

THE VICTORIAN NEWSLETTER

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The Forms of Victorian Fiction*

James R. Kincaid

MR. MICAWBER, determined to see for himself what his country intends to do for him, steps round the corner in Canterbury and sees his former London lodger. He confuses David by treating him as an old and dear friend, an equal in age and experience: "Still in the wine trade?" (Ch. 17).¹ He insists on addressing him always with terms like "the friend of my youth, the companion of earlier days!" (Ch. 27). These words carry a great deal of warmth and delight, at least to the reader, but David is made oddly uncomfortable both by this address and this man. He is not only embarrassed; he is disoriented: the steady, logical world in which he is living has been disrupted. And we too sense a fundamental disjunction of some sort. In a parallel scene Micawber himself is embarrassed when he later admits to David that he is working for Uriah Heep. Micawber speaks in such a stammering and shambling way that even his eyeglass droops, and we are again aware of some queer dislocation, some discomfort that far exceeds the apparent cause.

Micawber's embarrassment is perhaps more easily explained than is David's. G. K. Chesterton, for instance, pointed out that Micawber was upset not so much at being caught up in villainy as being caught up in the plot.² The man who has spent his life outside the confines of time and space is, it seems, now trapped by them. He has no real place in the plot, that is, in the regularized pattern wherein David disciplines his heart and learns to live comfortably, successfully, and, most of all, predictably. Naturally Micawber is embarrassed at being seen in such an environment. By the same token, perhaps one can explain the earlier scene by saying that David, playing his part in the plot, is both annoyed and threatened by meeting a man who, so he thinks, is far beyond such things. David inhabits, or is trying to inhabit, the world of steady and linear progress. It is a distinctly Aristotelian world, with clearly defined and morally intelligible connections and a pleasing, regular shape. It is principally a world of space, and we, as readers, react to it as we would to art that exists in space, not in time, as we would to architecture, not music. We are aware at any point in

our reading of the vital relationship between that particular point and the whole and of the anticipated satisfaction at seeing that whole completed. Taken by itself, David's life traces a pattern whose meaning is completely and fully contained. Taken by itself, this form is just that of most eighteenth-century novels.

But David's closed world is not, of course, the total world of the novel in which he exists. The contracting, spatial form is combatted by an alien structure that is clearly expanding. Against the closed pattern which David tries to maintain, a radically open pattern is pressed. Micawber's wild rearrangement of their ages is also an assertion of his ability to live outside linear controls, outside reason itself. And it is reason that provides support for such things as plots. The predictably recurrent rhythms that David finds are repeatedly thrown against the defiantly irregular rhythms of Micawber's world. Even such recurrence as there is with the Micawbers—Mrs. Micawber's eloquent vows never to desert her husband, for instance—is so totally without cause that it makes us think not of rational rhythms but of the rhythms of a marionette or a jack-in-the-box. And these figures are, we know, in part parodies of human beings. Just so, Mr. Micawber parodies the basic assumptions of David's world. We notice this conflict between two rhythms not only when Micawber is on the scene but in such things as Murdstone's bizarre arithmetical puzzles, Aunt Betsey's war with donkeys, Barkis' elephantine wooing, more prominently in Dora and her implicit comment on a life of regularity, account books, and the disciplining of the heart, but most clearly in David's memory, which refuses to be either rational or linear and which continually calls up scenes of irrational nightmare—fears of a vengeful and risen father, for instance, or irrational comfort and love through memories of his mother.

The conjunction of two basic forms, then, is fundamental to this novel; it is the basis on which it is built. The gap created when the Aristotelian, linear, rational David meets the existential, jagged, irrational Micawber is paradigmatic of this novel and stands, I think, as an ade-

* This paper and the two that follow by Professors Ermarth and Harris were presented at the English X Meeting of the Modern Language Association, December 27, 1974.

1. All quotations are from the New Oxford Illustrated Dickens edition (London, 1948). References are to chapter numbers only.
2. Well, I thought Chesterton had said this, but now I cannot locate where he did so—if in fact he did. His comments on the conflict between Micawber and the plot at the conclusion of the novel,

however, are so similar that perhaps one is justified in following the lead provided by W. C. Fields: when it was pointed out to him that Dickens did not mention Micawber's juggling skills, Fields replied, "He forgot." For evidence that Chesterton similarly lacked only the occasion for saying what I have attributed to him see *Appreciations and Criticisms of the Works of Charles Dickens* (New York, 1966), pp. 130-39.

quate symbol for the form of most Victorian fiction. Perhaps the subtlest example of this mixed form is worked out in *Middlemarch*, where all the characters imagine they are occupying a magical and open world but are in fact caught in one that is all too inexorably plot-ridden. One thinks also of the disjunction between temporal demands and a linear plot that occur in those scenes between Becky Sharp and Amelia, Madeline Neroni and Eleanor Bold, Quilp and Little Nell, Mr. Pecksniff and old Martin. How many Victorian novels carry on a major action that is simultaneously parodied on another level!

The principle of parody is only the most obvious development of the conflict I have mentioned between the closed form the nineteenth-century novel inherited from the century before and the open form³ that has become common in our century.⁴ The perception of some conflict is, of course, not new. Older critics often spoke of a split between plot and character when talking about Becky Sharp or Micawber or Melmotte, arguing that the authors became so fond of their created people that the primary demands of plot were more or less forgotten. We all remember the argument and the conclusion consequent on it to the effect that the Victorian novel was nearly altogether formless, one great "loose, baggy monster." All this doubtless came from regarding the nineteenth-century novel as if it were written in the eighteenth century. Those modern critics who work from Aristotelian bases, notably members of the Chicago school, seem to me nearly as hard pressed when faced with the junction of forms in the nineteenth-century novels. Sheldon Sacks' *Fiction and the Shape of Belief* is forced to offer the term "serious action" to provide a category that will somehow contain novels that are neither clearly comic nor tragic. But something more radical in the way of assumptions is needed.

And most of us do make more radical assumptions, in one way or another—most commonly by assuming that Victorian novels were written not in the eighteenth century but in our own. We very likely talk to students and to each other about these novels as if the major action, what I have called the closed form, were not there. Who spends class time or space in scholarly journals on Agnes Wickfield, or the second Cathy, or Hetta Carbury, or even Will Ladislav? With novels less well-known we can go further. In discussing *Barnaby Rudge*, for instance, critics have sometimes said, more than a little

boastfully, that they have forgotten the lines of the major action and that they were going on undisturbed to talk about the riot scenes, or the treatment of madness, or the anti-pastoral, or virtually anything other than the narrative itself.

I am sure we all do this, more or less; at least I do. I have asserted from time to time that Mr. Pecksniff, not old Martin, occupies the moral center of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. While it is true that the major action of the novel would appear to place old Martin and his troop at the center and to allow Mr. Pecksniff only the role of villain, we all know, or so I have argued, that plots go for nothing in our interpretations and that we are all aware of the mysteries of reading these novels so as to respond to their secret life. Though I have never, so far as I know, made a single convert, even among my own students, I believe that such a view of *Martin Chuzzlewit* as a totally symbolic and subversive novel may, in fact, be only an extension of the basic strategy we all employ. We tend to reverse the Aristotelian bias and to simplify these novels in another direction, regarding them wishfully as if they were all prefigurations of *The Trial* or *Absalom! Absalom!* The result is not so much a distortion as a partial illumination. The most serious practical consequence of this mistaken assumption is that it is untrue to the richness and complexity of the nineteenth-century novel, substituting a relatively certain and unified pattern for one that is tentative and mixed. From this point of view, *The Trial* and other modern examples of open form are much simpler than *Bleak House*, the model for *The Trial*, and other nineteenth-century examples of mixed form.

The best analogy outside of literature for this mixed form is provided by J. Hillis Miller's comments on *The Disappearance of God*. Miller's central image is a God who is not dead but beyond reach; he still lingers in memory, perhaps in fact. This tantalizing symbol for the Victorians provided a structure and at least a hint of coherence, but that coherence could not be confidently maintained against a new sense of emptiness and causelessness. So, by extension, a closed form was no longer satisfactory. Still, neither was an open form, for such a form rests on assumptions of incoherence and irrationality that are too certain and too final. The only possible form, then, is one which mirrors that suspended, hesitant state the Victorians talked about as "doubt." The

3. Open form is variously defined. Robert M. Adams (*Strains of Discord: Studies in Literary Openness* [Ithaca, 1958]) sees openness as a deliberate thematic ambiguity: "The open form includes a major unresolved conflict with the intent of displaying its unresolvedness" (p. 13). More common is the formal sense defined by Alan Friedman (*The Turn of the Novel* [New York, 1966]), who refers openness "to an ending which does not contain or 'close off' the rising pressure of conscience in a novel"

(p. xvi). For Friedman, openness is not a matter of meaning but "a process of ethical experience which does not close" (p. xvi).

4. Barbara Hardy, similarly, says that Victorian novelists "seem to be caught between the assured conventionality of an earlier age of fiction and the assured brave dislocations of the next" ("Towards a Poetics of Fiction: An Approach through Narrative," *Novel*, 2 [1968], 8). But if there is a trap, it is one that offers rich compensations to those caught in it.

form, like the state of mind, refuses to rest in either of the alternate comforts of security or denial.

But the comforts of denial and the relative certainty we ourselves feel about open form are not easy to give up. Miller himself has later, in *The Form of Victorian Fiction*, for some reason denied to the novel the complexity resulting from the disappearance of God he had so brilliantly described. The novelists, he says, were somehow sure that God was dead and were thus exempt from the particular tensions felt by the poets; consequently, "the form taken by Victorian fiction implies a new notion of structure, and this new structure derives from the new metaphysical situation. Because there no longer seems to be any supernatural foundation for society or for the self, Victorian novels are likely to take the form of an incomplete self-generating structure, a structure in which the temporal dimension is constitutive in a new way" (pp. 33-34). The Victorian novel, he says, is a version of the dramatic monologue (p. 3), another new nineteenth-century form.

What Miller draws our attention to is certainly there, but he has perhaps done his work too well and made us see the temporal structure, the open form, too exclusively. In some terms, for instance, the Victorian novel certainly *is* much like the dramatic monologue, but these similarities in any case are purely those of technique. What the novel has that the dramatic monologue does not, in fact what the novel clings to that the dramatic monologue deliberately rejects, is a sense of context, more broadly, a traditional narrative pattern. It is easy to see formal resemblances between *Wuthering Heights* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, but to what does "Porphyria's Lover" connect? One cannot be sure, precisely because the narrative patterns in the dramatic monologue are artificially curtailed, made ambiguous in context, or in some other way totally suspended and thus made incomplete. In the novel, the formal pattern is given context and a total shape; the opposition is more subtle. The resultant form is itself tentative, recognizing the incoherence fully but refusing to acknowledge that the incoherence is necessarily final and unchanging.

This mixed form, I believe, dominates the Victorian novel in its full range, from those which seem most open, say the late novels of Dickens, to those of Trollope, apparently the most closed. *Our Mutual Friend*, for instance, among the most apocalyptic and modern of Victorian novels, takes as its main action a plot that is drawn straight from tradition, in this case the tradition of romantic comedy, with all its customary paraphernalia of mysterious wills, class barriers and reluctant parents overcome, a rush of marriages at the close, and clear didactic themes of moral education. Set against this—well, we all know from recent criticism what is set against this:

the nervous, disjointed language of the novel, the violent and expansive symbolism of the river and the dust, the removal of the social world altogether out of the sphere of humanity. Both patterns are present. When we see Bradley Headstone beating his head in desperation, then, we are aware simultaneously of two broad purposes: one serving the closed form, whereby he is the wrong and merely troublesome suitor on the road to eventual punishment, and the other serving the open form, whereby his anguish and sexual frustration reach outward as expressions of both social and cosmological injustice not to be explained by or contained within a comic plot. Even the most distinctly existential, temporal characters in the novel—the cripple Jenny Wren, say, or Mr. Venus, the man who has made a commercial success by the ingenious articulation of human bones—are still brought into the closed pattern: they both perform in romantic plots and are finally married. It is true that when the humorous villain Silas Wegg is thrown out of the window into a cart of nightsoil, the image penetrates the closed pattern and suggests a horrible connection between commerce, filth, civilization, and humanity; but this same scene also confirms the closed pattern by suggesting just as clearly a thousand traditional comic episodes in which the villain is exposed.

By the same token, those quiet and apparently backward-looking novels by Trollope find a variety of means to disengage us from the forward movement of the narrative action, to cast doubts on the conclusiveness or even authority of that action, and to create in the reader a recognition of these dual forms: the closed pattern at war with the open one. Whereas Dickens generally creates this disjunction through characters and images, Trollope more commonly uses a dramatized narrator. Often that narrator exposes the naïveté of the plot's romantic comedy by asserting a low-mimetic, even cynical perspective. Over and over again, Trollope's narrator prods us into reformulating and thus complicating terribly the romantic pattern. "You think he is a villain," the narrator will say, "but in fact nothing is that simple; look into yourself and see if you are really different." The end of such devices is almost never satiric; Trollope seldom wishes us to hold a mirror up to ourselves for very long or even to change anything. We are primarily to recognize that the main action of the novel is proceeding along lines which are somewhat contrived and artificial in that they are so neat. Trollope's narrators, as James proclaimed with such disgust, are always destroying the illusion, telling us that art is art and reminding us that we are reading novels, not witnessing life. James's obtuseness on this point is related to his insistence that the only adequate model for a novelist is provided by the historian. Trollope appeals to an older conception of the

novelist as maker, not a teller: the shoemaker was his own favorite and impish analogy. By seeking to remind us of the artificiality of the art, the narrator plays off against the apparent control and shapeliness of the plot a sense of the arbitrary and the uncaused. When he tells us, long before anything in the narrative requires it, that Eleanor Bold is not destined to marry Mr. Slope, we recognize the closed pattern immediately and anticipate its conclusion, but we also see that that pattern is neither unopposed nor autonomous. The rational world is thrown up against the irrational; the artist as maker can be as arbitrary and willful as Caliban's God.

When a Trollope novel comes to its concluding chapter, there are almost always a few remarks on the general nature of concluding chapters, some wry, even surprisingly bitter comments on the marriages taking place to the effect that marriage is a great anticlimax to what has

gone before, and some jocular apologies for boring us all with this conventional detailing of everyone's future. Just as the closed pattern is about to snap shut, the narrator pries it apart here and there, protesting against the notion of fulfillment itself as stagnant and repressive, suggesting that real life has very little resemblance to such neat patterns, and finally reminding us that this novel, this total experience, is, after all, only a matter of art, of tradition. But at the same time this very tradition has controlled the plot, and Trollope has managed to complicate that tradition without at all subverting it. Like all major nineteenth-century novelists, he is able to use the traditional narrative patterns without fully accepting their implications, and he can open the closed form without at the same time settling for the finality and simplicity of open form itself.

Ohio State University

Method and Moral in George Eliot's Narrative

Elizabeth Ermarth

GEORGE ELIOT ONCE REFUSED her publisher's request for a preliminary plot summary of *Adam Bede* on the following grounds: that it is the "treatment alone which determines the moral quality of art."¹ This statement bears close examination, since morality in her fiction is often taken to be synonymous with content, particularly the hortatory comments of the narrator—commentary, furthermore, that is often associated with the author herself. Here she suggests that moral significance in her novels derives not from any particular set of conclusions—not the narrator's and not the author's—but instead from the narrative method. George Eliot's realism deals not merely with objects or conditions as they are, but with the activity of mind in relation to conditions as they are. This activity refers to that habit of mind exemplified in the narrative treatment, not to the generalizations of her narrator who is in fact one of her characters. I want to consider the moral implications of her treatment after first making some distinctions between author, narrator, and narrative.

George Eliot's critics have always recognized the importance of her narrator, but have always treated it as the author's own voice. A century ago Dowden praised the "second self" of the author, "more substantial than any merely human personality encumbered by the accidents of flesh and blood and daily living,"² and yet, for all that, merely a projection of the author. Henry James praised *Middlemarch* for the "presence of brain" which he associated with authorial "instinct" and, thereby, with a capacity quite far from the conscious purpose of an artist like himself. "The constant presence of thought, of generalising instinct, of brain in a word, behind her observation gives the latter its great value and her whole manner its high superiority."³ More recently, both Wayne Booth and Barbara Hardy, despite arguments that could support the distinction, still make the same identification of author and narrator that seems to have become a critical habit.⁴ But George Eliot's narrator, far from being an unintentional projection by the author, is part of a conscious artistic intention to exter-

1. Letter to John Blackwood (1858). *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. Gordon S. Haight (New Haven, 1954-1955), II, 503-4.
2. "George Eliot" (1872), *A Century of George Eliot Criticism*, ed. G. S. Haight (Boston, 1965), pp. 64-65.
3. "George Eliot's *Middlemarch*," *A Century of George Eliot Criticism*, p. 86.
4. Even though she admits that "the narrative medium is composed of many voices," and that the narrator is a character, Ms. Hardy

nevertheless speaks of the narrator as "the authorial voice." Speaking of the narrator in *Adam Bede*, she says "this is the voice of George Eliot or Marian Evans at its calmest and most intense, without disguise, exaggeration, or arch humour." (*The Novels of George Eliot* [Oxford, 1967], p. 160). Wayne Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago, 1961), explicitly attributes the narrator's commentary in *Middlemarch* and *Adam Bede* to the author herself (pp. 197, 214-15).

nalize a mind, as Mark Schorer says, and to show that mind to *be* one.⁵

When George Eliot began writing fiction her deliberate purpose was to present the activity of a mind. In 1846 there appeared in the *Coventry Herald and Observer* the fictional memoirs of McCarthy, published by the fictional editor for the reason that they contain the "image of his mind."⁶ This mind, like the artist's, could perceive in ordinary objects a wider significance, a "beautiful shadow which was ever floating before him, importunately presenting itself as a twin object with all realities. . . ." Later narrators are less specific characters than McCarthy but idiosyncratic presences nevertheless, and ones quite distinct from the author. When the narrator in *The Mill on the Floss* says of Maggie's misguided attempt to imitate Thomas à Kempis "that renunciation remains sorrow, though a sorrow borne willingly" (IV, iii), the reader is not being offered a golden rule. George Eliot's own view of renunciation was that one undertakes it, not for its own sake, but as a necessary preliminary to creative action.⁷ What the reader is being offered in this passage is the burdensome task of evaluating the narrator's generalization in relation to Maggie's very complex situation.

The idiosyncrasy of the narrator's mind separates it from both the author and from the overall narrative style. In the passage just quoted the narrator stands at a distance from the character; at other times the narrator is completely effaced by dramatic scene; but at all times the narrator's range is smaller than the reader's and smaller than the implied author's. Even the obvious formal features of the novels—the temporal transitions, for example, or the symbolic parallels—belong to a world of authorial commentary which the narrator shows no sign of perceiving and which the reader must interpret alone.

Most of all, the hortatory passages call attention to the limits of the narrator's mind. The very fact that the narrator must resort to generalizations and patterns merely testifies to the human limitation of the narrator, not to his omniscience. A really omniscient mind would require none of the categories which weaker minds require precisely because they cannot have perfect knowledge of particulars and, hence, must find round-about ways of dealing with them.⁸ George Eliot asserts that art is not a

vehicle for exhortation but a medium for perception. The kind of moralizing often associated with her through her narrator is something George Eliot detested. The very idea, she wrote, that there are any definite lines between vice and virtue, "so far from being a necessary safeguard to morality, is itself an immoral fiction."⁹ She rebuked Kingsley for being "hortatory," and she advised him as an artist to give us instead "his higher sensibility as a medium, a delicate accoustical or optical instrument, bringing home to our coarser senses what would otherwise be unperceived by us."¹⁰ Her own purpose as an artist she described as the attempt "to exhibit things as they are or have been, seen through such a medium as my own nature gives me."¹¹ This medium, which I am now using synonymously with treatment, gives art its moral quality but a morality which has little to do with omniscience or even objectivity. As she wrote to a friend, "the most active perception gives us rather a reflex of what we think and feel, than the real sum of objects before us"¹²—a thought expressed by the narrator of *Adam Bede* in reference to the distortive nature of the mirror reflecting that action. Even the narrators, in George Eliot, walk around well-wadded with stupidity.

The narrator functions as one voice among many—for example, the passage from *The Mill on the Floss* (V, ii) which treats Tom Tulliver's efforts to redeem the family name. The narrative alternates between seven different points of view, each one idiosyncratic and each one partially correct. The idea that Tom is steadfast and loyal comes from Tom himself, and we cannot disagree even though we know there is more to say. The idea that he is "good commercial stuff" comes, appropriately, from Uncle Deane; the idea that he is a true Dodson comes from Mrs. Pullet; that one should not meddle with success from Uncle Pullet; and that all ideas about it are premature from Mrs. Glegg. Amidst this proliferation of perspectives, none of which is wrong and all of which are partial, we become conscious that each perception of Tom is limited and determined by the resources of the perceiver.

Mrs. Glegg observed that she was not given to speak without a book, as some people were; that those who said least were most likely to find their words made good; and that when the right moment came, it would be seen who could do something better than talk—

5. "The Structure of the Novel," in Barbara Hardy, ed., *Middlemarch: Critical Approaches* (London, 1967), p. 23.

6. "Poetry and Prose from the Notebook of an Eccentric," *Essays of George Eliot*, ed., Thomas Pinney (New York, 1963), pp. 15-17.

7. See my article on George Eliot's alleged determinism, "Incarnations: George Eliot's Conception of 'Undeviating Law'" in *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, Winter 1975.

8. This paraphrases Macht's view that thinking in categories originates in human weakness: "An intellect broad and inclusive

enough to grasp all details would require no such round about method—nor would there be any 'science' for it." Quoted by Ernst Cassirer, *The Problem of Knowledge* (New Haven, 1950), p. 108.

9. "The Morality of Wilhelm Meister" (1855), *Essays*, pp. 144-47.

10. "Westward Ho! and Constance Herbert" (1855), *Essays*, p. 126.

11. *Letters*, II, 362.

12. "Three Months in Weimar" (1855), *Essays*, p. 89.

an observation which says more about her than about Tom. Uncle Pullet's opinion, delivered "after silent meditation during a period of several lozenges," gives us a reflex of his own personality rather than the sum of objects before him.

The same is true of the narrator, whose mind exhibits distinctive literary and linguistic capabilities. This same chapter begins as follows:

So it has been since the days of Hecuba, and of Hector, tamer of horses: inside the gates, the women with streaming hair and uplifted hands offering prayers, watching the world's combat from afar, filling their long, empty days with memories and fears: outside, the men, in fierce struggle with things divine and human, quenching memory in the stronger light of purpose, losing the sense of dread and even of wounds in the hurrying ardour of action.

The allusive flow, elegant antitheses, and even slightly high-faluting quality of this language, as well as the horizon of possibilities suggested, contrast markedly with the narrow horizons and homely language of Mrs. Glegg and Uncle Pullet, setting the narrator apart as one voice among many. Certainly this voice contrasts with the urbane voice of George Eliot that we know from her essays and letters. It is a style that distinguishes the narrator's mind as one with unique resources. Like McCarthy, who saw a twin shadow in all realities which was the reflex of his own mind, so the narrator and Mr. Pullet alike perceive Tom's situation in relation to something else, through such a medium as their natures give them.

True, the narrator is more sophisticated than the characters, but the process of perception is the same. Early in *Middlemarch* (Ch. 29), for example, the narrator transfers our attention from Dorothea to Casaubon in the following way: "One morning, some weeks after her arrival at Lowick, Dorothea—but why always Dorothea? Was her point of view the only possible one with regard to this marriage?" By the end of the novel, after her dark night of the soul, Dorothea has learned to do the same thing. "She began now to live through that yesterday morning deliberately again, forcing herself to dwell on every detail and its possible meaning. Was she alone in that scene? Was it her event only?" (Ch. 80) In the same way, Dorothea shares the narrator's propensity for hortatory remarks and illustrative generalizations. In her case, they are often unkind or inappropriate, as with her comments to poor Celia about the family jewels, and as in this remark made to Ladislaw at the end of the novel: "If we had lost our own chief good, other people's good would remain, and that is worth trying for" (Ch. 83). Under the circumstances, when they seem about to lose each other

for no good reason, this remark seems inappropriate at best. This is a kind of reflex that she must outgrow, a kind of activity that we, like Dorothea, must learn to use appropriately.

The same is true for the narrator's generalizations. Take the famous pierglass image in *Middlemarch* (Ch. 27) where we learn that the ego gives a charming illusion of concentricity to a random universe. Are we being offered a general truth? The subject of egoism is important in the novel, and this image refers specifically to Rosamond, whose ego is all too concentric. Does Mary Garth have an ego that gives an illusion of concentricity? Does Dorothea even have much ego? Is the illusion of concentricity inevitable, as the narrator's generalization suggests, and if so, are Mary and Dorothea deficient in something? If this narrative comment is a general truth, it is an unstable one; not unreliable, but partial. The alert reader is forced to question the generalization and to qualify it by the test of experience; and our experience of the narrative process in this novel tells us of the fragility and limited appropriateness of all conclusions, even those of the narrator.

In contrast to the distinctive perspective of the narrator are the multiple perspectives of the narrative treatment. This method has been described as a "shift from particular to general," as a systole-diastole movement similar to Lydgate's description of scientific method, and as a zig-zag process among points of view.¹³ These descriptions seem adequate, with two qualifications: first that the method should be distinguished, as it often is not, from the narrator's mind; and second, that this activity is finely complex. The latter point should detain us for a moment.

This narrative shift from one perspective to another characterizes the style from the sentence to the overall structure. Even the innocent seeming word has a double aspect, as for example the word "conspicuously" in this description from *Romola*: "Tito Melema had become conspicuously serviceable in the intercourse with the French guests." (Ch. 22) The outer perspective, in which the word has a pejorative meaning, merges with Tito's perspective in which he feels the importance and the flattery of being conspicuous. Emblematic of this process on a larger scale is the process of narrative metamorphoses in the "Proem" to *Romola* where, in a few pages, the narrative is handed from a spirit called "angel of the dawn" to "our imagination," then to the shade of an old Florentine, and finally to the anonymous voice which cautions the spirit against descending.

For a more extended example of this process, which

13. See Hardy, *The Novels of George Eliot*, p. 163; J. Hillis Miller, *The Form of Victorian Fiction* (London, 1968), p. 83; and Derek

Oldfield, "The Language of the Novel," *Middlemarch: Critical Approaches*, esp. p. 81.

distinguishes the narrative treatment throughout the novels, take Chapter One of *Adam Bede*. The narrator steps forward in the famous passage to comment on the task of narration and then retires behind a scene of dramatic roundness and distinct, serene detail: a scene where, because we have no knowledge of the particular context, we cannot identify the characters or interpret their interactions. The narrative then shifts from an "elderly horseman" who watches Adam walking home, to Mr. Casson watching the elderly horseman approach Donnithorne Arms, back to the horseman as he rides away to hear Dinah speak, then to the narrator who delivers a literary quotation in connection with the rustic gathering before being effaced in a passage of dialogue. So at every level we see the narrative treatment involving us in a process of shifting perspective.

Since it is precisely this task of grasping multiple perspectives in which so many of George Eliot's characters fail, the narrative treatment can be considered a response to the moral problematic in George Eliot's fiction. Because Gwendolen Harleth forgets her first response to Grandcourt and acts on a limited view of her situation, she traps herself in a marriage which was supposed to mean freedom and which instead feels increasingly like imprisonment. Hetty Sorrel, Gwendolen, Lydgate, Bulstrode, and all the characters who act with limited vision and in ignorance of their actual, complex conditions, manage to act self-destructively. Dorothea at her most dreadful is Dorothea leaving Ladislav in the dust, acting on a mistaken view of Casaubon and of her duty toward him. Under the circumstances Will's reticence toward her is understandable, but hers seems an exaggerated withdrawal, a refusal to act in her own interest.

Dorothea, however, is a rare example of the character who actually learns to free herself from a fixation. Because she learns to see through other eyes she becomes capable of the autonomy she begins to demonstrate at the end of the novel. Seeing for once through Casaubon's eyes, after she learns of his legacy, she can see her own blindness. Then she can act to free herself from the dependency she had chosen. Similarly, because she is capable of perceiving a point of view different from her own and even, as it first seems, inimical to her own interests, she can return to comfort Rosamond. This ability, to see Casaubon and Rosy in more than one light, permits Dorothea to move beyond them. Such a capacity is precisely what George Eliot means by sympathy. Sympathy is distinctly not an emotional identification which obliterates differences but the opposite, a perception which respects them. In a way Feuerbach would approve, Doro-

thea's experience shows how an increased sense of otherness increases the sense of self and of one's own possibilities.

The narrative treatment constantly encourages the reader to perform the same shift of perception that Dorothea manages. We are forced to be attentive and circumspect, a fact which may account for the sense of difficulty and even fatigue which the novels can evoke. We perceive Casaubon incrementally, through a collection of perspectives on him—Celia's, Dorothea's, Ladislav's, Mrs. Cadwallader's, Casaubon's own, and the narrator's—so that our propensity to make judgments is inhibited. The fuller our perception of him becomes, the more problematic judgment must be and the more the mystery of his character is preserved. The essential identity of all characters and events in her fiction becomes problematic in this way because the narrative treatment prevents us from maintaining a single perspective. Far from fostering the stance of moral righteousness which often is associated with George Eliot and her narrator, the narrative demolishes it. As one voice among many and yet one more sophisticated than most, the narrator stands midway between the characters and the readers: as a model for the characters, if they could but see it, and as a specification of our activity as readers. The narrator's propensity to generalize is an influence always countered by the influence of the narrative; a fine tension is always maintained between the impulse to generalize and the need to differentiate. George Eliot's narrative fosters an unconventional morality, one more a matter of style than of precept.

Our response to this zig-zag narrative method must necessarily be tense, in the sense of attentive. In a situation where, as Mr. Oldfield says, we can neither become "uncritically identified" with a character's thoughts nor "wholly objective either,"¹⁴ we must be watchful and constantly active. If, as George Eliot said, the business of art is "amplifying our experience and extending our contact with our fellow-men beyond the bounds of our own lot,"¹⁵ then our activity as attentive readers is artistic activity. The narrative treatment has its moral consequence in the reader's detachment from fixed points of view and emancipation into a sense of the problematic nature of every situation. We are forced to relinquish resolutions for the sake of that "infinite search or approximation" which George Eliot called the true religious philosophy of an imperfect being. "Finality," she said, "is but another name for bewilderment or defeat."¹⁶ The task of maintaining a multiple perspective involves considerable effort, as Dorothea learns and as we know after

14. Oldfield, pp. 83-84.

15. "The Natural History of German Life" (1856), *Essays*, p. 271.

16. "Progress of the Intellect" (1851), *Essays*, p. 44.

reading a novel by George Eliot; but success is rewarding. "Looking through twenty different minds in quick succession," George Eliot wrote to a friend after seeing pic-

Vision and Form: The English Novel and the Emergence of the Short Story

Wendell V. Harris

IT IS A DIFFICULT TASK to attempt to assess the nature and power of unconscious assumptions or implicit definitions of an earlier period. When such assumptions are not in themselves startling, the attempt runs the danger of seeming to labor mightily to bring forth a mouse. But, having acknowledged the dangers, I state my argument: that the province of fiction, as recognized by serious writers from Fielding to Hardy, was defined essentially as the presentation of life in latitudinal or longitudinal completeness, very often both; that this paralleled the characteristic intellectual concern with the fabric of society during the middle years of the eighteenth century and during the greater part of the Victorian period; and that these mutually reinforcing views of the province of intellectually respectable fiction and of the nature of worthwhile intellectual endeavor go far to explain the generally insignificant place of shorter fiction in England until late in the nineteenth century. The genre awaited the coming of the appropriate vision.

Fielding preeminently and, in significant degrees, the other important mid-eighteenth-century novelists were, like Pope and Dr. Johnson, surveyors of a broad human panorama. Their novels constitute their own "essays on man," in several volumes. "Let observation, with extensive view / Survey mankind from China to Peru" could well be the poetic motto of the time—and the same impulse dominates the novel in mid-century. This is damped down in the latter years of the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth—though the two most significant novelists during what would otherwise have been a barren fifty years for the novel, Austen and Scott, represent it in their own ways—but reasserts itself in the great new generation of novelists in the 1840s and 1850s. After Fielding, the model of contemporary historical

tures at an exhibition, leaves one feeling "headachy, but enriched."¹⁷

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writing governed the novel; during the latter two-thirds of the nineteenth century that model, reinforced by the kind of organic all-encompassing consciousness best represented by Carlyle, suggested what should be the characteristic excellences of the novel. The two major dimensions of historical narrative—the longitudinal tracing of sequence and the latitudinal or comprehensive survey of interrelationships within a briefer period—set the legitimate tasks for fiction. The occasional call for shorter, more compact novels after the French manner¹ could hardly be heeded until this implicit expectation lost its force.

As Ian Watt, citing parallel views from E. M. Forster, Oswald Spengler, and Northrop Frye, points out, the novel reflects an appreciation of time as "the shaping force of man's individual and collective history."² Leo Braudy has argued that the word "history" in the title of the masterwork of the first English author who seriously considered the nature of fiction—*The History of Tom Jones*—has yet to be given its due weight by critics³; more critical attention might profitably be diverted from Fielding's description of the novel as a comic epic in prose to his preoccupation with history. Now of course the word "history" had come into rather general usage as a descriptive term distinguishing the more realistic fiction from the fairy-tale world of the romance: thus Mary Manley contrasted "Little Histories" (essentially realistic novella) with "Romances" in a preface of 1705 and Samuel Croxall describes novels (really *novella*) as "Imitations of History" in the preface to his 1720 collection. Defoe described *Roxana* (1724) as a "History" because it had a foundation in "Truth of Fact," contrasting it with the mere "Story."⁴ But Fielding applies the word to his novels in a more precise manner. Leo Braudy's study of the new

17. *Letters*, VI, 228.

1. For instance, see the anonymous "The Art of Story-Telling," *Fraser's*, 53 (January 1856), 722-32. Cited by Richard Stang, *The Theory of the Novel in England, 1850-1870* (New York, 1959), p. 115.

2. *The Rise of the Novel* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1957), p. 22.

3. *Narrative Form in History and Fiction* (Princeton, 1970).

4. One is indebted to Joan Williams for bringing together in *Novel and Romance, 1700-1800* (New York, Barnes and Noble, 1970) one hundred and one statements on the eighteenth-century novel. Manley's preface to *The Secret History of Queen Zarah* will be found on pages 33-39; Samuel Croxall's preface on pages 71-72; Defoe's preface to *Roxana* on pages 80-81.

developments in the narrative form of Hume's *History of England*, Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and Fielding's four novels builds on what he describes as a skeletal similarity: "all three writers use a prose narrative to treat problems of the individual in history, problems of the human character in history."⁵

In *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*, Fielding certainly occupies himself with the writing of history sufficiently to make us aware that the relation between history and fiction is of signal importance to him. To write history is to draw the manners of the species man and thus illustrate both the variety of human character and the constancy with which certain dominant characteristics shape individuals through history. "The Lawyer is not only alive, but hath been so these 4,000 Years."⁶ Fielding is redefining the reality which should be the subject of history—it is not the public sequence of events but the continuous panorama of human nature. The adventures of *Tom Jones* reveal the variety and interrelationship of the multiform possibilities of human character; therefore, those adventures constitute not merely his "life" but a *history*. Further, both the sequence of those adventures and the intricate reticulation of society which interconnects a variety of human types are important in Fielding's novels; Fielding had his own claim on a twentieth-century motto, "Only connect." The sequential and comprehensive model he offered was enormously influential. Variety of character and situation, the close interweaving of incident, and the chronicling of a substantial stretch of time came to be categorical expectations. This is implicit, for example, in the preface to the first English translation of the *Sorrows of Werter* (1779) which explains that "those who expect a Novel will be disappointed in this work, which contains few characters and few events"⁷; it is explicit in Smollett's 1753 definition of the novel as "a large diffused picture, comprehending the characters of life, disposed in different groupes, and exhibited in various attitudes, for the purposes of a uniform plan . . . to which every individual figure is subservient."⁸

The rise of the novel coincided with the rise of a more self-critical, self-conscious style of history-writing as well as with the rise of the middle class. The genre grew, flourished, and prospered through the nineteenth century when the historical consciousness was so great that it has been said, not altogether facetiously, that the nineteenth century discovered history. The century certainly gave itself to the tracing of chains of causes and effects, and of the subtle interweaving of relations throughout society

and across time. In the process, the great prophet-essayists of the century were led from region to region of intellectual speculation in their attempt to encompass the meaning of history and of society.

Carlyle not only had the greatest influence on other writers of any of the nineteenth-century English sages, but among them he offers the most complete paradigm of the course of the intellectual striving to connect all things. The effort led Carlyle from German romanticism to the struggle to assimilate the rigorously organized logic of German idealism and thence, by way of a monumental tour of the French revolution, to the condition of England and on through time and across frontiers in quest of the indubitable leader. But through it all he remained certain that "Wondrous truly are the bonds that unite us one and all; whether by the soft binding of Love or the Iron chaining of Necessity." The well-known passage from his first great work continues:

Wert thou, my little Brotherkin, suddenly covered up with the largest imaginable Glass bell . . . thou art no longer a circulating venous-arterial Heart, that taking and giving circulated through all Space and all Time: there has a hole fallen out in the immeasurable, universal World-tissue, which must be darned up again!

I say, there is not a red Indian, hunting by Lake Winnipeg, can quarrel with his squaw, but the whole world must smart for it: will not the price of beaver rise?⁹

That sense of organic interrelationship, which speaks, on the one hand, in the grand metaphor of the roaring loom of time and, on the other, in the homely but terrible incident of the Irish widow, runs through almost the whole of the Victorian prose writers. Ruskin, Arnold, Morris, even Mill, found themselves constantly expanding the temporal and intellectual contexts in which basic social questions should be considered; each conducted his own survey of the great network of human interaction seeking to discover the point of leverage from which the interlinked structure of society could be altered.

The novelists conducted similar surveys of the great nexus in their fictive histories. The worlds of the great Victorian novels depend on the shaping of each individual by the interaction between the pressures of the socioeconomic world and the choices made by the individual. *Vanity Fair* implies not only the variety and venality of the world but its bustling interconnections in space and time; the vast web of human endeavors which makes up *Bleak House*—some evil, some saintly, some grotesque, a few insane—represents only the most spectacular exam-

5. *Narrative Form in History and Fiction*, p. 5.

6. *Joseph Andrews*, ed. Martin Battestin (Middletown, Conn., 1967), Bk. III, Ch. 1.

7. Williams, p. 308.

8. Dedication to *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* (London, 1971 [Oxford English Novels]), p. 2.

9. *Sartor Resartus*, Vol. I, *Collected Works*, Sterling ed. (Boston, 1885), pp. 185-86.

pie of Dickens' concern to show the rippling effect of each human action intersecting with others. *Middlemarch*, which, we remember, George Eliot described as showing "the gradual action of ordinary causes,"¹⁰ sweeps across the great center of English social structure. Though Hardy's novels seldom exhibit so crowded a stage as those of the earlier authors, the actions of his characters extend through time and across the lives of others in designedly unexpected ways. Indeed, much of what may seem forced coincidence or unnecessary development of subplots in Hardy is after all the result of his difficulties in fulfilling—with a reduced cast of characters and restricted social horizon—what had come to be regarded as the mission of the novel: to see and illustrate the interconnectedness of things.

Though the action of time upon the individual, of class upon class, of man upon man, is the driving force in the great nineteenth-century novels, so universal and pervasive is this conception that it passes almost without comment by novelists or critics. The emergence of a number of differing novelistic modes was recognized, usually in contrasting pairs—the novel of character and the novel of situation, the realistic and the idealistic novel, the historical novel and the novel of contemporary life—but all these developed within the bounds of the undeclared necessary condition: the novel must chronicle the changes wrought by time and the vast interconnectedness of human actions.

Walter Bagehot, not quite a sage and certainly of a different temper of mind from Carlyle and those he most influenced, nevertheless illustrates with a unique explicitness the effect on the novel of the age's preoccupation with time and the great web of society. The only worthwhile novels for him belong to the class he calls "ubiquitous," which "aims at describing the whole of human life in all its spheres, in all its aspects, with all its varied interests, aims, and objects. It searches through the whole life of man; his practical pursuits, his speculative attempts, his romantic youth, and his domestic age. It gives an entire picture of these. . . ."¹¹ Further, in discussing what he called the "penal code" of the novel—"the apportionment of reward and punishment to the good and evil personages therein delineated"—he advances his own interpretation of the nature of the world and its proper delineation in fiction. Providence, he says, appears to work "by scheme of averages. Most people who ought to succeed, do succeed; most who do fail, ought to fail. But there is no exact adjustment of 'mark' to

merit. . . . 'on the whole,' 'speaking generally,' 'looking at life as a whole,' are the words in which we must describe the providential adjustment of visible good and evil to visible goodness and badness. And when we look more closely, we see that these general results are the consequences of certain principles which work unseen, and which are effectual in the main, though thwarted here and there."¹² It is apparent that the adequate representation of such a world in a novel requires that time be allowed for slow causes to operate, that a variety of characters and situations be included, and that action and reaction be broadly traced.

Elsewhere, Bagehot applies this joint view of the nature of the world and of the novel more directly to the structure of the novel. The novelist, he says, "must enter into each [character] individually, and he must bind them all together. He must be in each and over all . . . [and] imbue his tale with the feelings of the secret relation between the characters which suggest the reasons why their destinies are interwoven, and which determine the limits of their mutual influence on each other's career."¹³

It is true that the economic advantages which publishers and circulating libraries exploited in the three-volume novel, the lack of periodical outlets for short fiction, and the more immediate recognition possible to the novelist all militated against the earlier development of the true short story in England. But in nineteenth-century England a great portion of what Lionel Stevenson has happily called the "agglomerative impulse" which led writers to the longer forms of fiction¹⁴ would seem to have derived from a view of the purpose of fictional narrative very similar to Bagehot's.

Thus, during the long period from Fielding and Richardson to the emergence of Kipling, Stevenson, and the myriad short story writers of the 1890s, the entire province of fiction was seen as largely identical with that of the novel of the time. The old Romance soon went out of fashion—despite Clara Reeve's 1785 defense, the taste for the wonderful being satisfied for a time by the Goths: Walpole, Beckford, Lewis, and Radcliffe. Short fiction could be anecdotal—it was obviously well adapted to the humorous contretemps, but the only other alternatives likely to suggest themselves were miniatures either of the Gothic romance or the novel. The first led to the tale, tending, as Northrop Frye has suggested, not only to stylization but to the "nihilistic and untamable": to ghost stories, wild adventures, hair-breadth escapes.¹⁵ The second tended simply to disaster. That short fiction which

10. *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. Gordon S. Haight (New Haven, 1955), V, 168.

11. "The Waverly Novels," Vol. II, *The Collected Works* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965) p. 46.

12. Walter Bagehot's *Works*, II, 60.

13. "A Novel or Two," *National Review* (October 1855), cited in Stang, p. 126.

14. "The Short Story in Embryo," *English Literature in Transition*, 15:4 (1972), 261-68.

15. *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, 1957), p. 305.

tried to follow the novel in holding ordinary life up to the light lacked space to follow either the extensive or longitudinal models provided by the novel—it was unable to create world enough and time. Unfortunately, the closer the tale approached the novel, the further it was forced to move from the essentially ahistorical, sonnet-like, and highly focused vision which is characteristic of the true short story. That is why the bulk of the short fiction of writers like Dickens, Trollope, or Hardy seems so uninspired—it tried to translate a vision for which the short fiction piece simply could not be appropriate. So long as they clung to the central nineteenth-century view of the proper scope for fiction, shorter fiction was almost bound to go awry in the hands of even the best novelists. Dickens could employ short fiction in the interest of a humorous yet sentimental moral vision; Thackeray could employ it for satire; Trollope could touch up personal experiences into pleasant anecdotes which immediately slight the importance of the incidents they set forth. Hardy, more ambitious, tried to translate the historically structured narrative of the novel into the briefer form by looking before and after, tracing in unsatisfyingly bare outline how complex relationships came to be.

We may define the true short story impressionistically through certain qualities: it should be crisp, taut, lean, focused, unified. We may define it technically by enumerating those devices for getting under way, shifting scenes, and concluding, for implying, suggesting, symbolizing, and summing up, which produce those qualities we expect, and which fill the great majority of the books on the short story which, row on row, make up the dreary PN 3375 area of the stacks. But we also have a categorical expectation of which we are likely to be no more explicitly aware than were Victorian novel readers: the essence of the short story is to isolate, to portray the individual person, or moment, or scene in isolation—detached from the great continuum—at once social and historical, which it had been the business of the English novel, and the great concern of nineteenth-century essayists, to insist upon.

Frank O'Connor is expressing this when he finds that the short story looks for its central characters to the lonely or defiant, those outside conventional society. "The novel can still adhere to the classical concept of a civilized society, of man as an animal who lives in a community . . . but the short story remains by its very nature remote from the community—romantic, individualistic, and intransigent."¹⁶ The short story is indeed the natural vehicle for presentation of the outsider, but also for the moment whose intensity makes it seem outside the or-

inary stream of time, or the scene whose significance is outside our ordinary range of experience. Corollaries follow. Whereas in the novel the significance of events is defined only over time, in the short story the significance is, implicitly or explicitly, immediate. Where in the novel each character or event is understood only as part of a far-reaching web (the warp of that web being the flow of time, the weft the social structure), the short story illuminates only a small portion of the web (though it may imply the nature of the rest). Where the novel frequently exhibits a structure of symbols, the story may well become one.

Such qualities began to appeal to a variety of kinds of writers in England at the end of the nineteenth century. To begin with, Kipling's *India* offered a whole world of outsiders; the *Civil and Military Gazette* afforded only brief space for their treatment; the historical convention was shed and the English short story arrived. The immediately subsequent writers of the *Yellow Book* school, like Dowson, Crackanorpe, D'Arcy, and Harland, had the advantage of having read Kipling and of knowing what the French were accomplishing in the short story, but they must also have been attracted to the genre by a Paterian disinclination to take a cosmic or even expansive or longitudinal view of the world. The famous conclusion to *The Renaissance* is, in fact, not at all discordant with main streams of Victorian thought in emphasizing that not only human life but the entire visible universe is but a vast organic whole made up of elements constantly recombining. But where the major essayists and novelists had been fascinated by the vision of an organic structure of human endeavor which distributes and redistributes the effect of every human action, Pater's vision was of course a chillier one which emphasized every man's isolation. To those for whom Pater spoke, the wider the view one took, the less comfortable. The magic of the great Victorian prophets had come to seem mere verbal legerdemain. The everyday world revealed itself to be no better for the declamations of the Victorian idealists, and the cities and countryside were unquestionably much the worse for the practical result of economic utilitarianism. The strong common sense of the Bentham, Mills, and Harrisons had won a victory, but lost the green and pleasant land.

Many writers of the 1880s and 1890s turned therefore with relief to the isolable, the detachable. The incompatibility of their views with that which supported the great nineteenth-century tradition of the novel is manifested in their inability to master the longer form. But they were clear that quite another sort of vision had value, that the expression of that vision was the task

16. *The Lonely Voice* (Cleveland, 1963), p. 21.

of the short story, and that the legitimacy of that aim and that form was still largely unrecognized. As Lena Milman wrote in an essay on Henry James published in the *Yellow Book* in 1895: "It is not yet ours to realise how the most exquisite in life are just those passing emotions, those elusive impressions which it behoves the artist to go seeking, over them so cunningly to cast his net of words or colour as to preserve that emotion, that impression, for the delight of mankind forever. We are too apt to regard the short story as the cartoon for a possible novel, whereas any elaboration of it is as thankless a process as the development of a fresco from an easel painting. The treatment, the pigment, the medium, the palette are other from the very beginning."¹⁷

Writers like Arthur Morrison, Henry Nevinson, George Gissing, and Edwin Pugh discovered the short story to be appropriate to the isolating vision in yet another way. They were less interested in showing how the English lower class intermingled with and in part resulted from the larger structure of society than in trying accurately to depict the life it lived. Or, to take a third example, H. G. Wells' delight in probing scientific and pseudoscientific possibilities led him to desire a form which, when necessary, would lift his characters out of time and society almost as completely as his time machine.

Progressive Dubiety:

The Discontinuity of Disraeli's Political Trilogy

Daniel R. Schwarz

DISRAELI'S YOUNG ENGLAND NOVELS—*Coningsby*, or *The New Generation* (1844); *Sybil*, or *The Two Nations* (1845); and *Tancred*, or *The New Crusade* (1847)—are a radical departure from his earlier fiction. Politics were more than a vocation for Disraeli. In the early 1840s, his political life seemed to fulfill for him what George Eliot speaks of as "that idea of duty, that recognition of something to be lived for beyond the mere satisfaction of self."¹ For the first time since he began his parliamentary career in 1837, he returned to fiction because he understood the potential of presenting his ideas in an imagina-

If the readers' expectation of prose fiction had been adequately summed up by those purposes commonly advanced and defended by authors and critics from the 1740s to the 1880s—to amuse, instruct, and extend the readers' sympathies—short fiction could have fulfilled them quite as well as the full-length novel. But in addition to these stated expectations, there was the implicit assumption that fiction should portray an extensive panorama, the various parts of which were cunningly interconnected. Because the sudden illumination of the isolated individual, moment, or scene did not suggest itself as a significant intellectual goal, there was no suitable task for short fiction to undertake. Thus only, perhaps, can one account for an entire century during which thousands of pieces of short fiction were written, but hardly a single short story as we have recognized that form since it began to emerge in the 1880s and 1890s. Before that, to write serious fiction in England was to write a species of history, to integrate; only at the end of the nineteenth century did fiction begin to reflect reality perceived as a congeries of fragments. New, generally tighter kinds of novels could and did participate in the new vision, but its preeminent vehicle was the short story. A new mode of intellectual assimilation had found its literary correlative.

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tive framework.

This paper will argue that the Young England novels do not effectively hold together as an aesthetic entity or as a coherent polemical statement. Occasionally, the search for organic form leads critics to *impose* rigid structures and patterns where perhaps an acknowledgment of discontinuity and shifting perspectives seems more apt. We should not be surprised, then, to discover Richard Levine arguing that "the assumed later marriage of Tancred and Eva" represents "the union between West and East."² But we must recall that Eva faints and does not

17. "A Few Notes Upon Mr. James," *Yellow Book*, 7 (October 1895), 72.

1. George Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life*, Cabinet ed. (Edinburgh; Blackwood and Sons, n.d.), pp. 162-63.

2. Richard A. Levine, *Benjamin Disraeli* (New York, 1968), pp. 123-24. See pp. 114-20 for Levine's interesting discussion of how *Tancred* differs from *Sybil* and *Coningsby*. In his monumental *Dis-*

raeli (London, 1966), Blake remarks that Tancred "is the vehicle for Disraeli's own highly idiosyncratic views on race and religion" which "have little connection with the ideas in *Coningsby* and *Sybil*" (p. 194). But Blake's observation, never fully explored, is directed toward the philosophy of the novels. My concern is with the aesthetics of the political trilogy; I am interested in Disraeli's political views and psychological needs insofar as they explain the shape and meaning of his imagined world.

respond to Tancred's proposal, and Tancred has vowed never to return to England. Levine argues that *Tancred* is the third stage of a process begun with *Coningsby* and *Sybil*: the earlier stages are the realignment and solidification of the aristocracy, in which the Millbanks are depicted as equal to the Egremonts and Coningsbys, and the revival of a responsible aristocracy which recognizes its duties to the people: "This third stage in the sequence of events which will ultimately reinvigorate England must move to an area greater than politics and at the same time to one capable of giving real meaning and great principles to political parties and political action."³ But how will Tancred's dogma of Asian spirituality or the possible marriage to Eva effect change in Europe or Asia? Both Eva and her father are constantly enmeshed in intrigues and machinations. That Tancred must retreat when leading Astarte's warriors does not bode well for the project of conquering the world in the name of theocratic equality. While Egremont and Coningsby discover the values that are essential for new leadership, Tancred abandons his English values and European heritage.

Disraeli's General Preface, written in 1870, should be understood as a retrospective statement of intention, not as a substantive critical essay. In that preface, Disraeli writes:

The derivation and character of political parties; the condition of the people which had been the consequence of them; the duties of the Church as a main remedial agency in our present state; were the principal topics which I intended to treat, but I found they were too vast for the space I had allotted to myself.

They were all launched in *Coningsby* but the origin and condition of political parties, the first portion of the theme, was the only one completely handled in that work.

Next year (1845), in *Sybil*, or *The Two Nations*, I considered the condition of the people. . . .

In recognizing the Church as a powerful agent in the previous development of England . . . it seemed to me that the time had arrived when it became my duty to . . . consider the position of the descendants of that race who had been the founders of Christianity. Familiar as we all are now with such themes, the House of Israel being now freed from the barbarism of mediaeval misconception, and judged like other races by their contributions to the existing sum of human welfare, and the general influence of race on human action being universally recognized as the key of history, the difficulty and hazard of touching for the first time on such topics cannot now be easily appreciated. But public opinion recognised both the truth and sincerity of these views, and, with its sanction, in *Tancred*, or *The New*

Crusade, the third portion of the Trilogy, I completed their development.⁴

Cumulatively, the novels were meant to present both a political geography and a historical survey of England, and simultaneously to suggest how England could experience a political and moral rebirth. In my judgment, this is unsuccessful because after its first two books, *Tancred* has little to do with the preceding volumes and dissolves into irresolution and possibly incoherence.

Despite the 1870 Preface, we should not forget the intensely personal tone of Disraeli's later letters. The following comment is typical: "My books are the history of my life—I don't mean a vulgar photograph of incidents, but the psychological development of my character" (September 27, 1875).⁵ Like Tennyson, Carlyle, Mill, and Newman, Disraeli responded with a desperate search for absolutes to a world of moral turmoil. That his narrators and major characters speak ex cathedra in generalizations and abstractions may derive from Disraeli's desire to emulate in the fabric of his fiction the scope and seriousness of Victorian philosophical and religious tracts. The trilogy of the 1840s is Disraeli's Apologia. Behind the dramatization of the education of Tancred, Coningsby, and Egremont lies Disraeli's quest for the principles with which he could structure his public life. Disraeli continually asserted dogma to convince himself of its value, although as with Newman, the nature of the dogma was continually in flux. The political ideals discovered by his Young England heroes became, for a time, the tenets of his own political and moral credo.

I

Let us review the ties that actually bind the novels together. *Coningsby*, *Sybil*, and *Tancred* only very peripherally share Disraeli's rather reductive response to what he felt was Whig propaganda disguised as history: "Generally speaking, all the great events have been distorted, most of the important causes concealed, some of the principal characters never appear, and all who figure are so misunderstood and misrepresented, that the result is a complete mystification . . ." (*Sybil*, I, iii, p. 17).⁶ According to Disraeli, a "Venetian Constitution"—by which is meant the reduction of the power of the throne by the Whig oligarchy until the King is no more than a "doge"—has displaced the English system. For Disraeli, Charles I is a martyr, and the Glorious Revolution is "The Dutch Invasion of 1688" which resulted because "the resources of Holland, however inconsiderable, were inadequate to sustain him in his internecine rivalry with the

3. Levine, p. 124.

4. Excerpts from the Preface to the 1870 Collected Edition are cited in Blake, pp. 193-94.

5. *The Letters of Disraeli to Lady Bradford and Lady Chesterfield*,

ed. Marquis of Zetland (New York, 1929), I, 372.

6. Page numbers in parentheses refer to the Hughenden edition (London, 1882). Book and chapter numbers are designated respectively by large and small Roman numerals.

great sovereign of France" (*Sybil*, I, iii, p. 23). Those families who deposed James II in the name of civil and religious liberty were the very Whig families who formed the Venetian party and who "in one century plundered the church to gain the property of the people and in another century changed the dynasty to gain the power of the crown" (*Sybil*, I, iii, p. 14). With the continuing decline of the monarchy and the accelerating abnegation of responsibility on the part of the aristocracy who once cared for those living on their land, the common people now have no one to champion their cause. The established Anglican Church provides neither spiritual solace nor the hospitality and charity that the Catholic Church once provided for the common people before Henry VIII seized the abbeys and monasteries. Despite its intent to show how spiritual values might be revived, *Tancred* does not examine the implications of this historiography as it informs English life.

The trilogy explores the possibilities of heroism in an age which is epitomized for Disraeli by Vavasour who "is the quintessence of order, decency, and industry" and who complacently expresses the Benthamite credo that civilization is "the progressive development of the faculties of man" (*Tancred*, II, xiv, pp. 146-48). Coningsby's ambition is admirable and necessary because the adult world into which he is born is corrupt and hypocritical. For Disraeli, as for Carlyle, ambition is not self-intoxication, but a noble quality that directs a man to follow in the heroic footsteps of the great men of history⁷:

It was that noble ambition, the highest and the best that must be born in the heart and organised in the brain, which will not let a man be content unless his intellectual power is recognised by his race, and desires that it should contribute to their welfare. It is the heroic feeling: the feeling that in old days produced demi-gods; without which no State is safe; without which political institutions are meat without salt; the Crown is a bauble, the Church an establishment, Parliaments debating-clubs, and Civilisation itself but a fitful and transient dream. (*Coningsby*, V, i, pp. 259-60)

The "highest" and "best" ambition stirs a man to strive for recognition and (*secondly*, according to the revealing syntax) to contribute to the nation. Indeed, Disraeli never quite convinces us that the fulfillment of his heroes' resplendent visions and aspirations is *not* more important than the principles on which those aspirations are nominally based and the people whom they presumably are to benefit.

The trilogy's three heroes—Coningsby, Egremont, and Tancred—are young scions of great families estranged from those charged with raising them. Each is expected

by family circumstances and social convention to fulfill a predetermined pattern. But each gradually becomes disillusioned with his expected paradigm of development and those who counsel it, and is gradually reeducated to a new set of values. Coningsby and Egremont learn that Monmouth and Marney are models that they must not follow. Monmouth expected his grandson, Coningsby, to be a Conservative representing Monmouth, the aristocracy, and the Tory party—in that order. Egremont's family typifies the aristocratic family which ignores the interests of the common people. On the other hand, Tancred eschews the values of his parents, who are in many ways the models of a responsible aristocracy, and of the men whom the previous novels have established as the basis of a resurgent aristocracy: Coningsby, Egremont, and Henry Sidney.

But to return to parallels. Because Coningsby and Egremont are fatherless and Tancred is estranged from his parents' values, each seeks the advice of a surrogate father. With the aid of his daughter, Sybil, Gerard educates Egremont about the needs and rights of the common people. Sidonia provides Coningsby and Tancred with essential wisdom. (Retrospectively, we find some of his advice disarmingly naïve, if not unpalatable; he tells Tancred "All is race; there is no other truth" [*Tancred*, II, xiv, p. 149].) At a crucial point, each of Disraeli's Young England heroes is tempted to withdraw from his quest for sustaining truths. Coningsby is discouraged after he is given short shrift in Monmouth's will: "The Great Seal indeed! It was the wild excitement of despair, the frenzied hope that blends inevitably with absolute ruin, that could alone have inspired such a hallucination! His unstrung heart deserted him. His energies could rally no more" (*Coningsby*, IX, iv, pp. 454-55). Disgusted with his brother and the superficiality of fashionable life, Egremont withdraws from his responsibilities and takes on the identity of Franklin. Tancred is not only almost dissuaded from undertaking his journey by the insipid Lady Constance and the disingenuous Lady Bertie and Bellair but, more importantly, temporarily loses faith in his purpose after reaching Jerusalem: "Was he, then, a stranger there? Uncalled, unexpected, intrusive, unwelcome? Was it a morbid curiosity, or the proverbial restlessness of a satiated aristocrat, that had drawn him to these wilds?" (*Tancred*, IV, iv, p. 264)

According to Disraeli's intended argument, each of the protagonists overcomes dubiety and anxiety because he convinces himself that he possesses the unique intellectual and moral potential to shape not merely his own life, but the very fabric of historical process. Each protagonist's quest is conceived as a heroic quest to discov-

7. For an extensive discussion of similarities between Disraeli and Carlyle, see Morris Edmund Speare, *The Political Novel* (New

York, 1924), pp. 170-71.

er the values essential for a new breed of political leaders who will recognize the supremacy of the monarchy and the importance of serving the common people. Coningsby's ambition and self-confidence; Egremont's compassion and consciousness of the miseries of others; and Tancred's spiritual faith and willingness to act on behalf of his beliefs are the ideals to which others (and *others* for Disraeli meant his aristocratic audience and hence potential political leaders) must strive.

The quest for values takes place against the background of Tadpole's and Taper's political expedience; the self-indulgence and arrogance of such aristocracy as Marney and Monmouth; the spiritual emptiness of entire communities such as Wodgate; and the recurring periods of poverty. The trilogy satirizes a decadent aristocracy lacking in vitality and a sense of responsibility, and a parliamentary system that seems divorced from the people for whom it is responsible. The satire also focuses on those who, despite their pretensions, are without principles or faith: men like Rigby, Morley, and Fakredeem, who betray the protagonists.

II

In many significant ways, however, the three novels are separate and distinct and represent three different genres of fiction. *Coningsby* is a *Bildungsroman* concerned with the intellectual and moral development of the potential leader. *Sybil*, heavily borrowing from Blue Book material, is a polemical novel that primarily focuses on the socioeconomic conditions that need to be remedied. And *Tancred* is an imaginary voyage in the tradition of *Gulliver's Travels*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and Disraeli's own neglected *Poapanilla* (1828).

The efficacy of *Coningsby* depends upon Disraeli's establishing a relationship between the private theme—the development of Coningsby's abilities as a potential leader; and the public theme—the need for revivifying England's political institutions. The insipid political gossip and private debauchery of both the aristocracy and their myrmidons give convincing support to Millbank's call for a natural aristocracy of virtue, talent, and property. As a comparative newcomer to wealth, Millbank may be a bit unpolished and prone to anger, but how preferential is his integrity to the amorality and cynicism of Monmouth and his followers. Such dramatic interest as there is depends upon whether Coningsby will develop into an exceptional man, not upon whether he will become simply a moral and capable one. Sidonia, Millbank, and Lyle provide significant examples of alternative life styles to those espoused by Monmouth and his followers. Part of the dramatic potential of *Coningsby* is lost be-

cause the rather priggish protagonist's "tempters" hold no appeal for him. Coningsby's superego does not require the influence of Lyle, Millbank, and especially Sidonia to reject the duplicity of Rigby, the solipsism of Monmouth, and the cynicism of Princess Lucretia.

Coningsby's growth is measured by a kind of intellectual barometer: his acceptance of the views held by Sidonia (whose views generally echo the narrator's) is the index of his development. As is often the case in a *Bildungsroman* employing an omniscient third-person narrator, Disraeli's narrator expresses the values to which the protagonist evolves. Thus, there is a gradually narrowing distance between narrator, Disraeli's surrogate, and Coningsby, as the latter becomes a spokesman for the values of the former. Monmouth speaks for the position that places family before party, and party before nation: "The only person to whom you are responsible is your own relation, who brings you in. . . . All you have got to do is to vote with your party" (*Coningsby*, VIII, iii, pp. 406-7). But Coningsby can accept neither his grandfather's values nor support the Conservative party as presently constituted; and his reasons are identical with Disraeli's political views in 1844:

I have for a long time looked upon the Conservative party as a body who have betrayed their trust; more from ignorance, I admit, than from design; yet clearly a body of individuals totally unequal to the exigencies of the epoch; and indeed unconscious of its real character. . . .

What we want, sir, is not to fashion new dukes and furnish up old baronies; but to establish great principles which may maintain the realm and secure the happiness of the people. Let me see authority once more honoured; a solemn reverence again the habit of our lives; let me see property acknowledging, as in the old days of faith, that labour is his twin brother, and that the essence of all tenure is the performance of duty; let results such as these be brought about, and let me participate, however feebly, in the great fulfillment; and public life then indeed becomes a noble career, and a seat in Parliament an enviable distinction. (*Coningsby*, VIII, iii, pp. 407, 411)

If *Coningsby* were written, as Disraeli claimed, simply "to vindicate the just claims of the Tory Party to be the popular political confederation of the country" it would seem a dreadful failure.⁸ Read alone, *Coningsby* is a rather dreary tract, but if read in conjunction with *Sybil*, it has substantial impact. In a sense, *Sybil* "completes" *Coningsby*; by illustrating the discontent and deprivation of the common people, the later novel implies the need for new leadership. Our minds revert to Coningsby and his friends who are gradually developing their potential for leadership during the 1837-1841 period and who, we

8. Preface to 1849 edition, reprinted as Note D in *Coningsby; or The New Crusade*, ed. Bernard N. Langdon-Davis (New York,

1961), p. 587.

realize, represent the hope of England far more than the transitory "three good harvests" with which *Sybil* ends. *Coningsby* is less effectual than *Sybil* because its intellectual and moral abstractions lack dramatized correlatives. Sidonia tells Coningsby that England's "character as a community" has declined, and that the contemporary period is "an age of social disorganization" when "the various classes of this country are arrayed against each other" (*Coningsby*, IV, xiii, pp. 237-38). But these ideas, like so many of Sidonia's oracular comments, are not illustrated within the narrative of *Coningsby*. It remains for *Sybil* to illustrate how men lacking adequate political and spiritual leaders may totemize their own worst instincts in the form of a savage chieftain like the Wodgate Bishop; how Chartism appeals to men who feel a void in their lives; and how the church has become virtually a hollow anachronism. Egremont perceives rural poverty firsthand in the town of Marney and sees the effect of urban industrialization on craftsmen such as Warner. While Egremont is able to empathize with the plight of the common people as he becomes aware of their economic deprivation and while he takes a superb stand in parliamentary debate, he lacks the magnetism and ambition to lead.

The inclusive structure of *Sybil* supplements the effects of Egremont's personal experience by presenting representative vignettes of life in England. Rapid alternation between scenes of luxury and scenes of poverty calls attention to the discrepancy between the idle, luxurious lives of the aristocracy and the struggle for economic and moral survival of the common people. The narrator of *Sybil* does not, like the narrator of *Coningsby*, restrict his interests to those possessing wealth and position or to those who serve them. His panorama includes scenes that explicitly reveal the failure of political leadership to provide for the people. For example, his voice rises in indignation and outrage as he recalls the "penury and disease" of the "miserable population" of Marney who are consigned to unsanitary hovels (*Sybil*, II, iii, pp. 60-62).

Tancred does develop some of the social and political themes begun in *Coningsby* and *Sybil*. Tancred journeys to Jerusalem after convincing himself of the superficiality of contemporary English civilization and the futility of its politics. The political world of the Mid-East parodies the intrigues of English politics; the major difference is that weapons rather than votes are the method of settling political disagreements. Syria's "history" parodies England's—the deposition of a strong monarch had been followed by civil war, and, finally, monarchist sentiments were revived when the feudal (or territorial)

system had been endangered. In the Lebanese mountains, Tancred discovers the mirror of Young England's dreams: "a proud, feudal aristocracy; a conventual establishment . . . a free and armed peasantry . . . [and] bishops worthy of the Apostles" (*Tancred*, IV, xii, p. 338). Predictably, the Young Syria Movement appeared in 1844 to "profess nationality as their object" and to plead for "the restoration of the house of Shehaab" (*Tancred*, V, i, p. 349). And Fakredeen epitomizes the cynical aristocrats and hypocritical politicians of *Coningsby* and *Sybil* who, while espousing principles, practice self-interest. The narrator tells us that "It was his profession and his pride to simulate and to dissemble" (*ibid.*). Although temporarily enraptured by Tancred's plans, he lacks the moral energy to adhere to a consistent code of conduct, and once he considers the benefits of a dynasty founded on a marriage between himself and Astarte, he has no trouble betraying Tancred.

But despite superficial resemblances to its predecessors, *Tancred* does not function as the climactic volume of the political trilogy. Originally conceived as a novel about reviving the sacred position of the Anglican Church by means of rediscovering its spiritual principles, *Tancred* becomes, whether Disraeli intended it or not, a kind of clumsy metaphor for the discovery of the divine within oneself. Like a later member of a self-conceived Elect, Rupert Birkin, Tancred discovers potential within himself but, rather arbitrarily, a dearth of vitality and spirituality in everyone else: "Individuality is dead; there is a want of inward and personal energy in man; and that is what people feel and mean when they go about complaining there is no faith" (*Tancred*, II, ixv, p. 147).

Mimesis in *Tancred* is based on entirely different assumptions than in the rest of the trilogy. Verisimilitude of time and space is virtually absent. An imaginary voyage, *Tancred* is loosely held together by the hero's physical journey which introduces him to incredible people and fantastic places. The novel begins in the present tense in England, but Tancred's crusade is virtually a journey backward in time; he discovers remote cultures whose religious beliefs and political customs are regarded condescendingly by Christian England: Judaism, pagan worship of the Greek gods, and feudalism.

Disraeli may well have believed that the art of *Tancred* demonstrated the "imagination" presently lacking in England. As Blake notes, he "belongs to the same strand in nineteenth-century English thought as Coleridge and Carlyle, the romantic, conservative, organic thinkers who revolted against Benthamism and the legacy of eighteenth-century rationalism."⁹ As early as *Popanilla* and *Con-tarini Fleming* (1832), we can see his distrust of excessive

9. Blake, p. 210.

logic and reason. In *Sybil*, Morley illustrates the emptiness of utilitarianism; once his own private designs are thwarted, the greatest good for the greatest number has little appeal, and repressed and unacknowledged atavistic impulses manifest themselves. The narrator in *Tancred* continually mocks scientific methodology and its inductive method, and implicitly proposes faith and intuition as superior alternatives. Lady Constance's explanation of evolution, drawn from a book she has read entitled *The Revelations of Chaos*, is a scathing indictment of the kind of scientific determinism Disraeli loathed. When Tancred dourly objects, "I do not believe I ever was a fish," she responds: "Everything is proved; by geology, you know" (*Tancred*, II, ix, p. 110).

Tancred, the most introspective of the trilogy's heroes, confides in no one and bears the burdens of self-consciousness most acutely; neither drawing room activities nor contemporary political issues interest him. As a romantic hero, he pursues what Geoffrey Hartman calls "the lure of false ultimates" in the expectation that he will find a "final station for the mind."¹⁰ Tancred never finds the resting place he seeks. The process of searching for "ultimates" is his consuming activity. Because he does not really find solace or direction from the angel's visitation, the novel's second half dissolves into a spiritual myth of Sisyphus where each new adventure puts him back at the start.

That the angel's revelation is not tested as a viable system is a failure of *Tancred* which severely affects the argument of the entire trilogy. The novel does not explore the meaning of the angel's message as a plausible alternative to political intrigue in Asia or to the decline of the monarchy and church in England. Disraeli's dramatization of Tancred's communion with the angel reflects the compelling urge to experience the presence of a higher being which permeated the Victorian period.¹¹ But the shibboleth of theocratic equality does not justify the angel's appearance, and the angel's words are vague, if not bathetic:

The equality of man can only be accomplished by the sovereignty of God. The longing for fraternity can never be satisfied but under the sway of a common father. The relations between Jehovah and his creatures can be neither too numerous nor too near. In the increased distance between God and man have grown up all those developments that have made life mournful. Cease, then, to seek in a

vain philosophy the solution of the social problem that perplexes you. Announce the sublime and solacing doctrine of theocratic equality. (*Tancred*, IV, vii, p. 291)

Tancred becomes a ludicrous parody of, rather than—as Disraeli intended—an heir of, those biblical heroes to whom God and his angels spoke.

III

Harold Fisch places Disraeli in the Romantic tradition: "His novels have the sublime egoism of all true Romantics, of Shelley, of Wordsworth, of Milton. His subject is himself: he is Coningsby; he is Alroy; he is Tancred; and he is the Wandering Jew, Sidonia. From these varied characters we are able to reconstruct the inner vision of Disraeli, the rich landscape of his dreams, his irrepressible vision of grandeur, of power, but power used for glorious and elevating ends."¹² As Blake has remarked, Young England was "a sort of nostalgic escape from the disagreeable present to the agreeable but imaginary past."¹³ For Disraeli, it was a sustaining personal fiction, a political prayer, as well as a political program that provided an alternative not only to Chartism and Utilitarianism, but to the practical considerations of advancing his position. Although he wrote that he found himself "the leader of a party chiefly of the youth and new members,"¹⁴ Young England was never a numerical factor, only including about a dozen at best; even Disraeli, Smythe, Manners, and Baille-Cochrane, the four central members, did not always agree on major issues. Like Disraeli's dream that a coterie of youth would revive England, *Coningsby* reflects a mixture of idealism, fantasy, and escapism. But in *Sybil* he comes to terms with the economic deprivation experienced by the rural and urban poor and seems to be ambivalent about the notion that one heroic man can make a substantive difference.¹⁵

By the time Disraeli wrote *Tancred*, Young England had virtually disintegrated following the controversy over funding the Maynooth Seminary in late 1845. *Tancred* is as much a continuation of *Contarini Fleming*, the semi-autobiographical novel subtitled "A Psychological Romance," as it is of the political novels of the 1840s. In *Tancred*, Disraeli transports himself as well as his title character from the demands of politics to a fantasy world populated by virtual demigods. In a "garden" which "seems a paradise," Tancred discovers Eva, the perfection

10. Geoffrey H. Hartman, "Romanticism and Anti-Self-Consciousness" in *Romanticism and Consciousness*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York, 1970), p. 54.

11. Obvious examples are *Sartor Resartus*, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, and *In Memoriam*. See Walter Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870* (New Haven, 1957).

12. Harold Fisch, "Disraeli's Hebraic Compulsions," *Essays Presented to Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. H. J. Zimmels, J. Rabbinowitz, and I. Fine-

stein (London, 1967), p. 91.

13. Blake, p. 171. Much of this paragraph is indebted to Blake's Chapter VIII, entitled "Young England."

14. Blake, p. 173.

15. See Sheila M. Smith, "Willenhall and Wodgate: Disraeli's Use of Blue Book Evidence," *Review of English Studies*, N.S. 13 (November 1962), pp. 368-84; "Blue Books and Victorian Novelists," *Review of English Studies*, N.S. 21 (February 1970), pp. 23-40.

of beauty "such as it existed in Eden" (*Tancred*, II, vii, pp. 184, 187-88). (And Sidonia describes Adam Besso as a man who "looks as if [he] were in the garden of Eden before the fall" [*Tancred*, II, xi, p. 126].) We can properly consider Disraeli a Romantic, shaping politics, religion, and philosophy to conform to his own private vision. Thus *Tancred's* search for spiritual faith may be a disguised version of Disraeli's unconscious desire to return to his racial and spiritual origins. To again quote Hartman, "Romantic art has a function analogous to that of religion. The traditional scheme of Eden, fall and redemption merges with the new triad of Nature, self-consciousness, imagination; while the last term in both involves a kind of return to the first."¹⁶

Disraeli's motives for writing the trilogy were complex. He undoubtedly wanted to articulate political and moral principles, in part no doubt to erase the notoriety that he had acquired, due to "the continued refusal of the *Quarterly Review* even to mention his name, the alleged tergiversations in his early political career, his rickety finances, the extravagancies of his novels . . . his mysterious half-foreign appearance, and the virulent abuse, much of which stuck, hurled at him by malignant journalists." A major motive certainly was "to vindicate his own Jewish descent."¹⁷ Disraeli created Sidonia as a mouthpiece to argue for the historical significance of the Jewish people in *Coningsby* and in the first two books of *Tancred*. But it is *Tancred's* pilgrimage to Jerusalem for "Asian spirituality" and his discovery of the Hebraic basis of Christianity that dramatize Disraeli's intense personal need to reconcile his Jewish origins with the Christian religion. Disraeli believed that Christianity was completed Judaism, although he may have unconsciously taken this position because of his need to justify his own conversion. He argued in *Lord George Bentinck* (1852) that a Jew converted to Christianity professes the "whole Jewish religion and believes in Calvary as well as Sinai."¹⁸ In an authoritative study of Disraeli's Jewish aspect, Cecil Roth perceptively writes:

But it seems as though the Christianity which he professed, quite sincerely, in his own mind was not that of the established Church, but a Judaic ethical monotheism, of which the Jew Jesus was the last and greatest exponent. . . . Jesus was the ideal scion of the Jewish people. . . . in whose teachings the Mosaic faith received its culmination, the New Testament being the perfection, and climax, of the Old.¹⁹

Disraeli's self-confidence in part depended upon his belief that the Jews deserved esteem as an especially gifted race. Often, and with considerable justification, Disraeli

is accused of political expedience and intellectual legerdemain. But the defense of Jews was an article of faith. Disraeli risked his chances for leadership when he insisted in 1847 that his friend Baron Lionel de Rothschild be allowed to take his seat in Parliament without taking the Parliamentary oath "on the true faith of a Christian."²⁰ On that occasion, he invoked arguments similar to those that appeared in both *Tancred* and later in *Lord George Bentinck* to support the Baron's position.

IV

The progressive dubiety implied by each successive ending shows how Disraeli gradually abandoned the optimism with which he began the Young England novels. By the next to last chapter, Coningsby had discovered a political credo and demonstrated to himself that he had the capacity to represent and lead his followers. The heroic potential of Coningsby, and the idealism and conduct of both Coningsby and his followers, imply affirmative answers to the questions posed by the novel's closing paragraph:

They stand now at the threshold of public life. They are in the leash, but in a moment they will be slipped. What will be their fate? Will they maintain in august assemblies and high places the great truths which, in study and in solitude they have embraced? . . . Will they remain brave, single and true; refuse to bow before shadows and worship phrases; sensible of the greatness of their position, recognize the greatness of their duties; denounce to a perplexed and disheartened world the frigid theories of a generalising age that have destroyed the individuality of man; and restore the happiness of their country by believing in their own energies, and daring to be great. (*Coningsby*, IX, vii, p. 477)

Despite the symbolic marriage between rich and poor, *Sybil* does not permanently resolve economic inequality or deal with the spiritual drought of the common people; nor does it show how such necessary political changes as the revival of a strong monarchy and of an independent, responsible aristocracy will take place. Neither Egremont's position as a back-bencher nor the temporary upturn in agriculture really answers *Sybil's* concluding prayer for a "free monarchy, and a privileged and prosperous People" (*Sybil*, VI, iii, p. 489). And *Tancred*, as we have seen, ends inconclusively without establishing the dramatic correlative for its theological message.

Tancred, begun as an effort to reinvigorate spiritual values in England, really demonstrates Disraeli's disillusionment with Young England as a political movement. The hope voiced in *Coningsby* and *Sybil* has at best been par-

16. Hartman, p. 54.

17. Blake, pp. 265, 202.

18. *Lord George Bentinck: A Political Biography* (London, 1905),

p. 324.

19. Cecil Roth, *Benjamin Disraeli* (New York, 1952), p. 79.

20. See Blake, pp. 258-61.

tially fulfilled, for *Tancred* shows that the new generation of leaders is not yet governing and that political progress has been relatively slow. When Tancred meets Coningsby, the latter seems to be engaged in the rather disappointing if not cynical activities of "cultivat[ing] his alliances" (*Tancred*, II, viii, p. 101). When Egremont reappears, he has not only chosen not to be a cabinet member but is described as a man "of fine mind rather than of brilliant talents" who *requires* the "directing sympathy" of Coningsby (*Tancred*, II, xii, p. 139). It is very significant that Disraeli has Tancred renounce a parliamentary career when he meets Lord Marney (Egremont) and Coningsby, the heroes of the preceding volumes, who have predicated their hopes on rejuvenating England's political system.

That Tancred becomes a fanatic, alternating between

moments of meditation and spasms of frenetic activity when he is ready to sacrifice human life for his vague dreams, reflects Disraeli's disappointment with the demise of Young England and his frustration with his failure to obtain political power. I think, too, that Disraeli must have felt that he had not dramatized the enduring spiritual principles on which a revived church could be based and that *Tancred* did not provide an alternative to utilitarianism, rationality, and objectivity. As *Tancred* vacillates erratically from its political moorings to its concern with faith, subjectivity, and imagination, it destroys the expectation raised by *Coningsby* and *Sybil* for a major political trilogy based on a deft analysis of the past, a sustained indictment of the present, and a prophetic vision of the future.

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Pater's Conception of the Renaissance: From Sources to Personal Ideal

Billie Andrew Inman

IF PATER CAN BE CONSIDERED a writer of genius, he was at the time he published *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, the type of genius-as-critic that Arnold had described in "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time"—one who drew upon a fresh intellectual current for ideas and transformed these ideas into works of art. The shaping fire was another idea, stated explicitly sixteen years later in "Postscript": "... in literature as in other matters it is well to unite as many diverse elements as may be."¹ Whether this idea too was borrowed is open to question. Borrowed or not, it became Pater's leading apprehension. It was not, however, the open-ended idea that it is usually assumed to be. Pater's conception of the function of art, which he imposed upon his own work, set a limitation to the types of diverse elements that may be combined. It is my purpose to show that the borrowed ideas, developed in the light of the leading apprehension as limited by the conception of the function of art, constitute the basic lines of Pater's vision of the Renaissance, a personal ideal by which he thought art of the nineteenth century could be judged.

According to Arnold, "for the creation of a masterpiece of literature two powers must concur, the power of

the man and the power of the moment."² For Pater the moment was indeed crucial. If he had been old enough in the 1840s to write a book about the period immediately following the Middle Ages, he would have inherited, as Ruskin did, a conception of the post-medieval period created by German philosophers and critics in the early nineteenth century and transmitted by Alexis François Rio—a period of decline, in which pure Christian faith and native, national art were corrupted by alien pagan elements. That he could have accommodated himself to such a conception is doubtful; certainly, he could not have produced the book that he published in 1873. By an accident of chronology, Pater formed his idea of the Renaissance in the 1860s, when Michelet's and Burckhardt's descriptions of the period were available. Though Michelet and Burckhardt differed much in their thinking, neither regarded the medieval period as the golden age, as the German critics had done in the Romantic period. Both saw the Renaissance as a step forward that broke the tyranny of a repressive medieval culture: Michelet, a step toward greater geographical and scientific knowledge, greater human freedom, and universal sympathy; Burckhardt, toward greater political freedom, the

1. *Appreciations, with an Essay on Style*, in *The Works of Walter Pater*, Library Ed., 10 vols. (London, 1910), p. 261. The Library Edition is used exclusively in this paper for works included in the edition with the title of each work referred to and the page number given in the text. Works not included in the Library

Edition are acknowledged by notes.

2. "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," in *Matthew Arnold: Lectures and Essays in Criticism*, ed. R. H. Super (Ann Arbor, 1960), p. 261.

discovery of natural beauty and the discovery of man, and the realization of the many-sided individual.

Michelet, the first historian to define and describe the Renaissance as a period in history as distinct from merely a rebirth of classical knowledge and art,³ published his *XVI^e Siècle: La Renaissance*, in 1855, the seventh volume in his *Histoire de France*. Pater was reading Michelet in 1870 and again in 1872.⁴ Three of Pater's basic ideas in *The Renaissance* describing the Renaissance as a period in history had been set forth by Michelet: (1) that the Renaissance began in France in the twelfth century (p. 1); (2) that the most definitive characteristics of Renaissance expression were "liberty of the heart" and "liberty of the intellect" (pp. 3-4); and (3) that the Middle Ages and the Renaissance overlapped (pp. 2-3). With regard to the last, Pater expresses approval of the "theory of a Renaissance within the middle age" that heals "that rupture between the middle age and the Renaissance which has so often been exaggerated" (p. 3). Michelet had summarized his discussion of the overlapping of the two periods by saying that it took the Renaissance three hundred years to be born because it took the oppressive Middle Ages three hundred years to die.⁵ To both Pater and Michelet, Abelard was one of the first heroes of the Renaissance within the Middle Ages (pp. 3-4), and in his discussion of Abelard Pater suggests his source by referring to a passage in Michelet's history (p. 5).⁶

To Burckhardt's *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (1860), a landmark in *Kulturgeschichte*, Pater was indebted for three ideas developed in *The Renaissance*, the first two stated in the Preface and the third in "Two Early French Stories": (1) that "the fifteenth century in Italy . . . is an age productive in personalities, many-sided, centralised, complete" (p. xiv); (2) that artists, scholars, and men of the world were able to "breathe a common air, and catch light and heat from each other's thoughts" (p. xiv); and (3) that the Renaissance was an age of synthesis (pp. 1-2). Burckhardt's description of the reconciliation in the fifteenth century between pagan and Christian rituals and ideas is similar to that which

Pater developed at length in *The Renaissance* and other works. Burckhardt states that in a number of the most widespread Catholic rites there are "remnants of pagan ceremonies," but that in Italy in the fifteenth century "we find instances in which the affiliation of the new faith with the old seems consciously recognized."⁷ Pico della Mirandola, Pater's chief reconciler of pagan and Christian motifs, was one of Burckhardt's heroes, too. Burckhardt praises him for being "the only man who loudly and vigorously defended the truth and science of all ages against the one-sided worship of classical antiquity."⁸ Burckhardt's synthesis was much broader, however, than the reconciliation of pagan and Christian rituals and ideas. In his Introduction to Part III: "The Revival of Antiquity," he states: "We must insist upon it, as one of the chief propositions of this book, that it was not the revival of antiquity alone, but its union with the genius of the Italian people, which achieved the conquest of the Western world."⁹ The following statement from Pater's "Two Early French Stories" is an indirect acknowledgment of Burckhardt's influence: "The word *Renaissance* . . . is now generally used to denote not merely the revival of classical antiquity which took place in the fifteenth century, and to which the word was first applied, but a whole complex movement, of which that revival of classical antiquity was but one element or symptom" (pp. 1-2). Burckhardt believed that the unifying spirit of this complex culture was the spirit of individualism, which made its representative persons "in religion, as in other matters, altogether subjective."¹⁰

Pater was concerned not with distinctions between Michelet's overlapping of ages and Burckhardt's synthesis, but with the similarity: the idea that the Renaissance was an eclectic period combining medieval (largely Christian) and classical elements. This idea jibed with that part of Hegel's conception of history that Pater could accept, the idea that in the process of history the present holds within itself elements of the past.¹¹ It could be related by analogy to Darwin's idea that "nature makes no sudden starts."¹² So many lines of thought converg-

3. Wallace K. Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical Thought: Five Centuries of Interpretation* (Boston, 1948), p. 173.
 4. No full account exists of Pater's reading during these or other years, but Bruce E. Vardon lists in his dissertation, "Variant Readings in Walter Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*" (University of Chicago, 1950), books borrowed by Pater from the Taylor Institution at Oxford between 1865 and 1873. Pater borrowed Volume 10 of Michelet's *Histoire de France* in November 1870, and Volumes 11 and 12 in April 1872 (Vardon, p. 366). It seems that he had read the preceding volumes earlier and was finishing the work in these years.
 5. *XVI^e Siècle: La Renaissance*, in *Histoire de France*, VII (Paris: Librairie Internationale, 1876), pp. 105-7.
 6. Michelet discusses Abelard in *La Renaissance*, pp. 29-30.
 7. *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S. G. C. Middlemore (London, 1929), p. 464.
 8. *Ibid.*, p. 210.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 175.
 10. *Ibid.*, p. 473.
 11. In "History as Palingenesis in Pater and Hegel," *PMLA*, 86 (May 1971), William Shuter ably discusses the influence of this idea of Hegel's upon Pater, but he does not make clear the differences between Pater's conception of history and Hegel's, which are as important to an understanding of Pater as the similarities.
 12. In *Plato and Platonism*, Pater relates the idea of historical continuity to evolution: "With the world of intellectual production, as with that of organic generation, nature makes no sudden starts. *Natura nihil facit per saltum*; and in the history of philosophy there are no absolute beginnings" (p. 5). Darwin had used a very similar Latin statement—*Natura non facit saltum*—in his discussion of natural selection (*The Origin of Species* [Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1952], p. 235).

ing at one point constitute for a skeptical mind like Pater's a high degree of probability that the idea is true. His summary definition of the Renaissance in "Two Early French Stories" is a combination of and interpretation of Burckhardt's "subjectivism" and Michelet's "liberty": "For us the Renaissance is the name of a many-sided but yet united movement, in which the love of the things of the intellect and the imagination for their own sake, the desire for a more liberal and comely way of conceiving life, make themselves felt, urging those who experience this desire to search out first one and then another means of intellectual or imaginative enjoyment" (p. 2).

A different type of person might have looked upon the blending of cultural strains in life and art as anathema. Ruskin, for example, felt that any artist who could mingle ideas and sentiments from Christianity and paganism in his philosophy or religion did not believe in either and that for this reason neither could provide real inspiration for his work. With vital belief gone, Ruskin thought, the artist becomes altogether absorbed in technique and the result is the decline of art. To him, therefore, the Renaissance was a "foul torrent," its religion hollow and its art corrupt.¹³ But the idea of the composite culture was very appealing to Pater. He assumed that the blending of seemingly disparate cultural elements meant enrichment—in the culture of an age or of an individual. The kind of freedom implied in the choice of diverse elements, which to Ruskin meant loss of faith in everything, seemed to Pater the freedom to appreciate individual things—ideas, experiences, works of art—for their own sake, that is, for the pleasure or significance they hold for the individual, without reference to a larger context or a creed.

Pater probably did not independently reach the conclusion that a composite culture is desirable. This conclusion, too, was in the fresh intellectual current. It had been well expressed by Mme de Staël in *On Germany*: "Undoubtedly, as I have constantly reiterated in the course of this work, it is desirable that modern literature be based upon our history and our creed. But the point is not that we should be forcing art backward in time but that we should combine, as much as possible, the various fine qualities displayed by the human mind in all eras."¹⁴ However Pater acquired this judgment, it

became integral to *The Renaissance* and to all of his subsequent works.

Though Pater assumed when writing *The Renaissance*, as thereafter, that eclectic culture or eclectic art can be consciously formed through selection of diverse elements, he is never as direct as de Staël in suggesting a qualitative selectivity. His reference in "Postscript" to "as many diverse elements as may be" is vague. In his definition in "Pico della Mirandola" of a term that seems synonymous with eclectic culture, *humanism*, he suggests no qualitative selection: "For the essence of humanism is that belief of which he [Pico] seems never to have doubted, that nothing which has ever interested living men and women can wholly lose its vitality—no language they have spoken, nor oracle beside which they have hushed their voices, no dream which has once been entertained by actual human minds, nothing about which they have ever been passionate, or expended time and zeal" (*Renaissance*, p. 49). But, ironically, de Staël's recommendation that "fine qualities" be selected represents Pater's practice better than his own statements.¹⁵ His own principles of selectivity in *The Renaissance* can be seen behind his 1875 criticism of Symonds' *Renaissance in Italy: The Age of the Despots*:

The spirit of the Renaissance proper, of the Renaissance as a humanistic movement, on which it may be said this volume does not profess to touch, is as unlike the spirit of Alexander VI. as it is unlike that of Savonarola. Alexander VI. has more in common with Ezzelino da Romano, that fanatical hater of human life in the middle age, than with Tasso or Lionardo [sic]. The Renaissance is an assertion of liberty indeed, but of liberty to see and feel those things the seeing and feeling of which generate not the "barbarous ferocity of temper, the savage and coarse tastes" of the Renaissance Popes, but a sympathy with life everywhere, even in its weakest and most frail manifestations. Sympathy, appreciation, a sense of latent claims in things which even ordinary good men pass rudely by—these on the whole are the characteristic traits of its artists, though it may be still true that "aesthetic propriety, rather than strict conceptions of duty, ruled the conduct even of the best. . . ."¹⁶

Burckhardt had described the tempestuous, sometimes violent, energy, the brutality, the egotism, the material-

13. Ruskin refers to "the foul torrent of the Renaissance" in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, in *Complete Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, Library ed. (London, 1903-1912), VIII, 98.

14. *Madame de Staël on Politics, Literature, and National Character*, trans. and ed. Morroe Berger (Garden City, 1964), p. 318. Pater seems to have been well acquainted with Mme de Staël's works. In his first two published essays he refers to statements of hers ("Coleridge's Writings," *Westminster Review*, 85 [January 1866], 113; "Winckelmann," *Westminster Review*, 87 [January 1867], 87). And he checked out the first volume of her *Oeuvres Complètes* in the winter of 1869 from the Taylor Insti-

tution (Vardon, p. 366).

15. In *Walter Pater: Humanist*, Richard Crinkley sees cultural synthesis as the main theme of *The Renaissance*; however, he takes the definition of *humanism* at face value as the principle behind the synthesis, without considering the discrepancy between the definition and Pater's actual syntheses in *The Renaissance*, *Marius*, and *Gaston de Latour*, which are selective ([Lexington, 1970], pp. 3-4, 61).

16. Pater's review appeared in the *Academy*, 7 (July 31, 1875); rpt. *Uncollected Essays by Walter Pater* (Portland, Maine, 1903), pp. 6-7.

ism, the gross immorality that existed in the Renaissance along with intellectual and aesthetic brilliance and humane sensitivities. Pater, however, excluded the gross and violent aspects of the age in his selection of diverse elements. In stating his purpose in writing *The Renaissance*, he testifies to selectivity, but, again, does not make his principle of selection clear: "The subjects of the following studies are taken from the history of the *Renaissance*, and touch what I think the chief points in that complex, many-sided movement" (p. xi). In what sense are the "points" that are treated "chief"? They are not chief if the book is to be judged as history or even if it is to be judged as art history. What Pater called points are really qualities of mind and art, and they were selected because they constitute an ideal eclectic culture that Pater wanted to recommend to his readers—to recommend without seeming didactic.

Pater's purpose is elucidated by his own conception of the function of art, for he certainly considered himself an artist. To Pater art was a refuge from the world, or, better, a transcendence of the world, with its materialistic vulgarity, its depressing sense of determinism, its violence, ugliness, and grossness. He believed that the best art creates an ideal that is elevating and refreshing to the human spirit.¹⁷ In "Dante Gabriel Rossetti," he states that "poetry, at all times, exercises two distinct functions: it may reveal, it may unveil to every eye, the ideal aspects of common things . . . or it may actually add to the number of motives poetic and uncommon in themselves, by the imaginative creation of things that are ideal from their very birth" (*Appreciations*, p. 218). Pater illustrates in "Demeter and Persephone" the difference between the less desirable aspects of reality and an artistic ideal:

. . . the myth of Demeter, like the Greek religion in general, had its unlovelier side, grotesque, unhellenic, unglorified by art, illustrated well enough by the description Pausanias gives us of his visit to the cave of the Black Demeter at Phigalia. . . he tells us enough about it to enable us to realise its general characteristics, monstrous as the special legend with which it was connected, the black draperies, the horse's head united to the woman's body, with the curved reptiles creeping about it. If, with the thought of this gloomy image of our mother the earth, in our minds, we take up one of those coins which bear the image of Kore or Demeter, we shall better understand what the function of sculpture really was, in elevating and refining the

religious conceptions of the Greeks. (*Greek Studies*, pp. 137-38)

The "quickened, multiplied consciousness" of the Conclusion to *The Renaissance* is not an immersion in life but a type of transcendence through the selection of the most exquisite sensations from life: "While all melts under our feet, we may well grasp at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment . . ." (p. 237).

Each of the Renaissance essays presents a quality or a blend of qualities that Pater thought necessary to an ideal, eclectic age and to an eclectic art. (He never sharply distinguished between life and art.) One of these qualities directly reflects the master idea of the book, that the Renaissance combines medieval and classical elements. This quality is a blend of strength, which Pater thought medieval, and sweetness, which he thought classical. In "Two Early French Stories," he generalizes upon this blend: ". . . the Renaissance has not only the sweetness which it derives from the classical world, but also that curious strength of which there are great resources in the true middle age [the pre-Gothic dark ages]" (p. 15). *Strength*, as Pater defines it in "The Poetry of Michelangelo," is fanciful energy, wild imagination that produces that which is "singular or strange" (*Renaissance*, p. 73). It has the power to surprise and excite. Pater thought that if unenlightened, medieval strength could be dark, monstrous, and forbidding. He was to typify it in "Vézelay" (1894) in his description of the Romanesque Cluniac monastery: "In its mortified light the very soul of monasticism, Roman and half-military, as the completest outcome of a religion of threats, seems to descend upon one" (*Misc. Studies*, p. 133). Vézelay seems to Pater an "iron place" (p. 133); its decoration has about it a frightful savagery: "Of sculptured capitals . . . there are nearly a hundred, unwearied in variety, unique in the energy of their conception, full of wild promise in their coarse execution, cruel, you might say, in the realisation of human form and features" (p. 134). The main theme of this decoration, Pater states, is punishment of wicked persons for their sins, and it is often satiric, even "merry" in its brutality: "how adroitly the executioner planted knee on the culprit's bosom, as he lay on the ground, and out came the sinful tongue, to meet the iron pincers" (p. 135).

17. To some critics who have observed his tendency to idealize, Pater is simply an escapist. Ruth C. Child states in *The Aesthetic of Walter Pater*: "[even] Pater's mature philosophy of life . . . is, in large part, an escape philosophy. The artist is to create an ideal world which shall afford a refuge from the world as it is" ([New York, 1940], p. 142). To Charles du Bos, Pater's tendency to escape was based on fear—"expressed in the refusal to accept in his work and its artistic form, life in its raw state."

(Quoted from du Bos's *Journal 1926-27*, p. 45, by Angelo P. Bertocci, in "French Criticism and the Pater Problem," *Boston University Studies in English*, 1 [Autumn 1955], 184.) To Gerald C. Monsman, however, Pater's selectivity is not escapism but a kind of transcendence that breaks the time barrier ("Pater's Aesthetic Hero," *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 40 [Winter 1971], 145-46).

Pater felt that what *strength* needed to keep it from running to extremes was *sweetness*. As used in *The Renaissance*, *sweetness* is approximately synonymous with *tender emotion that springs from sympathy with humanity in its most fundamental experiences*. In "The Poetry of Michelangelo" Pater gives his fullest definition of it. It means, first, the gentle wonder that people naturally feel when contemplating the creation of new life. Pater says that Michelangelo's favorite pagan story was the myth of Leda, in which "the delight of the world" breaks from a bird's egg, and that the theme of *The Last Judgment* is not really judgment, but resurrection (p. 76). He implies that the *Creation of Man* in the Sistine Ceiling has a strong *natural* appeal, stating that Adam is "rude and satyrlite" as he awaits the quickening touch (p. 75). Michelangelo captures this tender emotion, also, by leaving many of his statues incomplete, the figures just emerging into life from the rough stone (p. 76). In the second sense, *sweetness* means the profound and wholly human pity that a skeptical person feels in contemplating sorrow occasioned by death. To Pater there is no morbidity or grotesqueness in Michelangelo's treatment of death, nothing to suggest the *Danse Macabre* (p. 93). Michelangelo depicts the dead in their dignity, but the viewer is inspired to pity because he knows that the dignity of the dead body is brief and because to him there is no assurance of a future life. In Michelangelo's representations of the *Pietà*, Pater sees not a special and divine sorrow, but "the pity of all mothers over all dead sons"—"a hopeless, rayless, almost heathen sorrow" (p. 94). Again, in the sacristy of San Lorenzo, according to Pater, "mere human nature" stirs pity (p. 94). He contrasts Dante's child-like belief in a "precise and firm" immortality with Michelangelo's skeptical speculation about the dead, represented by the restless, indeterminate figures in San Lorenzo. "... in Michelangelo you have maturity... dealing cautiously and dispassionately with serious things; and what hope he has is based on the consciousness of ignorance—ignorance of man, ignorance of the nature of the mind, its origin and capacities" (p. 95). In short, in Pater's interpretation, Michelangelo humanizes the traditional medieval themes of Creation and Entombment and thereby achieves *sweetness*.

Pater added a discussion of *Li Amitiez de Ami et Amile* to the second edition of *The Renaissance* to illustrate medieval strength in a pure form, or as he terms it, "the early strength of the Renaissance" (p. 15).¹⁸ In the sec-

ond and subsequent editions, he introduces *Aucassin et Nicolette* as a story that illustrates the "early sweetness, a languid excess of sweetness even" (p. 15).¹⁹ To illustrate the combination of strength and sweetness in the early Renaissance, he refers to the poetry of Provence and to Gothic architecture—a blend of Romanesque strength and classical sweetness, not, to him, the pure medieval form that Ruskin and other devotees of the Gothic thought (*Renaissance*, p. 2). In the High Renaissance, it was Michelangelo, according to Pater, who combined medieval strength and classical sweetness to perfection. In "Pico della Mirandola," Pater describes approvingly the "picturesque union of contrasts" in the *Holy Family* (*tondo Doni*), in which "Michelangelo actually brings the pagan religion, and with it the unveiled human form, the sleepy-looking fauns of a Dionysiac revel, into the presence of the Madonna, as simpler painters had introduced there other products of earth, birds or flowers, while he has given to that Madonna herself much of the uncouth energy of the older and more primitive 'Mighty Mother'" (*Renaissance*, p. 48). The theme of "The Poetry of Michelangelo" is that Michelangelo became a great artist and, at long last, an admirable man by sweetening his great strength. As far as thematic significance is concerned, "The Poetry of Michelangelo" is the central essay in the book, because it describes the basic blend of classical and medieval qualities.

Other characteristic qualities of the Renaissance besides the blend of strength and sweetness are (1) a combined "liberty of the heart" and "liberty of the intellect," like Abelard's; (2) a sympathy that of itself is morality, like Botticelli's; (3) a conciliatory spirit like Pico della Mirandola's that will not let any system of thought deprive one of a beautiful idea belonging to another system of thought; (4) a blend of simplicity and expressiveness, like Luca della Robbia's²⁰; (5) a blend of curiosity and the love of beauty, like Leonardo's; (6) a perfect blend of matter and form, like Giorgione's; (7) the only purely aesthetic quality, a perfect manner in art, like Joachim du Bellay's, that delights the receiver in and of itself when the matter may be only the inconsequential moods of the artist; and (8) a temperamental affinity with a past mode, like Winckelmann's with Hellenism, so strong that it rediscovers the life in that mode and transmits it to the present.

In the concluding paragraph of "The Poetry of Michel-

18. *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, 2nd ed. (London, 1877), p. 16.

19. *Ibid.*

20. To Richard S. Lyons, in "The 'Complex, Many-Sided' Unity of *The Renaissance*," *SEL*, 12 (Autumn 1972), the idea of expressiveness, as developed in "Luca della Robbia," is "the cen-

tral aesthetic formulation of *The Renaissance*" (p. 767). It is *expressiveness*, "that intimate impress of an indwelling soul" (*Renaissance*, p. 63), that makes a work of art valuable and gives it the power to survive in even a hostile culture. Though we approach the book differently, Lyons also concludes that Pater was trying "to establish an ideal of culture" (p. 779).

angelo," Pater reveals his purpose in serving as an aesthetic critic for readers of the Renaissance essays, presumably artists, lovers of art, and choice spirits who wish to live life as an art. By discussing "old masters" and defining "those characteristics, and the law of their combination" by which the old masters achieved their effects—in short, their *formulas*, he was setting standards by which to interpret, judge, and, by implication, refine modern art (*Renaissance*, p. 96). One might say that he was elucidating, not specific passages from great authors to be used as touchstones, as Arnold was to do, but the characterizing elements in the works of great artists, to be so used. To illustrate the recurrence of a Renaissance formula in the nineteenth century, he notes that the "strange interfusion of sweetness and strength" exemplified in the High Renaissance by Michelangelo can be found in the works of William Blake and Victor Hugo.

Critical Forum

With this issue, VNL initiates a new feature intended to encourage free-ranging critiques of notable recent work (articles, singly or in cluster, books, chapters of books) worthy of the particular attention of habitual readers of Victorian scholarship and criticism. We want to avoid the standard review formula, for which sufficient channels exist, and provide instead the opportunity for a flexible and open forum—evaluative, responsible, perceptive, and spontaneous. This section will appear henceforth on an occasional basis, in rhythm with the availability of significant commentary.

STUDENTS OF VICTORIAN IDEAS would do well to look into the highly readable and instructive book by Frank Miller Turner, *Between Science and Religion: The Reaction to Scientific Naturalism in Late Victorian England* (Yale, 1974). Turner's thesis is that scientific naturalism, or what we might call the Mill-Darwin-Huxley philosophical position, proved less than convincing as the century wore on and that it spawned from its own ranks some notable dissenters. It is six of these dissenters whom Turner focuses on to illustrate the critique of scientific naturalism in late Victorian England. The six are: Henry Sidgwick, Alfred Russel Wallace, Frederick W. H. Myers, George John Romanes, Samuel Butler, and James Ward.

There are two aspects of Turner's study that I should

To Pater, the nineteenth century, which had no dominant creed, was, like the Renaissance, an eclectic age—intellectually curious, broadly sympathetic, and responsive to the art of all ages.²¹ Its artists, with not only modern reality but also the whole heritage of Western civilization to draw upon, could extract and combine splendid, often diverse, qualities in the creation of an artistic ideal of culture that would refresh the human spirit. Under the gentle guidance of the aesthetic critic, appreciators of art could refine their senses so that in their assessment of modern art they would know where "the stir, the genius, the sentiment of the period" reside, or "where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy" (*Renaissance*, pp. x, 236).

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like to call attention to, without by any means implying that these two exhaust the interest of the book. The first aspect is that of the still substantial overlap in the Victorian age between literature *per se* and science. The struggles between the orthodox and increasingly entrenched scientific naturalists and the dissenters took place in both scientific and literary circles. Samuel Butler, of course, felt obliged to argue his case to the general public because the scientific community disdained to hear him. But the other more respectable scientists also often went outside the confines of the scientific community to air their disagreement, or more often, their uncertainties about the rigid materialism of contemporary science. Thus we see Alfred Russel Wallace publishing books on spiritualism, George John Romanes leaving a posthumous philosophic treatise affirming a hesitant theism, and so on. Guarding the citadel of materialism of course was that redoubtable man of letters, T. H. Huxley, who regularly wrote for the intellectual journals, which in turn were mostly edited by those other men of letters like Bagehot and Morley who by and large endorsed the Huxley-Darwin axis. Some of these figures appear in Turner's study, but his focus is on the dissenters.

It all serves to remind the student of Victorian literature, especially the student of nonfiction prose, of the frequent need to go outside conventional literature to

21. Pater discusses the nineteenth century in "Prosper Mérimée," *Misc. Studies*, p. 11; "Postscript," *Appreciations*, pp. 260-61; *Plato and Platonism*, pp. 20-21; and the Introduction to *Purga-*

tory of Dante Alighieri, trans. Charles L. Shadwell (London, 1892), p. xv; rpt. in *Uncollected Essays*, p. 147.

gain a proper understanding of even that literature itself. The interaction of scientific, philosophic, and literary concerns is perhaps now a platitude of Victorian literary studies, but Turner's book is still a rare instance of a scholar working with skill and assurance in all the relevant fields. Not surprisingly, Turner's own discipline is history.

Turner's point, however, is not so much the interaction of ideas in the age, rather the reverse, for his dissenters by and large waged a losing struggle in their own day against the dogmas of scientific naturalism. Science was already arrogating to itself the right to name and approve its devotees; and they always turned out to agree with the prevailing orthodoxy. Scientists had become, as Butler recognized, a priestly caste that claimed to have written the book of knowledge. On the other hand, Turner's conclusion would suggest a degree of triumph for his dissenter that in my view is optimistic and confined mainly to certain higher reaches of thought while society as a whole still operates on essentially scientific-naturalist assumptions.

And this leads to the other aspect of Turner's study that I should like to emphasize. It is the continuing intellectual problems that the triumph of scientific naturalism only masked. An Alfred Russel Wallace attending séances could be and was laughed off; a Frederick W. H. Myers telling students literally behind closed doors that the evidences did not support Darwinism could be simply ignored; but the deficiencies in the philosophic position represented by scientific naturalism will not disappear, not even with the qualified answers of a Bertrand Russell, cited approvingly by Turner. Mind spontaneously generated by a mindless universe is as unsound a proposition today as it was one hundred years ago, and the holes in Darwinian theory only widen as it becomes more entrenched in the schools as Darwinian fact.

The challenges raised by such as Sidgwick, Myers, Romanes, *et al.*, are still waiting for satisfactory replies. When these come they will change the thinking of all of us in ways closer to those of Turner's dissenters than we are presently prepared to admit.

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DONALD DAVIE'S FASCINATING, rather discontinuous little book, *Thomas Hardy and British Poetry* (London, 1973), should not be overlooked by readers seriously concerned with poetry. There are a number of matters that will occasion pain to the scrupulous *Gelehrte* (example: "though I think there is no evidence internal or external that Roy Fisher has ever read any of Hardy's poems

with attention, his temperament is, like Larkin's, profoundly Hardy-esque.") But one doesn't worry about such matters when a gifted poet decides to render such a vigorous report on the quality and condition of poems being written in English today—and offers, as well, a challenging thesis that takes us back to the late Victorian period in an effort to reformulate poetic tradition. Davie is now arguing that "in British poetry of the last fifty years (as not in American) the most far-reaching influence, for good or ill, has not been Yeats, still less Eliot or Pound, not Lawrence, but Hardy." Behind this thesis is an impressive statement about the nature and extent of imaginative apprehension, the claim of poets to speak with authority of unknown modes of being beyond the reach of rational reflection.

Davie puts together a very amateur and rickety model of "five levels of awareness" that poets have claimed access to at various times. These range from simple description through "presentation," "equation," the "ghostly," and last of all, "myth." Davie is directly challenging the authority of the mythic, this final level of awareness to which our more vatic poets claim access. He tells us that Hardy (and those contemporary poets like Philip Larkin and Roy Fisher whom he admires) will have dealings with the "ghostly" but will not lay claim to insights arrived at as the consequence of the poet's exposure to a special mode of awareness, the mythic. Hardy was a "liberal," indeed he claimed to live by the principles of the "scientific humanism" of his day. It was not possible for him to lay claims to private revelations of a suprarational sort. "Ghostly intimations" were the furthest limit his imagination would reach. A similar repudiation of the more grandiose claims to a higher knowledge—claims we associate with writers like Blake and Whitman, Carlyle and D. H. Lawrence—has been made by the most impressive of contemporary British poets. That, essentially, is the thesis. And he proceeds immediately to the attack. After quoting some familiar Poundian remarks about knowing what it means to "meet Artemis" and to "turn into a tree" and "walk sheer into nonsense," Davie says this:

I will confess at once that my own experience provides me with not an inkling of what these expressions mean. And accordingly I owe it to myself to refuse the trust which I am asked to give that for other persons 'these things are . . . real'. Does this seem very illiberal? Or is it not the merest prudence, and of a firmly liberal kind, to refuse without supporting evidence from one's own experience the claims of others to have private revelations of a supra-rational sort? After all, on the basis of such revelations, do we not hear it contended that the Elders of Zion have planned world conquest; that black and brown peoples must be servants of the whites . . . ? In short, who is to persuade me—and how—that the man who says he has met Artemis or

turned into a tree is not dangerously self-deluded or self-intoxicated? And is not this in fact the central and unavoidable question about Pound's poetry, as about Charles Olson's and Robert Duncan's? . . . It would certainly have been the question raised by Hardy.

The argument continues, in another context, as follows:

Pound and Pasternak (and Yeats and G. M. Hopkins and Eliot) are radical in a sense that Hardy isn't. All . . . claim . . . to give us entry through their poems into a world that is truer and more real than the world we know from statistics or scientific induction or common sense. Their criticism of life is radical in that they refuse to accept life on the terms in which it offers itself . . . that quotidian reality is transformed, displaced, supplanted; the alternative reality which their poems create is offered to us as a superior reality by which the reality of every day is to be judged and governed . . . Hardy's poems instead of transforming and displacing quantifiable reality are on the contrary just so many glosses on that reality, which is conceived of as "given" and final. This is what makes it possible to say (once again) that he sold the vocation short, tacitly surrendering the proudest claims traditionally made for the act of the poetic imagination. Whether this was inevitable . . . is an interesting question. . . . In any case, it happened; and the consequences of it, for some of Hardy's successors, have been momentous.

These "successors," beginning with Philip Larkin, are then passed in review and the "Hardyesque" influence assessed in some detail. We are provided with some brilliant criticism of such ambivalent Hardy admirers as Lawrence, Housman, and Kingsley Amis. The politics of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* is shown to be "liberal" in Hardy's fashion and the social views of W. H. Auden are seen in a brilliantly new light. A web of relationships begins to spread out as we unravel the mode of false irony that seeps from some bad Hardy into self-pitying Housman, nostalgic Betjeman (but who is given his due very handsomely, for a change), and a baffled Sassoon. There is much about Twenties Russian Formalism, two sustained studies of virtually unknown and unregarded talents (J. H. Prynne and Roy Fisher) and much besides. There are shrewd passing remarks about such diverse figures as Graves, Pasternak, Tomlinson, Theophile Gautier, Yeats, Norman Cameron, Lowell, Mairi MacInnes, Verlaine, and Verhaeren. In addition, there is a continual dialogue with a sequence of critics commencing (alphabetically) with Alvarez, Brooks, and Blackmur and running through Leavis to Ransome and Winters at the other end of the alphabet. Rexroth is simply annihilated, Irving Howe receives deservedly high praise of a sort he usually is refused, and the "new critics" are not sneered at. "Open form" poets are not treated with disdain, and Whitman is accorded surprising respect though Davie

obviously prefers closed, repetitive form and metrical language. He frankly admits that Larkin and others, following Hardy, have indeed made British poetry seem unadventurous in comparison to other poetries written in foreign languages or in English. But Davie is tough and unillusioned and on his last page restates his position:

My argument has been that in surprisingly many cases in British poetry in the last fifty years what is derided as "gentility" can be glossed as "civic sense" or "political responsibility"; and further, that whether a poet should be expected to display such sense and responsibility is a real and open question—a question debated, by implication, in much British verse but hardly ever in American.

Davie is not easy or happy with the options before him and sees much that is dispiriting and in the nature of a "cop out" in Hardy's bland approach to public affairs. He is angry at the self-imposed limitations of a poet as gifted as Larkin. Much of this failure to take risks is due to Hardy's influence and he deplors it. But he does not believe that one can establish a dichotomy between conservative poetics and conservative politics or between radical poetics and radical politics: his book shows why he feels that that sort of correlation is nonsense, however fashionable or plausible it may appear to be. He admits, in a troubled way, that English poetry today seems much tamer than poetries being written in Europe, Africa, South America, even Asia. Nevertheless, he ends with an impressive defense for the line of poetry he has been considering.

If we are still a little contemptuous of Hardy's political cop-out, if we respond more vividly to Lawrence's recklessness . . . he for his part offers you no political standing point short of wholesale and open-ended revolutionary upheaval. . . . It is not surprising, and it certainly is not disgraceful, that English poets have refused to take that risk and pay that price.

For it needs to be asserted, now when the air is thick with voices like Rexroth's demanding that all poetry be *prophetic* (like Blake's and Lawrence's) that prophetic poetry is necessarily an inferior poetry. . . . The prophet is above being fair-minded—judiciousness he leaves to someone else. But the poet will absolve himself from none of the responsibilities of being human, he will leave none of those responsibilities to 'someone else'. And being human involves the responsibility of being judicious and fair-minded.

In this way the poet supports the intellectual venture of humankind, taking his place along with (though *above*, yet along with) the scholar and the statesman and the learned divine. His poetry supports and nourishes and helps to shape *culture*; the prophet, however, is outside culture and (really) at war with it. The prophet exists on sufferance, he is on society's expense account, part of what society

can sometimes afford. Not so the poet; he is what society cannot dispense with.

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FOR THOSE OF US who offer courses in the literature of the later Victorian age, it is gratifying to observe the continuing interest shown on the part of both scholars and students in the work of the Pre-Raphaelites—Swinburne, Morris, and the so-called aesthetes and decadents, for example, Pater, Wilde, and the poets of the nineties. Numerous books have appeared in the last few years on Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites, and much scholarly activity surrounds at present the life and work of such a key figure of the period as Swinburne, whose letters have now been edited by Professor Lang and whose writings are the focus of not only a whole double issue of *Victorian Poetry*, but the critical acumen of such able scholars as Jerome McGann, John Rosenberg, and Robert Greenberg, among others.

Pater, too, is much written about at the present time as is Wilde whose work is, as we all know, the focus of continuing study by Professor Ellmann. It could be wished, of course, that more work were being done on the poetry of William Morris and George Meredith; and, as Professor Landow has observed in his recent review of Lionel Stevenson's *The Pre-Raphaelite Poets*, more detailed criticism of the lesser-known poets of the seventies, eighties, and nineties is needed. Nevertheless, interest continues high in the literature of the later nineteenth century, and I am sure the ELT seminar on aestheticism in the nineties, held during the recent MLA meeting, will stimulate further work.

However, on the negative side, it is increasingly difficult for those of us who want to continue to provide course work in these authors and areas to find adequate course materials in the wake of the publishing industry's current cutback. For instance, such anthologies as Professor Buckley's Modern Library College edition of the *Pre-Raphaelites* and Professor Lang's similar text in the Riverside series (which included the whole of Morris' *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*) have gone out of print. Likewise, two very useful paperback editions of nineties poetry—Karl Beckson's *Aesthetes and Decadents of the 1890's* and R. K. R. Thornton's *Poetry of the 'Nineties*—have also been withdrawn. General anthologies such as Buckley's *Poetry of the Victorian Period* still are available but often because of their wide range of coverage they lack the depth of materials needed for

more advanced work in the literature of the later nineteenth century.

Hopefully, continued interest in the area attested to by new and exciting studies of these authors, such as Christopher Nassaar's recent book on Wilde, will add to the growing interest in the literature of the later Victorian period and encourage publishers to bring back editions and anthologies such as those I have mentioned.

Entitled *Into the Demon Universe: A Literary Exploration of Oscar Wilde* (Yale, 1974), Nassaar's study is a highly provocative, carefully argued attempt to see Wilde's major work as a unified whole beginning with what for both Nassaar and Ellmann (who view Wilde's introduction into the realm of homosexual practice in 1886 as crucial) is his first important work, "Lord Arthur Savile's Crime." Although Savile is fortunate enough to move through the Blakean stages of innocence and experience to what critics refer to as a "higher innocence," Wilde, himself, was not so fortunate, finding, so Nassaar contends, that experience is a demonic realm from which, like Dante's hell, there is no exit. Wilde's work is seen as progressing from the innocence of the fairy tales through the attractive but destructive evil which Dorian Gray explores, to a glorification, indeed, the very worship of evil in *Salome*.

Always imaginative if at times what one can only term quixotic, Nassaar's critical insights are most cogent in his truly exciting reading of this play which serves as the centerpiece of the book. Linking *Salome* with the savage, male-castrating goddess of the ancient world, Cybele, Nassaar sees her as a symbol of the pure evil of human nature which one vainly attempts to hide in the deep recesses of the unconscious. Enraged by the puritanism and hypocrisy of the Victorians, Wilde in that ultimate piece of nineties exoticism dares to tear off the last veil covering the evil reality of man's nature in a highly serious drama which concludes in a veritable apocalypse of evil.

Although much in the way of Wildean biography has been sensational, the scholarly writings about his work, with few exceptions, have been singularly unsensational. Perhaps this simply is because Wilde's life is more exciting than his work. Yet it is refreshing to find a book which views Wilde's canon as an exciting, terrifying, even sensational development toward a crushingly tragic denouement. Many students and critics of Wilde will not agree with all that Nassaar has to say, but they will, I believe, be stimulated to seek further into Wilde's work for themes, ideas, and elements of progression and cohesion at least as compelling and exciting to the imagination as is his life.

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IT IS A PARTICULARLY disconcerting experience to find that someone has already written the book one never quite got around to writing. A. O. J. Cockshut's *Truth to Life, The Art of Biography in the Nineteenth Century* initially aroused feelings of hostility in me; but it didn't take long to forget about making irritated exclamation marks in the margin when I discovered that the author was presenting fresh insights into books with which I was already very familiar.

Actually *Truth to Life* is a little slow in getting off the ground. Cockshut is a bit wobbly in theorizing on general principles. When he has almost reached the end, he comments, "The difference between biography and autobiography is fundamental; and it is seen in its chemically pure state when each is true and good in its own way and when most of the working materials are the same." Yet he never analyzes just what this fundamental difference is, and in his introductory chapters he refers to both genres almost as though they were interchangeable. He makes the usual comments about the reticence of Victorian biography: sex was so important that it simply couldn't be discussed. He is appreciative, nevertheless, that the nineteenth century was the great period of biography (and it is not coincidental that it is linked to the growth of the novel whose techniques it often borrowed), despite the fact that its authors were more persistently aware of their readers' sensibilities than they were of presenting an in-depth portrait of their subject. He remarks perceptively that its main weakness was the lack of a sense of passing time, due to the Victorian biographers' reliance on a mass of documentation to let the story tell itself.

There is a very witty chapter on the handling of death-bed scenes. Contrary to most opinion, Cockshut believes that Stanley's treatment of Dr. Arnold's death is highly commendable, not finding the sentimentality that mars it for most readers. However, in his account of Stanley's evocation of Archdeacon Hare's last words, as the reverent gentleman pointed with his fingers, "Upwards! Upwards!" Cockshut wryly comments, "If the scene is accurately described here, it is hard to avoid the suspicion that the dying man was collaborating in his own biography. . . . We have the pseudo-religious equivalent of the wedding-bell chapter at the end of the novel."

Cockshut is at his best when he actually confronts a particular biography, focusing all his attention on books like Trevelyan's *Macaulay*, Stanley's *Arnold*, Froude's *Carlyle*, Morley's *Gladstone*, and Ward's *Newman*. He rightly assigns Froude's life of Carlyle next to Boswell's Johnson as the greatest biographies in the English language. Since both men knew their subjects intimately, they were able to give vivid intimate details of their lives—"the stains of earth make man different from man," as Yeats said to Katharine Tynan—yet at the same time sustain an aesthetic distance. Cockshut is particularly convincing in the way he marshals his arguments for the lack of sexual relations between the Carlyles. "Froude's intimate knowledge of the feelings of both parties," he writes, "his determination to break decisively with long-established traditions of reticence and his great literary gifts make his treatment of this marriage without peer or rival in the whole of English biography." Such appreciation should help to establish Froude as one of the leading nineteenth-century biographers.

Cockshut has many interesting things to say about Arnold's longing not for fame but for influence; about Ward's cursory treatment of Newman's connection with the Anglican Church, one of the most important periods in his life; and one delights in his estimate of Macaulay's "touch of hollow cleverness." Particularly fascinating is Cockshut's analysis of Morley's sense of the slow ripening of Gladstone's mind. He feels that Morley was incapable of doing justice to Disraeli because of his liberal bias, yet he understands Disraeli's shrewd appraisal of the eventual stand Gladstone would take on Home Rule.

Unfortunately, Cockshut shows little sense of the changes occurring in late Victorian biography. Surely one could find seeds of *Eminent Victorians* in George Moore's *Confessions of a Young Man* or Butler's semi-autobiographical *The Way of All Flesh*?

All in all, it is a fascinating book, especially as it is so apparent that it is a labor of love. I am grateful to him for getting there first.

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University College,
University of Toronto

Recent Publications: A Selected List

Arthur F. Minerof

AUGUST 1974-JANUARY 1975

I

GENERAL

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Conolly, L. W., and J. P. Wearing. "Nineteenth-Century Theatre Research: A Bibliography for 1973." *Nineteenth Century Theatre Research*, Autumn, pp. 93-111.

Curran, Stuart. "Recent Studies in the Nineteenth-Century." *Studies in English Literature*, Autumn, pp. 637-68.

Tobias, Richard C., ed. "Guide to the Year's Work in Victorian Poetry and Prose: 1973." *Victorian Poetry*, Autumn, pp. 235-84.

CRITICISM AND LITERARY HISTORY. Baker, William. "George Henry Lewes and the 'Penny Cyclopaedia.'" *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*, September, pp. 15-18. Twenty-seven unattributed articles.

Basch, Françoise. *Relative Creatures*. Trans. Anthony Rudolph. Allen Lane. Victorian women in society and in the novel. Rev. *TLS*, 27 December, p. 1461.

Beer, Patricia. *Reader, I Married Him*. Macmillan. Study of the women characters of writers, including Charlotte Brontë, Gaskell and Eliot. Rev. *TLS*, 13 December, p. 1408.

Bump, Jerome. "Manual Photography: Hopkins, Ruskin and Victorian Drawing." *Texas Quarterly*, Summer 1973, pp. 90-116. The importance of realistic art to both men.

Cerutti, Toni. *Antonio Gallenga: An Italian Writer in Victorian England*. Oxford. Rev. *TLS*, 20 December, p. 1448.

Kemnitz, Thomas Milton. "The Origins of Editorial Policy in Early Victorian Newspapers: The Case of the 'Brighton Patriot.'" *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*, September, pp. 3-14. The great importance to editorial opinion of the interests of the newspaper's financial backers.

McCraw, Harry Wells. "Two Novelists of Despair: James Anthony Froude and William Hale White." *Southern Quarterly*, October, pp. 21-51. Both *Nemesis of Faith* and *The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford* are classic Victorian studies of unresolved doubt.

Morgan, Kathleen E. "The Ethos of Work in Nineteenth-Century Literature." *English*, Summer 1974, pp. 47-54. Attitudes toward work expressed in the works of Victorian writers.

Portnoy, William Evans. "Wilde's Debt to Tennyson in *Dorian Gray*." *English Literature in Transition*, Vol. XVII, No. 4, pp. 259-61. Wilde drew heavily upon "The Lady of Shalott."

Simmons, James C. *The Novelist as Historian*. Mouton. Writers of the first half of the nineteenth century. Rev. *TLS*, 13 December, p. 1404.

ECONOMICS AND POLITICS. Harrison, John F. C. "A Knife and Fork Question?: Some Recent Writing on the History of Social Movements." *Victorian Studies*, December, pp. 218-24. Review-article.

HISTORY. Bythell, Duncan. "The History of the Poor." *English Historical Review*, April 1974, pp. 365-77. Review-article.

Dunbabin, J. P. D., ed. *Rural Discontent in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. Faber and Faber. Essays. Rev. *TLS*, 22 November, p. 1303.

Hall, Richard. *Stanley: An Adventurer Explored*. Collins. Rev. *TLS*, 22 November, p. 1318.

Harcourt-Smith, Simon. "The Rising at Morant Bay." *History Today*, September, pp. 625-32. In 1865 an insurrection against white authority in Jamaica had wide repercussions in England.

Horn, Pamela. "Child Workers in the Pillow Lace and Straw Plait Trades of Victorian Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire." *Historical Journal*, December, pp. 779-95. The disappearance of these cottage industries was clearly to the advantage of the children.

Marcus, Steven. *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. Rev. *TLS*, 25 October, p. 1181.

Pellew, Jill H. "The Home Office and the Explosives Act of 1875." *Victorian Studies*, December, pp. 175-94. The flexibility of the Act gave the Home Office considerable potential powers through delegated legislation.

RELIGION. Francis, Mark. "The Origin of *Essays and Reviews*: An Interpretation of Mark Pattison in the 1850's." *Historical Journal*, December, pp. 797-811. The significant contribution of Pattison.

Rowell, Geoffrey. *Hell and the Victorians*. Oxford. Theological controversies concerning eternal punishment and the future life. Rev. *TLS*, 2 August, pp. 821-22.

SCIENCE. Forrest, D. W. *Francis Galton: The Life and Work of a Victorian Genius*. Elek. Rev. *TLS*, 24 January, p. 83.

SOCIAL. Kent, Christopher. "The Whittington Club: A Bohemian Experiment in Middle Class Social Reform." *Victorian Studies*, September, pp. 31-55. The experiment was an instructive failure from the social historian's viewpoint.

Longmate, Norman. *The Workhouse*. Temple Smith. History of poor relief. Rev. *TLS*, 30 August, p. 919.

Sylvester, D. W. *Robert Lowe and Education*. Cambridge. Rev. *TLS*, 2 August, p. 837.

Thomas, Alan. "Authenticity and Charm: The Revival of Victorian Photography." *Victorian Studies*, September, pp. 103-11. Review-article.

II

INDIVIDUAL AUTHORS

ARNOLD. Farrell, J. P. "Arnold, Byron, and Taine." *English Studies*, October, pp. 435-39. There is a strong possibility that Arnold's essay on Byron was influenced by Hippolyte Taine.

Pady, Donald S. "Matthew Arnold to Thomas Brower Peacock." *Notes and Queries*, December, pp. 453-54. The

- three reprinted letters reveal a literary relationship between Arnold and the Kansas poet.
- BRONTËS. Daley, A. Stuart. "The Moons and Almanacs of *Wuthering Heights*." *Huntington Library Quarterly*, August 1974, pp. 337-53. Explains the chronological basis of the novel by an analysis of the moon's appearances.
- Scrivner, Buford, Jr., "The Ethos of *Wuthering Heights*." *Dalhousie Review*, Autumn, pp. 451-62. The ethical concern of the novel determines its theme and structure.
- Sucksmith, H. P. "The Theme of *Wuthering Heights* Reconsidered." *Dalhousie Review*, Autumn, pp. 418-28. The novel must be viewed in both the Victorian as well as universal contexts.
- Yeazell, Ruth Bernard. "More True than Real: Jane Eyre's 'Mysterious Summons.'" *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, September, pp. 127-43. The miraculous events concluding *Jane Eyre* are true to the vision of human experience which informs Brontë's world.
- BROWNING. Berridge, Elizabeth, ed. *The Barrett's at Hope End*. John Murray. Early diary of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Rev. *TLS*, 6 September, p. 948.
- Columbus, Claudette Kemper. "The Ring and the Book: A Masque for the Making of Meaning." *Philological Quarterly*, Spring 1974, pp. 237-55. The work is a masque.
- Lawson, E. LeRoy. *Religious Language in the Poetry of Robert Browning*. Vanderbilt University. Rev. *TLS*, 25 October, p. 1184.
- Maynard, John. "Browning's Essay on Chatterton." *Notes and Queries*, December, pp. 447-48. Further evidence that Browning wrote the essay.
- Russo, Francine Gombeg. "Browning's 'James Lee's Wife': A Study in Neurotic Love." *Victorian Poetry*, Autumn, pp. 219-34. In this valuable poem, Browning creates character through the use of a personal and brilliantly expressive language.
- Whitla, William. "Four More Fugitives by Robert Browning." *Notes and Queries*, December, pp. 448-53. Four short poems represented.
- BULWER-LYTTON. Wildman, John Hazard. "Unsuccessful Return from Avalon." *Victorian Poetry*, Autumn, pp. 291-96. The poem is unsuccessful.
- CARLYLE. Sigman, Joseph. "Adam-Kadmon, Nifl, Muspel, and the Biblical Symbolism of *Sartor Resartus*." *ELH*, Summer, pp. 233-56. Biblical symbolism is important in defining the direction Carlyle believes a new historical period will take.
- Workman, Gillian. "Thomas Carlyle and the Governor Eyre Controversy: An Account with Some New Material." *Victorian Studies*, September, pp. 77-102. Carlyle's involvement was the result not of racist views but of his preoccupation with the condition of England and a desire to force his lessons home.
- CARROLL. Blake, Kathleen. *Play, Games and Sport: The Literary Works of Lewis Carroll*. Cornell. Rev. *TLS*, 20 December, p. 1436.
- Heath, Peter. *The Philosopher's Alice*. Academy Editions. Annotated version of the Alice books. Rev. *TLS*, 20 December, p. 1436.
- CLOUGH. Mulhauser, F. L., ed. *The Poems of Arthur Hugh Clough*. Translations edited by Jane Turner. Oxford. Rev. *TLS*, 10 January, p. 37.
- COLLINS. Stewart, J. I. M. "From Mystery to Mission." *TLS*, 6 September, pp. 953-54. Review-article.
- DARWIN. Campbell, John Angus. "Charles Darwin and the Crisis of Ecology: A Rhetorical Perspective." *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, December, pp. 442-49. *Origin of Species* is a contemporary document whose message about man and the environment is significant for our time.
- . "Nature, Religion and Emotional Response: A Reconsideration of Darwin's Affective Decline." *Victorian Studies*, December, pp. 159-74. Darwin's affective responsiveness to nature did not undergo a decline at all comparable to his decline of interest in art.
- Chancellor, John. *Charles Darwin*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. Rev. *TLS*, 16 August, p. 886.
- Gruber, Howard E. *Darwin on Man*. Wildwood House. Rev. *TLS*, 8 November, p. 1251.
- DICKENS. Fleishman, Avrom. "Master and Servant in *Little Dorrit*." *Studies in English Literature*, Autumn, pp. 575-86. The importance of the master-servant relationship in the novel.
- Grillo, Virgil. *Charles Dickens' Sketches by Boz*. Colorado Associated University Press. Critical study. Rev. *TLS*, 23 August, p. 902.
- House, Madeline, Graham Storey, and Kathleen Tillotson, eds. *The Letters of Charles Dickens*. Vol. III, 1842-1843. Oxford. Rev. *TLS*, 6 December, p. 1359.
- Lazarus, Mary. *A Tale of Two Brothers: Charles Dickens's Sons in Australia*. Angus and Robertson. Rev. *TLS*, 25 October, p. 1184.
- Parker, Dorothy. "Allegory and the Extension of Mr. Bucket's Forefinger." *English Language Notes*, September, pp. 31-35. Bucket's gesture emerges gradually into thematic significance as the novel develops.
- Petrie, Graham. "Dickens, Godard, and the Film Today." *Yale Review*, Winter 1975, pp. 185-201. Relationship between the work of the two artists.
- Schrero, Elliot M. "Intonation in Nineteenth-Century Fiction: The Voices of Paraphrase." *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, October, pp. 289-95. Passages from *Bleak House* illustrate the stylistic use of intonation patterns.
- Slater, Michael. "Re-doing *Dombey*." *TLS*, 20 September, p. 1020. Review-article on *Dombey and Son*.
- Smith, Sheila M. "John Overs to Charles Dickens: A Working-Man's Letter and Its Implications." *Victorian Studies*, December, pp. 195-217. Overs' letter provides strong circumstantial evidence that Dickens had read *Chartism* and found in it material for *The Chimes*, the Christmas Book for 1844.
- Wilson, John R. "Dickens and Christian Mystery." *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Autumn, pp. 528-40. Dickens' preoccupation with self-salvation.
- ELIOT. Ermarth, Elizabeth. "Incarnations: George Eliot's Conception of 'Undeviating Law.'" *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, December, pp. 273-86. Eliot's moral law is determinate but not deterministic.
- . "Maggie Tulliver's Long Suicide." *Studies in English Literature*, Autumn, pp. 587-601. Being female is an important key to Maggie's tragedy.
- Newton, K. M. "George Eliot, George Henry Lewes, and Darwinism." *Durham University Journal*, June 1974, pp. 278-93. Eliot was affected by Darwin in important respects.
- Quick, Jonathan. "*Silas Marner* as Romance: The Example

- of Hawthorne." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, December, pp. 287-98. Hawthorne's experiments in the romance helped to shape the conception and writing of *Silas Marner*.
- Rogal, Samuel J. "Hymns in George Eliot's Fiction." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, September, pp. 173-84. Placed carefully throughout the novels, these hymns are a bridge between the old metrical versions of the Psalms and the new enthusiasm of the gospel hymns.
- Sullivan, William J. "The Allusion to Jenny Lind in *Daniel Deronda*." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, September, pp. 211-14. The comparison of Gwendolen's voice to that of Jenny Lind is a comment on the former's selfishness.
- Swann, Brian. "George Eliot's Ecumenical Jew, or The Novel as Outdoor Temple." *Novel*, Fall, pp. 39-50. The novel sums up Eliot's whole religious career.
- JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE. Mulhauser, Frederick L. "An Unpublished Poem of James Anthony Froude." *English Language Notes*, September, pp. 26-30. Contained in a letter of 1848 to A. H. Clough.
- GASKELL. Wheeler, Michael D. "The Writer as Reader in *Mary Barton*." *Durham University Journal*, December, pp. 92-102. The novel was influenced by Mrs Gaskell's reading.
- HARDY. Doherty, Paul C., and E. Dennis Taylor. "Syntax in Hardy's 'Neutral Tones.'" *Victorian Poetry*, Autumn, pp. 285-90. Hardy's play on language is related to ambivalent perspectives.
- HOPKINS. Bump, Jerome. "Hopkins' Response to Nature: An Ecological Quest." *Salzburg Studies in English Literature*, 1973, pp. 150-68. Hopkins' poems remain unrivalled as pleas for the preservation of the earth.
- Johnson, Wendell Stacy. "Auden, Hopkins, and the Poetry of Reticence." *Twentieth Century Literature*, July 1974, pp. 165-71. Auden was uneasy about those poems of Hopkins which dealt openly with erotic and devotional feeling.
- Richards, Bernard. "Hopkins' 'To Oxford.'" *Explicator*, November, No. 24. The poem is a fact of visual experience.
- Thomas, Alfred. "Hopkins' 'The Windhover.'" *Explicator*, December, No. 31. The poem's Christocentricity.
- KINGSLEY. Chitty, Susan. *The Beast and the Monk*. Hodder and Stoughton. Life. Rev. *TLS*, 24 January, p. 70.
- Colloms, Brenda. *Charles Kingsley*. Constable. Rev. *TLS*, 24 January, p. 70.
- MEREDITH. DeBruyn, John R. "The Tragedy of Wycliffe Taylor." *Notes and Queries*, December, pp. 461-63. Explains Meredith's interest in Taylor.
- Wilson, Phillip E. "Affective Coherence, a Principle of Abated Action and Meredith's *Modern Love*." *Modern Philology*, November, pp. 151-71. "Abated-action" is the principle of synthesis in *Modern Love*.
- NEWMAN. Dessain, Charles Stephen, and Thomas Gornall, S. J., eds. *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*. Vol. XXVI. Oxford. Rev. *TLS*, 23 August, p. 901.
- PATER. Schuetz, Lawrence F. "The Suppressed 'Conclusion' to *The Renaissance* and Pater's Modern Image." *English Literature in Transition*, Vol. XVII, No. 4, pp. 251-58. Critical discussion of the "Conclusion's" suppression fosters the predominately negative modern image of Pater.
- ARTHUR PINERO. Wearing, J. P., ed. *The Collected Letters of Sir Arthur Pinero*. Minnesota University. Rev. *TLS*, 4 October, p. 1063.
- RUSKIN. Burd, Van Akin. "A Week at Winnington: Two New Ruskin Letters of 1864." *English Language Notes*, September, pp. 38-43. Reprinted.
- STEVENSON. Pope-Hennessy, James. *Robert Louis Stevenson*. Cape. Rev. *TLS*, 25 October, p. 1195.
- SWINBURNE. Levin, Gerald. "Swinburne's 'End of the World' Fantasy." *Literature and Psychology*, Vol. XXIV, No. 3, pp. 109-14. The recurrence of this fantasy in Swinburne's poetry.
- Meyers, Terry L. "Swinburne Footnote." *Literary Sketches*, Midsummer, pp. 7-9. In the matter of Swinburne's will, Watts-Dunton appears to have done nothing deserving of Gosse's viciousness.
- Murfin, Ross C. "Athens Unbound: A Study of Swinburne's *Erectheus*." *Victorian Poetry*, Autumn, pp. 205-17. Exemplifying the controlled poetry of ideas, *Erectheus* is a lyrical drama dramatizing the human soul as it undergoes a crisis in world-view.
- Peattie, Roger W. "Swinburne's Funeral." *Notes and Queries*, December, pp. 466-69. William Michael Rossetti's part in prohibiting the Church of England burial service to be read over Swinburne's grave.
- TENNYSON. Campbell, Nancie, ed. *Tennyson in Lincoln*. Vol. 2. Tennyson Society. Catalog of the collections in the Research Centre. Rev. *TLS*, 8 November, p. 1246.
- Goslee, David F. "Character and Structure in Tennyson's *The Princess*." *Studies in English Literature*, Autumn, pp. 563-73. Tennyson reconciled his radical and conservative values in terms of personal vision.
- Kincaid, James R. "Rhetorical Irony, The Dramatic Monologue, and Tennyson's *Poems* (1842)." *Philological Quarterly*, Spring 1974, pp. 220-36. The volume is filled with poems that create a subtle bondage not only for their characters but for their readers as well.
- Landow, George P. "Closing the Frame: Having Faith and Keeping Faith in Tennyson's 'The Passing of Arthur.'" *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, Spring 1974, pp. 422-42. This last idyll acts as a narrative frame to the ten central idylls.
- McSweeney, Kerry. "The State of Tennyson Criticism." *Papers on Language and Literature*, Fall, pp. 433-46. Review-article.
- Staines, David. "Tennyson's 'The Holy Grail': The Tragedy of Percivale." *Modern Language Review*, October, pp. 745-56. The entire story, with its glory and its failings, is seen through the human eyes of the failing Percivale.
- Tennyson, Charles, and Hope Dyson. *Tennyson, Lincolnshire and Australia*. Lincolnshire Society and the Tennyson Society. Rev. *TLS*, 25 October, p. 1184.
- Wordsworth, Jonathan. "'What is it, that has been done?' the Central Problem of *Maud*." *Essays in Criticism*, October, pp. 356-62. The poem is about sexual guilt and remorse.
- THOMSON. Noel-Bentley, Peter C. "'Fronting the Dreadful Mysteries of Time': Dürer's *Melencolia* in Thomson's *City of Dreadful Night*." *Victorian Poetry*, Autumn, pp. 193-203. The image of Dürer's *Melencolia I* resolves every major theme and image of Thomson's poem.

- TROLLOPE, Hall, N. John. "Trollope's 'Hobbledehoyhood': A New Letter." *Notes and Queries*, December, pp. 446-47. Reprinted; dated August 16, 1838.
- . "An Unpublished Trollope Manuscript on a Proposed History of World Literature." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, September, pp. 206-10. Reprints the ten-page manuscript prospectus.
- McMaster, Juliet. "'The Meaning of Words and the Nature of Things': Trollope's *Can You Forgive Her?*" *Studies in English Literature*, Autumn, pp. 603-18. Alice Vavasor is not intended to be vivacious or captivating.
- Levine, George. "Can You Forgive Him? Trollope's *Can You Forgive Her?* And the Myth of Realism." *Victorian Studies*, September, pp. 5-30. Trollope remained within the realistic mode and his realism reflects not the "reali-

- ty" of Victorian society, but the myth of pragmatic worldly wisdom which supported it.
- WILLIAM HALE WHITE. Cunningham, V. D. "William Hale White ('Mark Rutherford'), and Samuel Bamford." *Notes and Queries*, December, pp. 455-61. White makes extensive use of Samuel Bamford's *Passages in the Life of a Radical* in his work *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane*.
- Hughes, Linda K. "Madge and Clara Hopgood: William Hale White's Spinozan Sisters." *Victorian Studies*, September, pp. 57-75. The significance of Spinoza's philosophy in *Clara Hopgood*.

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English X News

- George Levine, Program Chairman for 1975, reminds readers that the subject is to be Literature and Popular Culture and invites the submission of papers: "We are looking for lively papers which would investigate the connections between Victorian popular culture—working class entertainment, yellow-backs, theater, music hall, street ballads, sports, etc.—and particular works of literature or larger literary movements. We don't want the emphasis to be on analysis of famous works. The more we learn about popular culture, the better. Anything—up to and including music hall performance itself—will be welcome, so long as it has, ultimately, some serious point for our understanding of Victorian literature and culture. Our announcement of the program last year evoked only a few contributions: there is plenty of opportunity for fresh and original essays. Send inquiries and manuscripts to George Levine, English Department, Stanford University, Stanford, California 94305."
- The Victorians Institute will hold its annual meeting on October 11, 1975, at the College of William and Mary. The focus of the meeting will be William Morris, with the main speaker being William E. Fredeman. Details from Terry L. Meyers, Department of English, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va. 23185.
- The Research Society for Victorian Periodicals welcomes new members as well as new subscribers to its quarterly journal *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*. Through its pages scholars can follow the progress of the computerized *Directory of the Victorian Press*, check the annual bibliography of current work, take advantage of the world-wide survey of manuscript resources, and read of the latest research. Membership is eight dollars, including a subscription to the *Newsletter*. Subscription only is three dollars for individuals and five dollars for institutions. Write to N. Merrill Distad, University of Toronto, Department of History, Sydney Smith Hall, 100 St. George Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 1A1.
- *Victorian Poetry* notes that copies of its 130-page issue, *A Guide to the Year's Work in Victorian Poetry and Prose*, are still available at \$4.00 each. Orders should be addressed to *VP*, West Virginia Book Store, Mountainlair, Morgantown, W.V. 26506.
- *Costerus* announces the upcoming publication of its first special supplementary volume, in this instance devoted to studies of the writings of W. M. Thackeray. The volume, some 350 pages in length, will include over 50 illustrations, many of them facsimiles of Thackeray's extant manuscripts and drawings. Orders and requests for price information should be addressed to James L. W. West III, Editor, *Costerus*, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061.
- *The Hopkins Quarterly*, a journal devoted to all aspects of the life, thought, and works of Gerard Manley Hopkins, welcomes articles, notes, documents, and book reviews. Subscriptions are \$4.00 per year (U.S. and Canada) and \$5.00 per year (foreign). Correspondence should be sent to *The Hopkins Quarterly*, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 59 Queen's Park Crescent West, Toronto, Ontario M5S 204.