Law discusses this scene's non-reflective, absorbent nature in terms of Lydia Glasher's capacity to create a dark star or black hole force over Gwendolen. Similarly, Hetty Sorrel does not see her reflection in the pond, suggesting the Medusa effect is absorbent and deadly.

### *Hetty Sorrel: Narcissism and the Medusa Gaze*

Hetty Sorrel is the character most consistently shown through the narcissistic trope of the mirror, feasting her eyes on her own "pleasing reflection" (*Adam Bede* 77) in the polished metal and wooden surfaces attesting to Aunt Poyser's efficient housework. Although her aunt despises physical attractions and aims to be a strict mentor to this motherless girl, even she is susceptible to Hetty's beauty: she "gazed at Hetty's charms by the sly, fascinated in spite of herself" (86). Thus the narcissistic Hetty becomes as subject to the specular power of her captivating charms as the women and men around her. Lacan's insights suggest the importance of reflected images in the mirror stage, when children develop self-recognition but misrecognize their gestalt in the process of forming an ego separate from their (m)other. The ontological structure of the self dating from this loss of primal unity with the (m)other opens the "meaning of beauty as formative and erogenic" (Lacan 77), with repressions and alienations occurring as "the specular *I* turns into the social *P*" (79). The subject may retain a self-reflective narcissistic image in her libidinal dynamism, which Freud pejoratively regards as a feminine style of loving ("Narcissism" 373-75); alternately, subjects may develop an object-libido, enabling a cathexis of emotional energy towards their love choice. Eliot's novels support Lacan's emphasis on the importance of the gaze, whether narcissistic or interactively object-libidinal, and show many examples of the latter in the independent passions of characters like Maggie Tulliver, Dorothea Brooke, and Dinah Morris. In this, she opposes the contemporary expectation that women exploit their beauty to "sell" themselves in marriage.

Hetty Sorrel is an entirely narcissistic character, using the power of her attractions against the highly respected Adam Bede, who "could be made to turn pale or red any day by a word or a look from her" (*Adam Bede* 98). Her "coquettish tyranny" (100) causes him to blush when trapped within her aura, although her heart remains cool towards him. How much more does she enjoy her power over the young gentleman heir to the estate, Arthur Donnithorne, under whose admiring gaze she makes butter "with quite a self-possessed, coquettish air, slyly conscious that no turn of her head was lost" (86). This is not a disinterested love of him so much as a reflection of specifically what his love might

signify for her, since she imagines "he would like to see her in nice clothes, and thin shoes and white stockings, perhaps with silk clocks to them" (147). His "[b]right, admiring glances" and the transformation they might render in her physical appearance "were the warm rays that set poor Hetty's heart vibrating, and playing its little foolish tunes over and over again" (98). She envisions herself basking in the eyes of the others in her circle: "Mary Barge and everybody would perhaps see her going out in her carriage" (148). Meanwhile, Arthur succumbs to her beauty, confident that he is too moral to over-indulge himself and that she has the cunning to take care of herself (126), thus attempting to share his guilt with her. Arthur has appraised himself in the mirror of rural society which, assuming him to be worthy of trust and confidence, reflects love and respect; he anticipates a lifetime of neighbors touching their hats to him with a look of goodwill (165). He guiltily blushes and withdraws from his intended confession when Mr. Irvine intuits his feelings for Hetty (168), while she is encouraged to trust him in her delusion that he can do whatever he wants, even marry her and make a lady of her (147), thus making everything right. Both men misread the signifier of Hetty's feminine allure: Arthur assumes her canniness, while Adam imagines that because she looks so child-like herself, she would be a loving mother (an assumption belied by her impatience with her spoilt cousin Totty). In this respect, Aunt Poyser evaluates the false signifier of her beauty realistically, finding her "heart's as hard as a pebble" (152), as is borne out by the novel's conclusion.

With no one nearby to reflect admiration onto Hetty, she creates a ritual sacrament before two looking-glasses in her bedroom, placing candles on this altar to worship her beauty. The bewitched Arthur is an imaginary spectator to this rite, his voice saying pretty things, his arm firmly around her waist, her lips tasting his kiss, in her recollected synaesthetic enjoyment of their physical lust (147). During this ritual, the smaller mirror catches in her shawl and falls to the floor with a bang, hinting at the impending bad luck of pregnancy, illegitimate birth, infanticide, and transportation; but Hetty, irritated by her cousin Dinah's suggestion of potential trouble, believes in the power of her own image, a further facet of her narcissism.

When Adam learns about Hetty's affair and forces Arthur to undeceive her regarding the impossibility of marriage, Hetty creates another mirror scene: while reading

Arthur's letter, her reflection in the mirror serves as "a companion that she might complain to" (322), even if it is powerless to soften his harsh words. After her aunt and uncle refuse her request vicariously to experience ladylike status as lady's-maid, Hetty mimics the shadow of her previous feelings for Arthur in "a feeblor relief, a feeblor triumph" (345) by getting engaged to Adam. Blind to the developing pregnancy of this buxom wench, Adam only sees that "the great dark eyes and the sweet lips were as beautiful as ever, perhaps more beautiful, for there was a more luxuriant womanliness about Hetty of late." Her physical state finally forces her to run away from home in fear of disgrace; with her pregnancy reflected in the suspicious eyes of everyone she meets, her beauty now signifies the cause of her fallen state.

During her wanderings, Hetty's comeliness becomes frozen into a "hard and even fierce look....the sadder for its beauty, like that wondrous Medusa-face" (369). Eliot's notes for *Adam Bede* refer to Adolf Stahr's description of Medusa's astonishing beauty, in one version of the myth, comparable to Athena; another version casts her as a victim of male desire, caught between Poseidon's rape and Athena's outrage at this rape occurring in her temple (Weisenfarth 148). As the beautiful Medusa is condemned to victim status, so Eliot casts "poor" Hetty as a "hard, unloving despairing soul" (*Adam Bede* 374). Freud's view of the paradoxical nature of Medusa is that her stare "makes the spectator stiff with terror, turns him to stone" as well as stiff with an erection (85), indicating its dual capacity for fear and pleasure—in Cixous's phrase, "the jitters that gives them a hard-on" (399). Both agree on Medusa's sexual force as well as her destructive power, as Eliot suggests in describing Hetty's "wondrous Medusa-face, with the passionate, passionless lips" (*Adam Bede* 369). In "Being-for-Others," Sartre emphasizes Medusa's power: "This petrification in-itself by the Other's look is the profound meaning of the myth of Medusa" (430), which Hazel Barnes glosses thus: "when another person looks at me, his look may make me feel that I am an object, a thing in the midst of a world of things. If I feel that my free subjectivity has been paralysed, this is as if I had been turned to stone" (124). Thus is the Medusa myth both objectifying and destructive.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Sartre views the Medusa look as sexually neutral; but for others, like Freud and Cixous, it is an ambiguous source of both female power and disempowerment. The potentially castrating gaze of Medusa is associated with *vagina dentata*, an archetypal female destructive force.

From this point, Hetty's sexual attractiveness freezes and stultifies her ability to act. Where once her looks could have killed, in the colloquial expression joining sexual conquest with death, now her self-worship has turned into a helpless death wish. She is frozen before her once seductive but now empty reflection, unable either to kill herself or to get rid of her death wish. Lacan mentions how the narcissistic and sexual libido may be released in "destructive and even death instincts" (*Écrits* 79), here implying the existential negativity to which Sartre also refers. Jacqueline Rose explains the narcissistic mode as a corollary of "both the libidinal object-tie and the function of aggressivity" (173), indicating how the narcissistic lover may degenerate into rivalry and aggression to ultimately embrace the death wish. This is the position Hetty reaches in cursing Arthur and wishing to transfer her desolation onto him (*Adam Bede* 370), finally mirroring Medea by killing her own child.

In Hetty's wanderings, she is repeatedly driven towards "a dark shrouded pool" (350) which had often been reflected in her thoughts as an escape from pregnancy. This absorbent pool, rather than mirroring her now hardened, monstrous appearance, reflects instead the nothingness or abyss of her future, as she contemplates drowning herself. Just as Lydia Glasher's letter in *Daniel Deronda* works as an absorbent "dark star from which no light reflects or escapes" (Law 261) and prevents Gwendolen from seeing her reflection, so too does Hetty's Medusa-reflection fail to reflect either her beauty or anything else. Yet Hetty cannot commit suicide as she instinctually clings to life and dreads exposure.<sup>4</sup> She is constantly drawn back to the pool she imagines could rescue her from her plight: "There it was, black under the darkening sky: no motion, no sound near" (*Adam Bede* 370); she clings to the youth and beauty that are now beyond a great gulf. She cannot take "the dreadful leap"; torn between "wretchedness, that she did not dare to face death; [and] exultation, that she was still in life—that she might yet know light and warmth again" (371), she kisses her arms in a narcissistic clinging to life. Memory brings Dinah's eyes before her as reflecting neither reproof nor scorn, and later it is to her that she confesses carrying her child under the reflected, accusatory light of the moon which had "never looked so before"; she was "struck like a stone, with fear" (431-32).

<sup>4</sup> See Carol Ann Duffy's poem "Medusa," in which the rejected wife petrifies all at whom she stares: "I glanced at a singing bird, / a handful of dusty gravel/ spattered down" (2875).

Such a pool seems the only escape for both mother and child, but she ultimately buries the burdensome child under wood chips in a natural grave, indifferent to its fate yet instinctually drawn towards it: "a heavy weight hanging round my neck; and yet its crying went through me, and I daredn't look at its little hands and face" for fear of becoming attached to it (431). Thus she leaves the child to death and discovery, unable to evade her responsibility in playing with death. During her trial, Hetty's petrified gaze suggests "some demon had cast a blighting glance upon her, withered up the woman's soul in her, and left only a hard despairing obstinacy...she was that Hetty's corpse" (411). She relapses "into her blank hard indifference...like a statue of dull despair," remaining in "her hard immovability and obstinate silence" (415-16); later, Adam associates this look with marble, "as if she had come back from the dead" (437). When the verdict is pronounced, she shrieks and faints in horror at her fatal plight, thus moving from narcissism to petrification through her own Medusa gaze.

#### *Maggie Tulliver: Evading Narcissism and the Medusa Gaze*

In *The Mill on the Floss*, Maggie progresses from an under- to an over-valuation of her beauty, once mirrored in the eyes of Stephen Guest; the two share intense glances and blushes expressing their mutual attraction, leading inexorably to the final crisis. As a child, she evaded her reflected image, as noted by Jenijoy La Belle (53-56), tormented by her mother's doomed efforts to curl her heavy hair and imputations that she is an alien child, dark as the gypsies. Unsympathetic brother Tom helps her hack off her unwieldy hair and then ridicules her: "O, my buttons, what a queer thing you look! Look at yourself in the glass—you look like the idiot we throw our nutshells to at school" (120); Maggie trembles at her rash action while her mother screams at this new monstrosity (124), suggesting the furies. In a subsequent wrangle by the pond, Maggie pushes immaculate cousin Lucy into the mud; when the others desert her, she looks after them helplessly with "her small Medusa face" (164). Beth Newman suggests Eliot used the Medusa allusion for "women (or girls) contemplating reflections of lack,"<sup>5</sup>—for Maggie, an idea turned back onto herself when she attempts to "Run Away from Her Shadow" (168) and

<sup>5</sup> Beth Newman discusses the Medusa gaze in relation to the first Catherine Earnshaw, demonstrating how her monstrous look induces paralysis and places the viewer under a spell.

join the gypsies. After this display, her mother accurately predicts her children being "brought in dead and drowned some day" (166).

Maggie matures into a beautiful young woman; but, while her mother plaits her hair into a coronet, she "steadily refus[ed]...to look at herself in the glass" (388). Maturing under the ascetic influence of Thomas-à-Kempis, she suppressed life's temptations, causing her emotions finally to burst out all the more violently. Lucy studies her appearance as if to make a portrait, wondering what witchery makes Maggie look stunning in her "old limp merino" (480). It is Lucy who prepares the stage for Stephen Guest's expectation that Maggie is a plump, blonde beauty like her mother: he "could not conceal his astonishment at the sight of this tall dark-eyed nymph with her jet-black coronet of hair" (484), while Maggie responds to his "tribute of a very deep blush" with brightened eyes and flushed cheeks. Of course, Stephen's erotic reaction is taboo while he is the acknowledged lover of her cousin Lucy; he has not matured in Maggie's strict school of life, and he indulges his ego in trying to gain a response from her. Accordingly, the culture-starved Maggie is transfixed when he expounds Buckland's *Treatise on "The Goodness of God, as Manifested in the Creation"* (683), with God's qualities reflected in the mirror of nature.

What is the scientific view on the blushes which accompany these lovers' looks? Charles Darwin asserted in *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* that a blush occurs through both reflective and erotic thinking or feeling, indicating our sensitivity towards the eyes of the other, as the subject responds to "the thinking of what others think of us, which excites a blush" (325). Both Darwin writing on the blush and Lacan on the mirror gaze emphasize the self-conscious nature of these specifically human reactions to others or to one's own image. Darwin categorized blushing and flushing with their accompanying facial warmth as a response to shame, sexual consciousness or positive attention: "when lovers meet, we know that their hearts beat quickly, their breathing is hurried, and their faces flush....No happy pair of lovers...probably ever courted each other without many a blush" (78, 327). Physically, the blush is the result of a local blood flow through the face and neck enabled by vasodilation, which early psychoanalytic thinking believed was a sign of repressed libido.

At the same time, the blush affords partial release in this "symbolic representation of genital excitation" (Stein and Bouwer 104),<sup>6</sup> a contemporary scientific view Eliot certainly vindicates in her expression of the blush in her novels. Thus, the blush represents a metonymously displaced orgasm at an ambiguously tender and stimulating phase in amorous relationships, with its heat, liquid, and sensual force. While she does use a blush to indicate embarrassment of a shameful nature, as for example when Will Ladislaw hears dubious information concerning his mother, or Hetty Sorrel is asked about her sweetheart while pregnant with another man's child, Eliot's extensive use of this euphemistic erotic charge is striking. In *Daniel Deronda*, she writes: "A blush is no language: only a dubious flag signal which may mean either of two contradictories" (385), as when Gwendolen blushes on catching Daniel's eye in full view of her husband Grandcourt while they are being shown the splendid stables at the Abbey. She is embarrassed at her bad taste in expressing prospective enjoyment of what may become their property rather than Daniel's. At the same time, this scene contrasts Gwendolen's growing erotic warmth towards Daniel with the agony of her marriage. She has just exchanged a desperate glance of "involuntary confidence" (378) with Daniel, and henceforth increasingly reaches out to him the more that Grandcourt disrupts their every meeting in order to exercise control over her; observers evaluate whether their behavior is incriminating enough to merit Grandcourt's jealousy or not.<sup>7</sup> Thus, while Gwendolen's blush indicates shame, there is also a suggestion of her growing attachment to Daniel as her revulsion against Grandcourt increases; the blush indicates an erotic undertow in such tricky situations, where the lovers' feelings are unacknowledged or where erotic expression may lead to public betrayal. Thus, blushes become a veritable barometer of characters' erotic intensity.

Returning to Maggie, her visual conquest over Stephen is only the start of her power in St. Ogg's, where her striking simplicity and poor clothes set a new fashion, and the trope of the gaze is represented in young Torry ogling her through his eye-glass (*Mill* 512). Stephen initially falls for her specular image, and each of them express their erotic

<sup>6</sup> Blushing as an expression of shame leads to gaze aversion, while the erotic gaze involves an intensification of reciprocal looks. See also Stein and Bouwer (101, 104).

<sup>7</sup> See Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess," in which the Duke of Ferrara jealously watches every "spot Of joy," "Half-flush" or "blush" of his wife towards their social inferiors (Browning 5).

feelings while gazing into the eyes of the other, making their interactions fraught with electric consciousness. Both become painfully aware of each other as they mutually betray this forbidden frisson. They never dare to speak to each other while Lucy is absent; but when she returns, they more safely release their feelings in teasing behavior towards each other through her (516), making her unsuspectingly assume a mutual antipathy through their erratic behavior (530). It becomes with him a “monomania, to want that long look from Maggie” (519), and however hard she tries not to respond to him, the depths of her feelings can be gauged through her erotic response to music. The men’s singing and playing acts as a conduit through which Maggie’s soul

is played on in this way by the inexorable power of sound. You might have seen the slightest perceptible quivering through her whole frame, as she leaned a little forward, clasping her hands as if to steady herself, while her eyes dilated and brightened into that wide-open, childish expression of wondering delight which always came back in her happiest moments. (532)

This ecstatic and erotic vision causes Lucy to steal up and kiss her and sets the more suspicious Philip wondering. Stephen deceitfully pretends an antipathy towards her in order to hide his feelings before Philip’s sharp eyes, making Philip accuse him of hypocrisy (552).

Thus, Maggie struggles against her passion for Stephen and her concern for Philip, for whom she lacks passion: “she was looking at him with that open, affectionate scrutiny which we give to a friend from whom we have been long separated” (526). Maggie’s neutrality towards the hunchbacked, androgynously slight Philip and her bias towards the “stronger presence” of Stephen (588) underscore the physical basis of her feelings. When Philip declared his love for her in the Red Deeps, her face had a “flush and slight spasm,” indicating her need to adjust her feelings (434); she pales as he presses his love on her. When he claimed her childish promise of a kiss, she gave it “simply and quietly” (436); his eyes “flashed with delight” when she bent to “kiss the low pale face that was full of pleading, timid love—like a woman’s” (438). Philip later dreams of Maggie “slipping down a glistening, green slimy channel of a waterfall, and he was

looking on helpless” (544), highlighting the aquatic element through which she figuratively succumbs to her passion (569) and, literally, to her ultimate drowning.

Maggie never approaches a mirror voluntarily, but when Lucy brings her before the glass, her attractive reflection displays her effect on others. The splendor of her beauty makes her briefly desire the “admiration and acknowledged supremacy” (554) she had once wished to have over the gypsies, on this sole occasion approaching narcissism through her perceived power. She “was made to look at the full length of her tall beauty, crowned by the night of her massy hair. Maggie had smiled at herself then, and for the moment had forgotten everything in the sense of her own beauty” (555), which would place Stephen at her feet, offering adoration and a life of culture and luxury. But for her, “passion, and affection, and long deep memories of early discipline and effort, of early claims on her love and pity” are stronger than the “stream of vanity” of her own looks. She thus resists being caught up in this “wider current,” desperately attempting to sublimate the irresistible force of her passion. Contrary to Judith Mitchell’s suggestion that Stephen is “a powerful male subject...[to Maggie’s] beautiful female object” (23), there is a force of independent strength in her personality which Philip and Lucy particularly acknowledge in “large-souled Maggie” (*Mill* 635), making her ultimately resistant to her love for Stephen, however tempted she is by it.

While Maggie and Stephen struggle against their feelings, each reflects the other’s emotions; aware “that she was the person he sought, she felt...a glowing gladness at heart. Her eyes and cheeks were still brightened...[s]omething strangely powerful...was in the light of Stephen’s long gaze, for it made Maggie’s face turn towards it and look upward at it” (560); they walk “without feeling anything but that long grave mutual gaze which has the solemnity belonging to all deep human passion” (561). For sensitive Maggie, the hardest struggle in refusing him is not her own feelings so much as her awareness of his suffering: “Maggie did not—dared not look. She had already seen [Stephen’s] harassed face” (567), as she watched him falling into “the sickening look of fatigue” which “relapsed into indifference towards everything but the possibility of watching her” (583). These electric interactive gazes culminate in Maggie’s journey with Stephen to the point of no return. She dreams of being in the boat with him while the Virgin passes in St Ogg’s boat—which shifts to Lucy and Tom, who pass without a



glance as she calls out and their boat overturns (596). Later, Stephen writes to her of having “met that long look of love that has burnt itself into my soul, so that no other image can come there” (647). Their relationship powerfully expresses the “fusion of consciousness in which each of them would preserve his otherness in order to found the other” (Sartre, *Being* 376), as their love moves towards the final tragedy.

When Maggie rescues Tom in the flood, he gazes at her in “awe and humiliation” (*Mill* 654), recognizing that the depths of her character transcend his narrow emotions; he utters her old nickname, giving her momentary joy before drowning in their last embrace. Thus do Maggie’s emotions find ultimate consummation in reunion with Tom: “It is coming, Maggie!” (655).<sup>8</sup>

#### *Dorothea Brooke, Dinah Morris, and the Blush*

In *Middlemarch*, Casaubon’s impotence is implied by his claim that poets exaggerate a passion which he lacks (87), while Dorothea’s ardent feelings for her mature suitor are revealed in more than her face. She “coloured with pleasure” (44) when he defended her indifference towards horsemanship; her “colour rose” in anticipating their future together (49), and she responded to the pamphlets he sent her with “an electric stream...thrilling her from despair into expectation” (61) for this intellectual soul mate. When her uncle informs her of Casaubon’s intended visit, it “seemed as if something like the reflection of a white sunlit wing had passed across her features, ending in one of her rare blushes” (70); but, once married, Dorothea’s devotion to Casaubon turns to frustration, and it is Will Ladislaw’s presence that evokes the rare blush. Similarly, Will flushes when she receives him in Rome (236); embarrassed, she reciprocates when he exposes the gaps in Casaubon’s knowledge (254). For Dorothea, Will “was like a lunette opened in the wall of her prison, giving her a glimpse of the sunny air” (396); for Will, “to ask her [Dorothea] to be less simple and direct would be like breathing on the crystal that you want to see the light through” (403). While discussing Casaubon’s responsibilities towards Will, she colors, torn between her feelings for them both; and when she is announced at her uncle’s, Will starts as if “from an electric shock” (422).

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of Eliot’s aquatic deaths, see Jacobus on Irigaray, Higonnet, and Christ. See also Emmitt (315)

Thus we are shown Will’s developing object-libido for her betrayed through his gazes and blushes, while Dorothea’s pure response is reinforced by images of transparent glass and light.

Dorothea fully realizes her feelings for Will when she discovers him in an apparently incriminating position with Rosamund; this external view of the two together shows her how she and Will would have appeared in her husband’s eyes, adding guilty self-consciousness to her nascent sexual feelings for him (471-72). When Celia tells Dorothea of Casaubon’s codicil to his will, cutting her out of his property if she marries Ladislaw, “The blood rushed to Dorothea’s face and neck painfully” (*Middlemarch* 532): she is both repulsed by Casaubon’s suspicions and confused by the “sudden strange yearning of heart towards Will Ladislaw.” Rejecting Casaubon’s wish for her to bury herself in his *Key to All Mythologies*, she longs for Will’s “human gaze which rested upon her with choice and beseeching...the gaze which had found her” (583). His first visit after Casaubon’s death causes her to blush deeply and painfully (586), while the blood mounts to his face and neck (587-88), making him look almost angry; an electric shock passes through both of them when Sir James interrupts them (589).

The next time Dorothea observes Will with Rosamund—the latter coquettishly appealing to him with her face a “flushed tearfulness”—Will meets Dorothea’s eyes “with a new lightning in them” (832). Later, he reproaches Rosamund with his “vindictive fire” (836) for having thus compromised him. Dorothea leaves them, pale but animated, though Celia later notes the brightness of her eyes (833); finally, she bursts out: “Oh, I did love him!” (844), anguished at losing him just when she acknowledges her feelings for him. Confronted by Dorothea, Rosamund thanks her with a blush which again shows embarrassment tinged with sexual guilt (853). As Dorothea explains to Rosamund the uselessness of loving someone else while married, no doubt reflecting her own previously repressed feelings for Will, Rosamund tells Dorothea of Will’s passion for her, which causes a new tumult stronger than joy to animate Dorothea’s face (856-57). Thus, when Will finally visits Dorothea, she feels “the colour mounting to her cheeks” (864) as he is announced, while her mention of Casaubon’s suspicions makes Will color (868) at their implied sexual guilt. As her face brightens and he looks gravely at her, their feelings are reflected through the pathetic fallacy of thunder and lightning,



combining visual and aural together with kinesthetic effect: "a vivid flash of lightning which lit each of them up for the other—and the light seemed to be the terror of a hopeless love" (868). They clasp hands like children and share a trembling kiss, until "the flood of her young passion bearing down all the obstructions" (870), she insists on leaving her despised wealth and clearly states her desire to marry him. Like Maggie Tulliver, Dorothea's passion is here expressed as an irresistible flood.

A similar exposure of the feelings of Methodist preacher Dinah Morris occurs through her blushes. Dinah is a transparent vessel with a "total absence of self-consciousness in her demeanour, . . . as unconscious of her outward appearance as a boy: there was no blush, no tremulousness, which said, 'I know you think me a pretty woman, too young to preach'" (*Adam Bede* 30-31). As with Maggie's lack of sexual attraction to Philip, Dinah lacks libidinal feeling for Seth, while her involuntary response to Adam is finally betrayed in a faint blush (454). While Adam obtusely continues discussing the impossibility of her marriage with Seth, he is confused by her agitated glance and deep rose flush (460). Asking Seth whether Adam would be offended if his papers were stirred, Adam himself answers, and her powerful response to his voice emerges in this quasi-musical, quasi-sensual metaphor: "It was as if Dinah had put her hands unawares on a vibrating chord; she was shaken with an intense thrill, and for the instant felt nothing else; then she knew that her cheeks were glowing, and dared not look round" (467)—clear evidence of her love for him. Adam's mother is highly attuned to this possibility, and when she suggests Adam propose to Dinah, the blood rushes to his face (475); when he visits her, Dinah "colour[s] deeply" (480), becoming pale and trembling as he declares his love. Margaret Homans discusses Dinah's blush as sexualizing her in an ethereal way (168); actually, Dinah's blushes parallel the blushing in Eliot's other novels by suggesting emergent sexuality. Thus, the "fusion of consciousness" which Sartre suggests occurs through libidinal looks (*Being* 376) is powerfully expressed through these lovers' blushes.

### *Gwendolen Harleth: Narcissism and the Medusa Gaze*

All of these powerful regards are exemplified in Gwendolen Harleth of *Daniel Deronda*. Narcissistic, she is absorbed in the beauty which she hoped would enable a

dramatic career; but, discouraged in this aspiration, she falls back on using her attractions to marry. Gwendolen is particularly susceptible to the observation of others and her own specular effect: she preens in public, while in private she kisses her mirror image (*Daniel Deronda* 31). Her gambling success is early "arrested" by Daniel (24), who turns his moral eye on her, yet through her persistence he establishes an ambiguous relation with her as father confessor or confidant in her unhappy marriage. While reluctant to fall for Gwendolen's fascinating womanhood, Daniel is nevertheless a knight-errant highly susceptible to female appeals for help (298). Later discussing the damper he had placed on her gambling, "she blushed over face and neck; and Deronda blushed too, conscious that in the little affair of [returning] the necklace he had taken a questionable freedom" with her (305); his blush here betrays the erotic culpability beneath his shame at showing his involvement with her. He also "redden[s] nervously" while talking to the other damsel he saves from drowning, Mirah Lapidoth, as she gazes at him to answer a question (187). As for Gwendolen's first meeting with Grandcourt, "there was a little shock which flushed her cheeks and vexatiously deepened with her consciousness of it" (112); naturally, Grandcourt gives away nothing in his "slightly exploring gaze" (113), which enables his mastery over her. When his words force her to either accept marriage outright or reject his being able to take care of her, her first response is a blush, which then pales (132). In each case the gaze indicates libido together with self-conscious embarrassment, which Gwendolen expresses even in her narcissism.

However, the Medusa-apparition is the strongest aspect of these glances as Gwendolen becomes the specular victim of Grandcourt's rejected lover, Lydia Glasher, an adjunct of his cruelty. At their first meeting, Lydia warned Gwendolen that marriage to Grandcourt would usurp the rights of herself and her children, and would thus be immoral; Gwendolen shivers when this "ghastly vision had come to her in a dream and said, 'I am a woman's life'" (150). The impression of this once-handsome woman and her cherubic child never leaves Gwendolen, and when she receives the poisoned gems from her on her wedding day, her letter is like an adder, implying Medusa's snake hair, as she curses Gwendolen for having broken her word in spite of being warned. Furious at her children's rights being usurped by a rival, Lydia tells her she will only be able to marry the corpse of her old love, of which she herself is the grave. Gwendolen becomes

spellbound in reading this letter, which she burns in horror against its accusation. As Jules Law suggests, her reflection is multiplied in the diamonds as "so many women petrified white" (330); as the poison enters her, she screams with "hysterical violence," proving that "the furies had crossed his [Grandcourt's] threshold" (330).

The fangs (410) and "poisoning skill of [the] sorceress" Lydia (504) remain with Gwendolen, the letter never fading from her consciousness. When husband and wife later ride past her and her children in the park, Gwendolen sees "the beings in all the world the most painful for her to behold...making a Medusa apparition before Gwendolen, vindictiveness and jealousy finding relief in an outlet of venom, though it were as futile as that of a viper already flung on the other side of the hedge" (549). The sadistic Grandcourt is unmoved at this sight, causing Gwendolen further shock. She considers her only escape to be in death; and, unable to imagine his death but longing for such a release, this thought returns to her, but this time with his avenging fingers around her throat (550). Sartre analyses the lack of freedom and risk afforded as the conscious subject or being-for-itself falls under the objectifying observation of another, thereby reduced to the insentient being-in-itself in suffering a loss of independence. This look brings about "a petrification [which] is the profound meaning of the myth of Medusa" (*Being* 430), emphasizing the negative force which Eliot's Medusa allusions express so forcefully.

Grandcourt's consciousness of Gwendolen's knowledge of his bond with Lydia Glasher plays into his power as the secret is reflected back by Lush to his "thunderous, bullying superior" (*Daniel Deronda* 267), increasing the impact of Lydia's gaze over Gwendolen as death chases her throughout the novel. Gwendolen's first confrontation with death concerns the panel at Offendene that springs out under Klesmer's powerful piano playing; Gwendolen screams with terrified fear at "the dead face and the fleeing figure" (69) depicted there, perhaps representing her dead father (Byatt and Sodr  92). Jacqueline Rose suggests that Grandcourt is finally reflected as this dead face from whom she flees (105); he haunts her with guilt after months of crushing her spirit and, watching him drown, her "heart said, 'Die!'" (*Daniel Deronda* 629). As their "Satanic masquerade" finally comes to an end (686), she is left with a fear of his posthumous presence and its ability to release potential evil in her. Thus the gaze occurs in all three

aspects as narcissistic and object-libidinal, but predominantly as the destructive Medusa stare of Lydia Glasher, crushing Gwendolen through Grandcourt's perceptive cruelty.

### *Death and Return to the Mother*

We begin life with a consciousness of our reflection in the mirror and become self-aware in our mother's arms; described by Lacan as the mirror stage, the process marks each individual's journey from the maternal matrix. It is striking that Eliot frequently brings her characters back full circle to death through the maternal force of water: from Mirah, who takes to the River Thames when unable to find her mother; to Maggie and Tom, who are swept to their death by the flooding Floss; and to Hetty, who contemplates suicide in a non-reflective pond. Even Casaubon, "looking into the eyes of death" (*Middlemarch* 461), faces a watery end: "the vision of waters upon the earth is different from the delirious vision of water which cannot be had to cool the burning tongue" (461). His consciousness of death now seizes him with cruel fingers:

he may come to fold us in his arms as our mother did, and our last moment of dim earthly discerning may be like the first. To Mr Casaubon now, it was as if he suddenly found himself on the dark river-brink and heard the splash of the oncoming oar, not discerning the forms, but expecting the summons. (461-62)

The aquatic reference to Casaubon returning to the arms of his mother is certainly striking; Margaret Higonnet suggests we "image death as a return to the mother" (104), while Cixous notes the similarity in the French words for *sea* and *mother*: "happy as when they go to the sea, the womb of the mother" ("Aller   la m re" 548).

In these four novels, Eliot demonstrates her characters' interactions through reflected looks: erotic love shown as an overwhelming and blushing response to the other's look; or the look that remains trapped within the subject's own reflected image; or the gaze that is frozen into objectifying and stultifying Medusa form. These various references to reciprocal or maimed gazes create a ubiquitous trope indicating the characters' feelings. Narcissistic Hetty enjoys her image in the mirror or in people mirroring her, even in love anticipating an enhanced reflection of herself; Arthur is

shown similarly giving supreme importance to his reflected view, and their doomed love founders. Similarly, Gwendolen blushing responds to Daniel and Grandcourt but remains transfixed by the force of Lydia Glasher, whose power is reinforced by Grandcourt's haunting.

For Maggie, Dinah, and Dorothea, blushes signify sexual awakening once the "right" partner presents himself; their blushes are metonymously orgasmic. In particular, Dorothea's sexual consummation or "jouissance" resembles Saint Theresa when pierced by the angel (Mitchell and Rose 52). But although Dorothea is a splendid "Saint Theresa," she is ultimately the "foundress of nothing" (*Middlemarch* 26), leaving the reader wondering if she might not have achieved something beyond absorption in the life of another, as her "full nature, like that river...spent itself in channels which had no great name on the earth" (896).

*Dogus University, Istanbul*

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## *Book Reviews*

Lesley Higgins, Ed. *Oxford Essays and Notes*, Vol. IV of *The Collected Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006. pp. xxiv + 368, \$199.00 cb.

*Reviewed by Jerome Bump*

The first of the eight volumes of the new Oxford edition to be published, this edition includes Hopkins's Birmingham Oratory notebook as well as all of his Oxford essays and notes. Full of previously unpublished materials, it is the most important publication in Hopkins scholarship in the last twenty years.

A brief examination of just two previously unpublished items in the new edition suggests some of its controversial links to worlds unexplored by traditional Hopkins scholarship, such as Orientalism and Animal Studies (the subject of twelve articles in *PMLA*, March 2009). These two items also lead us to new territories in areas that Hopkins scholars have already begun to map out, such as ecocriticism, and advance our understanding of Victorian culture, Hopkins's life and works, and his reputation outside the academy.

The two items that I have chosen are a note on Buddhism, and the essay, "The contrast between the older and the newer order of the world as seen in Caste." Lesley Higgins's initial note on this essay (213-14) refers the reader to the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 and various related publications. Admittedly, the India connection may be disputed on at least three grounds. First of all, India is not mentioned in the essay, though Herodotus and the Romans are. Secondly, Professor Higgins reminds us that "GMH had been invited to write an essay on the subject 'Estimate the value of India to England,'" one of two topics in Hopkins's diary that may have been suggested by his tutor, perhaps from a list for a group of students; but we have no evidence that Hopkins wrote this essay. Finally, at first glance, even the last word of Hopkins's title fails to support a

connection to India. The first definition of “cast” in the *OED* includes the obsolete “race, stock, or breed (of men)”; the Spanish word *casta*; and cast as “breed of animal.”

Nevertheless, I would argue for the India link for three reasons. First, Hopkins’s spelling of “caste” with an “e” (“hardly found before 1800”) refers specifically to India, and the *OED* entry concludes, “this is now the leading sense, which influences all others.” Secondly, the first *OED* example after this definition is from “1818 *JAS. MILL* British India.” In her note, Professor Higgins cites this book (along with Max Müller’s works and Jowett’s notes and lectures), and states that for the essay on caste Hopkins “consulted James Mill, ‘Caste’,” in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Finally, I would point to Hopkins’s statements in a letter to a friend in India: “I have a yearning towards Hindoos...as Baillie and I used to say, the Vedas and Hindoo philosophy are what I should hugely like to go in for.” Hopkins adds that if his friend knows Sanskrit, “I go April-green with envy.” More importantly, Hopkins asks him to write to him about specific castes and to “develop caste” generally.

Assuming, then, that India is at least one of the subjects of the essay, it seems that Hopkins is not just explaining, but defending caste, and thus the natives of India, at a time when there was almost no British sympathy for either. Still more intriguing is his comment on “the difference of food” (213), implying acknowledgment of a cause of the mutiny rarely taken seriously. (Ostensibly, the British forced the native soldiers to use cow and pig fat in the preparation of the cartridges of the new Enfield rifles, thereby violating the deepest precepts of their religions.) If Hopkins is admitting the validity of one of the religious causes of the mutiny, as well as defending the Indian caste system, we may need to revise our simplistic assessment of him as a jingoist and, to some extent, our account of the Victorian representation of India.

Space does not permit further exploration of such a complex topic here, so I’ll turn to Hopkins’s brief citation from Max Müller’s *Chips from a German Workshop*: “Establishment of Buddhism by Asoka ‘the Constantine of India’” (296). Even here the India connection may be resisted: when I directed the attention of one Hopkins scholar to this quotation, he argued that Hopkins was interested primarily in Constantine and stressed that this is the only time Hopkins even uses the word “India” in these essays and notes. This argument was made despite the fact that this extract appears in the middle of

pages of citations from Müller’s discussion of India and in spite of knowledge of the Hopkins letter cited above.

Inspired by that letter and Professor Higgins’s note on the Caste essay, I propose that Hopkins’s citation of Müller’s phrase advances our understanding of “Binsey Poplars” and one of the strangest entries in Hopkins’s journal: “The ash tree growing in the corner of the garden was felled. It was lopped first: I heard the sound and looking out and seeing it maimed there came at that moment a great pang and I wished to die and not see the inscapes of the world destroyed any more.” These sentences enhance Hopkins’s reputation in the world beyond the academy. Drawing attention to Hopkins’s nature writing, the source of many readers’ initial attraction to Hopkins, these sentences enhance his contributions to the environmental movement’s powerful impact on international, national, and campus politics. As we shall see, they may even be said to help in their own small ways both to heal divisions between the West and East and to increase awareness of the spiritual aspects of the environmental crisis.

Hopkins’s “pang” is an expression of, among other feelings, the elegiac lament that pervades the environmental movement. In this regard, the word “felled” in the journal entry recalls “Binsey Poplars.” Both illustrate Hopkins’s “compassion” for trees—that is, his ability “to suffer together with” and to “participate in the suffering of another” (*OED*). In “Binsey Poplars,” the speaker’s own body suffers with the trees’ inscape, “so tender / To touch, her being só slender, / That, like this sleek and seeing ball / But a prick will make no eye at all.” In his journal entry, Hopkins’s suffering is more intense, going beyond loss of an eye to the death of the whole body.

This hypersensitivity is rare in the West, but it surfaces in Goethe’s *Sorrows of Young Werther*, Thoreau’s *Walden*, and Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure*. Many have assumed that Hopkins’s response to the ash tree is, in Hardy’s terms, an “excessive sensibility,” perhaps even a “weakness of character” justifying the psychoanalysis of Hopkins as a person attracted to pain. In *Elegy for an Age*, John Rosenberg traces this extreme sensitivity to the Greek and Latin literature Hopkins studied at Oxford. During those years, Oxford was becoming famous also for Sanskrit studies, a language that transmitted an even older and more sacred poetry of the earth than the western classics. Hopkins’s comment on Müller’s chapter on Buddhism suggests that we widen the scope of our

inquiry beyond Anglophone literature, with its heritage of Greece and Rome, to the rest of the world. When we do so, we discover that if Hopkins's "excessive sensibility" is a "weakness of character," he shares it with the hundreds of millions of people who have lived in India in the last three thousand years. Moreover, as the Victorians in India were discovering, this spirituality was not extinct, like that of the Romans and Greeks. Indeed, at this moment it is reframing the issues of the environmental crisis.

Hopkins's interest in Asoka suggests that his "pang" and this death wish can also take us to the cutting edge of Animal Studies research, extending to plants the definition of species-ism, the "discrimination against or exploitation of certain animal species by human beings, based on an assumption of mankind's superiority" (*OED*). In the chapter in *Chips* that Hopkins cited, Müller notes that, in Buddhism, "cruelty to animals is guarded against by special precepts," and he cites Asoka's "rock inscriptions...which might be read with advantage by our own missionaries, though they are now more than 2,000 years old." These famous edicts, carved on man-made pillars, boulders, and caves throughout southeast Asia, celebrated the rest-houses, wells, and shade trees Asoka planted along roads for the benefit of animals as well as people. The second rock edict demanded medical treatment for animals and the fifth pillar declared special protection for trees as well.

These proclamations embodied the first of the Five Precepts of moral conduct in Buddhism: abstaining from causing injury to other sentient beings, a doctrine fundamental also to Hinduism and Jainism, where it is known as *ahimsa*. Since the eighth century B.C., some Hindu texts recommended that *ahimsa* be applied not just to animals but also to plants, both wild and cultivated, and called for a diet so limited that no plants would be destroyed in food gathering. Jains (whom the British at first confused with Buddhists) made this kind of vegetarianism mandatory, thereby surpassing Buddhists as well as Hindus in the application of *ahimsa*. Indeed, Jains avoid almost all agricultural occupations and some take pains to prevent injury to creatures too small to be seen. For example, some Jains avoid eating or drinking after dark so as to not injure tiny insects attracted to the light, and some Jain monks wear mouth covers to avoid ingesting tiny creatures and/or carry brooms to sweep the ground in front of them so that they (like Jude) would not step on them.

We move closer to a feeling akin to Hopkins's "pang" when we focus on the basic rule of Jainism stated by Mahavira, a rival of Buddha: "As you want to live, so do to others." By "others," Mahavira meant not only all living beings that can move but also earth, air, water, and vegetation. He considered injury to any of these a sinful act. In this context, Hopkins's list of his sins of "Killing a spider," "Cruelty to a moth," and "Killing an earwig" evoke a profound spirituality akin to that of Hindus, Buddhists, and especially Jains. In the *Arcanga Sutra*, a primary Jain scripture (one of two published by Müller), Mahavira explicitly extends sympathy to plants: "Vegetation has life just as human beings have life. It is born as are human beings; its body grows and feels pain when pricked or cut with weapons."

The significance of "pricked or cut," which foreshadows Hopkins's journal and "Binsey Poplars," may be seen in the Jain story of the majestic banyan tree. One day, a man came along, ate its fruit, deliberately broke off a branch, and left. The spirit that dwelled in the tree thought, "How amazing, how astonishing that anyone could...be so evil." This tree spirit came to Mahavira and complained that someone had *cut off his child's arm* (italics added). Mahavira, acknowledged as the protector of the mute world, then proclaimed that trees should never be mutilated in any way because they are a source of life. Presumably no one thought that Mahavira suffered from a "weakness of character." The founder of Jainism even said that forests are like saints. Who would not be upset if a saint was lopped, maimed, and killed?

Clearly, as the doctrine of *ahimsa* evolved to prevent the acquisition of the bad karma that keeps us in this world, it encouraged a "hypersensitivity" to the environment beyond the wildest imaginations of most Westerners—until they encounter India. As we have seen, this extraordinary sympathy, like Hopkins's, is the product of a spiritual belief. In fact, Jains believe that every living being in this world has *jīva*, what we call a soul. Hence Müller, in the second chapter on Buddhism in *Chips*, marveled that "something divine was discovered in everything that moved and lived" and concluded that in India "the Divine presence was felt everywhere."

That phrase might recall for Hopkins scholars the doctrine of the "Real Presence" that brought Hopkins to Roman Catholicism, with the huge difference that in India the Real Presence is not confined to the Eucharist. This belief that "the Divine presence was

felt everywhere” suggests a new understanding of that extraordinary image of the earth in “Hurrahing in Harvest”: “the azurous hung hills are his world-wielding shoulder.” After reading this line, I like to pose to students the question, “How would we act toward the environment if we believed that this world was the body of God?” Müller’s chapter on Buddhism in *Chips*, which Hopkins cited extensively, provides answers to that question.

On a more personal note, I will conclude simply by saying that I have studied Hopkins for over forty years and now I can say, with Keats:

Much have I travell’d in the realms of gold,  
 And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;  
 Round many western islands have I been,  
 But when, with the aid of the new edition, I traveled to India,  
 Then felt I like some watcher of the skies  
 When a new planet swims into his ken;  
 Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes  
 He star’d at the Pacific—and all his men  
 Look’d at each other with a wild surmise  
 Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

*University of Texas at Austin*

Matthew Hofer and Gary Scharnhorst (eds.). *Oscar Wilde in America: The Interviews*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2010. pp. xi + 193. \$40.00.

*Reviewed by Nikolai Endres*

Oscar Wilde’s year-long American lecture tour in 1882 thoroughly established his fame. It consolidated his image as the consummate aesthete, witty conversationalist, and promoter of himself. He addressed enthusiastic crowds, large and small, with such lectures as “The English Renaissance,” “The Decorative Arts,” “The House Beautiful,” and “Irish Poets and Poetry of the Nineteenth Century.” During his trip, Wilde freely granted interviews, which are collected in this volume.

*Oscar Wilde in America* is the first reliable, comprehensive, and annotated edition of his interviews, superseding Lloyd Lewis and Henry Justin Smith’s *Oscar Wilde Discovers America* (1936)—dismissed by editors Matthew Hofer and Gary Scharnhorst as “a trade book with few pretensions to scholarly accuracy” (xi)—and E. H. Mikhail’s *Oscar Wilde: Interviews and Recollections* (1979), which contains several omissions and inaccuracies. Wilde gave a total of ninety-eight interviews, forty-eight of which are reprinted here. An appendix partly reproduces Wilde’s post-visit lecture, “Impressions of America,” followed by a chronology of all the known interviews Wilde gave (a total of 107), half of which have been ignored in Wilde scholarship.

The Introduction provides background information on the craze for celebrity interviews in the U.S., Wilde’s public persona, his itinerary, biographical highlights, the interviewers’ gender perception of Wilde as basically androgynous, and Wilde’s wide-ranging subjects: “Wilde commented with equal facility on grain elevators, train station sandwiches, hog butchering, oil cars, boxing matches, the Chicago water tower, the mudflats of New Jersey, and the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City” (4).

In what follows, I will pick out some of the highlights. Wilde’s arrival in New York was notorious. He not only (supposedly) quipped about having nothing to declare but his genius, but his outfit caused a riot of journalistic speculation:

His outer garment was a long ulster trimmed with two kinds of fur, which reached almost to his feet. He wore patent-leather shoes, a smoking-cap or turban, and his shirt might be termed ultra-Byronic, or perhaps—décolleté. A sky-blue cravat of the sailor style hung well down upon the chest. His hair flowed over his shoulders in dark-brown waves, curling slightly upwards at the ends. His eyes were of a deep blue, but without that faraway expression that is popularly attributed to poets. (13)

And what mysteries did his luggage contain? Did his suitable suitcases hide “frail objects such as lilies and the like” (15)?

Another reporter admired Wilde’s truly universal beauty:

The only peculiarity in his appearance was his very long brown hair, fine and glossy as silk, parted in the middle, and hanging below his collar and round a face essentially English—or Irish—but thoroughly refined, and endowed with a liberal share of the beauty of expression. His head has something of the Gothic arched poetical outline; the forehead is rather low, but broad and fair, though seemingly narrowed by the flowing locks; the nose is aquiline, the eyes bright blue, and clear, as if you could see down into the lowest depths of thought within, and the mouth and chin are Hibernian, but of the highest Celtic type, and there is an air of refinement and gentle breeding pervading not only the face, but the entire man, and idealized in the full, flexible, delicately finished lips. (32)

There was even attraction bordering on the homoerotic (or fetishist): “He was dressed in a simple black velvet jacket, below which he wore a pair of beautiful brown trousers, from the bottoms of which his patent-leather pumps were seen covering a very shapely pair of feet” (22). And now we know that Wilde’s fascination with *japonisme* must reveal a vestige of Asian ethnicity: “His eyes are large and light blue in color. Their outside

corners are lower than the inside like a Chinaman’s, though they are far from being almond-shaped” (72). But some observers were less reverent:

As the poet posed for a moment on the threshold, it was evident how atrociously he has been misrepresented. Only the fertile fancy of the veteran interviewer would have described his luxuriant hair as falling upon his shoulders and flowing down his back. It seemed instead to be brushed forward over the eyes and corners of the eyes, and indeed might have been tied under the chin and done excellent service as a muffler. To such extremes went the heated imaginations of the New York reporters that they impressed the public with the idea that his nether garments extended only to his knees; the writer can aver from careful observation they modestly reached an inch and a half below. The innumerable implications of this nature that have been spread before the public cast an indelible stigma upon American journalism. (47-48)

Another writer grappled with the phenomenon of Oscar: “The fact is he has been greatly misrepresented, his individualities caricatured, his tastes exaggerated, his appearance burlesqued. He is not great enough to merit so much attention, and he is not necessarily an object of ridicule” (51). At times, Wilde would even be outdone by the newspapers: “A *Globe-Democrat* reporter awaited an hour when the Prince of Languor had presumably suspended the delights of deglutition, and then sent up a lily-white card, decorated with the legend by which he is known to his creditors” (78)

What did Wilde muse about? Fellow writers from the United States, for example; he singles out Walt Whitman for special praise: “There is something so Greek and sane about his poetry....It has all the pantheism of Goethe and Schiller” (29). Nathaniel Hawthorne fares equally well: “I think his *Scarlet Letter* has the grandest passion and is the greatest work of fiction ever written in the English tongue” (41). Clearly, here is a dissertation waiting to be written. Did Wilde have a premonition of how society would cast him out thirteen years later by branding him with the scarlet S of the sodomite? An



encounter with Henry Wadsworth Longfellow proved tempestuous: "I went to see Longfellow in a snow storm and returned in a hurricane, quite the right conditions for a visit to a poet" (70). William Dean Howells, whose novels entertained Wilde during his tedious train rides, "is America's greatest author" (81). Ralph Waldo Emerson is "the only man of letters in America who has influenced the course of English thought" (86). Edgar Allan Poe towers as America's "greatest poet": "His sense of form and exquisiteness of touch are intense. His gold is not to be gilt and his lilies are unpaintable" (170).

Such literary commentary extends to British authors: "There was only one artist in England who took any notice of what was said of him. That was Byron. Byron began by being a great lyric poet and should always have been one. But he read the newspapers and it soured his nature, and at least he became a satirist, which is a low order of a poet" (44). Wilde sympathises with Percy Bysshe Shelley, who "was abused, but he did not heed it, and it had not the least effect upon him." On the other hand, Wilde admits, John Keats—intense, unloved, exiled—suffered a great deal, while Alfred, Lord Tennyson "is not only a poet, but a poem" (81). Wilde then expounds a great democratic trio: "Swinburne, Shelley, and Milton are the three greatest poets of liberty in England" (85).

Of course, Wilde was repeatedly asked about his impressions of the country: "We in England have no idea of the distances in your country. The impression seems to be that all of the large cities are located in the suburbs of New York, then come the Rocky Mountains, next the Indians, then San Francisco and the ocean" (76). Generally, Wilde was not impressed with New England and the East Coast. He enjoyed the West but did not fancy Utah, especially the Mormon Temple:

the tabernacle has the shape of a soup kettle and the decorations are suitable to a jail. It was the most purely dreadful building I ever saw. There was not even the honesty to tell the truth, because they painted sham pillars. There are no pillars in the building. In the house of God, I think, no lies should be told.  
(138)

No doubt, Leadville, Colorado was Wilde's highlight: "One of my best and most interesting audiences was composed of Leadville miners. One reason I liked them was because of their magnificent physiques. I spent a night in a silver mine, and it was one of my most delightful experiences" (146). This is, of course, how the movie *Wilde* with Stephen Fry begins.

There are also some surprises (and embarrassments): "I admire the Middle Ages, because their social life was natural and unharassed by petty rules" (18). This blatantly contradicts Lord Henry's sermon in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (in itself inspired by Matthew Arnold's dichotomy of Hebraism vs. Hellenism): "if one man were to live out his life fully and completely, were to give form to every feeling, expression to every thought, reality to every dream...the world would gain such a fresh insight of joy that we would forget all the maladies of mediaevalism, and return to the Hellenic ideal." And why would the francophile Wilde put the French capital down? "If you visit France do not waste your time in Paris...but go into the villages and the remote country hamlets, and note the instinctive politeness of the peasant" (166). Wilde's wit was legendary, but apparently he was a poor public speaker: "my delivery has often been criticized very severely, but I confess it is abominable" (129). Or in his poetic effusions, Wilde seems to have forgotten Shelley's "Mont Blanc" or Byron's *Manfred*:

The mountains of California are so gigantic that they are not favourable to art or poetry. The scenery for definite utterance is that which man is lord of. There are good poets in England, but none in Switzerland. There the mountains are too high. Art cannot add to nature. (137)

Finally, a couple of politically incorrect ruminations sit uneasily with a modern audience. A native Canadian lacrosse player "should have been dressed, say, in war costume, with his face painted, armed with a tomahawk, and wearing a headdress of feathers. I was greatly amused at the gesticulations of the Indians, and I wondered what language they were speaking" (155). African-Americans similarly conform to fantastic and outrageous stereotypes: "I saw them everywhere...happy and careless, basking in the sunshine or dancing in the shade, their half-naked bodies gleaming like bronze, and their lithe and

active movements reminding one of the lizards that were seen flashing along the banks and trunks of the trees" (157).

More ominous is Wilde's flattery of MP Henry Labouchère: "He is one of the most brilliant conversationalists and the most brilliant journalist in England, one of the many democrats which the English aristocracy has produced....He is the only brilliant enemy I ever had in England" (94). In 1885, at Labouchère's instigation, Parliament ratified the Criminal Law Amendment Act that outlawed "gross indecency" between male persons in public or in private, under which Wilde would be sentenced to two years of hard labor in 1895. Moreover, Wilde's "Sapphic speech" (87) and his androgyny—"He was conspicuous for his splendid physique, his long hair and singular cast of features, which in repose would be that half of man and half of woman" (135)—hint at trouble ahead.

Apart from delightful reading (despite the somewhat pedantic annotations), *Oscar Wilde in America* could be used as a Wildean Baedeker, even listing the hotels Wilde stayed at. Literary tourists can now follow Wilde's peregrinations from Alabama to Alcatraz and New York to Nebraska. Most importantly, these interviews show the birth of the Wilde phenomenon, which continues unabated in our time.

*Western Kentucky University*

### *Books Received*

Lesley Higgins, Ed. *Oxford Essays and Notes*, Vol. IV of *The Collected Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006. Reviewed in this volume.

Hetherington, Naomi and Nadia Valman, eds. *Amy Levy. Critical Essays*. Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 2010.

Matthew Hofer and Gary Scharnhorst (eds.). *Oscar Wilde in America: The Interviews*. Urbana and Chicago: U. Illinois Press, 2010. Reviewed in this volume.

Knoepflmacher, U.C. and Logan Browning, eds. *Victorian Hybridities. Cultural Anxiety and Formal Innovation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2010.

Loy, James and Kent Loy. *Emma Darwin. A Victorian Life*. Gainesville: U. Florida P, 2010.

Marroni, Francesco. *Victorian Disharmonies. A Reconsideration of Nineteenth-Century English Fiction*. Rome: John Cabot UP, 2010.

Pole, J.R. *Contract and Consent. Representation and the Jury in Anglo-American Legal History*. Charlottesville, VA: U. Virginia P., 2010.

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THE HARRIET MARTINEAU SOCIOLOGICAL SOCIETY Announces the Sixth International Working Seminar, 9-11 August 2011, Northwest Indiana-Southwest Michigan Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. For more information or to propose a paper, please contact the co-organizers: Michael Hill <[editor@sociological-origins.com](mailto:editor@sociological-origins.com)> or Deborah Logan <[deborah.logan@wku.edu](mailto:deborah.logan@wku.edu)>

## Contributors

Gillian M.E. Alban holds degrees in English literature and language, applied linguistics, and philosophy of religion. Her book, *Melusine the Serpent Goddess in A. S. Byatt's Possession and in Mythology*, was published by Lexington Press, Lanham (2003). She is currently working on archetypal views of mythic women in literature. She is Assistant Professor at Doğuş University in Istanbul, Turkey.

Galia Benziman is a lecturer in English and Comparative Literature at the Open University of Israel. She specializes in Romantic and Victorian culture and in the history of childhood. Her book, *Narratives of Child Neglect in Romantic and Victorian Culture*, is forthcoming from Palgrave Macmillan.

Jerome Bump is Professor of English at the University of Texas, Austin. His latest publication is "Racism and Appearance in *The Bluest Eye*: a Template for an Ethical Emotive Criticism." Research interests include Hopkins, Carroll, Ecocriticism, and Animal Studies.

Lucy Cogan currently lectures and teaches at University College, Dublin. She has articles forthcoming on William Blake, William Cowper, and Charlotte Brooke. Her research interests lie primarily in the Long Eighteenth Century, covering Irish Romantic writing, the Johnson Circle, radical and antinomian inspired texts and women's writing. She is currently preparing her dissertation, "William Blake's 'Bible of Hell' and the Fall in Materialism and Language" for publication as a monograph.

Nikolai Endres is associate professor of World Literature at Western Kentucky University. He has published on Plato, Ovid, Petronius, Gustave Flaubert, Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde, Forster, Fitzgerald, Mary Renault, Gore Vidal, and Patricia Nell Warren. His new work includes a "queer" reading of the myth and music of Richard Wagner.

Richard Jacobs is Subject Leader and Principal Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Brighton, U.K. His publications include *A Beginner's Guide to Critical Reading* (Routledge) and editions for Penguin Classics; his chapter on Waugh's "A Handful of Dust" is forthcoming in *Re-assessing the Contemporary Canon* (Rodopi). Research interests include narrative and the novel, the impact of the myth of the Fall on literary and other texts, and pedagogies of literature teaching in higher education. His novel *I Am Happy: a Fiction* is currently under consideration.

Morteza Jafari, a graduate in English Literature from Tabriz University (Iran), is a lecturer at Payame Noor University. Research interests include Victorian and Modernist literature. His comparative study of Sylvia Plath and Forough Farrokhzad (a Persian woman poet) was published in 2008, and he has also written a guide for Developing Reading Proficiency (a course taught in Iranian universities).

## Advisory Board

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