

Style in Ruskin and Ruskin on Style

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Style is difficult to define when the term refers to a single art; the difficulty is very much increased when one compares the style of a picture to that of an essay or poem. In his study *The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism from Dryden to Gray* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1958), Jean Hagstrum lists criteria for considering writers to be "pictorialist." He restates these in his review of Witemeyer's *George Eliot and the Visual Arts*, asking that the pictorial writer adhere to a literary or critical ideal which Horace's formulation *ut pictura poesis* imposes; that the writer be a painter, collector, or connoisseur, be influenced by "antecedent pictorialist tradition in literature and criticism," and produce moments within a narrative or logical structure that correspond to (picturable) *stasis*.¹ Hagstrum's point about *stasis* is particularly relevant to the age of Ruskin—and to an analysis of John Ruskin's style as a visual artist, as a writer of poetic prose (and, indeed, of poetry), as, finally, a critic concerned with the very subject of style. The point, suggesting the distinction Lessing makes between literature's function as art of time and painting's function as art of space, yet suggesting an intimate relationship, a virtual link, between the two arts and their functions, applies with special force to the post-Romantic imagination. As a peculiarly post-Romantic or Victorian artist, the author of *Modern Painters* can be called "pictorialist" in the style of his most memorable passages. The "word painting" for which he was greatly admired and which he came to distrust, provides many examples of aesthetic stasis along with movement in the verbal artist's—and in the water colorist's—treatment of mountains, clouds, and water.²

Among the most memorable of the early word-painting passages, one often quoted and one that has its specific visual parallel in Ruskin's drawing, is his description of the Falls at Schaffhausen. It comes with Part II of Volume I (Section V, Chapter II, Paragraph 2) of *Modern Painters*, in a discussion of how contemporary landscape painters—including Ruskin's own teacher Copley Fielding but also the lesser-known De Wint and Holland—represent water effects in form and color that fail to meet the challenge of this subject. Ruskin's presenting of the challenge in a kind of aside becomes a

jeu d'esprit of virtuosity and stands out from the critical discussion proper. For here, as so often, he is moving from landscape as painting to landscape as reality, from art to nature.³

The passage begins with the injunctions *stand* and *watch*, injunctions to the reader and viewer as to the painter. It repeatedly uses the word *how*; and its reference is not to how a picture is composed but to how the water, the scene, composes itself.

Stand for half an hour beside the Fall of Schaffhausen, on the north side where the rapids are long, and watch how the vault of water first bends, unbroken, in pure polished velocity, over the arching rocks at the brow of the cataract, covering them with a dome of crystal twenty feet thick, so swift that its motion is unseen except when a foam-globe from above darts over it like a falling star; and how the trees are lighted above it under all their leaves, at the instant that it breaks into foam; and how all the hollows of that foam burn with green fire like so much shattering chrysoprase; and how, ever and anon, startling you with its white flash, a jet of spray leaps hissing out of the fall, like a rocket, bursting in the wind and driven away in dust, filling the air with light; and how, through the curdling wreaths of the restless crashing abyss below, the blue of the water, paled by the foam in its body, shows purer than the sky through white rain-cloud; while the shuddering iris stoops in tremulous stillness over all, fading and flushing alternately through the choking spray and shattered sunshine, hiding itself at last among the thick golden leaves which toss to and fro in sympathy with the wild water; their dripping masses lifted at intervals, like sheaves of loaded corn, by some stronger gust from the cataract, and bowed again upon the mossy rocks as its roar dies away; the dew gushing from their thick branches through drooping clusters of emerald herbage, and sparkling in white threads along the dark rocks of the shore, feeding the lichens which chase and chequer them with purple and silver.

The most remarkable thing, perhaps, about this breathtaking passage is that it consists of one sentence. The rhythm, often dazzlingly rapid, and the extraordinary detail are encompassed in a form, a moment, that is the single grammatical unit. It is a unit the single

1. *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 34 (1979), 29. The Hugh Witemeyer study (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1979) shows how George Eliot's realism "like Ruskin's . . . is a subspecies of Romanticism" (p. 173); of the Victorian novelists, Eliot and in a somewhat different sense Meredith, with his symbolic alpine landscape, might be called the most Romantically "pictorialist."

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2. "Mountains," "Clouds," and "Water" are of course important headings in *Modern Painters*, and they imply meanings—scientific,

typological, and ultimately symbolic—that greatly extend the sense of "word painting," as the style through which they are communicated greatly expands the sense of the very word *style*, which comes to mean truth of vision, fidelity to an objective reality at once natural and, in the earlier volumes on painting, divine.

3. As Richard L. Stein observes in *The Ritual of Interpretation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1975), Ruskin repeatedly shifts from one to another of "The Two Landscapes." Cook and Wedderburn's Index to the Library Edition (39,300) comments that he "uses 'landscape' in two senses, landscape painting and scenery . . . He also refers indifferently to painting and poetry."

central verb of which is, once again, a command—a command, from which all this verbal energy flows, that one be still and respond, stand, watch, and see. The hortatory voice exhorts a fixedness in the very face and moment of fluctuating jets, lights, colors, a stillness in the face of agitated waters. The reader and viewer is nearly swept away from that stance initially commanded by the subsidiary and yet powerful words that seem at once to be progressive and participial, verbs and adjectives, active movements themselves and reactive descriptions: *unbroken* becomes *arching*, and descriptive sense shifts further into verbal activity as *swift* and *lighted* give way to such words as *shattering*, *startling*, *hissing*, *bursting*, *crashing*, *shuddering*, *choking*, and so on. The effect is a double one, an alternating (“fading and flushing alternately”), a combining through alternation of “tremendous stillness” and “restless” movement, a combining that is of aesthetic stasis with vigorous verbal continuity. The picture drawn is composed not so much through spatial elements as by time words and phrases used for transition: “half an hour,” “first,” “when,” “at the instant,” “ever and anon,” “at last,” “again” connecting the architectural and geological forms of *vault*, *rocks*, *dome*, *chrysopease*, and *masses*. Altogether, the prose becomes a virtually moving picture of restless water, a real landscape in its paradoxical static essence—as standing and watching paradoxically become moving and being, passivity becomes equivalent to passion, and the viewer, the very reader, who is himself the unseen figure in the scape, becomes merged into still moving water.

There is a parallel between this effect and one achieved by Ruskin’s sketch, between the technique of the one and that of the other. In fact, Ruskin did two sketches of the falls at Schaffhausen, just at the time he wrote this passage, and the observations are significant in each.⁴ The first, a gouache on cream paper with blue and white splashed on for the water, emphasizes the undulating movement of the falls and rocks behind a solid foreground rampart which gives a fixed form as if for the viewer to stand on firmly—against which, then, to perceive and measure the watery flux. The second, that only picture by Ruskin which, he said, Turner admired, combines within itself the curving movement and solidity that make up, too, his verbal picture, at once aesthetically static and in several senses moving. The suggestions of “emerald,” “purple and silver” are here, in splashes of green, darker blue, and white, with the rapid impression of dewy foam; there is even some sense in the sketch of that subsiding into virtual peace, that framing and finality with which the verbal passage ends. At last, a certain solid control of total form is here in the picture, a control that has its counterpart in the unitary wholeness of the

sentence with its elaborately structured rising to a climax and falling to conclusion.

In both verbal and visual ways, then, the artist has rendered a double quality of stasis and flux—the paradox of the continuing falls, the ever-changing unchanged form—that most strikes him in the scene: the paling and coloring “alternately,” the “white threads along the dark rocks,” the “chequer,” at last, of dual stillness and stress, formal control and involuntary motion, or the figurative vision of the partly dissociated viewer and the real, profoundly absorbing, natural scape.

One inescapable aspect of all this, one that Ruskin reinforces by the phrase “golden leaves which toss to and fro in sympathy with the wild water,” is its “pathetic fallacy.” The water certainly represents feelings of the artist unseen in either prose or picture, the one who sees and who becomes, by extension, the reader and viewer. The sympathy of leaves with water is a natural correspondence of the moved and the moving, responsive emotions and natural actions—in a virtually Wordsworthian (or early Coleridgean) give and take that Ruskin’s condemnation of pathetic effects as weakness would at least bring into question.

When Ruskin turns entirely, as he rarely does, from landscape to the human figure, he is both less disciplined and much less free. His portraits of two from among the three most important women in his life (the other, Adèle, is drawn only in verse), Euphemia, his wife in name, and Rose La Touche, his later love, have a degree of literalness that is touching and at the same time oddly vague, neither tight in style nor impassioned. The 1850 sketch of Effie is a weak water color; the 1872 miniature of Rose shows her as a child and has the tender but slight quality of a reference, perhaps deliberately brief and almost off-hand, in *Praeterita*:

Rosie . . . canonized me as “Saint Crumpet” . . . Rose went on into geology, but only far enough to find another play-name for me—“Archigosaurus.”

Some wise, and prettily mannered, people have told me I shouldn’t say anything about Rosie at all. But I am too old now to take advice.⁵

In 1874, however, not long before her death, the image of Rose La Touche occurs again in Ruskin’s drawing, now transmuted into a strictly formal guise, late-medieval or early-Renaissance in style, almost—already—a stone-like effigy, the effigy of a saint with sculptured flowers in her headdress and with lowered or closed eyes. Here, as in the crayon drawings of Gothic detail in architecture, is the static, cool aspect of Ruskin’s art. For it there is no verbal counterpart in references to the living, brooding,

4. See, for comment on these sketches and others, Paul H. Walton, *The Drawings of John Ruskin* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1972), especially pp. 52-53 (and plates 32, 33). Walton’s study is as much a critical account of subject and technique as a collection of Ruskin’s art work.

5. *Works*, 35, 528-529. Perhaps, as Ruskin did, Dante Gabriel Rossetti wed unfortunately. In any event, as Ruskin did, he lost one of his

loves—Elizabeth Siddal, his model “Lizzie,” who became his wife—and even after he had returned to another—Janie Morris, his best friend’s wife—he idealized dead Lizzie. She became “Soul’s Beauty,” as the painter-poet’s sister Christina had come to personify spiritual purity in the role of the Virgin for Rossetti’s earliest—and possibly his best—attempts at painting.

tragic child, the little girls so playful and so clever, doomed as she was delightful in her youth.

Ruskin's art is filled with both the cool static quality and the affective, the moving. The tension between these two, often within a single paragraph or picture, is not simply a contrast between scientifically exact representation, which the critic often urges, and the expressing of judgment, of feeling. Sometimes, in Ruskin, a landscape made up of external objects is passionately observed; sometimes a human form that seems to invite emotional response is stonelike in rigidity. Other Victorians, too, fail to do stylistically what we expect. A Morris landscape can be strangely pathetic—as in "The Haystack in the Floods"—while a figure that might be invested with terrible pathos, like Guenevere, is cold, unmoving. Rossetti's images of time and life are quite transfixed, are even quite devitalized within a patterned stillness, his imagery of Heaven filled with temporal longing—as in the paradoxical lines and in the paintings, as well, of "The Blessed Damozel."

The paradox, or rather the surprising and consistent rearrangement of those elements associated with flux and with all-embracing order, may lead to a way of defining Ruskin's style—and the dominant style (some would say the lack of style) in high Victorian art both visual and verbal.

But what is this way? How can such comments end in a fair conception not only of styles in several painter-poets but of what we might call a Victorian style? If the analysis of style is difficult, and doubly difficult when several arts are involved, that is largely because the very word *style* can be so ambiguous—especially for Ruskin. Yet we have a sense that the word does mean something.

Wylie Sypher's comment that the Victorian age is one without a style may indicate that it has a great variety of individual styles, but, as the remark also indicates, we expect a period to have a comprehensive style; we expect that style will be a function not only of the single genius but also of the times.⁶ And we owe that expectation to Ruskin, the first great critic to demonstrate how the art of an age expresses its spirit in a style. The very idea of stylistic analysis drawn from an expressive theory, a Romantic theory of criticism as Abrams calls it, is one for which Ruskin is in painting and architecture the major spokesman—and one which he expands to include the genius of a period along with that of the individual artist.

Style, then, for every critic since Ruskin, must mean the expression of a personal vision and also, at least to some extent, the vision of the historical community, of the period. In this personal, temporal sense, it is a term of critical limitation. For a pure Romantic, and for Ruskin and his contemporaries, too, the limitation is a problem. It implies a nagging doubt. One after another, the Victorians ask or imply a question of the vistas in Romantic art: has Nature in the great Wordsworthian sense failed them; is that guide, that genius, only part of a whole vision, as any genius, any age's mode of seeing, is partial? The question reverberates in essay, autobiography, in poem and in picture.

This question in turn suggests the question whether the style of nature itself can be perceived by artist or critic. Surely art can mean only nature distilled and better understood; surely there is a style or truth beyond, a vision beyond truths, styles, visions, if only the ideal artist and the ultimate criticism *can* perceive it; this, in effect, is the Romantic faith.

6. Some critics have found in Rossetti and, to some extent, in Morris a schizophrenic quality; each in a way seems to be hedonist and moralist, decorator and literary man, either radically bohemian and sensual or idealistic, even unearthly, fleshly in style or flat. This is certainly "Victorian style." On the combination of stylistic elements in Rossetti's treatment of women, see my "D. G. Rossetti as Painter and Poet," *VP*, 3 (1965), 9-18. As for his fellow poet, Morris's one completed painting of any note, or his only surviving one on canvas, is *Queen Guenevere*, done just before his marriage to the model, Janie Burden, and at the same time as his "Defence of Guenevere," the title poem for his 1858 volume. The poem is said to have been inspired by Rossetti's water colors, but most of young Morris's proceedings at that time appear to have been, one way or another, inspired by Rossetti, his patron and friend: his poems, his picture, his designs, and his marriage as well. Some comparison seems inevitable between the picture and the poem upon Guenevere the faithless wife from Morris's own hand. The picture is, unlike Rossetti's *Blessed Damozel*, almost without any element of landscape. Ruskin's art could alternate between purely natural representation—that is, representation of nature without persons—and the art of the figure, between Schaffhausen and his portraits of women, and Rossetti's could try to combine the two. But Morris's might be said to omit purely natural setting or to transform it rather, to make of it the subject for hand-formed patterns—for design that only indirectly comments upon the seemingly static human foreground, the figure out of natural time and temporal place, held still in its moment of passion.

A designer's interests are evident, certainly, in the detail of this picture: the stylized pattern of the large, flat flowers in pale violet against the creamy white of Guenevere's gown, the other subtly colored and reiterated forms of carpet, hangings, and spreads that give, along with the shallowness of the vista, a closed and almost

flattened surface to this scene. Yet, and still qualifying this flat formalization, there is an interesting treatment of cloth, folded and rumpled in even this neat, limiting space, that suggests if not violent movement then a disquieting, an agitation of surface. That agitation is reflected in the face of Jane Burden as Guenevere, a face strained with tension—not in the trance-like repose so often associated with Pre-Raphaelite ladies, especially those in Morris's sketches for, say, carving or stained glass. The Queen's is no carved face or figure, for all its stiffness: the arms, with their bright red sleeves, curve as they grasp at her girdle, her eyes are focussed and alive.

There is a significant contrast, in curvilinear lines, in expressive form and color, between this painting and Morris's design for a Red House embroidery, another "Guenevere" that is dated 1859. In the heavily outlined and virtually flat design, the arms are looser and hang without tension, the folds are regularly designed without rumpling and they suggest a heavy rather than a freely responsive cloth, while the woman's eyes are lowered or closed. The total effect is much more nearly static, sculptural, rather than animate, with a sense of energy checked while poised to move.

The painting, with its double effects of color and dimmed light, disordered clothing and patterned cloth, action in progress and formal order, communicates more of the feeling contained in Morris's strange verse than the sketch can do. Although that verse takes passion, disorder, and frustration as its subject, its forces are set against—are held within—the bonds of a legal situation and a firm poetic strategy. See Blue Calhoun, *The Pastoral Vision of William Morris* (Athens, Georgia: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1975), pp. 30-60, especially 41 and 51. The vision, in poem and picture, is of time's caprices and destructiveness held up in a distance, perceived in ages past so that the aging seems ageless, the figure timeless, the landscape blurred and the figure in it an effigy as much as an active being.

Now and then, when he uses the word *style*, Ruskin does seem to intend the style of nature itself. As Richard Stein implies in his discussion of "The Two Landscapes in *Modern Painters*," the critic can confuse and even merge the two senses of style, and two meanings of landscape: art is to mediate between nature and audience, and yet Ruskin as critic shifts easily from a focus upon mediating form to a focus upon unmediated original—from the composed picture to the apparently self-composing reality which he represents not through literal vision but in words.⁷ In discussing "Grand Style" and true "Greatness of Style," however, Ruskin is trying to define the painter and poet as being both limited historically and liberated through a poetic response to the historical and specific—liberated, in a Romantic paradox, *by* a specifying and confining history.

Ruskin asserts repeatedly of art that it must transcend flaws of seeing, of perception. We must see truly. And, in "modern" or Romantic art, that means that we must be at the same time responsive—loving beauty and sincerely representing truth—and original, individual, inventive. Both the nature of external reality and the nature of genius or style are normative, for the two must be one, in the art of modern times.

Modern, as in *Modern Painters*, is a nineteenth-century word. And *time* is a key word, "the times" a key phrase, in the literature of that century.⁸ Hazlitt's "Signs of the Times" was succeeded by Carlyle's "Characteristics," defining the "godless times" he lamented, and Mill's "Signs of the Times," among other essays toward definition in an increasingly self-conscious and thus times-conscious age. One of the ways in which the post-Romantic generations, and especially the Victorians, have tried to define their own times is by contrast with earlier periods, sometimes the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Renaissance but more often the late Middle Ages of the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries as idealized by Carlyle in his *Past and Present*, by Pugin, and by Mor-

ris.⁹ On the other hand—and there is always an opposing other hand for the Victorians—a writer who does not share in the post-Scott and pre-Socialist typifying of things Gothic and medieval, Robert Browning, can observe in "Love Among the Ruins" how the Shelleyan past itself is both corruptible (he echoes the motif of *ubi sunt*) and morally corrupt. The elegiac note struck lightly here, and it is struck more poignantly more often by the verse of Arnold, more bitterly in the art of Tennyson, is present still to qualify all sense of time and the times, of the Hard Times that Dickens observes so clearly but of the times past, too, and possibly by implication of all times to come.

Love among the ruins: if there is a divine meaning—love, beauty, or finally Truth—in Romantic landscape, it has for Ruskin to transcend and yet to be expressed by those ruins, by and in, perhaps, that Gothic style that is also modern.

In poem and in picture, then, the question of Nature and of art's reflecting nature is not only posed directly by the critic but is implicit as style itself: as the related styles of the several arts, ideal and timeless while specific and immediate. In the language of Ruskin's critical theory, "typical beauty" is merged into a fuller "vital beauty."

By "typical" Ruskin means the traditional and abstract conception; by "vital" the modern, Romantic impression. And, as George Landow points out, he is inclined to identify typical beauty with the visual, with pictures, vital beauty with the emotional, with poems. The "Vital Beauty" that Ruskin is more and more inclined to emphasize "depends on the internal made external, or expression."¹⁰ Hence, in spite of his fascination with typology as a visual and allegorical method uniting "the Sister Arts," the critic increasingly writes of all the arts in the language of poetic expression; *style* is basically literary style.

Both Ruskin's apprehension of style, with its model of literary Romanticism—especially poetic theory in Col-

7. Stein's *Ritual of Interpretation* studies the "Victorian literature of art," between the Romantic age and the twentieth century, showing how Ruskin tries to balance a traditional emphasis on natural representation even for iconic art with a Romantic emphasis on the emotive, the evocative (what is called here the symbolic or Romantic and sacramental sense of landscape nature). It stresses, properly, how "description and evocation" cannot be separated in the actual language used by Ruskin, Rossetti, and Pater—the prose and the poetry—and shows how they go beyond the iconic, analyzing this language in passages on visual art. Stein's analysis makes further examples here unnecessary for the three artists to whose "ritual" he addresses himself (using *ritual* to mean a not only aesthetic but personal and virtually religious act of mediation). His close readings of passages in Ruskin and Rossetti on Venetian scenes are particularly valuable; and his chapters on Pater's *Renaissance* and *Marius*, both original and definitive, leave little more to be said. Finally, Pater's literary art sums up this critic's subject: like Ruskin's, Rossetti's, and, perhaps, Morris's, Pater's writing "uses the past to reassert the validity of art and to make the largest possible claim for his aesthetic ideal" (p. 293).

As for vision in words, G. Robert Stange claims persuasively that the criticism of art becomes itself a literary art with the Victorians, an art at once imitating the scene (natural and painted) and expressing the individual style (even as an impulse to what has been called spiritual autobiography); see "Art Criticism as a Prose

Genre," in *The Art of Victorian Prose*, ed. George Levine and Wm. Madden (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968), pp. 39-52.

8. The fullest study of Victorian time-consciousness is Jerome H. Buckley's *The Triumph of Time* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1967), which concludes, on the Victorians' "sustaining conviction of continuity," "If it could restore even briefly a sense of integration, unity, and design, art could reduce to harmless illusion the terror of time, the separation of then and when, before and after" (p. 153).

9. Alice Chandler's *A Dream of Order* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1971) documents this idealizing of things medieval.

10. Landow's *Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971) gives a background for the critic's theories and relates his developments in aesthetic thought to the expressive school associated by M. H. Abrams with Romantic poetry and literary criticism. Although Ruskin's sense of "Vital Beauty" shifts and grows, as his loss of religious faith increasingly makes him give human weight to the ambiguous term *moral*—replacing rigid ethical precept with human sympathy for life—Landow demonstrates a consistent personal or subjective quality in Ruskin's work that allows him to change and to admire at last the vital sensuousness of Giorgione, even the "moral" value of the naked human form. It is, precisely, change and growth that Ruskin values in his reverence for living, vital, loveliness.

Yet, as Landow also observes, the two kinds of beauty, Typical

eridge and Wordsworth — and his employment of style in sketching indicate this bias. “Vital” form that is essential beauty, or the idea of the living whole within and constituting works of art, this is essentially the doctrine of organic form, given in the biological language that will infuse and *inform* literary criticism from the early nineteenth century to now.

It is organic form to which the literary art and its visual counterpart in Ruskin, in Rossetti, and in Morris, too, aspire. The formal, aesthetic vision no matter how time-transcending it appears, is translated into an emotional, moral “reading” no matter how time-limited.¹¹

One has, now, a vague impression that Ruskin as critic and draftsman, Rossetti as poet and painter, and Morris as writer of verse and designer, have not only styles but something like a style in common: a style that consists of the partly conscious juxtaposing of formal, abstract elements with vital, specific movement, of order with apparent disorder, of idea with ephemeral feeling — in brief, of inanimate design, whether drawn directly or abstracted from landscape nature, with the animate figure.

The parallels we have made between verbal passages and visual works have shown that the styles in each form are somewhat similar precisely because in each style — in each art — there is a paradox that implicitly relates the arts. That is, there are frequent and frequently paradoxical shifts in a theme. Ruskin’s description of Schaffhausen landscape, of water and foam, almost trembles with personal feeling. Rossetti’s *Damozel* seems decoratively timeless and her landscape background temporal, colorful, moving. Morris’s *Guenevere* is still and yet speaks of motion and emotion.

We can ask, however, if this verbal analysis shows us a pictorial reality. Ruskin as critic may provide an answer in his own reflections upon style in *Modern Painters*, where he is interested in stylistic ideas involving time and individual temper even as his own style attempts some pinning down of time in what is still a constant flux of language. Repeatedly, and often indirectly, he attempts to define style as the manner of a time — in particular, the “modern” style, what we would now consider the Romantic and Victorian.

When he discusses the “Grand Style” in *Modern Painters* III (Part 4, Chapter 1), he is investigating the

“received Opinions” on that subject, specifically the neo-classical opinions of Sir Joshua Reynolds. His objection to these is that they distinguish “history” or the unvarying literal from “poetry” or the imaginative vision of an invariable. There must be for Reynolds, as for Samuel Johnson, a contrast between rather than an identity of the historically real and the particularly or accidentally perceived — that is, the symbolic actuality. Referring to Byron, Ruskin makes clear his understanding that the Romantic artist knows truth through fact, that for such a visionary the universal can be realized only through and in a particular. This is because every part of nature is a symbolic expression — like a sacrament, not an icon — of the organic whole.

Ruskin insists that painting if it is artistically true is not to be contrasted with poetry (instead, the two stand in contrast to speaking, writing, or presenting simply abstract propositions); both can demonstrate a style that is at once pictorial — expressing the specific here and now — and poetic — perhaps demonstrating the movement in time of a living force. In any event, the poetic style must involve both live perceiver and vital object. “Greatness of Style” need not be “Grand” in the neo-classical sense of generalizing if only it expresses 1) Love of Beauty, 2) Sincerity, and 3) Invention.¹²

Ruskin begins, then, with beauty, but he ends with invention, with not an object but an action. The one term seems generally aesthetic, the other specifically genial — as Coleridge uses that adjective. Almost certainly Ruskin, who was fascinated by words and versed in etymology, intends a multiple significance for *invention*. Traditionally (as in “The Invention of the True Cross”) it means not so much “making up” as “discovery.” The artist discovers his object by reading himself into it, by reading or perceiving, say, landscape as a poet perceives and reads facts and a literal reader takes in words.

Great art must be an inventing, the great stylist an inventor, just as the reader of a “noble and expressive language” can be said to invent or find out a truth. Nature, then, the whole of the landscape, is commented on by — as it is appropriate to — the figures within it; the artist perceives the truth of this Nature and composes his vision, sometimes including human beings that give narrative focus to the vision; the human viewer or audience, whom such figures in part represent, can then

and Vital, both must function, making up a “sister arts aesthetic”: while Ruskin praises the vital, moving, changing quality of animate art, he retains a sense of the need for stillness, for repose — which, as he says, all art must have — and even for the unchanging that is expressed, John Rosenberg suggests, in images of death. Landow quotes at length the fascinating passage in which Ruskin analyzes Turner’s painting of that very scene that he himself has given in picture and prose, the Falls of Schaffhausen; and here the artist-critic finds within the greater painter’s landscape a counterpart to his own attempts and indeed his own theories: curving, moving lines, laughing, flirting human figures, against a fixed scape “straight and monotonous in reality.” See, in Landow, p. 86; pp. 146-179; and pp. 124-125.

11. As Hagstrum’s use of *pictorial* suggests, a close attention to static representation is often the clue to what is most painterly in literature. Usually, in fact, for the Romantic and Victorian

temperaments, verbal narration carries implications that are explicitly moral, while visual and static art including landscape has a value that is thought of as more purely aesthetic. A nineteenth-century landscape picture may, indeed, seem either static or more “Romantically” agitated, communicating movement and affect. A Victorian poem may be either narrative and ethical or purely descriptive, even virtually visual. But critics and other writers tend, even so, to associate landscape with the fixed and aesthetic, storytelling with the temporal and with “content.” That association is one basis for Buchanan’s attack on the “Fleshly School of Poetry”: painting may devote itself primarily to carnal beauty, but this is not an appropriate mode for verse, which has to sustain some ethical burden.

12. Ruskin notes, “I name them in order of increasing, not decreasing importance” (*Works*, 5, 58).

read clear as they read words this mediating art, in turn becoming new inventors and imaginative discoverers. Each—artist, critic, seer or reader—has a high vocation and a noble duty: to witness the otherwise unspoken, unheard beauty, moral and aesthetic, of Nature itself.

Such a vocation, such a process, as Ruskin both writes of it and demonstrates in *Modern Painters* must, for him, be spoken of in words, be given literary form. Uneasily, he sets himself against an old tradition. "In representing human emotion," he asserts, "words surpass painting," but, he has to add, "in apprehending natural scenery painting surpasses words." In modern times the relationship between poet and painter implied by the ancient motto of *ut pictura poesis* may still seem to hold: Turner surpasses Scott as a seer of landscape.¹³ But the poet in Ruskin has not for all his efforts been subdued to the analyst of art. For him, emotion remains, against and in spite of all the barriers he has himself erected from adolescence on, primary, essential, inescapable.

In Ruskin's words, great art—again—"must be inventive," that is, it must "fulfill the definition... of

poetry." And his definition of poetry is "the suggestion, by the imagination, of noble grounds for noble emotions." This is the language of a poetic writer who seeks to express the noble ground in his own organic, temporal, and only imaginatively *grounded* forms of feeling. These are, in a large sense, the words of a poet. The formula enunciates not just a stylistic principle or an aesthetic method—not a version of art criticism at all, perhaps, of any systematic sort—but, indeed, a poetic criticism.

In feeling, then, Ruskin is a poetic artist. Like the Romantics Wordsworth and Turner he needs "poetic" form in which to express the eternal: he needs spots of time as symbols of intuited Nature. This need means a time-limited locating of emotion and emerges in a style that unites momentary passion with dispassionate order. The style, visual and verbal, is distinctly his own but might as well be called, as he analyzes and sometimes moralizes it, the essentially Victorian.

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Literature and Dogma and Literature: New Textual Perspective on Matthew Arnold's Critical Organicism

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In a recent essay on the imaginative distinctiveness of Victorian literature, I made the following substantial claim for Matthew Arnold as a literary critic:

What Matthew Arnold did for literary criticism... was to bring the critical act so close to the creative act that criticism's generative analogue is clearly visible in the creative work itself, while at the same time he preserved impeccably the discrete distinction between the work of the critic and the work of the creator. He brought the suffusive empiricism of the modern *Zeitgeist*, with its reenforcing counterpart in Aristotelian Classicism, to the service of literary experience. And he did this in two ways: by drawing the intuitions and practical rules of his criticism only from literary experience itself, from a wide, deep, oft-repeated, wholly experimental proofing of the world's great literary texts; and by communicating to his readers the proven, verifiable "ground and authority" of literature's... call on them. Thus Arnold's very mission as a critic was rooted in an irrefragable faith in the organic, transformational, conversational affectiveness of literature which was itself rooted in just such experience. His temperament, the character of his education, his sense of

mission, the peculiarities of his life-history, and the *Zeitgeist* had removed Arnold from the confessional mode by which Wordsworth, Coleridge, Carlyle, and Newman gave literary exposure to this sort of conversational experience; but the fact that he used an Aristotelian rather than an Augustinian or a Rousseauistic mode of discourse does not disguise the fact that his personal transformation through literary experience undergirds the character and intensity of his devotion to letters and brings it close to the sort of revelation in which literary experience is itself centered.¹

Such a manifest faith in the solidity and salutariness of Arnold as a critic of literature, being quite uncustomary in the curiously fast-stepping, one-sided debate in progress at the present time, demands fuller elaboration than the circumstances surrounding the original assertion allowed; and that is the purpose of the present essay. The large proportions of the underlying issue will be perceived by those who recognize that the Deconstructionists have launched, not just a corrective to some of our casual ways of dealing with literary texts, but a fundamental attack on the Classicism which, with many

13. See in Volume III the chapter "Of Modern Landscape" (*Works*, 5, 317-353).

1. "The Victorian Imagination: A Nonpolemical Introduction," in *The Victorian Imagination: Essays in Aesthetic Exploration* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1980), pp. 10-11. See also pp. 11-13 for further elaboration of this point of view.

variations, held steady in the Western critical consciousness from Aristotle to, say, Matthew Arnold and that, in America, Arnold is their whipping-boy because, more than anyone else, he re-modernized Classicism and made it a pervasive and unwithdrawing presence in the academic critical mind.

Literature and Dogma: An Essay Towards a Better Apprehension of the Bible (1873) has been chosen as the critical document for demonstration of these and other substantial claims for Arnold's stature and continuing relevance as a literary critic.² It is a book somewhat off the beaten path for non-Arnoldians and thus may invite a response minimally cluttered by entrenched prejudices on both the positive and the negative sides. It is Arnold's most extensive and detailed study of one of the world's great books—the Bible—and it was written at the end of his second decade as a practicing critic, when his critical techniques were at the top of their form and his critical of reference and *aperçus* fully developed. And while one may perhaps consider another of Arnold's books as more original and authoritative (e.g., *On Translating Homer*) or more of a critical landmark (e.g., *Essays in Criticism, First Series*) or bolder (e.g., *On the Study of Celtic Literature*) or more crucial to the century (e.g., *Culture and Anarchy*), everyone will surely admit that *Literature and Dogma* is vintage Arnold and a fair test of his critical method and significance.

At the heart of *Literature and Dogma* is the issue of epistemological relevance—what and how we can know about matters central to the Bible and how we can translate the verifiable truth of the Bible into our own lives. Both aspects of this issue contribute to the central motive of *Literature and Dogma* and to Arnold's whole career as a critic: that the matter is true (experimentally knowable, verifiable) and that it is intractable (fundamentally operative in ourselves if we can master the simple secret of internalization). For this double renewal—the renewal if our critical understanding of the original meaning of the Bible and the affective beginnings of the moral renewal³ of ourselves—the crucial key is language, and therefore *Literature and Dogma* is essentially a critical redemption of language, an erasure of clichés. It is a recreation of signs, a release of language from the prison of metaphysics, a return of *literary* words to their original and authentic generation in quintessential but fully representative human experience, a rhythmic demonstration that the renewal of language is an archetypal endeavor of men of good sense because language, so indispensable to man's access to fresh knowledge, inevitably degenerates into conventional triteness with the loss of the initial intuition that released it and seems to be the very thing it was originally created to replace.

Arnold says repeatedly that a large part of criticism depends on our understanding of how men use words and what they mean by them; and through the example of Israel (i.e., the Old Testament), he emphasizes how “the spirit of the tongue of Israel kept a propriety, a reserve, a sense of the inadequacy of language, in conveying man's ideas of God” as contrasted with “the astounding particularity and license of affirmation” conspicuous in the modern “science” of theology (187, 200) and in the demands for linguistic clarity and definiteness in modern science generally. Poets are the creators and tenders of language, but they, like Israel, are perpetually and painfully aware that language is inadequate to the expression of any truly challenging insight and that the poet's words must therefore be “*thrown out* at a vast object of consciousness, which he [can] not fully grasp. . .” (187-8). This is not linguistic license or linguistic carelessness, but a sort of linguistic heroism, a determination not to abandon an insight just because language is inadequate to its full expression and a determination not to shrink an insight to the reaches of a perfectly comprehensive language. In this, the poet necessarily differs from both the theologian and the scientist: he intuits beyond the easy reach of language, though he constantly attempts to extend language in the direction of his furthest-reaching intuitions, while the theologian and scientist, who deal in the illusion of the particularly knowable, must make their language and their insights co-equal except in those rare instances in which they aspire to be poets.

The critic of literature who would become theological or scientific, therefore, can do so only by shrinking literature and thereby collapsing his intellectual trust: by transforming ideas so intensely and profoundly intuited that they outstrip the very capacity of language, even in the hands of a master of language, and refuse to succumb entirely to a philosophical or scientific level of language—by transforming such ideas into a language that aspires not simply to practical clarity, but to definiteness and comprehensiveness of meaning, the critic falls into the very philosophical or scientific trap from which only literature itself can keep him free or free him after his fall. He becomes a systematizer, relatively petty or grand, of the ideas and techniques of a language-rooted experience whose authentic significance depends on a rebellion against the inadequacy of systems, including the inadequacy of language-systems. It was in the interests of this supreme literary truth that Arnold avoided a criticism of definitions and employed a critical language that has seemed to some to be too vague to be impressive. The opposite is in fact true. It is not the vagueness of language that makes Arnold so frustrating to our rage for definiteness. At the practical level, his

2. All references to *Literature and Dogma* are to *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*, ed. R. H. Super (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1968), VI, and page references are given in parentheses in the text.

Perhaps it is unnecessary to remark that this essay deals strictly with Arnold's method as a critic of *literature* and does not invade the

fascinating questions of Arnold's religion or of his place in the evolution of modern Biblical studies, about both of which there is a substantial corpus of commentary and the need for a good deal more.

3. “Moral” in Arnold has Aristotelian rather than apothegmatical significance.

meaning is eminently clear, and it is so interwoven with apt illustrations of that meaning that, though the idea may be rejected, it can hardly be conscientiously misunderstood. What frustrates many of his readers is his resistance to closure, his refusal to *package* literature, in however brilliant and complexly impressive a fashion. He saw literature as the chief curative to modern man's spiritual malaise, and we recognize without any serious doubt that he saw it that way. But he steadfastly refused to make a talisman or dilettantish toy out of literature, even for the literary professional; resisted all the pressures of a theologically, philosophically, scientifically positivistic age to make literature's curative way "simpler than possible" (Einstein). He knew that literature, if it would work authentically, must work organically, that it depended on the very broadest, deepest, most repetitive experience. That was literature's only practical application to the spiritual ills of modern life, and his criticism was most practical when it held truest to that insight. It is an irony of the very keenest sort: as the modern mentality becomes more positivistic, it spasms more frantically for the myth of the magic wand; as it becomes more habituated to the services of the mechanical self for instant safety (self-preservation) and instant gratification (self-reproduction), it yearns more for instant growth. And that it cannot have. It may substitute the personal miracle or instant conversion or re-birth for organic growth, and it may fixate on the idea of quick redemption as a welcome escape from both acute yearning and the necessarily prolonged pain of personal growth. For the great generality of persons, however, there is no substitute for gradualness, as both Arnold and Tennyson knew: we are, at our best, Arthurians, not Grailites. As all great writers have known this, it is imperative that critics know it too; and it is a mark of Arnold's abiding greatness as a critic that he had the courage to resist critical glamor and to use critical language as an oblique and parabolic way of insinuating it, organically, into our consciousness. "The language of science about it," says Arnold, "would be *below* what we feel to be the truth" (189) of great literary experience, and a scientific criticism would be below it too.

The severity of Arnold's attendance upon the true meaning of a work's original language, coupled with his extreme care to avoid slipping into a critical language that was reductive of the work's original intuition, is one of the ways in which he brought the critical act close to the creative act. Another is his parabolic or analogical method.

Literature and Dogma is parabolic or analogical in that it talks about one subject in terms that have valid reference to another subject, and this parabolic or analogical method works beautifully for Arnold because both subjects interpenetrate and illumine each other. The central (inner) subject of *Literature and Dogma* is the Bible; the encompassing (outer) subject is the nature of literary experience; the mechanism of the book (its instrument of discovery) is a highly organic form of

literary criticism that touches both the inner and outer subjects simultaneously and enables them to unfold together. That this is the implicit and continuous method of his book, Arnold several times signals. For example, he allows one of the central parables underlying *Literature and Dogma* — that revelation takes place only in the consciousness and may come from the literature of Homer, Sophocles, and Shakespeare as well as from the literature of Isaiah — to break through the parabolic texture at the end of the first chapter, "Religion Given," in order to consolidate the fundamental argument of the book. The distinction between "natural religion" and "revealed religion" is a false distinction: that religion which is most natural is most revealed. "The real antithesis, to natural and revealed alike, is *invented, artificial*" (195); and "*invented, artificial*" religion is the religion, not of the Bible or of any other testament or authentic literary experience, but of theologians. And the revelations of consciousness are lost to man to the degree that any scientific theologian or scientific critic erects an artificial religion or an artificial criticism between him and the natural instrument of those revelations, literature. "For the thing turns upon understanding the manner in which men have thought, their way of using words, and what they mean by them. And by knowing letters, by becoming conversant with the best that has been thought and said in the world, we become acquainted not only with the history, but also with the scope and powers, of the instruments which men employ in thinking and speaking. *And that is just what is sought for*" (196, emphasis added). At the end of Chapter II — "*Aberglaube Invading*" — Arnold again explicitly signals that the inner Biblical literary history (the mutating textual history) that he has been tracing from the initial intuition of the golden age of Hebrew classicism (c. 1000 B.C.) to the hardened Messianic ideas of the second century B.C. has an analogue in the present time: "similar ideas have so signally done the same thing with popular Christianity" (213). This verifies our recognition that throughout the chapter there are unspoken, implicit parallels between the ancient decay of this original intuition and the modern decay of it, including the perennial human inclination to confront the "unworthiness and infelicities of the actual present" with inflated and artificial and hardened anticipations of the future (210). Thus the *Aberglaube* of antiquity has its parabolic counterpart in the *Aberglaube* of modernism, and the movement toward it follows an archetypal pattern. Further, though Arnold agrees with Goethe that " '*Aberglaube* is the poetry of life, — *der Aberglaube ist die Poesie des Lebens*' " (212), it is not the greatest poetry; and implicit in his tracing of the inner movement from the original intuition to these "more prodigal and wild imaginations" is the contrast between the simplicity, force, and austerity of Hebrew classicism, based on "firm, experimental ground," and this latter-day Romanticism, with its extravagant hope and augury, which has so hardened the original poetic inspiration that it even "imagine[s] itself science." And

this too has its parabolic analogue in the efforts of Arnold's own century and ours to invent a "science" of the beautiful.

One of Arnold's deftest uses of this parabolic or analogical method can be seen in his treatment and transmutation of the concept of happiness (191-195) as the object of life, as a fulfilling of the law of our being. Bentham and his followers had implanted happiness as the great object of life in the nineteenth century—pleasure as the test of moral good, the "Greatest Happiness of the Greatest Number" as the test of social good (good government). Happiness had become the cultural measure of the good life, and selfishness (enlightened self-interest) had become its means. A power "not ourselves"—a *Zeitgeist* pressure—had made it so, and that pressure as a moral pressure centered in conduct, both private and public. Building on this thoroughly verifiable moral disposition of his century but without direct reference to the moral calculus of the Utilitarians, Arnold incrementally undercuts the selfish, epicurean theory of happiness by showing that a power "not ourselves" may, unless it is the "Eternal," lead us to disobey "the real law of our being" and leave us unfulfilled. Drawing on witnesses both ancient and modern, both Pagan and Christian, from the Old Testament and the New—St. Paul, Epictetus, Quintillian, Goethe, Bishop Butler, Bishop Wilson, the *Imitation*, Isaac Barrow, Saint Augustine, Proverbs, Psalms, Job, Isaiah—he shows that the testimony is overwhelmingly in support of virtue and the blessedness and gratitude which virtue induces as the chief law of our permanent self that seeks fulfilment as contradistinct to the pleasurable gratification sought by the temporary, mechanical, instantaneous, apparent self of a cultural moment or era like the present time. And he carries this anti-Utilitarian parable even further by contrasting the anti-religious character of this modern morality of "self-love" with the jubilee of selflessness celebrated in the Psalms and in Isaiah with such "power and depth of emotion" that *morality* passed into *religion* as "The obligation of a grateful and devout self-surrender to the Eternal replaced all sense of obligation [even] to one's own better self, one's own permanent interest" (194).

But *Literature and Dogma* may be said to vibrate with parabolic analogies. Implicit in the redemption of the Bible is the redemption of literature itself: if the Bible is saved, literature is immeasurably strengthened, and though the Bible is a pearl of great price, literature itself is the chief affirmation of our very reason for being. Implicit in science's incapacity to deal with the Bible is science's incapacity to serve as an adequate guide to life. Implicit in the identified manner of the New Testament—that of accretive example—is a preference for practical, experiential revelation over philosophical disquisition. Analogous to Arnold's sense of religion—"morality touched by emotion"—is his sense of poetry—"ideas touched by feeling." Even Arnold's purposiveness as a critic in *Literature and Dogma* has about it a parabolic character. His faith in the power of poetry, of literature,

is immense, and the role he assumes as a critic is to make the reader more totally available to the uniquely human power of poetry, of literature—to its truth and its style, its idea and its feeling. But that power lies in considerable part in the common accessibility of poetry, not in its mystery or unknowableness: like Arthur in Guinevere's final recognition, poetry is "the highest and most human too." Therefore, Arnold does not attempt to bleed mystery into the common light of day, but to throw a "sunny white Light" on what is there for all to see. He is de-mystifying both "God" and the Bible. He is trying to bring our most common, universal, and practical sense of *conduct* to bear upon our most trustworthy guide and inspiration to conduct, the Bible. That is where its incomparable grandeur as literature resides; that is its "*morality touched by emotion*" (religion) as well as its "*idea touched by feeling*" (poetry). Centered in the high but common humanness of a universal faith experimentally verified, the Bible is therefore centered in *us*, and it is Arnold's parabolic purpose, like Tennyson's purpose in *Idylls of the King*, to generate—in Arnold's specific case, through a renewed faith in the Bible—a renewed faith in ourselves.

This parabolic or analogical manner of Arnold's has the crucial effect of "placing" the critic in an organic rather than a mechanical relationship to his literary object. It simultaneously activates and tests the critic's assumption that his object is one of the great embodiments of positive human experience by the criterion, not of contemporaneity, but of perennality: a book looked at with uninhibited clarity for just what it is will, if it is truly great, reveal an insistent relevance to every age that honestly considers it; and if it fails to do this, then either it is not one of the great books or the critic has failed to find its secret. But if a book passes these tests of authenticity and discovery, the critic will inevitably be deeply conscious of its pervasive relevance to his own time and will, consciously or unconsciously but irresistibly, shape his commentary in such a way as to reveal his double awareness of the book's distinctive character as a thing in itself as well as a book for all seasons.

And this relates to Arnold's use throughout his critical writings, including *Literature and Dogma*, of "human nature" as a persistent point of reference. There is in history an ever-shifting *Zeitgeist* which makes the cultural imperatives and availabilities of each epoch visibly different, and every great book, being shaped by the imperatives and availabilities of its *Zeitgeist*, is different in corresponding ways. But there is a sort of non-shifting, eternal *Zeitgeist*, too, rooted in those coordinates of man's basic nature which do not change. A great book is one that, despite the visible marks of its epoch, touches at a fundamental level these basic human coordinates. Such books, being perennially relevant, are perennially modern; but occasionally "a favourable moment and the 'Zeit-Geist'" (276) make such a book quintessentially relevant and modern because the circumstances of the two ages—their *Zeitgeists*—reveal

such numerous and metaphorically exact parallels and because the original intuition which brought the book into being in the first place is thus so urgently needed by the later age. This is the situation of the late nineteenth century as regards the Bible; and since, by Arnold's judgment, the late nineteenth century had the capacity to become an expansively critical age rather than an expansively creative one, the best the critic could do was to restore for his age the incomparable guidance of a great book that, though produced by another, was wholly relevant to it. It is this literary redemption of a great book that provides the Arnoldian critic's central motive—it is an urgently needed act—and it shapes his critical method too. *Literature and Dogma* is a superb example of a close, sensitive, imaginative reading of a literary text: it arrives at its explication of the Bible through a relentless attention to "how these words worked originally" (289). But it is superbly extra-textual too: it reads the needs of its original ages—c.1000 B.C. to c.100 A.D.—out of, *not into*, the text; it shows how later critical ages have read their needs *into* the text; and it shows how the present age more than anything else needs the original intuition of a Bible unadulterated by the *Aberglaube* of its own or subsequent ages. But Arnold's critical extra-textuality neither moves the text off-center nor borrows from history, ancient or contemporary, one iota of literary justification or re-enforcement. The eye of the critic is always on the original text, his evidence strictly internal; and his abiding faith is in the text's own incomparable value. What he adds is a recognition of and zeal for literary usability. As a great book did not emerge from a vacuum, so its value cannot be vacuous; and it is part of the critic's conscientious duty, not to force-feed his intuition of a great book's greatness into a generation unfavorable to its reception, but to bring the power of the book and the power of his own time into organic concurrence when he recognizes "a favourable moment and the 'Zeit-Geist'" (276). Then a critic comes closest to performing a truly creative act; that is his furthest remove from dilettantism. It is with him a matter of honor to preserve the integrity of the text intact; to make the text work for the largest possible number of readers is a matter of conscience. And without the extra-textuality which, in Arnold, surfaces as a parabolic or analogical manner, the critic accomplishes his mission in only a very partial way.

Arnold is attempting to get his reader to *read* the Bible again (and again) in the light of this new critical apprehension. He wants his own book to function to the end of renewing in the reader's experience a book with an immeasurably greater function. That is the only real usefulness of criticism, individually or epochally—to prepare the way for and induce a great creative experience. Thus Arnold's retrospective critical tendencies were not precious or nostalgic, but wholly realistic. If, as he had argued in "On the Modern Element in Literature," that is most modern which is most relevant and if the greatest books are the greatest sustainers of the most dynamically affective human experience—experience that, like its

language, is "fluid, passing, and literary" (152)—then the greatest books are the greatest sources of human fluidity, growth, organic creativity. They are not historical except in their accidents; in essence, they are eternal—never old, always new. It is to that magnifying experience that criticism rightly leads; and to the degree that, like excessive rhetoric in poetry, it draws attention to itself rather than to affective access to its grand object, it is faulted and counter-productive. Criticism is successful, not only to the degree that it gives a satisfactory sense of what a great book possesses in the way of experience, but also to the degree that it makes a dependable promise, a critic-reader contract, that the kind of experience said to be in a great book will in fact be found there and that a reader induced to make himself available to the book's central experience will undergo in the process of reading and re-reading it a peculiar personal transformation. That is the critic's proper role—not as substitute, but as trustworthy precursor and facilitator. The *creator* "modernizes" the book, not the critic; and to try to make it contemporaneous in any literal sense is simply a confession of bad faith in the book's own authenticity. This is where the literary historian and the literary critic essentially differ: the historian assumes that there are historical reasons to justify interest in the book; the critic assumes, in addition, that a book worthy of our interest has transcended history. In this the critic is like the creator: the creator perceives the archetypal character of human events; the critic perceives the archetypal character of books. Hence Arnold would have found the theory that a work of literature means only what the critic finds there very strange indeed since that would place the critic higher than the creator in determining what literary (i.e., human) experience the reader would have. It was his experience of criticism that very few critics were equal to the challenges provided by the truly great creators. So he would have asked at least, *what* critics of *what* meaning of *what* books? And he would have said of the criticism what Aristotle said of the creation—the *action* is of primary importance, not what we as readers *feel about* the action, and it is the creator, not the critic, who puts the action there—in the first place and the last.

Arnold repeatedly cites Goethe's statement that "man never knows how anthropomorphic he is" (e.g., 242); and this is a crucial clue to his detachment from that idealistic tradition of nineteenth-century literary endeavor which had been chiefly fueled by the German Romantic philosophers and men of letters and which, in a fashion that fundamentally transformed it, had been channeled torrentially into England by Carlyle. But Carlyle was not a Romantic critic in even the pure sense that Coleridge was: in *Sartor Resartus*, Romanticism is carefully mutated by method, and Carlyle severely Englishes—empiricizes—his Germanic inheritance. But Arnold was even less Romantic than Carlyle: he was reasonably sanguine, in his criticism, about human possibilities, but transcendence except in the very practical metaphoric sense was not a foundation-stone of his

-muted sanguinity. His critical hope was at least as Classical as it was Romantic, and his critical method was wholly Classical. It was this that enabled him to use Goethe as such a satisfying role-model, and it was this that made him so uncomfortable with Carlyle even at his best, led him to diminish Carlyle's estimate of the German Romantics, and determined him ultimately in his preference for Emerson over Carlyle. Translated to its practical function in *Literature and Dogma*, "man never knows how anthropomorphic he is" means that man is wholly anthropomorphic and that his best hope for getting in touch with useful reality is through personal morphology—through a purposive and systematic and wholly organic self-renewal. Such a goal was preeminently Classical, and in such classical works as Apuleius' *Transformations* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* it had its chief literary testaments. The Bible was simply the greatest, the most eloquent, the most intense literary embodiment of the idea by which man's moral metamorphosis could most profitably direct itself. In the Old Testament, this idea is summed up in the sentence "O ye that love the Eternal, see that ye hate the thing which is evil! to him that ordereth his conversation right shall be shown the salvation of God" (Psalm xcvi. 10 [175]); in the New Testament, the idea is summed up in the sentence "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity!" (2 Timothy ii. 19 [175]). Thus Pagan Classicism and Hebrew-Christian Classicism are brought together by Arnold in the spirit of a wholly empirical Modernism which has hopes for man that are completely rooted in experiment and verifiable assumptions and that look to literary experience for the best aid toward their realization. And if something has eroded during the hundred and more years since the publication of *Literature and Dogma*, it is not the critical method but the critical hope; and in that case, it is not the value of Arnold that is in question, but the value of life itself.

Classical rather than Romantic, but still organic. Arnold is discovering and laying open the "ruling passion of the whole mind" of the Bible, pointing to the imaginative center by which all parts gain coherence and through which—gradually, with many imperfections, and over a whole millenium—that imagination makes its final disclosure. What he was doing, then, was organic in a meaningful way with the inner history of the Bible itself. As the initial intuition of the Classical Bible of the golden age had been lost in the misguided, inferior, pseudo-scientific poetry (*Aberglaube*) of a much later antiquity, so Christ's mission was to restore that initial intuition by which, through the depth and intensity of its emotion, morality was enabled to rise into and become religion. That recovered intuition, victimized by the *Aberglaube* rampant at the time of its recovery, was again soon lost, and *Literature and Dogma* is an organicist critic's efforts to show his readers what the original intuition was and how they might personally recover it. And thus there is a pervasive suggestion in *Literature and Dogma* that the real, authentic Christianity has never

really been active in our popular religion and that the modern world threatens to abandon it before it has ever been tried.

A chief key to Arnold's critical organicism is his emphasis on the indispensability of style—*style is the man*—to any breakthrough in the historical consciousness: "Jesus Christ's new and different way of putting things was the secret of his succeeding where the prophets failed" (219). This rather familiar conception gets stunning renewal through its application to Jesus since he was not a writer but a personal embodiment of style: style and the man meet uniquely in the life-style of Jesus, and the mildness, self-renouncement, inwardness of his teaching in no sense prevented him from fully accomplishing his labors. His was not the paralyzing inwardness of a latter-day Romantic but the catalyzing inwardness of the integrated Classical moralist. Jesus is unique too in that he was a supreme extra-textual existence: he inspired one of the great written testaments to an imitable human rectitude, but he is the object, not of evangelistic comprehensiveness, but of evangelistic suggestiveness. He looms larger than all the writing about him; and in his extra-textual existence, of which the New Testament accounts give only hints, is centered his incomparable magnetism. The motive which he provided was not essentially his lessons, however inspiring they may be, but his example, which incited personal devotion as a steady, intense, world-wide motive. He was not a writer, though his life released the poetry in great men's souls; he was the strangest and most compelling of all humans, the hero of humility.

Literature and Dogma is as "scientific" as criticism can be without ceasing to be criticism. It is severely monitored empirically—turning upon what we actually know rather than upon what we would like to think we know—but it is kept responsibly critical, is not allowed, in the name of criticism, to abandon the purpose of criticism. It does not become, for example, capriciously philological in the interests of being or appearing to be scientific because at a point philology loses its critical uses and becomes strictly (i.e., scientifically) philological. But it does not beg the question on the more traditional literary side either—it does not become so Romantically mythic that it begs the question through an emotive transcendence of the question. This suggests how far Arnold (and criticism) have traveled from the subjectivity of the prefaces of Wordsworth and the *Biographia Literaria* and the *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* of Coleridge: "we" has taken the place of "I," and issues are tested, not against incontrovertible autobiographical experience, but against the *common* experience, how men use language and what they mean by it. This is the method, not of the Romantics, but of Aristotle, and it is the Classical method of empirical criticism and practical philosophy with the broadest humanistic base that can be made properly to apply to such a subject. Arnold is careful in this not to let the confessional mode of nineteenth-century poetry invade his criticism but to let symbolic experience hold

steady in the face even of the inevitable enchantments, in an age desperate for transcendence, of symbolic aspiration.

Arnold's emphasis on conduct ("Look up to God" means "Consult your Conscience," 175) runs directly counter to the tendency of philosophy in his time (for example, the Caird brothers) to separate religion and morality. Thus again he side-steps "abstruse reasoning" and keeps very close to the search for the good life—"righteousness"—staying clear of moral philosophy in the interests of moral intelligibility, simplicity, function. Thus his emphasis is throughout practical, empirical, knowable: the object (as distinct from the philosophical meaning or the theological-scientific "meaning") of religion is conduct (175-177). Hence he insists that religion and ethics are contradistinguished only at the *theoretical* level, but that this antithesis is "quite a false one" at the *practical* level.⁴ His emphasis on a functional criticism has a firm analogue here. Arnold was obviously capable of the abstrusest reasoning: his ability to draw down to their essentials the abstrusest reasonings of others proves this. But he was non-theoretical in his approach on very deliberative and purposive grounds. He never lost sight of the fact that literary criticism, however pleasurable it might be, was a secondary, not a primary, species of literary work. However well it was done, it could not be genuine unless it was serviceable to the literary experience provided, not by the critics ultimately, but by the creators. Hence, each of his works was an effort to create a peer-group, to enlarge the number of those equipped to profit organically, internally, from the finest literary experience. A theory of literature *per se* was likely to lose touch with the crucial object itself, to turn the reader's thoughts into "abstruse reasonings," and to become, finally, not a means, but an end. This he would have seen as, however brilliant, self-defeating. Literature was too urgently needed by modern secular man to be sacrificed to a criticism that had become its own end.

Chapter V of *Literature and Dogma*—"The Proof from Miracles"—is especially rich in critical reverberations of the most fundamental sort. The requirement of the times is for a "new testament," and, as in all human history, that "new testament" is a literary testament, specifically here a revelation of the grand but purely human revelation of which the Bible is, in its particular field of attendance, an incomparable embodiment. Thus Arnold's approach to the Bible is a route of double access: by returning the Bible, through the rules and techniques of literary criticism, to its authentic status as a great work of literature, the critic not only makes the Bible function anew for the modern reader, but also enlarges the canon of great literature itself by firmly adding to it the greatest of all literary exemplifications of the human search for the good life through personal rectitude. Arnold recognizes the tendency of "men in general" to believe in miracles

and to depend upon them for authority: "It is almost impossible to exaggerate the proneness of the human mind to take miracles as evidence, and to seek for miracles as evidence..." (245); "Signs and wonders men's minds will have, and they create them honestly and naturally; yet not so but that we can see *how* they create them" (246). Thus miracle-making and miracle-believing are much larger than the human experience embodied in the metaphysician's Bible, though they are conspicuous there; and Arnold delicately dismantles the textual "proof" for Biblical miracles while emphasizing his belief that the emergent *Zeitgeist* will itself—"without insistence, without attack, without controversy" (257)—sap belief in miracles. Nor does Arnold show any enthusiasm for those mythic patternings, essentially anthropological in their bearings, which move Biblical fable and personage into an ultimately archetypal frame, patternings which would soon get their most dramatic dilation in the psychological theories of Jung. "Such speculations," says Arnold ironically, "almost take away the breath of a mere man of letters" (239). Even if valid in their own right and in degree true, they are not really germane to what literary experience, or a criticism that takes literary experience as its central object, is fundamentally concerned with. Though perhaps more valid than the historically held patterns they would replace, they draw literature toward metaphysical abstruseness, not toward the "facts of positive experience." Arnold thus draws a third element into his critical equation: to the ultimately unsustainable reliance on miracles for the Bible's authentic human workability and the overwhelming tendency of the human mind to seek out and use miracles as evidence, he adds the rapidly developing exploitation of the hypothesis of archetypal mythicism in the new "science" of anthropology. Against all three of these, he sets a severe and enveloping Classicism. Great literature is man's chief salvation-mechanism *in this world*, and it does its work, not by yielding to tendencies which it both recognizes and at the same time sees as humanly erosive, but by correcting them through a process that perpetually returns man to the "facts of positive experience" and perpetually tries to make him understand that his salvation is there or nowhere. Arnold's explicit application of this fundamental Classicism is to the Bible—both to Bible-writers who had yielded to the miraculous *Aberglaube* of their time and to later commentators who had exploited that capitulation to a miracle-mentality. But Arnold's fundamental Classicism has here a shorter-ranged implicit application too—namely, to the tendency of certain Romantic writers and critics so to mythicize human experience in their poetry and in their evaluations of poetry as to give it a metaphysical rather than a positive experiential quality and to beat "in the void [their] luminous wings in vain."⁵ The great Classical writers, both Hebrew and Greek, had brought myth to the affective level of the human pulse-

4. Carlyle had developed this point in considerable detail and to an analogous end in "The Hero as Poet."

5. "Shelley," in *Essays in Criticism, Second Series, Complete Prose Works*, ed. Super (1977), XI, 327.

beat; and Arnold saw the Romantic-Modern temptation not to hold steady in a faith in human actions, in "the facts of positive experience," but to respond to a hieratic sense of urgency by creating new mythic miracles detached from the human pulse-beat, as "availing nothing, effecting nothing." Such a response failed to correct a persuasive human tendency and, besides contributing to a delusion that must ultimately collapse with profound after-shocks, it missed the opportunity to contribute to human growth at a simple organic level. Moreover, it reenforced a Romantic disposition, with metaphysical overtones, to make of the poet an infallible seer and to strip him of that universal proneness to error which, once accepted, enlarges rather than diminishes his affectiveness with a modern reader to whom the very notion of infallibility has had to be abandoned.⁶

Chapter VI—"The New Testament Record"—moves even more steadily and confidently toward a revelation of the limitations of various schools of criticism and a full statement of the severe requisites of genuine literary criticism. One of its most rewarding moments (262ff.) is Arnold's identification of a central tension in the New Testament which is the dynamic source of dramatic excitement in all literature. The New Testament is literature made of literature (the New made of the Old), and a primary dimension of its *literary* experience is our involvement in a measuring of two readings of literature—Christ's reading and the reading of the New Testament writers—by which we clearly see the difference between a master-critic and critics with "a truer moral susceptibility" than their countrymen but still crippled by imperatives of their *Zeitgeist*. This comparative process leads Arnold naturally to an identification and critique of the critical modes that his own century has applied to the same great testament of positive human experience, the Bible. Thus he is able to identify the chief dispositions of modern criticism and to measure them according to their relative success in unlocking the secret of the same literary document.

The least satisfactory, of course, have been the *metaphysical critics*. In their theological manifestation, they have simply built a house of falsehood around an intuition of truth and have put truth itself in danger of being lost to many people as their artificial invention crumbles around them. In their more modern mythic manifestation, they simply function under the false premise "that metaphysics should...always confer the superiority upon their possessor" (272). The *textual critics* simply do not have the data to settle their question; and their case is in any event not essential to the kind of criticism most needed since even the most authentic primitive text would not erase the theurgy and thaumaturgy by which the New Testament writers were influenced and by which they obscured the intuition of Jesus. The *rational-*

istic critics, on the other hand, are not authentically historical: they have "too narrow a conception of the history of the human mind, and of its diversities of operation and production" (269) and miss the mark by imposing contemporaneity ("men rational in our sense and way") upon the past. The *historical critics* of the Bible have in general (Ewald is an exception, Baur, Strauss, and even Renan are not) attempted to settle by external evidence a problem—"what comes from Jesus" (270)—that requires internal evidence. This demands a higher degree of literary tact—a comparative method that is meticulously textual, a capacity for "right note-catching" that poets have always depended on in their best readers—than the historical critics have possessed or than their critical methodology has allowed them. Finally, the *philosophical critics*, though their contribution is real when they are genuinely philosophical, tend even at their best to translate "a great and free thought" into "a narrow and mechanical interpretation" (274).

As he rises to his climactic elaboration of the severe demands of a conscientious literary criticism against the background of criticism so often partial and inadequate—criticism lamed by a restricting methodology or the preemptory *Aberglaube* of its age—Arnold cites two extraordinarily simple texts as monitoring the spirit of his criticism. The first is from Newton, and he calls it "the cardinal rule" of his critical inquiry: "*Hypotheses non fingo*," *I do not invent [my] hypotheses* (275). The other is from the *Imitation*, and it is given as an example of a text providing its own best key to itself: "*Esto humilis et pacificus, et erit tecum Jesus!*" *Be humble and quiet, and Jesus will be with you* (275). The two texts taken together are stunningly illuminative of Arnold's critical organicism: when science reaches toward poetry and conduct toward perfection, criticism invokes its genuine muse.

Arnold's critical method is one of "intuition and practical rule" (298), and he saw compelling analogies for such a method in both Aristotle and Jesus as critics of literature. Aristotle, he says, "does not appeal to a speculative theory of the system of things, and deduce conclusions from it" (296). Rather, Aristotle recognized that "the law of our being is *not* something which is already definitively known" but "something which discovers itself and *becomes*" the law of our being (296). Thus Aristotle, like Arnold, depended rather upon "the experience [that] is ripe and solid, and to be used safely, long before the theory" (297). However "beautiful and impressive" a theory may be, whether of aesthetics or of ethics, it resists a reduction to experience and to that degree becomes relatively trivial and dysfunctional. Theory places emphasis on how a doctrine was reached, not on the doctrine itself; it is inorganic except within the system in which it has a place. Jesus, like Aristotle, dealt with

6. Throughout *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*, Carlyle had reiterated this creative distinction between human perfection and human grandeur. See especially "The Hero as Prophet" and "The Hero as King."

experience that was "ripe and solid," and, like Aristotle, he was attentive to organic becoming: "How he reached a doctrine we cannot say; but he always exhibited it as an intuition and practical rule, and a practical rule which, if adopted, would have the force of an intuition for its adopter also" (297-298).

Arnold's perception of Jesus as a great student of letters, as an organicist literary critic, is a dramatic dimension of his whole effort to humanize the Bible. By "restoring the intuition," Jesus was returning men's awareness to the initial and authentic spirit of the Old Testament. He dealt in language, moved his disciples by freeing language from the encrustations of *Aberglaube* into which the original intuition of the Classical Hebrews had been imprisoned by their then-modern successors. He made the words of the Old Testament work differently from the way they worked in the theological rigidities of Jewish orthodoxy. Thus he "was for ever translating [*Aberglaube*] into the sense of the higher ideal, the only sense in which it had truth and grandeur" (305). He used words in a special way (305), had an intuitive preference for certain words out of the Old Testament (308), and he was the most practical, the least theoretical, of the critics of the Old Testament (208), ultimately resting in his revelation on the most practical rule of all: "Follow me!" He was, of course, a great literary creator too, his great *secret* (inwardness), and his great *method* (self-renouncement) working through his great *style* (felicity) to produce "the total impression of his 'epieikeia,' or sweet reasonableness. . ." (300); but he came to possess this incomparable genius for conduct, this wholly practical, processive, experiential insight into the human way to permanent happiness, by doing what the modern literary critic must do—by following Scripture "continuously and interpreting it naturally" (281) and thereby recovering the original, indispensable intuition of Israel—by conscientiously caring and conscientiously attending (288). Jesus exceeded the role of literary critic and became a great literary founder in that, besides rubbing the dust off the clichés into which the original intuition of the Old Testament had fallen, he created a new voice, a new language and imagery, that makes his insight exact and permanent beyond measure of any other.

Chapter IX—"Aberglaube Re-Invading"—is one of those broad historical sweep-throughs (c.100 - c.1873) which Arnold did so confidently and which "scientific" critics and "scientific" historians and "scientific" theologians are most impatient with and tend most to slur. It is, of course, untenable as history; but it is just as surely irresistible as emblematic critical narrative. There can be no doubt about the meaning of his term *Aberglaube*; and there can be no doubt that a mentality suggested by that metaphor took hold of Christianity during this period of "almost two thousand years" or that it was largely alien to the original intuition of the Old Testament and the recovered intuition of the New. The account of the progressive hardening of the official Creeds (Apostles',

Nicene, Athanasian) is persuasive enough, and the comparison of the Psalms with the *Soliloquies* of St. Augustine is a brilliantly effective critical strategy. It is, in one sense, absurd to attempt what Arnold attempts in thirty pages, or even in three thousand; but it is also astounding how much "tact, measure, and correct perception" (361) he shows in moving thus rapidly among the various pressure-points of medieval Christianity, in distinguishing between the centers of gravity in post-Reformation Protestantism and Catholicism, in identifying the recognizable physiognomy of contemporary Evangelicalism with the fairy-tale of the three Lord Shaftesburys, and in yet defending the innate humanness of this untenable popular science of religion against the charge of his "philosophical Liberal friends" that it is all "a degrading superstition." Though it is necessarily extra-textual in a rather grand way, the Biblical text from which it is a bursting release is now securely in place; and this, together with the critical manner of the chapter itself, suggests that representative Patristic, Scholastic, and Reformation documents are fresh in Arnold's mind and are specifically monitoring the movement of his critical thought. So while one may readily concede that the chapter is in considerable degree an intuitive shot in the dark, he can still hold that it serves even the conscientious critic's overall purpose not only aptly but brilliantly. It is an organically rooted celebration of the discovery which the preceding chapters have enacted, and the discursiveness which invokes our historical skepticism is wrapped in a spirit of justified critical jubilee that largely erases our doubts.

Chapter X—"Our 'Masses' and the Bible"—is one of the most brilliantly and engagingly strategic chapters in *Literature and Dogma*. It contains the central "social idea" of the volume: it is past time for toying with "the masses"—they will have it straight or not at all; and since they, like all of us, need an adequate guide to right conduct and since without such a guide their actions are likely to be anarchical, it behooves us to save the Bible if we would save social order. Though that puts the case in its extreme social form, that is the underlying social intuition of Arnold's book.

And this enables us to pinpoint the audience of *Literature and Dogma*. It is not the masses themselves or the professional exponents of popular scientific religion, who are rather plaintiffs and defendants in the case; rather, Arnold's audience is the jury of the present who may, if they will, shape the future—all those members of a society in rapid transition who are both conscientious and sensible, who are accessible to ideas, however unusual, that have self-evident relevance to their times, who are not blinded by the fanaticism of reform and know, therefore, how to help ideas along without rushing to institutionalize them, and yet who have some experience and power of working toward improved social felicity without the visionary violence of utopianists. These are the readers to whom Arnold appeals, and his keen consciousness of them shapes his points of reference

and critical methodology. Thus his appeal is essentially social and his criteria essentially empirical.

In the background is the figure and career of John Henry Newman, who had, a generation earlier, caught the attention and enthusiasm of clusters of this same audience and from whom, considering the similarities in their subject-matter, Arnold has to distance himself as to both method and purpose. Newman had accepted (even restored) Revelation in its traditional ecclesiastical sense and had deduced his religious insights from it; Arnold reinterprets and humanizes the very idea of Biblical revelation and anchors it in wholly verifiable experience, strips it of syllogistic deduction and subjects it to inductive experiment. Newman had insisted upon the distinction between *natural* and *revealed* religion; Arnold erases the distinction as ultimately unverifiable, since the "Great Personal First Cause" is common to them both. Newman's quarrel with Butler's *Analogy* Arnold sees as an archetypal contention irreconcilable on Newman's and Butler's terms, but he shows that it proceeds on a "line of hypothesis and inference" that "falls to pieces like a house of cards" (366) once the hypothesis is withdrawn. The anthropomorphism from which both Butler and Newman would save religion Arnold sees as one of man's saving remnants in matters of religion ("Man—never knows how anthropomorphic he is," 242). Although it may lead him, under the influence of abstraction-merchants, to "metaphysical ideas of the personality of God" (368), these are only the natural extravagances of his "anthropomorphic language," and his anthropomorphism ultimately leads him back to the humanly verifiable, to experience, to "plain experimental proof" (366). By *trying* it—that is, by experiment—he will find that personal rectitude is the true source of happiness or peace; by comparing the various guides to rectitude—that is, by *trying* them—he will find that the Bible is incomparably the best guide; and having had the actual experience of the joy that comes of right conduct—having actually had his *morality touched by emotion*—he will be immune to the notional religion of even such an "exquisite and delicate genius" as Dr. Newman (377). Thus Arnold's *Literature and Dogma* is a wholly different "grammar of assent" from Newman's, and part of his purpose is to set in reverse-motion Newman's whole idea of "the development of Christian doctrine."

Finally, Arnold's audience is one that would be rather easily persuaded that the age of the *homo unius libri*, the man of one book, is over, that times do change, and that their best guides to the future are a sensitivity to the "Zeit-geist," and a prolonged and large experience of men's expressions and how they employ them . . ." (373). Newman's disqualification was not in the latter, but in the former: he had been born into the world twenty years too soon and had not been "touched with the breath of the 'Zeit-Geist'" now everywhere abroad. So the widest reading and the most "exquisite and delicate genius" are not enough, nor is impeccable conscientiousness. One must know, in addition, "the history of the human spirit

and its deliverances" (378) and that "*Time—, the wisest of all things,—is the unfailing discoverer*" (265).

In the end, Arnold holds steady in his faith in Israel's idea, in the method he has employed in unlocking that idea, and in the ultimate victory of that idea if man would survive. But he recognizes, too, that neither his method nor Israel's idea will dominate the short curve of the future. More chaos and more Catholicism are likely to have their day first, but as "the whole career of the human race" (386) fulfills, in Aristotle's words, the law of its being, Israel's prophecy will be fulfilled. In the meantime, one's chief work is to show that the true religion of Israel is "incomparably higher, grander, more wide and deep-reaching, than the *Aberglaube* and false science which it displaces" (384-385), and one's chief consolation is, in the words of Newman's Oriel compeer Davison, that " 'Conscience and the present constitution of things are not corresponding terms; it is conscience and the issue of things which go together' " (386). *En passant*, Arnold begs the utmost indulgence for popular religion, utmost disdain for learned religion, and shows, with witty elegance, how the centers of European culture—from ancient Greece to modern France, Italy, and Germany—have attempted to side-step the prophetic idea of Israel and said rather, with Abraham, " 'Oh that Ishmael might live before thee!'" (389).

The future of Christianity cannot be prophesied simply because, in its authentic fulness, it has never been tried: we have not yet had full experience of it. Christianity itself, impeded almost from the beginning by the *Aberglaube* of orthodoxy, has "brought the world . . . to regard righteousness as only the Jews regarded it before the coming of Christ" (398). We have had a great *show* of Christianity, but very little reality of it. Indeed our situation is closely analogous to Christ's situation, and we have had corresponding impediments to a genuine practice of his way. Never having practiced Christianity, we cannot testify to its effects on the basis of experimental proof. We have such metaphysical notions of immortality because we have not typed in ourselves the experience by which life's victory over death can be experimentally known. But the Jesus of the New Testament can persuade us of "the infinite" of Christianity—"its immense capacity for ceaseless progress and farther development" (405)—if we can be shown that it is in fact in the Bible (*the work of literary criticism*) and if we will read and re-read "the gospels continually, until we catch something of it" (*the work of literature itself*).

In the "Preface" to the first edition, Arnold states as his fundamental purpose "to find, for the Bible, . . . a basis in something that can be verified, instead of in something which has to be assumed" (150). He realizes that, to do this, he will have "to recast religion" (150), but he realizes, too, that the time is not only right but imperative if the Bible and the Bible-religion are to be saved. The *Zeitgeist* has suffused modern life with "some notion of the processes of the experimental sciences," and people are now everywhere demanding the "ground and

authority" for religion's assertions. But neither theological science nor physical science is equipped to deal with this demand because they do not have the proper intellectual equipment, the technique, or the experience to "watch the God of the Bible, and the salvation of the Bible, gradually and on an immense scale discovering themselves and *becoming*—" (152). This is culture's task, for only culture places the highest premium on "getting the power, through reading, to estimate the proportion and relation in what we read" (153); only culture—the organic, processive result of wide, deep, repetitive reading, reading undertaken with the serious and systematic purpose of getting to know the best that has been thought and known in human history—prepares one to perceive the power, the crux, the distinctiveness of what one reads. Otherwise (especially if one has scant reading and an overabundance of scientific methodology), one reads to little purpose, missing the true "ground and authority" of what he does read. Theology is a proven failure; physical science is alienated from both the subject and the medium in which the subject subsists; knowledge, even the massive knowledge of Germany, leaves the central issue untouched or touches it only negatively.

What is needed is a wholly constructive literary criticism, and for this only culture of the widest, deepest most experientially strengthened sort is a fit preparation since only culture, working through a large, rich, deep, imaginative mind, can produce a sufficiently keen and delicate instrument—*tact*. *Tact* is the most crucial critical term in the Arnold lexicon, and its presence in a critical endeavor separates the finest from the second-class, is the true "note" of the genuine critic. It comes, "in a clear and fair mind, from a wide experience" (157), and it expresses itself through "justness of perception" (158), "quickness and sureness of perception" (159). It is "quick" and "keen" and shows a "practical dexterity of perception," a fine and practical critical sureness. *Tact* leads the critic to "a true...sense of relative value" (160), identifies "intrinsic worth" (160), goes straight to the "internal evidence" (161), makes sound discriminations (161). Arnold does not define the term *tact* more specifically than this, but it is clear that, at the height of his power and experience as a literary critic, he considered *tact* the indispensable quality of any sound criticism or of any true culture. And the fact that it is not a scientific term does not mean that the critical quality conveyed by

it is either vague or insubstantial. *Tact* is to Arnold's criticism what *inscape* is to Hopkins' aesthetics—that individually distinctive capacity to perceive the individually distinctive character of the object scrutinized. It is the literary critic's spiritual eye, by which he can recover a writer's original intuition and distinguish it from all other intuitions, can perceive justly and surely the total impression into which a writer's secret and method are converted by his style. This obviously is not an easily acquired capacity, but it seems to be worth all the literary experience—all of the observation, meditation, and imagination applied with systematic seriousness to the world's great books—necessary to acquire it. And at least this much seems likely enough: that none but the most serious and purposeful students of literary experience can hope to acquire it and that the world of literary experience itself would be vastly poorer without it.

Thus the three fundamental theses of this essay bear a consequential relationship: (1) that Arnold is solid and salutary for our time, still our sanest and most constructive literary voice because (2) he brought the critical act so close to the creative act that criticism's generative analogue is clearly visible in the creative work itself (3) through a critical organicism that perceives language, thought, and action as organic in a most various human history, and the world's great books as the supreme literary intuitions by which, individually, a magnificently gifted creator makes an inductive leap through his own *Zeitgeist* into the enveloping metaphor in which the *Zeitgeist* itself subsists. To become available to these supreme literary intuitions, the critic must himself undergo an organic transformation for which a deep, wide, and oft-repeated experience of the world's greatest books is the only affective method; and if, like the poet, he would lend out to others a mind thus transformed, he must, again by analogy with the poet, always prefer the great book to himself, being most successful when he most fully succeeds in effacing himself and allowing the great book to subsist as it did (and does) in nature. And the contemporary student of literature who begins to understand Arnold's superb, dynamic critical organicism cannot conscientiously deny his persistent and massive relevance to the art of criticism. He may chafe at it, rail at it, insult it, hate it; but if he is a serious, gifted, purposive student of literature, he will end "by receiving its influence and by undergoing its law."

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Hopkins' Paradigms of Language

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Derrida's dream of *archi-écriture*, the ultimate language *qua* language, of a series of signifiers cut off completely from the signified, texts without contexts, is but the latest development in the increasing "spatialization" of language traced by Ong, McLuhan, Frank and others. Derrida's dream of reduction of language to a purely visual medium, writing, is merely carrying to their logical conclusion the tendencies of centuries, tendencies evident from the beginning in ancient hieroglyphics and other pictographic writings, in the worship of Thoth, the Egyptian god of writing Derrida would resurrect.

These tendencies were apparent in the nineteenth century as well. Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn," for instance, is a seminal expression of the visual orientation of modern literature and criticism and the aesthetes' attempt to find a heaven in that stasis of the spatial arts which seems to escape the flux of time and mortality. "The school of Keats," as Hopkins called the Pre-Raphaelites, extrapolated Keats's amalgamation of the visual and verbal arts, most obviously in the poems for pictures they inscribed on the frames of the paintings themselves. Pater developed the implications of these experiments for criticism, and the influence of his spatial paradigms of language is obvious in Wilde's "The Critic as Artist" and "The Decay of Lying," essays which contain in embryo the essence of formalism and its various permutations in our century, including structuralism and deconstructionism.

The Victorian era also supported an older, rival paradigm of language, however, as Philip Collins has shown, in his performances as well as in *Reading Aloud: A Victorian Metier*.¹ We have only begun to understand the implications of this metier, especially as it affected "the category of writers conspicuously absent from the names" he mentions: "the poets" (p. 26). Hopkins, for instance, was, like Wilde, one of Pater's students, and he too began with an obviously visual orientation. Influenced by Keats, he wanted to be a Pre-Raphaelite painter and poet. Yet Hopkins eventually generated a new auditory poetics to replace his spatial paradigms. A recently discovered letter reveals that Hopkins actually designed a new genre of spoken lyric which emphasizes poetry's affinities with music, speech, and drama rather than the visual arts.² In this letter to his brother Everard in 1885,

he also suggested how the phonograph, which had been invented only seven years before, could help restore the human voice to literature. Hopkins is thus the true father of the school of criticism identified with McLuhan and Ong (it is no accident that both wrote on Hopkins early in their careers). More importantly, the auditory poetics he articulated in this letter and elsewhere demands that we re-evaluate not only how we read his poetry, but how we teach literature and how we communicate generally.

Hopkins could not abandon visual paradigms altogether, of course. Indeed, his poems were well received by modernists not simply for their conciseness and rhythmic freedom, but also apparently for their "spatial effects," their many affinities with the visual arts. *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, for example, must have recalled the early work of Pound and Eliot in its tendency to undermine narrative consecutiveness while retaining elements of conventional structure. The reader's expectations of sequentiality are frustrated by Hopkins' reversal of the narrative logic: the effect on the speaker precedes the representation of the event which caused it. Reflexive references throughout the poem demand that its two parts be set side by side and perceived simultaneously — as if it were a diptych. Joseph Franks' description of related techniques in the county fair scene in *Madame Bovary* applies almost as well to Hopkins as it does to Flaubert: "relationships are juxtaposed independently of the progress of the narrative, and the full significance of the scene is given only by the reflexive relations among the units of meaning."³

Hopkins himself emphasized analogies with music, however. In his preface Hopkins connects his version of metrical "counterpoint," sprung rhythm, to the "rhythm of all but the most monotonously regular music, so that in the words of choruses and refrains, and in songs written closely to music it arises."⁴ The poem which follows then exemplifies this musical analogy, becoming a "madrigal" or "glee" of the poet's autobiographical, narrative, and sermonic voices echoing and amplifying the central melody of the nun, a virtuoso score which could test the skills of the great "polyphonists" or "monopolylogues" of the Victorian stage described by Collins (p. 25). Though these reflexive voices can be represented spatially, musical paradigms seem more relevant for a poem in which darkness renders hearing the more important

1. Philip Collins, *Reading Aloud: A Victorian Metier* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1972) — hereafter cited in the text.

2. Ms. University of Texas at Austin; rpt. *Hopkins Research Bulletin*, No. 4 (1973), 6-12. A fuller account of the genesis of the poetics summarized in this letter is forthcoming in the *Bucknell Review*.

3. Joseph Frank, *The Widening Gyre* (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1963), p. 15. Other examples of the dominance of visual paradigms in modern criticism include Wallace Stevens, *The Necessary Angel* (New York: Random House, 1951), p. 159; René Wellek and

Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1956), p. 126; Robert Scholes, *Structuralism in Literature* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1974), p. 29; Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1976), p. 7.

4. *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, 4th ed., ed. by W. H. Gardner and N. H. Mackenzie (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), p. 49 — all citations of Hopkins' poems are to this edition.

sense.

Indeed, the ellipses in the twenty-eighth stanza express the speaker's failure to find appropriate spatial metaphors for "the sight of it," just as in the ninth stanza he found his auditory powers incapable of communicating what is "Beyond saying," "past telling of tongue." While this tendency to confess the limitations of language in this poem is due as much to its subject as to its style, its style obviously aspires to the condition of music as well as to that of painting.

The musical analogy in fact offers not only alternative models for the pattern of reflexive reference in modern poetry—madrigals, polyphonies, fugues—but also another mode of explanation for the tendency to self-negation in language. By aspiring to the condition of music, Romantic poetry sought to minimize the referential quality of language (which Victorian word-painting depended on), and thus lent itself to Hopkins' definition of poetry as "speech framed to be heard for its own sake and interest even over and above its interest of meaning. Some matter and meaning is essential to it but only as an element necessary to support and employ the shape which is contemplated for its own sake. Poetry is in fact speech only employed to carry the inscape of speech for the inscape's sake and therefore the inscape must be dwelt on."⁵ In his own poetry Hopkins "dwells on" fugal repetitions of the auditory inscape "to be heard for its own sake." Conventional syntax and clarity are consistently sacrificed for such musical effects, and the result in, say, "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo," is an operatic performance which clearly subordinates the referential qualities of language to the musical. Extrapolation of wordmusic as well as wordpainting, therefore, can reduce poetry to language qua language, decreasing its referential qualities and increasing what Jakobson calls "the fundamental dichotomy of signs and objects."⁶

This apparent anticipation of Jakobson's hypothesis has naturally led us to associate Hopkins' theories with modern criticism and its basic tenet of the autonomy of the aesthetic imagination, but the result is often a misunderstanding of Hopkins' aims and methods. Formalist criticism has encouraged us to perceive his poetry as a modernist hypostasis of language isolated from both speaker and listener, with the result that both centers of his art have now been "deconstructed"; a recent article, for instance, argues that his poetry deviates radically from representation of both God and nature, that his poems are the "counterparts of Satan's refusal to accept prescription."⁷ Such a reading is clearly relevant to aspects of Hopkins' life and art, especially his "terrible sonnets" and the familiar poet vs. priest conflict, but it is

based on the mistaken assumption that Hopkins shared modern spatial paradigms of language, that he too believed language was primarily visual and therefore the essence of poetry was writing.

Yet Jakobson, though he maintains the spatial orientation of modern literary criticism by comparing grammatical parallelism in poetry to geometrical relationships in paintings, is forced when he cites Hopkins' "figure of grammar" to identify it with Hopkins' "figure of sound."⁸ Hopkins' special emphasis on auditory rather than spatial effects often means that his poetry, for all its apparent modernity, cannot be read the way we normally read modern literature, as Hopkins himself discovered to his dismay: "when on somebody returning me the *Eurydice*, I opened and read some lines, reading, as one commonly reads whether prose or verse, with the eyes, so to say, only, it struck me aghast with a kind of raw nakedness and unmitigated violence I was unprepared for: but take breath and read it with the ears, as I always wish to be read, and my verse becomes all right."⁹ The *Eurydice* was also on his mind when he wrote to Everard: "I am sweetly soothed by your saying that you could make any one understand my poem by reciting it well. That is what I always hoped, thought, and said; it is my precise aim and thereby hangs so considerable a tale, in fact the very thing I was going to write about Sprung Rhythm in general."

Hopkins' poetry is in fact based on nothing less than a new theory of poetry as performance—that was the "considerable tale" he adumbrated in his letter to Everard:

Every art then and every work of art has its own play or performance. . . books play, perform, or are played and performed when they are read; and ordinarily by one reader, alone, to himself, with the eyes only. . . Poetry was originally meant for either singing or reciting; a record was kept of it; the record could be, was, read, and that in time by one reader, alone, to himself, with the eyes only. This reacted on the art: what was to be performed under these conditions for these conditions ought be and was composed and calculated. Sound-effects were intended, wonderful combinations even; but they bear the marks of having been meant for the whispered, not even whispered, merely mental performance of the closet, the study and so on. . . This is not the true nature of poetry, the darling child of speech, of lips and spoken utterance: it must be spoken; *till it is spoken it is not performed*, it does not perform, it is not itself.

Admittedly, such a poetics seems archaic and impractical now. The only definitive performance of, say, *The Eurydice*, would be by Hopkins himself, presumably. Yet we have learned that poets are not always the best

5. *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. H. House and G. Storey (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1959), p. 289.

6. Roman Jakobson, "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics" in *Style and Language*, ed. Thomas H. Sebeok (Cambridge: 1960), p. 356.

7. Jacob Korg, "Hopkins' Linguistic Deviations," *PMLA*, 92, No. 5 (1977), 977-986, p. 980; see also J. Hillis Miller, "The Linguistic Moment in 'The Wreck of the Deutschland'" in *The New Criticism*

and *After*, ed. Thomas D. Young (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 1976), 47-60; and Michael Sprinker, "G. M. Hopkins on the Origin of Language," *JHI*, 41, No. 1 (1980), 113-128.

8. Roman Jakobson, "Poetry of Grammar and Grammar of Poetry," *Lingua*, 21 (1968), 597-609, p. 599.

9. *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, ed. C. C. Abbott (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), p. 79.

readers of their own poems. Hopkins admits "that to perform it quite satisfactorily is not at all easy, I do not say I could do it; but this is nothing against the truth of the principle maintained. A composer need not be able to play his violin music or sing his songs. Indeed the higher wrought the art, clearly the wider severance between the parts of the author and the performer." The performer's task is made still more difficult by Hopkins' insistence that it is worse to have a bad performance than no performance at all: "Much the same is the case with plain chant music. Many of those who do not admire it have never heard it performed (or worse, have heard it murdered) and cannot conceive the performance; for to read it and even play it, without the secret, is no good." Many of our current recordings of Hopkins' own poetry confirm this, I am afraid.

Nevertheless, if we restore some of the original unity of the liberal arts, Hopkins' new poetics is practicable. As it is, if performers had to come from universities, no one department could train them. It is true that poetry recitation is an exercise in many speech departments, but Hopkins insists that his performers must be literary specialists as well: "Neither of course do I mean my verse to be recited only. True poetry must be studied as Shakespeare and all great dramatists have their maximum effect on the stage but bear to be or must be studied at home before or after or both, so I should want it to be with my lyric poetry." Drama would seem the most likely source of the new "performers" of literature, but no: "In drama the fine spoken utterance has been cultivated and a tradition established, but everything is most highly wrought and furthest developed in drama where gesture and action generally are to play a great part too; it might be developed in recited lyric. Now hitherto this has not been done."

Shakespeare is also studied in English departments, of course, but they cannot be expected to devote their energy to continual performances of literature. Hopkins argued that one definitive performance is all that is really necessary, however: "in practice that will be enough by itself alone to anyone who has first realized the effect of reciting; for then like a musician reading a score and supplying in thought the orchestra (as they can), no further performance is, substantially, needed." Yet if English departments are the best stages for Hopkins' poetics in universities, how can they do justice to his emphasis on music? Despite the persistence of the musical analogy in Hopkins' poetics, he has in mind something to rival music. After all, poetry as song had already been perfected: "The Greeks carried lyric to its highest perfection in Pindar and the tragic choruses, but what was this lyric? not spoken lyric at all, but song; poetry written neither to be recited nor chanted nor even sung to a transferable tune but each piece of itself a song." Hence Hopkins proposed a new kind of spoken lyric: "as prose, though commonly less beautiful than verse and debarred from its symmetrical beauties, has, at least possible to it, effects more beautiful than any verse can attain, so

perhaps the inflections and intonations of the speaking voice may give effects more beautiful than any attainable by the fixed pitches of music."

The great potential of this new poetics could be realized by interdisciplinary study in drama, speech, and literary criticism, assisted by electronic media:

I look on this as an infinite field and very little worked. It has this great difficulty, that the art depends entirely on living tradition. The phonograph may give us one, but hitherto there could be no record of fine spoken utterance. . . . the natural performance and delivery belonging properly to lyric poetry, which is speech, has not been enough cultivated, and should be. When performers were trained to do it (it needs the rarest gifts) and audiences to appreciate it, it would be, I am persuaded, a lovely art. . . . With the aid of the phonograph each phrase could be fixed and learned by heart like a song.

By thus restoring the living voice to literature, Hopkins offered a new humanization of art to counteract the dehumanization so evident in his time and still more so in ours.

Admittedly, oral interpretation of "highly wrought" poetry is difficult, but if a poet's own statements ever mean anything, the conclusion is inescapable: with modern electronic media at our disposal we should be devoting as much time and effort to recording and disseminating definitive, professional performances of Hopkins' poems as we are to producing increasingly elaborate and informative editions of them. If and "when performers were trained to do it. . . and audiences to appreciate it," we would more readily perceive Hopkins' visual imagery and spatial effects as the product not of protomodernism but as part of an older and more balanced synthesis of wordpainting and wordmusic, or more traditional union of the poetics of both *ut pictura poesis* and *ut musica poesis*.

Moreover, if truly professional performances of Hopkins' poems were to become popular we would more readily perceive the irony of their enthusiastic reception by modernist poets and critics who actually had little sympathy with their proselytical rhetoric, their sacramental use of words, or their highly wrought wordmusic. This particular irony suggests the need to re-examine not merely Hopkins, but also modernism and our general cultural reliance on our eyes rather than our ears. Until we do so, Hopkins' letter to his brother almost a century ago remains an important indictment of the visual orientation of the teaching of literature and of many modern readers of poetry: "This is not the true nature of poetry, the darling child of lips and spoken utterance: it must be spoken; *till it is spoken, it is not performed*, it does not perform, it is not itself."

This advice is not restricted to poetry. The limitation of visual paradigms of language in other genres as well was acknowledged the year Hopkins' letter was written by Pater himself in *Marius the Epicurean*. Pater's account of Heraclitus's reputation in the novel ironically fore-

shadows his own reputation in our century: "Heracliteanism has grown to be almost identical with the famous doctrine of the sophist Protagoras, that the momentary, sensible apprehension of the individual was the only standard of what is or is not, and each one the measure of all things to himself. The impressive name of Heraclitus had become but an authority for a philosophy of the despair of knowledge."¹⁰ To show how Pater has been "recuperated by the American deconstructionists," for example, Sharon Bassett cites Harold Bloom's description of Pater as one who "makes available to the coming age" the moment "when the mind will know neither itself nor the object but only the dumbfounding abyss that comes between."¹¹

Sharon Bassett argues, correctly I think, that the source of much of Pater's influence on Bloom as well as Miller, Frank, Burke, Wilson, and Frye, is his spatial paradigms of language. If we heed Pater's auditory as well as his visual metaphors in *Marius*, however, we are forced to re-evaluate his theory of language and literature. Heraclitus's "negative doctrine," Pater reminds us, "had been, as originally conceived, but the preliminary step towards a large positive system of almost religious philosophy." We have overlooked this partly because that "almost religious philosophy" is expressed best in auditory rather than visual paradigms: in the "perpetual flux" there is a "continuance" of "orderly intelligible relationships, like the harmony of musical notes . . . ordinances of the divine reason" (ch.8). Pater's musical metaphor reminds us that despite Marius's sense of "the eye, the visual faculty of mind," as the "unchangeable law of his temperament," it is the ear which leads him to the music of the *Logos*. Marius enters the house of the Christians, "And from the first they could hear singing . . . of a new kind; so novel indeed in its effect, as to bring suddenly to the recollection of Marius, Flavian's early essay toward a new world of poetic sound" (ch.21). As we have seen, Pater's former student, Hopkins, wrote his letter advocating a new world of poetic sound the year this novel appeared.

For Marius the Christian "divine service" was "contrasting itself in particular, very forcibly, with the imperial philosopher's so heavy burden of unrelieved melancholy" (ch. 22)—Thoth, we remember, was the god of death as well as writing. In contrast to the merely visual, written words of Marcus Aurelius, which stimulated only an inner dialogue, the oral performance of

the script of the divine service provides Marius with a model of a dramatic, external dialogue with others as well. His ear thus not only led him to the music of the *Logos*, but also to a fuller sense of human communication.

Speech is a more inclusive model because, as linguistic pragmatics has shown, it includes forms which writing usually avoids such as those whose meaning depends on gesture, intonation, speech styles, or other vocal qualifiers, and more informal expressions drawn from the living language so frequently praised in *Marius*, the colloquial idiom as it is actually spoken. In spoken discourse, knowledge of the audience is also usually more precise than in writing, and hence the relationship can be more personal and flexible. While written composition, once delivered, is regarded as relatively fixed, not subject to further revision, oral composition has the advantage of revising and clarifying in response to an audience.¹² The audience in turn has the additional information of the kinesis of para-language of the speaker. A speech act theory of literature, moreover, "offers the important possibility of integrating literary discourse into the same basic model of language as all other communicative activities, for, unlike structuralist poetics, it need not associate 'literariness' with formal textual properties."¹³ More importantly, the emphasis on the impact of "performatives" in speech act theory offers a more positive paradigm of language which can act as a counterpoise for spatial models which can lead to a philosophy of the despair of knowledge.

Of course when Hopkins asserted that "till it is spoken, it is not performed, it is not itself," he was not thinking of the current concept of "performatives" in language. In our recent discoveries of the pervasiveness of the typological imagination in the nineteenth century,¹⁴ we have begun to recognize the importance of the biblical model of language for the Victorians, but the Victorian emphasis on literature as performance is still more basic evidence of their consciousness of this paradigm. Hopkins' use of the word "perform," for instance, is full of echoes of the King James Bible familiar to most Victorians. These echoes include that sense of fulfillment of prophecy so basic to the typological imagination: "For I am the LORD; I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass . . . in your days . . . will I say the word, and will perform it."¹⁵

But the biblical "perform" is not limited to this typological meaning; it conveys all the connotations of speech

10. Walter Pater, *Marius the Epicurean* (London: MacMillan Co., 1934), pp.75-76 (ch.8) — all citations are to this text.

11. Sharon Bassett, "The Uncanny Critic of Brasenose: Walter Pater and Modernisms," *VN*, No. 58 (Fall, 1980), 10-14, p.10.

12. See E. C. Traugott and M. L. Pratt, *Linguistics for Students of Literature* (New York, 1980), pp.41-46, 260-262.

13. M. L. Pratt, *Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1977), pp.87-88. For a sense of the debate between the writing and speech models of literature see Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context" and John R. Searle, "Reiterating the Differences: A Reply to Derrida," *Glyph* 1 (1977), 172-208; and Jacques Derrida, "Limited Inc.," *Glyph* 2 (1977), 162-254.

14. See George Landow, *Victorian Types, Victorian Shadows* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980); G. B. Tennyson, *Victorian Devotional Poetry: The Tractarian Mode* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1980); Herbert Sussamn, *Fact into Figure: Typology in Carlyle, Ruskin, and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood* (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1979); Michael Wheeler, *The Art of Allusion in Victorian Fiction* (London, 1979); Jane Vogel, *Allegory in Dickens* (Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1977); Jerome Bump, "Hopkins' Imagery and Medievalist Poetics," *VP* 15, No. 2 (1977), 99-119; and M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: Norton, 1971).

15. Ezk 12:25; for similar uses of the word "perform" in the King James Bible see Gn 26:3-5; 1K 6:11; 1K 12:15; Jr 28:6; Mi 7:20.

as act: "I am the LORD that . . . confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, . . . That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers; That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying unto Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built, and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid" (Is 44:24-28). One of the reasons that the Bible is *the* book of Western civilization is that it is the one most in tune with those original oral traditions which endow our language with great power. The source of the ultimate performatives in our language, the Bible is the drama of word as event, speech as act, from the creation ("And God said, Let there be light: and there was light") to the New Testament: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Biblical words are clearly kinetic, dynamic—they make things happen.

The emphasis is of course on speech, not writing, for the Hebrew tradition is oriented to the ears, not the eyes. The God of the ten commandments is heard, not seen: "And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire; ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice: And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform" (Dt 4:12-13). Other echoes of the word "perform" also stress the effect of the voice of the invisible God on the ear: "And the LORD said to Samuel; Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of everyone that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform" (Is 3:11-12).

To move closer to Hopkins' own situation, much of this sense of the power of the word is transferred to the poet when the word of the Lord comes to him and he accepts the role of prophet with his "Amen":¹⁶ "The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and speak unto the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; And say unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel; cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant. . . Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you; so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God: That I may perform the oath that I have sworn unto your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as it is this day. Then answered I, and said, So be it, O LORD" (Jr 11:1-5).

So far we may seem to have stayed within the oral tradition, though the Bible is its visual transcription, but the

biblical echoes of the word "perform" include explicit instructions on how to perform a written text: "And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book" (2K 23:3). In this model of reading, the performance of the words of a text demands the complete participation of the reader; his heart and soul are to embrace the heart and soul of the text: "I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end" (Ps 119:112). It is not enough to read the text, or even to speak it aloud; one must pour one's whole being into the performance of it: "That which has gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform" (Dt 23:23); "Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have" (2Co 8:11).

This sense of the text as the script for a performance is clearly at the other end of the spectrum from the idea of the text as merely a visual object. Hopkins soon discovered that to read with the eyes only is to be deaf and dumb, to have one's organs closed to the magical or miraculous power of words in performance. In his sermon, "Cure of the Deaf and Dumb Man, Ephphetha," for instance, Hopkins recalls that "having made the organs ready to hear and speak he looked up to heaven and groaned. . . *And said Ephphetha, Be opened*—The evangelist tells us the very word which had this magical or rather miraculous effect. . . Much more should we admire what Christ has done for us—made us deaf hear, if we will hear. . . made us dumb speak."¹⁷ Emphasis on the eyes only, on the other hand, on the spatial arts as a paradigm for language, leads us to the formalist dream of heaven, Derrida's belief that "writing is a lost tracer, a non-viable semen, all that is in sperm which is dispensed without reservation, a force sidetracked outside the field of life."¹⁸ If we contrast such an explicit extrapolation of the results of merely visual models of language with, say, the Patristic identification of the *logoi spermatakoï* with the fertilizing Word of Isaiah 50, we readily perceive why Hopkins developed a new poetics. When he discovered how the biblical model of the performance of a text fully engages the whole field of life, he found a far more potent paradigm of language.

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16. "Amen" ("So be it") is one of the most powerful performatives in the language. To take an example relevant to Hopkins' situation, during the Mass the priest takes the host to the communicant, raises it a little and shows it, saying, "The body of Christ," and the communicant answers, "Amen," and receives communion. For similar examples see A. P. Martinich, "Sacraments and Speech Acts," *The Heythrop Journal* 16 (1975), 289-303, 405-417.

17. *The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. C. Devlin (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), pp. 17-18.

18. Jacques Derrida, "La Pharmacie de Platon" in his *La Dissémination* (Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1972), p. 105; trans. by Roland A. Champagne, "The Resurrection of *Thoth*, the God of Writing; Jacques Derrida's Arguments for the *machine à écrire*," *Centrum* 2, No. 1 (1974), 5-13, p. 10.

Clocking the Reader in the Long Victorian Novel

Michael Lund

Much modern criticism has tended to emphasize the spatial qualities of literature, the shape each work assumes under analysis, the structure which seems to underlie the total creation. A number of scholars, however, have recently brought attention to the fact that reading is a process through time, that literature is made up of events in sequence.¹ In *The Act of Reading*, Wolfgang Iser approaches the temporal nature of literary experience through the use of the term "the wandering viewpoint"; he argues that "every moment of reading is a dialectic of protension and retention, conveying a future horizon yet to be occupied, along with a past (and continually fading) horizon already filled; the wandering viewpoint carves its passage through both at the same time and leaves them to merge together in its wake. There is no escaping this process, for . . . the text cannot at any one moment be grasped as a whole."²

The Victorian serial novel provides a convenient model for studying the temporal nature of literature because of the way it was published. The original installment reader moved through his fiction in a fixed time frame, usually reading 32 pages once a month for almost two years.³ By studying the written reactions to serialized novels in the nineteenth century it is possible to characterize a historical "wandering viewpoint" as it engaged individual installments of long novels. And, because these readers were repeatedly stopped at certain moments in the novels, it is possible to explore some of the implications of the fact that "the text cannot at any one moment be grasped as a whole." In what follows, I will attempt to measure three specific activities of installment readers as they move through the worlds of their novels: their expansion of certain elements of the text; their contribution to the development of fictional characters; and the involvement of their own concerns in the form of the novels. As these activities go on in time, I will be trying to clock the reader in the long Victorian novel.

Philip Collins has noted, for instance, that the reading habits of George Eliot's original audience may have been shaped by their experience of earlier Victorian serial classics like Dickens' *David Copperfield*. *Middlemarch*, of course, was published in installments—eight half-volumes issued at bi-monthly intervals, with the last three numbers coming out monthly. In Eliot's classic "Study of Provincial Life" Tertius Lydgate is caught in an

unhappy marriage to Rosamond Vincy. As financial difficulties threaten the comfortable lifestyle she has been used to as the daughter of the mayor and a member of one of the town's first families, Rosamond blames her husband, and Lydgate begins to despair at the restrictions his marriage has imposed on him. Collins points out that George Eliot's audience was used to fortuitous deaths in fiction, and that they would have entertained this possibility in the Lydgate-Rosamond dilemma: "Many readers of the serialized *Middlemarch* were waiting for Rosamond to emulate Dora [Copperfield] by dying and thus allowing Lydgate to marry more happily. . . ." ⁴ The installment reader's speculation about the possibility of Rosamond's death would have taken on a special intensity between the appearances of Book VII, "Two Temptations," and Book VIII, "Sunrise and Sunset." In that month between installments the parts reader would have expanded certain elements of the fiction.

Reading Book VII, published in November, 1872, the reader watched Lydgate's situation worsen. Needing one thousand pounds to pay his most pressing debts, Lydgate hopes for sympathy and understanding from the woman he loves; but instead he is saddened to find her turning against him. Although she had seemed before their marriage to embody the Victorian idea of submissive womanhood, he discovers that he "had a growing dread of Rosamond's quiet obstinacy which would not allow any assertion of power to be final . . ." (p. 710).⁵ When appeals to his wealthy uncle and to the banker Bulstrode for money have failed, Lydgate himself alludes to the possibility of death as an escape from his troubles, commenting cynically to Rosamond: "I may get my neck broken, and that may make things easier to you" (p. 755). It is not Lydgate's death, however, but his wife's that the audience would desire in writing a happier ending to this story. In fact, the readers would have been encouraged by George Eliot herself to foresee the possible death of a spouse, since, in Book V (appearing three months earlier, in August, 1872), Casaubon's demise had freed Dorothea Brooke from her limiting marriage. Even when Lydgate later receives the needed loan from Bulstrode, he knows his marital troubles are not over. Telling Farebrother that he may hire an apprentice to help straighten out his professional affairs, he includes

1. See for instance Stanley Fish, "Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics," in *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth Century Literature* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972); and Walter Slatoff, *With Respect to Readers* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1970).

2. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1978), p. 112.

3. The artist's use of this form has been much more carefully studied than the reader's reaction to it. For the former, see John Butt and

Kathleen Tillotson, *Dickens at Work* (London: Methuen, 1957); Edgar F. Harden, *The Emergence of Thackeray's Serial Fiction* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1979); and J. A. Sutherland, *Thackeray at Work* (London: The Athlone Press, 1974).

4. Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), *Studies in English Literature* No. 67, p. 47n.

5. George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, ed. W. J. Harvey (New York: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1965). Subsequent references are to this edition and include pagination in the text.

the telling phrase, "if Rosamond will not mind." The narrator quickly points out, "Poor Lydgate! the 'if Rosamond will not mind,' which had fallen from him involuntarily as part of his thought, was a significant mark of the yoke he bore" (p. 768). At the very end of "Two Temptations" the readers are reminded that Lydgate is surrounded by hostile forces in his public life just as he is opposed by his wife in his private existence. In the concluding dramatic scene of Number VII Lydgate finds himself trapped into making a public gesture of support for Bulstrode which will be interpreted as an admission of his debt to the banker, now suspected of murdering Raffles, the man who knows Bulstrode's past. Lydgate's last act in Book VII, then, is "unspeakably bitter to him" (p. 783), as it underscores his increasingly desperate situation.

If George Eliot's original audience hoped, as they were reading Book VII, that Lydgate could free himself from personal and professional troubles, how much more they must have looked forward after this scene to his possible rescue in Book VIII, the concluding installment of the entire novel.⁶ Unlike modern readers, however, who read *Middlemarch* in a single-volume edition, the installment reader had an enforced wait for any resolution of the hero's plight. Book VIII did not come out until December, 1872, a full 30 days after the reader watched a saddened Lydgate escort Bulstrode from the town meeting. Thus, the installment reader had more time in the novel's original format than the modern reader to expand an element of the text—Lydgate's desire for freedom. The Victorian reader took time to link Lydgate's case to similar situations earlier in the novel and to similar incidents in other novels familiar to most readers of the genre. Of course, to Eliot's credit, Book VIII in the end disappoints such expectations, as Lydgate learns he must accept "his narrowed lot with sad resignation. He had chosen this fragile creature [Rosamond], and had taken the burthen of her life upon his arms. He must walk as he could, carrying the burthen pitifully" (p. 858). But Lydgate's dream of succor had taken on extra life in the minds of George Eliot's original readers as they waited between installments. As Wolfgang Iser observes, "The serial story, then, results in a special kind of reading . . . The reader is forced by the pauses imposed on him to imagine more than he could have if his reading were continuous . . ." (p. 192).

The installment reader is not only given certain fixed opportunities to expand elements of the text in his temporal reading experience, he also contributes in specific ways to the development of fictional character in the long Victorian novel. One of the favorite forms of nineteenth-century fiction is the *Bildungsroman*, the novel of initia-

tion in which a protagonist moves from the rural innocence of a provincial childhood to the larger, more diverse society of the city (usually London) in search of a vocation, a philosophy, and a family.⁷ *David Copperfield* has been termed the first successful English *Bildungsroman* because it presents convincingly the growth of its central character. W. J. Harvey, however, has made a keen observation about our perception of a character's development in fiction: "One of the obviously interesting things about a protagonist is the process of change and growth (or decay) which he undergoes during the course of a novel. . . . [W]hat we have here in the novel is a parallel situation in real life when we meet a friend we haven't seen for years and say simply, 'My God, how he's changed!,' without bothering to push the question further. But sometimes we are also aware of a change in ourselves as complicating our recognition of change in others."⁸

This idea, that the reader of fiction "is much less a fixity and much more a variable"⁹ than is ordinarily assumed, becomes particularly important in the case of a typical serial novel; for here the novel's reading time is nearly two years. For twenty months the reader listens as Copperfield pursues the famous question with which his own history begins, "Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show." During the same time, the reader of Dickens' most autobiographical novel goes through a number of significant events in his own life; and the resulting sense of change and growth is going to affect his response to and understanding of Copperfield's growth.

One event in the reader's world can serve as an example of how time's passing outside the novel affects the sense of time's passing within the novel: the purchase of new issues of the novel itself. Once a month, with remarkable regularity, the newest part of *Copperfield* appeared in the London bookstalls, and the addicted serial novel reader bought his latest installment of the adventures of some of his favorite characters. The regular publication of the novel's separate parts becomes a kind of clock ticking in the reader's world, marking his own passage through life. Although he might not think of it in precisely these terms, he would know that he had left home for school, gotten married, become a parent "so many parts ago." When there is no clock ticking to register the growth of Copperfield as protagonist in the *Bildungsroman*, there is a clock ticking which measures the reader's growing older; relativistically, that is, there is always a sense of change and movement in the literary experience. The reader becomes aware that Copperfield has had a life in his imagination for a long time, that

6. Dorothea's intention to "find out the truth and clear [Lydgate]" (p. 785) is announced on the last page of the Book and further inspires the reader to hope for Lydgate's rescue, one way or another.

7. See Jerome Buckley, *Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1974).

8. W. J. Harvey, *Character of the Novel* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1965), p. 113.

9. Harvey, p. 110.

Dickens' hero has a felt history, a past underscored by the occurrence of both fictional and real events. If the reader has lived through months of life, and Copperfield has been with him all that time, then Copperfield seems to have lived that long as well, to have evolved into the character he is now.

The reader's sense of David Copperfield as a developing character in a traditional *bildungsroman*, then, is enhanced by the intermixing of the reader's world and the fictional world. Copperfield's development may even be further emphasized in its relationship to the evolution of fictional characters in other novels. William Makepeace Thackeray, for instance, was publishing a *bildungsroman* of his own (*Pendennis*) at the same time Dickens was putting out the parts of *Copperfield*. One might speculate that the growth of Arthur Pendennis as a hero is also a factor in the reader's response to Copperfield's development. Certainly the creator of each protagonist was affected in the conception of his hero by the actions of the other character. Thackeray, who began his 24-part serialization of *Pendennis* in November, 1848, was clearly influenced by the appearance (and immediate success) of Dickens' novel, the first number of which went on sale on the first of May, 1849. Thackeray decided in June, 1849, to enliven his novel by sending its protagonist into an exciting London literary scene in hopes of matching *Copperfield's* appeal.¹⁰ Although Dickens, on the other hand, did not admit to being influenced by Thackeray, he was certainly aware of what his chief rival—the author of the successful and well-reviewed *Vanity Fair*—was doing at the same time.¹¹

The fact that by 1849 Thackeray and Dickens were the two major authors competing for the attention of middle-class audiences lends support to the probability that *Copperfield* and *Pendennis* were being read simultaneously by many readers and that responses to the two emerging *bildungsroman* protagonists overlapped each other. Reviewers invariably linked the two novels in the manner of David Masson's influential "*Pendennis and Copperfield: Thackeray and Dickens*," which appeared in the *North British Review* (May, 1851). And the novels themselves encouraged readers to imagine both worlds of fiction at the same time: between two pages of *Pendennis's* Number 6, for instance, appears an announcement of the first number of *Copperfield*, "to go on sale" May 1. Similarly, when the first number by Dickens does appear, its advertising section includes a reminder of the latest work by Thackeray, "Now Publishing in Monthly Numbers." In other words, in clocking the reader in a long Victorian novel, we must remember that figures from different fictional worlds are evolving in the installment reader's consciousness side by side. The reader may measure the growth of one protagonist by his

awareness of the simultaneous development of another.

Having considered the effects of installment form on the reader's expansion of certain elements of the text, and on his contribution to the development of fictional character, let me now turn to my last quality of serial reading—the reader's projection of himself in the act of reading. In addition to the stages of the individual's personal life, the Victorian age's sense of itself as a historical period also figures as a force in the experience of an installment novel. In considering this aspect of nineteenth-century literary experience, I wish to focus on Thackeray's *The Newcomes*, a novel much more appealing to his age than to our own. We can understand a bit more why the Victorian reader was so deeply engaged by this novel when we consider some of the effects of its original serial form.

The dominant action of Thackeray's brilliant satire on Victorian life is its many meetings and partings. On their separate paths toward London's elite guest lists, the characters of the novel—especially Colonel Newcome, his son Clive, and his beautiful niece Ethel—gather and then break apart to reform on other social occasions. That none of these small units holds together as a firm basis for any of the character's lives is a reflection of the entire age's sense of crumbling social ties. In his ongoing experience of a two-year reading event, Thackeray's reader is also involved in meetings and partings: he is always coming closer to particular people of the fictional world in an individual number, and then becoming separated from the characters and the author of the novel at the conclusion of that part. The effect of alternately being reacquainted with fictional personages and then being forced to leave them behind for another thirty days is that the reader is touched by the same melancholy sadness which affects many of the characters in *The Newcomes*. That is, the separation of reader from author and fictional world which ends each monthly installment in the serial novel is tinged by the entire age's sense of its lost community relationships. The sentimental desire to return to the world of the fiction and to unify all its characters is a fundamental impulse for the nineteenth-century parts reader, as both Thackeray and Dickens learned from those who wrote in offering advice about how their novels should end. The Victorians' appreciation of sentimental deaths and partings is related to the long-term but regularly interrupted commitment to their fictional worlds required by the temporal form of serial publication. It is not surprising that *The Newcomes's* final scene of separation (the Colonel's deathbed) was so wrenching for the original audience—they had suffered twenty-two partings already, and knew this one to be more final than any, reminding them once more of the Victorian period's sense of "cosmic isolation."¹²

10. Gordon N. Ray, *Thackeray: The Age of Wisdom* (New York: The McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1958), p. 112.

11. Sylvere Monod, *Dickens the Novelist* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1968), p. 276: "... the two writers must have been by then [1848] fully conscious of their relative situation."

12. Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1957), p. 85, uses this phrase to characterize this aspect of the nineteenth-century worldview. I develop this point further in "Reading Serially Published Novels: Old Stories in Thackeray's *The Newcomes*," forthcoming in *Philological Quarterly*.

When we clock the reader in the long Victorian novel, then, we find that he carried the world of the fiction into his own real world, and thereby made a commitment to it. As the novel progressed in installments, so did the reader's own life; the two formed a connection unlike that shared by different readers in different eras. The serial novel added to the reader's life, but the reader too added to the world of the fiction. Sometimes he even transferred change and growth in his own life into a sense of development in a fictional character. The monthly appearance of a new issue of a Thackeray novel — or one by Dickens, or a half-volume by George Eliot — meant two things for its readers: continued life for the characters of

that world (Ethel and Clive Newcome, David Copperfield, Dorothea Brooke); and it meant continued life for the readers. But Victorians were aware of the other end of the time continuum too — the element of separation inherent in the serial novel form. The conclusions of the monthly numbers became for the readers reminders of primary, melancholy facts of the Victorian world-view — parting, isolation, and death. For the nineteenth-century serial novel reader, trying to keep his world whole, the ideal ending of one novel could only be the beginning of another.

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Symbolic Representation and The Means of Revolution in *Daniel Deronda*

Peter Dale

Thanks to the work of several hands, we can say with some assurance that George Eliot is at least as much a symbolic novelist as she is a realist.¹ I plan in this paper to address myself not to the exposition of any particular symbolic system in the novels, but to the more general — and less discussed — question of what Eliot considered to be the philosophical status of symbols. My text is her last and most symbolically self-conscious novel, *Daniel Deronda*, and my problem, to try to answer the question that book is so persistently asking and which comes down to one form or another of Daniel's disarmingly casual, "I wonder whether one oftener learns to love real objects through their representations or the representations through real objects."²

I

Much of what follows rests on a distinction, a crucial distinction, in the way we approach the interpretation of symbolic forms. This distinction, which has been suggested to me by a number of writers,³ is between a scientific or *positivist* concept of symbolization and what one may, for want of a better term, call a *phenomenological* one.⁴ Let me briefly define the difference.

In his conception of the symbol, as in all things, the positivist's final point of reference is the reality of the

natural world, the objective world as in itself it really is, apart from the mediating human consciousness. The question he insists on asking about the symbolic representation — whether that representation be a word, proposition, a theory, or an entire world view — is does it correspond to a something represented, a real substance or a real relationship. For the positivistically inclined, the symbol is merely a reflection of something far more fundamental, far worthier of possession, that one calls the true order. His constant movement of thought is towards the penetration of the symbol in order to embrace the reality that is supposed to underlie it.

The positivist attitude, which I believe one may fairly say dominated the Anglo-American philosophical tradition from the mid-nineteenth century down through the first thirty years of this century, may be appropriately illustrated here by the response of one of its great Victorian representatives, G. H. Lewes, to its favorite *bête noire*, Hegel:

Starting from the admission that Philosophy is ideal construction formed out of symbols which represent, or are intended to represent, the real order in [experience], and can only be true when these symbols are the equivalents of their significates, we must reject Hegel's Method, which proceeds

philosophy running from Hume to Wittgenstein of which Comte's work is but a part (that tradition is best described by Leszek Kolakowski in *The Alienation of Reason: a History of Positivist Thought*, trans. N. Guterman [Garden City: Doubleday, 1968]). Similarly, by phenomenology I do not mean simply the school of Edmund Husserl, but positions that may reasonably be associated with his, such as Heidegger's or even, as we shall later see, Cassirer's. I would also, following Pierre Thévenaz (*What Is Phenomenology? and Other Essays* [Chicago: Quadrangle, 1962]), associate the phenomenologist position with late nineteenth-century Anglo-American Pragmatism.

1. E. g., Gillian Beer, U.C. Knoepflemacher, George Levine, Joseph Wiesenfarth, and, now most notably, Felicia Bonaparte.
2. *Daniel Deronda* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), p. 476. Future references to this edition will be in parentheses in the text.
3. Notably, Paul Ricoeur in *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. D. Savage (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1970), bk I, ch 2; bk 3, ch 4. Also important has been Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, especially vol III, part III.
4. By positivism, it should be clear, I do not mean simply the school of Auguste Comte. Rather I mean a far more general tradition in

on a reversal of this relation between Thought and [experience] and declares Thought to be prior to nature. . . .

What I object to is, that Hegel having got his symbol, relies on it, without reference to the [experience] originally symbolised.

... [Hegel's] Method is not the Method of Search which has heretofore discovered such truths as we have. At best it is but a Method of codification. . . .⁵

What I am calling the phenomenological attitude stands in sharp opposition to the realist assumptions underlying Lewes's remarks. It goes back in one way and another to Kant's criticism of consciousness and denies not reality, but the possibility of the mind's ever knowing reality. For the phenomenologist the issue cannot be how the symbolic representation relates to a thing represented, for the thing represented can never be known. Rather, the world of reality is placed to one side (bracketed, as Husserl says),⁶ and the issue becomes the mind's autonomous activity of structuring in itself and the influence of that structuring on others. My illustrative text here comes from a man whom I take to be one of the forerunners of modern phenomenology, the German Hans Vaihinger whose *Philosophy of "As If"* was begun at almost the same time Lewes wrote the observations on Hegel and symbolization just quoted:

... [M] any thought-processes and thought-constructs appear to be consciously false assumptions, which... contradict reality... , but which are intentionally thus formed in order to overcome difficulties of thought. . . . These artificial thought-constructs are called Scientific Fictions, and distinguished as conscious creations by their "As if" character.

The "As if" world, which is formed in this manner, the world of the "unreal" is just as important as the world of the so-called real. . . ; indeed it is far more important for ethics. . . . This. . . ethical world of "As if," the world of the unreal, becomes finally for us a world of values which, particularly in the form of religion, must be sharply distinguished in our mind from the world of becoming.⁷

What Vaihinger is calling fictional thought-constructs are clearly what Lewes complains of as symbolic "codifications." Yet for Vaihinger these thought-constructs, fic-

tive though they be, have a value in themselves, which he here and throughout his book identifies as the means by which, in absence of adequate information, the mind copes with an otherwise baffling experience of reality.

In her work Eliot is always self-consciously examining what she comes to call, in a favorite metaphor, the "web" of symbolic representation, through which men and women interpret or order their experience. This web may be relatively personal, as in Adam Bede's image of Hetty as ideal mate; or it may be more public, as in the ideal of a Christian community that Savonarola seeks to impose on Florence.⁸ Up to and to a degree including the writing of *Middlemarch*, the bias of her attitude towards the symbolic representation is, it seems to me, finally positivistic in the sense that, like Lewes, she considers that the symbol must constantly be tested against reality. Nothing is more typical of her characters' development than the discovery that their symbolic interpretation of themselves, of those close to them, or of society in general is mistaken, is in some way illusory. Indeed, one may say, that the basis of Eliot's tragic vision of life, so prominent in the novels before *Deronda* (*Silas Marner* excepted), is the experience of embracing illusion for reality and all the misery that follows on that experience. This is the fate—with greater or lesser severity—of virtually all her great protagonists—Adam, Maggie, Savonarola, Felix, Lydgate, Dorothea, and, as we shall see, Gwendolyn—all are "pilgrims," in the words of *Felix Holt*, to whom it is "whispered" that their "holy places are a delusion."⁹

With *Middlemarch* there is a perceptible shifting of her outlook. The process of writing the book seems to me, among other things, a process of intellectual release from the positivist model. I have not space enough to describe that process in any detail. It must suffice to say that it is epitomized by the fall of Lydgate, the very exemplar of scientific method, whose insistence that the symbolic constructions of the imagination be constantly tested against reality reproduces virtually verbatim Lewes' own position, and the rise of Ladislav, a conspicuous master of symbolic representation who just as conspicuously refuses to apply the test of reality to the symbols he produces or believes in.¹⁰ With *Deronda* comes the consolidation of the intellectual ground gained in *Middlemarch*, the presentation with almost allegorical clar-

5. *Problems of Life and Mind, First Series: The Foundation of a Creed* (London: Trübner, 1875), II, 523, 534, 535.

6. *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W. R. B. Gibson (New York: Macmillan, 1931), pp. 110-111.

7. *The Philosophy of "As if": A System of the Theoretical, Practical and Religious Fictions of Mankind*, trans. C. K. Ogden (London: Kegan Paul, 1924), pp. xlvi-xlvii (see also pp. 78-90). Eliot clearly did not know Vaihinger's work. She may, however, have known F. A. Lange's *History of Materialism* (1866), which Vaihinger lists as a major forerunner of the philosophy of "as if." She almost certainly did know the work of G. T. Fechner and Charles Renouvier (See Wm. Baker, *The George Eliot - George Henry Lewes Library* [New York and London: Garland, 1977], pp. 68, 169). Fechner and Renouvier were the principal forerunners of Pragmatism, and Pragmatism, as Vaihinger tells us (p. viii), "prepared the ground" for his own philosophy.

8. By the time she comes to *Romola*, Eliot has, beyond question, begun to think of symbolic representation as one of the central problems of life. It is, she says in that book, the "force of . . . symbols by which our active life is knit together so as to make an inexorable external identity for us. . . ." (*Romola* [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980], p. 391).

9. *Felix Holt* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), p. 555.

10. Lydgate's concept of symbolization is found in his remarks on scientific imagination in Chapter 16. These exactly reproduce Lewes' views as expressed, e.g., in the 1867 "Prolegomena" to his *History of Philosophy*, sections II and III. For Ladislav's lack of concern with verifying his symbolic constructs, see Eliot's discussion of his "off-hand treatment of symbolism" in Chapter 22 and the remarks on p. 12 below regarding his use of language.

ity of the mind's movement towards and final acceptance of a new concept of symbolization.

II

"[T]here are persons," Eliot writes in *Deronda*, "whose yearnings... continually take the form of images..." (527). The particular reference is to Mordecai, but the observation applies far more generally. Everyone in the novel sees both the world outside and the self within not directly but through the medium of the *image*. Gwendolyn sees herself as the "image" of St. Cecilia (55,294), of Hermoine (90), of the goddess of fortune (39); others see her as the image of Lamia (41) or as a Vandyke painting (718). Daniel pursues the "image" of his unknown parents, which Eliot says works in him with the "force of fact" (206). For Mordecai he is the "image" of the "second soul" who will take on his messianic mission (530). For Mirah he is the "image" of a "divinely-sent messenger" (522) while she for him is the "beloved type" of his soul (813), and so on. The text contains no more important word or family of words than this constantly recurring one of "image" and its synonyms: shape, form, symbol, type, representation. Nowhere previously in Eliot does the role of the symbolic representation take on such prominent proportions. Nowhere is it more explicitly recognized that the mind cannot perceive or comprehend existence except through the images of its own yearning.

Throughout the novel Eliot constantly treats or interprets these images in two quite different ways. The difference follows closely the positivist/phenomenological distinction I have outlined above, and is, I am convinced, quite consciously orchestrated. When she is dealing with Gwendolyn, the image/symbol is almost always treated as illusion or disguise. We are constantly confronted with the failure of the image to represent what is actually there in Gwendolyn or in the world as Gwendolyn sees it, which is to say that the axis of Eliot's interest here (and ours) lies squarely along the positivist line, the line indicated by Lewes, from representation to thing represented (or not represented).

Here, for example, is how we begin with Gwendolyn;

...[H]appening to be seated sideways before the long strip of mirror... she turned to look at herself, leaning her elbow on the back of the chair in an attitude that might have been chosen for her portrait... She had a *naïve* delight in her fortunate self, which any but the harshest saintliness will have some indulgence for in a girl who had every day seen a pleasant reflection of that self in her friends' flattery as well as in the looking-glass. And even in this beginning of her troubles, while for lack of anything else to do she sat gazing at her image in the growing light, her face gathered a complacency gradual as the cheerfulness of the morning... How could she believe in sorrow? (46-47)

The mirror throws back to Gwendolyn an image which is, in fact, constructed in her own mind, the image of the "fortunate self," the self that is immune from sorrow. In

such a passage as this we are invited at virtually every phrase to contemplate the tragic fragility of the image, its inevitable confrontation with the reality it seeks to mask. That confrontation begins in earnest the day after Gwendolyn's marriage:

She was really getting somewhat febrile in her excitement... Was it... the almost incredible fulfillment about to be given to her girlish dreams of being "somebody"... [Or] was it some dim forecast, the insistent penetration of suppressed experience, mixing the expectation of a triumph with the dread of a crisis? (404)

Of course, it is the latter, for in a few moments she will realize that she is hopelessly entrapped in a life of sorrow. The "suppressed experience" (i.e., the reality), not only of the world outside her, but of her own inner nature as well, penetrates and destroys the image of the fortunate self, and when in her terror she looks in the mirror, she sees nothing; the saving image has gone forever. In these two passages we have, in effect, an epitome not only of Gwendolyn's tragedy, but also of what I am calling the positivist aspect of Eliot's approach to the problem of symbolic representation.

When we turn from Gwendolyn to the principal Jewish characters, Mordecai and Mirah, we find a radically different approach to the interpretation of the image. With these two, who are actually male and female aspects of a single entity, Eliot is never seriously interested in the correspondence or lack of it between the images they project and what those images are meant to represent in reality. Her (and our own) interest is focussed, rather, on the *influence* of those images, on their power to create belief and commitment in another. When we first enter into Mordecai's consciousness we find that he, like Gwendolyn, is governed by an "image" of the other, the "second" self, created by the mind to "help out the insufficient first" (530). That image, we are told, is the focal point of the "passionate current of an ideal life straining to embody itself" (531). What Mordecai is seeking is someone who will conform to his "coercive type" and the messianic mission that type or image involves. That someone, of course, is Daniel.

Deronda had that sort of resemblance to the preconceived type which a finely individual bust or portrait has to the more generalised copy left in our minds after a long interval... And now, his face met Mordecai's inward gaze as if it had always belonged to the awaited friend, raying out, moreover, some of that influence which belongs to the breathing flesh... [T]he ever-recurrent vision had the force of an outward call to disregard counter-evidence, and keep expectation awake... [Daniel] was seen... painted on that golden sky which was the double blessed symbol of advancing day and of approaching rest. (536-537)

What is striking about the treatment of the image here is

the way it effectively annihilates the reality which is Daniel. The sort of resemblance Daniel bears to the image is not as a real object to its symbol, but as one symbol (a bust or portrait) to another (the preconceived type). His face ceases to be his own and becomes to Mordecai's vision "as if" it were the face of the other. Finally, all reality-oriented qualifiers—"sort of," "as if"—are dropped and the metaphoric transmutation of Daniel becomes complete. He is seen no longer "as if" but actually "painted" on the symbolic background.

In speaking earlier of the dramatic tension created by Eliot in her treatment of the images associated with our introduction to Gwendolyn, I said we are immediately made to anticipate the destructive collision of image and reality. Here, as throughout the treatment of Mordecai, the tension is of another sort altogether. The question is not whether Mordecai's image of the second self will conform with reality but whether it will have the power, the influence to compel another, that is, Daniel, into conformity with itself. From this point on (we are virtually at the center of the novel) the primary movement of the plot resides on the image's call to Daniel, and the only question that concerns us is whether he will respond to that call, whether he will embrace the image *as if* it were real. This way of dealing with the image not as a sign for something else, but as a simple concentration of spiritual energy that exerts a force on another consciousness is what I am calling Eliot's phenomenological approach to the problem of symbolic representation.

It will not be overlooked that the distinction I am drawing between the two interpretations of the image or symbol that I find in *Deronda* closely parallels the much discussed (and lamented) division between the English and Jewish "halves" of the novel. Like many, I find a substantial discontinuity between the world of Gwendolyn and that of Mordecai. I see that discontinuity, however, as the result of nothing so much as the opposing concepts of symbolization I have just outlined, and would argue that it is an inevitable consequence of Eliot's need at this point in her career to articulate and resolve a fundamental opposition, not only in her own thought but in contemporary philosophical controversy, which her own thought always reflects. She dramatically establishes the opposition, Gwendolyn/Mordecai, works out its consequences, and bases her plot on the process of resolution or choice. The great agent of choice is Daniel himself. He moves between commitment to Gwendolyn and commitment to the brother-sister entity, Mordecai-Mirah, and the need to choose one or the other is constantly emphasized by Eliot:

... on the one side the grasp of Mordecai's dying hand... with all the ideals and prospects it aroused; on the other this fair creature in silk and gems, with her hidden wound and self-dread... (625)

The final choice, of course, is for the way of Mordecai,

11. See especially bk 6, ch 12.

which in the terms I am pursuing is a choice not simply of a mission, but of a concept of the image upon which that mission must necessarily rest.

It is you [says Daniel to Mordecai] who have given shape to... an inherited yearning... I have always longed for some ideal task... some social captainship... You have raised the image of such a task for me... (819-820)

Eliot's language here, as throughout, indicates the focus of her concern. The choice, ultimately, is not for a man or a belief but for a "shape," for an "image" that expresses not a thing but a yearning.

III

What are we to say of the wider significance of this dialectic on the symbol? What has brought it about, and where is it leading? The answer to these questions, I believe, has ultimately to do with Eliot's concept of politics in the more general or theoretical sense of that word. That is, her concern with the meaning of the images through which we interpret experience cannot be separated from her desire for a new polity, a reformed society to take the place of the actual society she obviously considers is disintegrating around her, falling away as she puts it, from its "organic center" of community (593-595). Daniel's final purpose, inherited from Mordecai is "to bind [his] race together" in spiritual and social unity, to establish the New Jerusalem. This has been *mutatis mutandis*, the purpose of all Eliot's spiritual heroes from Dinah Morris and Maggie Tulliver down to Dorothea Brooke and Will Ladislaw. But now more than ever before the political issue is directly, self-consciously linked to the question of symbolic representation. The possibility of reform is made to depend upon the way one interprets or uses the symbol.

We tend to think of this perception of a necessary connection between one's understanding of symbolic representation and one's politics as particularly modern. In fact, it was at the center of the most widely read philosophical text of the Victorian period, Mill's *System of Logic*. Mill, as he tells us very clearly, wrote this book, which is primarily about the symbolic form in which we place our thought, with the end in view of establishing a philosophical basis for the political reform of society.¹¹ The forms of social organization should, like the most basic forms of thought and language, rest ultimately on the order of nature. I read *Deronda* as a book very much in the tradition of Mill's *Logic* in the special sense that it is profoundly conscious of the relation between symbolic form and political reform. That consciousness, however, is turned in a direction radically different from Mill's, whose approach is uncompromisingly positivist or reality-oriented.

For Mill the structure of beliefs upon which the social organism rests is simply an expanded symbol, which, like all symbols, ought to be a generalization from observed

reality and referable back to that reality. Any structure of social belief that does not meet this test is a myth that science must deconstruct. Eliot for most of her career assumed the validity of this positivist political program.¹² In *Deronda*, however, there is a clear change of view. The phenomenological interpretation of the symbol leads directly to the position that the expanded symbol, which is the structure of social beliefs or the myth, is important not for its truth, its relation to reality, but for its power to bind the race together, to make people behave *as if* it were true. Thus Mordecai's image of society, we are told, rests not on "strictly measuring science" but on "that passionate belief that determines the consequences it believes in," and that "in relation to human motives and actions . . . has a fuller efficacy" than scientifically safe generalizations. For the human intellect, Eliot continues, is inherently prone to error and being so may well turn to the "passionate vision" that produces order as the "artist seizes combinations" (572). As the last phrase suggests, politics and the process of social reform in *Deronda* are essentially the art of the effective fiction, which is another way of saying they rest on the image that influences or inspires rather than reproduces what is.

What is compelling Eliot in this direction is partly the skepticism I have just noticed, the belief that the mind simply cannot achieve the sort of understanding of reality the positivist expects of it. But it is something else as well, something far more important. She needed to believe in the power of human consciousness to control history, and specifically to move society towards an ever more perfect state of unity. "While there is warmth enough in the sun to feed an energetic life," she writes, "there will still be men to feel, 'I am lord of this moment's change, and will charge it with my soul'" (532). That feeling of power, she clearly wants to be able to say, is more than an illusion. The inevitable tendency of positivism, insofar as it is a political program, is to erode its adherents' ability to believe in the power of consciousness to transcend the conditions into which it is born, and this is a profoundly anti-revolutionary doctrine.¹³ The clear perception of this tendency was slow developing in the nineteenth century. Mill, for example, never seems to have attained it. Eliot, after tracing the defeat of one would-be world-reformer after another through the "experiments in life" she called her novels, came to understand it all too well. What she needed was a strategy that would enable her to circumvent the social and political implications of positivism without taking her back to the metaphysical

idealism that the former had so thoroughly discredited. An increasing focus on the meaning of the symbolic process was her answer to this need. By finally adopting the phenomenological interpretation of the symbol, she opened the way for a concept of human motivation that transcends the line of physical cause and effect governing positivist thought and restores to the consciousness its autonomous power of structuring the world in which it wishes to live. As Ernst Cassirer would put it: by moving beyond the "primitive" notion of "complete equivalence of word and thing, of 'signifier' and 'signified,'" Eliot has discovered the "characteristic force of the logos," the "sphere of efficacy" in which the symbol moves the world.¹⁴

IV

Having expanded Eliot's concept of symbolic representation in *Deronda* to its widest implication, the symbolic representation as the myth (or polity) that binds the race together, let me finally, following the hint of Cassirer's "logos," reduce it to its most basic expression, the symbolic representation as a linguistic form.

In the epigraph to Chapter 29 Eliot quotes Walt Whitman: "Surely whoever speaks to me in the right voice, him or her I shall follow. . . ." If one considers the precise means by which Mordecai exerts his influence on Daniel and others, one finds that Eliot repeatedly emphasizes the *voice*, the act of speech: "Deronda felt a new chord sounding in his speech: it was rather imperious than appealing—had. . . a conscious power. . ." (561). This power of language, Daniel himself takes on when the soul of Mordecai has become part of himself: "[Daniel's] words were like the touch of a miraculous hand to Gwendolyn. Mingled emotion streamed through her frame with a strength that seemed the beginning of a new existence. . ." (840).

The power of voice or language is, in fact, the single most prominent characteristic linking together all Eliot's great reform figures from Edgar Tryan on. Savonarola's effect as a preacher, for example, lies specifically in his language: "not in saying new things, but in saying things with a certain power that moves the hearers." Ladislav's vocation as political reformer is directly associated with his remarkable rhetorical ability: "You have a way of putting things," says Brooke, "I want that sort of thing—not ideas, you know, but a way of putting them. . ." and so on.¹⁵ Of all the symbolic forms that move society towards conformity with the "image of the

12. There is always a holding back from unqualified commitment to this program, such as we see in Mill or Lewes, but there is, nonetheless, the clear acceptance of the essential principle that the "teaching of positive truth is the grand means of expelling error," "the only hope of extending man's sources of knowledge and happiness" (*Essays*, ed. T. Pinney, New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1963) pp. 29, 28. This article of political faith seems to me to remain with Eliot until *Middlemarch* in which positive science in the figure of Lydgate is seen to be absolutely impotent in bringing about the "binding theory" that society is so much in need of.

13. A point which has been made by many and perhaps no where more exhaustively than by Talcott Parsons in *The Structure of Social Ac-*

tion. The most important contemporary expression of this tendency as far as Eliot was concerned would have been Herbert Spencer's *Study of Sociology*, which began coming out in periodical form in 1872, and which George Eliot would beyond question have read carefully.

14. *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1955), II, 25-26.

15. *Romola*, ed. cit. p. 224; *Middlemarch* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), p. 500. Similar emphasis on power of voice or verbal expression is associated with Dinah Morris and Felix Holt, two other conspicuous reform figures.

Supreme Unity" (802), language is for Eliot the most fundamental and the most universally effective.

At the heart of this effective language is one crucial process, the formation of metaphor. Mordecai, as we have seen, *thinks* metaphorically—his "mind wrought . . . constantly in images" (530). At its most impressive his force of language rests conspicuously on the structure of metaphor, as for example when he is preaching his doctrine of progress at the "Hand and Banner": "I believe in a growth, a passage, a new unfolding of life whereof the seed is more perfect, more charged with the elements that are pregnant with diviner form" (585). Daniel, likewise, comes to be a master of metaphorical expression, as one sees notably in his final efforts to console and in some way inspire Gwendolyn. Feeling the "weight of anxiety on all his words," he unconsciously reproduces the key metaphor of Mordecai's belief: ". . . there will be newly-opening needs—continually coming to carry you on from day to day. You will find your life growing like a plant" (839). Language is, in general, for Eliot the most effective, the most influential of symbolic representations, and within language the very focal point of power, the key to its "miraculous" touch, is the metaphor.¹⁶

The act of metaphor is, in fact, the quintessential phenomenological act, the explicit evasion of reality in favor of a fictional structure.¹⁷ Early in her career Eliot was distinctly puzzled by this mysterious process. Why does "intelligence so rarely [show] itself in speech without metaphor," she wonders in *The Mill on the Floss*; why can we "so seldom declare what a thing is, except by saying it is something else?"¹⁸ By the time she comes to *Deronda* she knows the answer. Metaphor is the intelligence's primary means of self-defense, its assertion at once of its autonomy from the natural world and of its power of growth and change. We do not say what a thing

is except by saying that it is something else because the mind refuses imprisonment by the thing itself.

Having developed Eliot's concept of the symbolic form to this point, I find it difficult to avoid comparison with the great German philosopher who was beginning his career just as she was ending hers. Shortly before the publication of *Deronda*, Friedrich Nietzsche wrote the following:

The different languages placed side by side show that with words truth . . . matters little. . . . The "Thing-in-itself" (it is just this which would be the pure ineffective truth) is also quite incomprehensible to the creator of language and not worth making any great endeavor to obtain. . . . [We] believe we know something about . . . things themselves, and yet we only possess metaphors of the things, these metaphors do not in the least correspond to the original essentials. . . . What therefore is truth? A mobile army of metaphors. . . . in short a sum of human relations which became poetically and rhetorically intensified, metamorphosed, adorned, and after long usage seems to a nation fixed, canonic, and binding. . . .¹⁹

There seems to me scarcely a better way of summarizing the significance of what Eliot is doing in this last novel. The German's tone is different; it is far more cynical, far more pessimistic; but the spirit, the definitively *modern* spirit, is altogether congruent with what is going on in *Deronda*. In both cases the break with nineteenth-century positivism is complete. One has entered upon a new intellectual world in which ultimate power resides in the sign, and the thing signified, so crucial to the positivist, has become, as Nietzsche says, a "pure ineffective truth."

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16. Eliot's preoccupation with metaphor, still not adequately explored, has been brought out by several critics, e.g. J. K. Gezari ("The Metaphorical Imagination of George Eliot," *ELH*, 45); John Holloway ("George Eliot" in *The Victorian Sage*); Mark Schorer ("The Structure of the Novel: Method, Metaphor and Mind" in *Middlemarch: Critical Approaches to the Novel*, ed. B. Hardy). For the concept of metaphor as the focal point of intellectual and, specifically, political advance, Eliot is beyond question indebted to Max Müller whose *Lectures on the Science of Language* she greatly admired. Metaphor, Müller argues, is the basis of myth and as such has a crucial effect on the development of society. "Metaphor is one of the most powerful engines in the construction of human speech." "No advance was possible in the intellectual life of man without metaphor." (*Lectures on the Science of Language* [London:

Longmans, 1885], II, 385, 387; see the entire lecture [VIII] for a discussion of the relation between metaphor and myth.) Müller's (and Eliot's) position is worth comparing to modern theories of the role of metaphor in political life, e.g., D. A. Schön "Generative Metaphor: a Perspective on Problem-Setting in Social Policy" in *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. A. Ortony (London, New York, and Melbourne: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979).

17. Cf. Paul Ricouer, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multidisciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, trans. R. Czerny (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1977), pp 247-256.

18. *The Mill on the Floss* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), p. 209.

19. "On Truth and Falsity in their Ultramoral Sense," trans. M. A. Mügge, *Complete Works*, ed. O. Levy (London and Edinburgh: Foulis, 1911), pp. 178-180.

Recent German Studies of Victorian Literature: 1979¹

Werner Bies

German publications of 1979 deal with a few neglected fields of Victorian literature; they are set on its periphery rather than in its center. Victorian poetry is not represented in the year's monographs and the major novelists (Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot), always popular with the German scholar, have made room for Disraeli, the early Victorian sea novel, and nineteenth-century novels on the "Williamite Wars." Besides, there remains a considerable interest in Victorian theory of literature.

Matthias Buschkühl—*Die Irische, Schottische und Römische Frage. Disraeli's Schlüsselroman 'Lothair' (1870)*. Diss. Hamburg 1979. Hamburg: privately printed, 1979. Pp. 294—presents *Lothair* as a key to the historical background of the time (not the other way round, cf. espec. p. 16), as a topical novel discussing the Irish, Scottish, and Roman Questions. The novel is read as a mere social and political document and the learned study is marred by a tendency to precipitous identifications, e.g. "Lothair, the eponymous hero, is John Patrick Stuart 3rd Marquis of Bute (1847-1900)," p. 20 (my italics).

Joachim Möller—*Frühviktorianische Seeromane. Der 'midshipman' als Held; oder, Ein britischer Traum*. Beiträge zur Anglistik, 4. Grossen-Linden: Hoffmann, 1979. Pp. 301—describes the contemporary English, American, and German reception of the early Victorian sea novel (Frederick Marryat, Michael Scott, Frederick Chamier, William Nugent Glascock, Edward Howard, James Scott, Edward John Trelawny, Basil Hall, Matthew Henry Barker, James Hannay) and draws up a typology of the genre (speaking names, handsome exterior, winning manners, honesty, and generosity of the midshipmen-heroes, beauty of the ship, praise of the Royal Navy, social ascent of the protagonists, moral instruction and picaresque elements of the novel). In his chapter "Seeroman und Britischer Chauvinismus" (pp. 206-31), Möller proves that the sea novel corresponds to the expectations of a chauvinistic bourgeois reading public.

Egbert Jantzen—*Die Darstellung der "Williamite Wars" im anglo-irischen Roman*. Diss. Wuppertal 1979. Wuppertal: privately printed, 1979. Pp. 209—discusses the representation of the 'Williamite Wars' (1689-91), the connection between 'fact' and 'fiction' in a number of Anglo-Irish novels: John Banim, *The Boyne Water*

(1826), Charlotte Elizabeth, *Derry* (1839), Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, *The Fortunes of Colonel Torlough O'Brien* (1847), J.M.M.K. (anonymous), *William and James* (1857), Albert Canning, *Baldearg O'Donnell* (1867), David Power Conyngham, *Sarsfield* (1871), Charles Ffrench Blake-Forster, *The Irish Chieftains* (1872), M.L. O'Bryne, *Leixlip Castle* (1883), G.A. Henty, *Orange and Green* (1887), S.R. Keightly, *The Crimson Sign* (1894), and Euphans H. Strains, *A Man's Foes* (1896). Too much space is given to careful plot summaries.

Norbert Kinne—*Die Literaturkritik Thomas Babington Macaulays und ihre Rezeption*. Arbeiten zur Ästhetik, Didaktik, Literatur- und Sprachwissenschaft, 6. Frankfurt/M., Bern, Cirencester: Lang, 1979. Pp. 266—describes the reception of Macaulay's literary criticism, gives a well-informed outline of the critic's literary theory—key words: theory of imagination and reason, problem of truth in poetry, definitions of poetry, literary genres, sociology of literature (politics and literature, literary market, copyright), theory of the four stages of literature (barbaric, imaginative, critical, and romantic times)—and offers a survey of Macaulay's criticism of individual Greek, Latin, Italian, French and English authors. Kinne's useful book emphasizes Macaulay's postulate that the history, theory, and criticism of literature form a unity (cf. espec. pp. 59-64) and the author's belief in the "fatalism of history" (cf. pp. 214-16). Macaulay is not an epigonous writer (cf. pp. 178-79), not an arbitrary judge of art with ungrounded assumptions, but a critic with a clear consciousness of historical tradition and theoretical principles (cf. p. 147).

An anthology edited by Hans-Heinrich Rudnick—*Englische Literaturtheorie des 19. Jahrhunderts. Texte von Blake bis Yeats*. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1979. Pp. 500—collects excellent German translations of the major contributions to the Victorian theory of literature (from John Stuart Mill's "What is Poetry?" to George Meredith's *On the Idea of Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit*).

Is there a distinct trend in the year's work? Perhaps a belief in the topicality and documentary character of fiction, a preference for the sociological interpretation of literature, a strong refusal of new-critical approaches and an emphasis on the theoretical aspects of literature.

Universität Trier

1. This survey is restricted to early and mid-Victorian literature. For the late Victorian period cf. my forthcoming article in *English Literature in Transition*.

Books Received

- Allott, Miriam, ed. *Arnold: The Complete Poems*, 2nd Ed. London: Longman, 1979. Pp. xxviii + 723. Paper \$19.95. A fully revised edition of Kenneth Allott's 1965 edition. Includes much new material, including a number of hitherto unpublished poems and Kenneth Allott's own notes from 1965 until his death in 1973.
- Borowitz, Albert. *The Woman Who Murdered Black Satin: The Bermondsey Horror*. Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1981. Pp. x. + 337. \$17.50. An account of the famous 1849 murder of Patrick O'Connor by his mistress and her husband, their apprehension, trial and execution, as well as the social significance of the "Bermondsey Horror."
- Buckler, William E. *The Victorian Imagination: Essays in Aesthetic Exploration*. New York and London: NYU Press, 1980. Pp. x + 382. A collection of 17 essays, 7 of which have been previously published. Essays include 8 on Tennyson, 4 on Hardy, 2 on Pater, 1 on Swinburne, 1 on *Past and Present*, an introductory essay on the Victorian imagination. Wise and well-written.
- Clubbe, John, ed. *Froude's Life of Carlyle*. Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1979. Pp. xxvi + 725. \$30.00. An abridgment which reduces by about 3/8 the original 4 vol. text; reductions mostly from letters and journals of Carlyle; only 10 to 15% of Froude's narrative omitted. Editor has corrected texts, identified documents, dates, etc. and made several thousand emendations. Includes 60pp. introduction and 50pp. notes.
- Cohen, Jane R. *Charles Dickens and His Original Illustrators*. Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1980. Pp. xxvi + 295. \$32.50. A handsome book with over 200 illustrations. A substantial addition to the dozens of commentators on Dickens's illustrators, this book "aspires . . . to treat comprehensively Dickens's personal and professional relations with his first artists."
- Faulkner, Peter. *Against the Age: An Introduction to William Morris*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1980. Pp. xi + 193. \$27.50. Written "to appeal to sixth formers and undergraduates." The emphasis is "mainly on [Morris's] work rather than on modern scholars' [or Faulkner's] views of it."
- Johnson, Wendell Stacy. *Living in Sin: The Victorian Sexual Revolution*, Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1980. Pp. x + 214. \$13.95; paper \$6.95. For the general reader, a study of sexuality, marriage, women's role in the Victorian period.
- Heineman, Helen. *Mrs. Trollope: The Triumphant Feminine in the Nineteenth Century*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio Univ. Press, 1979. Pp. [xii] + 316. \$15.00. A feminist approach to the biography of Frances Trollope.
- Landow, George P. ed. *Approaches to Victorian Autobiography*. Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1979. Pp. xlvi + 359. \$18.00. 16 essays divided as "Approaches to Victorian Autobiography," "Essays on Individual Authors"—Ruskin, Newman, Mrs. Oliphant, Eliz. Sewell, John Butler Yeats—and "Autobiography and Autobiographicality"—Mill, Samuel Butler, Gissing, Browning, *Copperfield*, Morris, Henry James among others.
- _____. *Victorian Types, Victorian Shadows*. Boston and London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980. Pp. xiv + 266. \$24.95. Examines the ways in which Victorians regarded typology and then investigates its use in literature—poetry, prose fiction, and non-fiction—plastic and graphic arts, and even politics. Two chapters are devoted to single types and one concentrates on D.G. Rossetti and Hopkins.
- McGhee, Richard D. *Marriage, Duty and Desire in Victorian Poetry and Drama*. Lawrence: Univ. of Kansas Press, 1980. Pp. x + 318. \$22.50. A study of "the specific function of marriage as a means to unite the sometimes conflicting values of duty and desire" in Tennyson, the Brownings, Arnold, Clough, D.G. Rossetti, Meredith, Swinburne, Hopkins and Wilde.
- Meisel, Perry. *The Absent Father: Virginia Woolf and Walter Pater*. New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1980. Pp. xxii + 249. \$. Argues that "Woolf succeeds Pater among principal English critics, and it is with Pater that her principal literary relationship is to be found."
- Monsman, Gerald. *Walter Pater's Art of Autobiography*. New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1980. Pp. x + 174. \$12.50. A study of the "reflexiveness" of Pater's writings, writings "which affirm the autonomy of their artifice" and "replace an elusive outer reality with a self-sustaining imaginative reality."
- O'Donnell, Thomas J. *The Confessions of T. E. Lawrence*. Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1979. Pp. xii + 196. \$13.50. Argues that "*Seven Pillars and The Mint* comprise a single confessional project and are in the tradition of the great confessions of Augustine, Bunyan, Rousseau, and Adams."
- Turner, Frank M. *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain*. New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1981. Pp. xvi + 461. \$30.00. Explores "Victorian commentary on antiquity as a means of more fully understanding Victorian intellectual life itself." Turner's is not a study of the influence of Greek antiquity on literature or education, nor does it concern itself with philological questions; it is an attempt "to understand why the classics, and more particularly the Greek classics, were perceived as useful."
- Wheatcroft, Andrew. *The Tennyson Album*. Intro. by Sir John Betjeman. London, Boston and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980. Pp. 1-160. \$25.00. An attractive compilation of more than 130 photos, some 25 of the poet; others of family and circle.

Victorian Group News

A. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Midwest Victorian Studies Association invites papers for its 1982 meeting, to be held at Ohio State University, 30 April - 1 May. The theme will be Victorian humor—all forms of wit, satire, parody, comedy and humor in a variety of media—literature, art and music, popular culture, scientific, political and academic rhetoric. Papers or detailed abstracts (250-500 words) should be sent no later than Dec. 1, 1981 to Frederick Kirchoff, Department of English and Linguistics, Indiana University-Purdue University at Fort Wayne, Fort Wayne, IN 46805.

A three day Gissing symposium will be held in his native town of Wakefield in Yorkshire 4-6 Sept. 1981. It will include a tour led by Clifford Brook and lectures by Pierre Coustillas, Peter Keating, Jacob Korg, Philip Collins, John Halperin, and Gillian Tindall. It will coincide with opening of a Gissing Centre. For information, write Ros Stinton, 368, Springvale Road, Sheffield, S10 1LN, England.

The first joint annual meeting of The Research Society for Victorian Periodicals and The Victorian Studies Assoc. of Western Canada will be held 8-10 Oct. 1981 at the University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, WA 98416.

A prize of \$250 will be awarded by the Dickens Society at its annual meeting in Dec. for the best, first article-length publication on Dickens (i.e. more than five printed pages) appearing between June 1980 and June 1981. (Article-length chapters on Dickens from books—either wholly devoted to Dickens or concerned with a wider subject—may be submitted.) Entries (three copies or offprints) should be sent to Deborah A. Thomas, Sec.-Treas., The Dickens Society, Department of English, Villanova University, Villanova, PA 19085.

Tennessee Studies in Literature is initiating a new series of critical vols., a change in the traditional format of that journal. These volumes, each devoted to a single general topic, will be published in hardback and paperback on an annual basis. The first volume, *Sexuality in the Victorian Age*, will appear in 1982. Essays dealing with all aspects of sexuality in the Victorian period are now being solicited. Inquiries and manuscripts should be addressed to Don Richard Cox, *Tennessee Studies in Literature*, Dept. of English, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37916.

"Victorian Classicism" will be the topic for the 1982 volume of *Browning Institute Studies*, which has recently widened its editorial scope to become "An Annual of Victorian Literary and Cultural History." Proposals for papers and papers themselves should be sent to Gerhard Joseph, the guest editor for the volume, at Dept. of English, Herbert H. Lehman College, CUNY, The Bronx, N.Y. 10468. The deadline—15 July 1981.

B. PROJECTS: REQUESTS FOR AID

Karl Beckson, the authorized biographer of Arthur Symons, seeks any information about letters or manuscripts that are in private hands. Write Department of English, Brooklyn College of CUNY, Bedford Ave. and Avenue H, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11210.

C. NOTICE

Victorian Newsletter address change: Ward Hellstrom, Editor, *Victorian Newsletter*, FAC 200, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY 42101.

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Editor

Ward Hellstrom

Managing Editor

Louise R. Hellstrom

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*Paper delivered at English X, MLA, Houston, Dec. 1980

Cover Illustration: Thackeray caricature in his copy of Rollin's *Ancient History*

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