

# The Victorian Newsletter

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## *Pensée Sauvage* at the MLA: Victorian Cultural Imperialism Then and Now

Patrick Brantlinger

*The blacks do not fight over land. There are no wars or invasions to seize territory. They do not enslave each other. There is no master-servant relation. There is no class division. There is no property or income inequality.*

W. E. H. Stanner, *White Man Got No Dreaming* (40)

"For my own part I would as soon be descended from that heroic little monkey, who braved his dreaded enemy in order to save the life of his keeper . . . as from a savage who delights to torture his enemies, offers up bloody sacrifices, practises infanticide . . . treats his wives like slaves, knows no decency, and is haunted by the grossest superstitions" (Darwin, *Descent* 919-20). Thus Darwin in *The Descent of Man*, suggesting that the evolution from ape to human, at least in moral terms, was the reverse of progress. But what about the evolution from savagery to civilization? Despite asserting that nature reveals no "fixed law of development or progress," Darwin was very much a believer in progress upward from the savage if not from the ape.<sup>1</sup>

Darwin's term "superstition" is one of several our Victorian ancestors used to characterize the mentality of so-called "primitives." A sizable genre of works purporting to map the primitive psyche runs from E. B. Tylor's *Primitive Culture* in 1871 down to Lévi-Strauss's *The Savage Mind* in 1962.<sup>2</sup> Before 1900 the genre included works on craniometry or skull-measuring, which Stephen Jay Gould has debunked as a superstition more racist than scientific (19-112). What is most apparent about the entire genre is its totalizing quality: all primitives think alike and their thinking is primitive. This sort of abstract mind-reading is just as true of Lévi-Strauss as of earlier writers, even though he elaborates the concept of *bricolage* to show that the mythologizing mind of the savage is proto-scientific and thus works like a primitive version of ours.<sup>3</sup> He rejects the notion that primitives are incapable of abstract ideas, the short version of the Victorian insistence on the unscientific, nonprogressive character of primitive thought. Typifying the Victorian view is C. S. Wake's 1872 essay on "The Mental Characteristics of Primitive Man, as Exemplified by Australian Aborigines," which asserts that "this race presents . . . hardly any of what are usually understood as the phenomena of intellect." The aborigines are

"mere children," who reveal "to us the condition of mankind . . . not . . . long after man's first appearance on earth." So aboriginal are they, Wake believes, that it wouldn't even make sense to call them superstitious: they have no religion, not even a "trace . . . of idolatry" (74-84).<sup>4</sup>

But usually for the Victorians, the antithesis to science, reason, or truth was "superstition" rather than mere blankness, and a frequent synonym, then as now, has been "fetishism," most simply defined as "idolatry," more complexly as "ideology." Numerous Victorian accounts depict "the African"—a highly questionable abstraction itself—as a "godless" worshiper of "fetishes." According to Richard Burton: "A prey to . . . melancholy godless fears, the Fetishist . . . peoples with malevolent beings the invisible world, and animates material nature with . . . his dark and deadly superstition . . ." <sup>5</sup> Nor was fetishism confined to Africa: for many, it was synonymous with the beliefs of all non-Christians. "What will men not worship, under the influence of superstition . . . ! Oxen, monkeys, cats, serpents, flies, and even onions . . . [supposedly] rational beings have bowed down to . . ." Thus the evangelical Isaac Taylor, writing about Asia (85-86).

Whereas Burton scoffed at weak-headed notions of converting the heathen, at least evangelicals believed in human redemption: even the benighted African could be weaned from fetishism to the true faith. Many Victorian social theorists also believed in redemption, though for them the true faith lay in science rather than religion. Tylor characterized early religious beliefs as forms of "animism" including "fetishism," while also characterizing progress as the gradual shedding of animism through experience and observation. Moreover, he saw the process of scientific enlightenment as both universal and inevitable. Though "primitive" peoples brought up the rear in the long march of progress, they were on the same path as modern "civilized" peoples.

Throughout his career, Tylor sought to show the common ground shared by all societies: human nature is everywhere the same; the different races form one species, not several. The first sentence of *Primitive Culture* reads: "Culture . . . is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society" (1:1). This definition is universal, and with variations remains standard today

<sup>1</sup> Darwin quoted by Kuper 46. Yet Darwin could also write, in the penultimate paragraph of *The Origin*, that "we may look with some confidence to a secure future of great length. And as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress toward perfection" (373).

<sup>2</sup> Boas, Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*. Other examples include Durkheim and Mauss, and several works by Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, such as *La mentalité primitive* (1922). In a sense, all works of cultural as opposed to physical anthropology belong to this genre.

<sup>3</sup> "Neolithic man was . . . the heir of a long scientific tradition," Lévi-Strauss declares in *The Savage Mind* (15). In *The Mind of Primitive Man*, Boas had

tried to make a similar break from the Victorians: "There is no fundamental difference in the ways of thinking of primitive and civilized man" (v).

<sup>4</sup> In *The Principles of Sociology* (1:74-5) Herbert Spencer summarized the Victorian view: ". . . the savage lacks abstract ideas . . . [such . . . as those of property and cause, [which] belong to a . . . higher stage [of social evolution] . . . Only . . . with the use of measures does . . . the idea of law become possible. In primitive life . . . the notion of truth cannot become clear . . . [And] such imagination as the primitive man has . . . is reminiscent only, not constructive." For further examples, see Mulvaney (68-75).

<sup>5</sup> For Burton and other examples, see Brantlinger (182-3).

(see Kroeber and Klukhohn). At the same time, though the reverse in several ways of our poststructuralist stress on "difference," Tylor's universalism was radical. The idea of "primitive culture" meant that *all* peoples, not just an Arnoldian elite and not even just the supposedly civilized west, possessed culture. Yet this egalitarianism—the foundational notion of modern anthropology—was mined from within both by its abstract generality and by its stress on "primitiveness," the chief sort of difference it recognized. All cultures were equal but some were much more equal than others. Through this contradiction, the universalism of early anthropology was translated into the lingua franca of imperialism.

Darwin took the Tierra del Fuegians as the most primitive of peoples, but for Tylor the lowest on the evolutionary totem pole were the unhappy Tasmanians, most of whom had been exterminated in the so-called "Black War" of the early 1800s, and the last of whom—supposedly—died in 1876.<sup>6</sup> I say "supposedly" because several hundred racially mixed people with the legal status of aborigines still live on Flinders and Cape Barren Islands, about whom one can read in Ida West's 1984 autobiography, *Pride against Prejudice: Reminiscences of a Tasmanian Aborigine*. Despite her personal survival story, the foreword to West's narrative begins this way: "The history of the Tasmanian Aborigines is one of horror. From first contact by [the] white man, Tasmanian[s] have been . . . culturally savaged," victims of "systematic genocide" (v)—an indictment hard to square with any belief in progress.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, from the crudeness of their stone tools, Tylor deduced that the Tasmanians—before their extinction, of course—were living "survivals" of the early Stone Age, the most primitive of primitive peoples, even lowlier than their Australian "aboriginal" cousins. (Among other things, Tasmanians were innocent of the boomerang.)

Tylor at least thought that Tasmanians held animistic beliefs, which was more than some observers granted. "Dr. Nixon, the first Bishop of Tasmania, [concluded] that 'No trace can be found of the existence of any religious . . . sentiment among them.'" And the Reverend T. Dove added that Tasmanians were distinguished "by the absence of all moral values"—a theory that may have contributed to the view that they didn't merit moral treatment, and that approximates the comparison between criminals and savages basic to social Darwinist criminology.<sup>8</sup> In any event, from the British perspective the unreasoning, unreligious, unmoral Tasmanians obviously fit Ambrose Bierce's definition of "Aborigines": "Persons of little worth found cumbering the soil of a newly discovered country. They soon cease to cumber; they fertilize" (qtd. in Barnett 3).

Because some primitives were held to lack all religious

beliefs, fetishism could be seen as a step up the evolutionary ladder. Thus Sir John Lubbock treated it as a higher stage than the "mere belief in evil spirits." And after fetishism came shamanism, totemism, polytheism, monotheism, and finally science.<sup>9</sup> Beliefs, tools, races—for the progressive evolutionist, all were situated on a chronological hierarchy leading to civilization. The inevitability and linearity of evolution meant that all societies followed the same inexorable path upward from the apes, though many failed to arrive at the luminous goal. The extinct Tasmanians were only one disquieting instance of such failure, mourned by Tylor in part because their extinction meant a loss of evidence for science (Stocking 280). In their abstract, scientific manner, many otherwise humane Victorians reasoned that, while certain primitive societies might inevitably evolve toward civilized societies like England, others like the palaeolithic Tasmanians were "unfit" to survive, doomed to extinction through contact with civilization. Of course if the Tasmanians really were palaeolithic, they must have been "fit" for something because they had survived for eons, until the progressive British turned their island into an open-air jail in which white convicts and bushrangers slaughtered them without mercy.

As in other parts of the world, genocide in Tasmania was quickly papered over with assertions about the inevitable progress of civilization. Social Darwinists like Benjamin Kidd and Karl Pearson were at least forthright in acknowledging genocide, which they saw as necessary to the "struggle for existence" among races. Social Darwinism is sometimes held to have been confined to a small number of second-rate intellectuals, to have little or nothing to do with what Darwin really said, and of course to be post-Darwinian. But as early as 1850 in his *The Races of Man* Robert Knox treated the extinction of so-called lower races as inevitable and perhaps desirable.<sup>10</sup> According to an Australian writing in *Household Words* in 1850, "the blacks soon tame or fade before the white man's face," a result which delighted Dickens, who in 1853 himself declared: "I call a savage something highly desirable to be civilized off the face of the earth" (Sidney 418, Dickens 337). The blatantly contradictory notion of civilization as beneficent lethal weapon or exterminating angel, ridding the world of its antithesis, savagery, predates *The Origin of Species* by many years.

Darwin usually only asserted that civilization *was* ridding the world of savagery, but there can be no doubt that he equated this deadly civilizing process with progress. "How long will the wretched inhabitants of N. W. Australia go on blinking their eyes without extermination?" he wondered in 1839; and in 1860, in a letter to Sir Charles Lyell, he wrote that "the white man is 'improving off the face of the earth'

<sup>6</sup> Darwin, *Voyage* 231; Tylor "On the Tasmanians" 141-52; "The Survival," 191, "Prefaces." For a graph representing a hierarchy of the "lowest races," see Lubbock, *Prehistoric Times* 544. See also Stocking 275-83. On the Tasmanians themselves the books of James Bonwick are invaluable; see especially *The Last of the Tasmanians; or, the Black War of Van Diemen's Land*.

<sup>7</sup> H. G. Wells declared that the inspiration for *War of the Worlds* may have come in a conversation with his brother Frank about "the discovery of Tasmania by the Europeans—a very frightful disaster for the native Tasmanians!" (qtd. in Bergonzi 124).

<sup>8</sup> The Nixon and Dove citations are from Lubbock, *Prehistoric Times* 453, 565. For social Darwinist criminology, see Gould 122-45.

<sup>9</sup> *Prehistoric Times* 574; Lubbock *Origin* 164. Lubbock writes: "As Totemism overlies Fetichism so does Shamanism overlies Totemism" (*Origin* 222).

<sup>10</sup> "What a field of extermination lies before the Saxon, Celtic and Sarmatian races!" For Knox, see Brantlinger 21-23.

even races nearly his equals."<sup>11</sup> If the question is asked, was Darwin himself a social Darwinist? the answer is yes. Despite strong antislavery opinions and his support of the liberal side of the Governor Eyre controversy, Darwin viewed the extinction of "lower races" as a law of nature, as did also the codiscoverer of natural selection, Alfred Russell Wallace. Just as humane and opposed to slavery as Darwin, Wallace was only stressing an already familiar idea when in 1864 he wrote about the "great law of the 'preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life,' which leads to the inevitable extinction of all those low and mentally undeveloped populations with which Europeans come in contact" (clxv).<sup>12</sup>

Poststructuralist anthropology has rejected many of the assumptions of its Victorian ancestors, who from the current perspective seem to have fallen prey to numerous primitive illusions, not least the fetish of progress which conjures up "primitive society" as its ghostly double. According to Adam Kuper in his 1988 book *The Invention of Primitive Society*, the "orthodox" anthropological view today "is that there never was such a thing as 'primitive society'"—though whether its nonexistence is due to its phantasmal nature or to a mix of paternalistic and genocidal imperialism, is perhaps a toss-up. "Certainly," Kuper continues, "no such thing [as primitive society] can be reconstructed now . . . there is no way of reconstituting prehistoric social forms . . . and aligning them in a time series. There are no fossils of social organization."<sup>13</sup> Kuper contends that the history of the theoretical illusion of primitive society begins with "the late Victorian surge of imperialism, [while] its perhaps terminal decline in the last two decades [is] related to the end of Empire" (8-9). Here, I think, Kuper is mistaken: the mirage of primitive society begins much earlier and is just as evident in Montaigne's "Cannibals" as in *King Solomon's Mines*, while the "end of Empire," like the "end of ideology," is itself a dangerous ideological mirage.

But if the concept of "primitive society" has almost disappeared from contemporary ethnography, so has the "comparative method," mainstay of evolutionary social science. In *Time and the Other*, Johannes Fabian argues that this method, whereby nonwestern, nonindustrial societies in the present are equated with prehistoric societies, involves the

"denial of coevalness"—a fantasy alienation of others in time, even while spatially they are being overwhelmed (18).<sup>14</sup> Contrary to Tylor, the Tasmanians were not "survivals" left over from the Stone Age, they were (almost) his contemporaries. Nor were they, as the method also suggested, either children or criminals.<sup>15</sup>

Kuper's and Fabian's arguments are in accord with the postmodernist ethnographic theories of James Clifford, George Marcus, Stephen Tyler, and others, social science parallels to poststructuralist literary theory. In *Writing Culture*, Clifford and his colleagues advocate a "cultural poetics" similar to that of the New Historicism. They are, in the best poststructuralist manner, wary of imposing any generalizations on anybody, except their academic opponents. Thus Stephen Tyler declares that "the true historical significance of writing is that it has increased our capacity to create totalistic illusions with which to have power over things or over others as if they were things"—illusions like "primitive society." This poses a dilemma for ethnography, which is inevitably a form of representing others through writing, and inevitably also western and supposedly scientific. The postmodern Tyler's solution is to practice "poetic evocation" rather than supposedly objective, abstract, scientific "representation" (131).

Ironically, postmodern ethnographers are resurrecting patterns of thinking that their Victorian ancestors identified with the "primitive mind." This could be called the boomeranging of ethnographic theory. "Poetic evocation" restores metaphor and myth to epistemological centrality while decentering notions of scientific objectivity. Like Lyotard's rejection of totalizing metanarratives, the new ethnography stresses difference and particularity as against the reifications of abstract thought. It thus refuses the hierarchical historicism of the evolutionary paradigm, insisting that periodizing labels such as "prehistoric" and "historic," "primitive" and "modern" are dangerous abstractions, more imperializing than scientific. And its relativistic refusal to pass judgment on entire cultures leads at times instead to defenses of cannibalism, human sacrifice, slavery—indeed, to a Rousseauistic recuperation of "the primitive" that sees western civilization as a global catastrophe instead of progress.<sup>16</sup>

But while the science of culture is turning into a poetics

<sup>11</sup> Charles Darwin, "Third Notebook," 14 or 15 September 1839 (qtd. in Gruber 169); Darwin to Charles Lyell, 12 September 1860 in Francis Darwin, ed. 2: 136. See also Charles Darwin's letter to W. Graham, 3 July 1881 (1: 286): "Remember what risk the nations of Europe ran, not so many centuries ago of being overwhelmed by the Turks, and how ridiculous such an idea now is! The more civilized Caucasian races have beaten the Turkish hollow in the struggle for existence. Looking to the world at no very distant date, what an endless number of the lower races will have been eliminated by the higher civilized races throughout the world."

<sup>12</sup> (clxiv-clxv). Darwin's fullest consideration of racial extinction, with the Tasmanians as a key example, occurs in ch. 7 of *The Descent of Man*, "On the Races of Man." "Where civilised nations come into contact with barbarians the struggle is short except where a deadly climate gives its aid to the native race" (*Descent* 543). Darwin did not consider how it was that more or less "Turkish" barbarians had been able to conquer more or less "Caucasian" Romans. For related examples, see Brantlinger 186-87. An intriguing example not included there is Florence Nightingale (552-58). In *Darwinism and Politics*, D. G. Ritchie declared that Darwin "looked forward to the elimination of the lower races by the higher civilized races throughout the world," and added that social Darwinism is a "scheme of salvation for the elect by the damnation of the vast majority" (7).

<sup>13</sup> (7). The illusoriness of primitive society at least in the postmodern era is

well-illustrated by the Tasaday, discovered in supposedly aboriginal innocence in the Philippines in 1971. Jean Baudrillard has made much of the Tasaday as an instance of postmodern simulation, but he did so before the fall of the Marcos regime and the revelation that one of its officials had indeed simulated the Tasaday as a hoax—a sort of double simulacrum, therefore, or the phantasm of a phantasm. See Wicke.

<sup>14</sup> "Primitive being essentially a temporal concept, is a category, not an object, of western thought" (Fabian 18). See also Marcus and Fischer, especially 157-64, and Gould 116-22.

<sup>15</sup> Darwin foresaw the "not very distant time" when "the civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate" both the "savage races throughout the world" and "the anthropomorphous apes . . . The break between man and his nearest allies will then be wider, for it will intervene between man in a more civilized state, as we may hope, even than the Caucasian, and some ape as low as a baboon, instead of as now between the negro or Australian and the gorilla" (*Descent* [152]).

<sup>16</sup> In contrast to the negative assessments of "savagery" by Victorian anthropologists, a Rousseauistic defense of the primitive emerges as a main theme of twentieth-century anthropology, starting with Franz Boas. See, for example, Lévi-Strauss, *Triste Tropiques* 38, 122, 150, 299, 326, 391-3; Diamond; and Harris. For a general commentary on this tendency, see Marcus and Fischer.

of culture, literary criticism may be going in the opposite direction. The chief object of worship at today's MLA isn't poetry, but rather that most interesting of recently evolved mental "swamp things," "theory." Now, the great benefit of theory is that it can help us question our deepest cultural assumptions. If the outcome is that we grow less Eurocentric and patriarchal, then I believe theory means progress—we are no longer so palaeolithic as we were back in the era of literary modernism and the New Criticism. But perhaps theory-worship is our version of fetishism, especially since theory so often behaves like a branch of the Parisian fashion industry? Many of you will agree that what Marx had to say about "commodity fetishism" applies with ironic vengeance to this new rough beast who just a few hours ago slouched into Washington, some of its witchdoctors registering at this very hotel. If theory is our current fetish, however, it isn't just because it's fashionable, but because of the promise of enlightenment or upward mental evolution that it asserts or exudes, even as it deconstructs the promise of progress in earlier texts, in the western canon, in literature as such. Indeed, as the main and perhaps only way of signifying its own progressive nature, today's theory necessarily deconstructs yesterday's theory, thus behaving like a slightly sublimated form of cultural cannibalism. This could be called the boomeranging of literary theory. Nor do I mean to single out deconstruction—theory is plural, and deconstruction is always already on the endangered species list. Perhaps at this very moment in some other session the beast of the New Historicism is devouring the already defunct beast of deconstruction, picking over the bones and tossing them over its modishly attired shoulders one by one.

Theory is one thing, you may be thinking, but literature is another—we always have literature to fall back on. Yet falling back on literature, like falling back on notions of cultural poetics, involves regressing to past stages more primitive than our own. Theory outruns literature by revealing it over and over again to be metaphor, story, mythology—superstition, if you will—rather than science or truth. Why should theory save the text when theory's most progressive thrust is to identify literature with the mythic, the primitive, the infantile? I am, of course, pushing the tendencies of both theory and literature to mythic/abstract extremes. In doing so, I hope to illustrate what Habermas calls the "colonization" of the humanities by "scientific rationalization": perhaps we are most under the sway of the fetish of progress when we believe we have progressed beyond that fetish.<sup>17</sup>

Liberal social Darwinists like Darwin often believed in two forms of nonreligious conversion. One was scientific: nonextinct primitive peoples could and should be educated out of their "savage minds" into the full light of science. Similarly, it was common to believe that, even minus religion, western secular cultures and languages should be taught to "backward" peoples. A famous instance is Macaulay's

advocacy of English education for India—the founding moment for English studies, ancestor of this very gathering. As Gauri Viswanathan contends, "Provoked by missionaries on the one hand and fears of native insubordination on the other, British administrators [of India] discovered an ally in English literature to support them in maintaining control of the natives under the guise of a liberal education" (95). Much the same pattern was repeated later in England, where the "restless natives" were not Hindus or Muslims, but the working and so-called "dangerous" classes. The progressive-mindedness but also imperialism of early versions of English studies are obvious: by imbibing "sweetness and light" particularly as expressed in English literature, all shall be uplifted toward some ultimate standard of—and standardized—civilization.

At least theory leads us beyond Arnoldianism, and therefore beyond certain forms of Eurocentrism. But theory seems also linked to western scientism and faith in abstract reason. Every poststructuralist radicalism promises enlightenment, albeit laced with blindness—theory can *only* function as a form of reason, dissecting its objects in better, more scientific ways than previous theory. The key point Habermas makes is that "instrumental reason" is a socially progressive force within limits, but when it begins to "colonize" the moral and esthetic areas of the "lifeworld" the catastrophes of modern history also begin.

So is the new faith in theory or the old, Arnoldian faith in the patriarchal, Eurocentric canon the fetish most clearly stamped with the MLA's current Seal of Approval? Great books humanize—so we hope. Yet theory at its best weans us from fetishes—from racism, sexism, classism. Because the great books of our ancestors also have defetishizing power, I continue to worship at the shrines of Darwin, Marx, Freud, Tylor—and even Arnold, Dickens, Eliot, Hardy.

I think, however, that the fate of the Tasmanians should keep us from over-worshipping either these illustrious ancestors or our own pet theories. Who speaks for them—the Tasmanians, I mean?<sup>18</sup> Not Arnold, not Darwin, not even Marx, and also not Jane Austen, who perhaps wasn't aware of their existence. But in *Pride against Prejudice*, *Ida West* speaks—too late, of course—for her unfortunate ancestors, victims of the Juggernaut of progress (that is, of empire). At the start of her account, this Tasmanian who is supposed by some authorities not even to exist—a ghost, as it were, speaking to us in ancestral language from the very dawn of human experience—explains what prompted her to write:

We have had Europeans writing about us for years. As a child I can remember people writing about us, they called us half-castes then, they might just as well have called us outcasts.

... We were brought up to respect our European relations but to be ashamed of Aboriginal relations, though from what I have seen ... the Europeans haven't been too good either ...

... One night watching television I saw a Legal Aid person

<sup>17</sup> See Diamond 38-9: "Imperialism seeks to absorb and nullify contradictions; but the basic apology for imperialism remains the idea of progress. The brutality of the means of conquest, the erosion of other cultural possibilities, the necessity of political tutelage, even economic exploitation for the benefit of the metropole are all rationalized in that context. Their unintended con-

sequences are conceived as positive; enlightened self-interest, it is fancied, ultimately resolves itself in the universal good."

<sup>18</sup> See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's related question, "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

for my people talking to someone about what the Europeans did to Aborigines, cutting their heads off and so on. He pulled out a drawer filled with Aborigine heads all shapes and sizes, and the sight of the skulls started to turn my stomach. The second drawer was full also. By the third drawer I felt faint. The Legal Aid person said, "Would you like to have your grandfather's head in there?"

So I got back [my] book and kept writing.

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## The Power of the Word Scientific Nomenclature and the Spread of Empire

Harriet Ritvo

The names of Victorian imperialists were frequently commemorated in the binomial Latin terminology of zoological and botanical nomenclature—the system of naming generally attributed to Linnaeus. For example, Sir Stamford Raffles, who was an empire builder and a naturalist, the founder of both Singapore and the Zoological Society of London, lent his name to at least 23 Southeast Asian organisms, including birds, fish, molluscs, and primates (Sherborn). Lionel Walter Rothschild (the second Lord Rothschild), an aggressive collector who sent his proxies to gather the zoological spoils of the Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, gave his name to 58

species or subspecies of birds, 18 of mammals, three of fish, two of reptiles and amphibia, 153 of insects, three of arachnids, one of millipedes, and one of nematode worms (Rothschild 364). Among the animals maintained by Edward Smith Stanley, the thirteenth Earl of Derby and the owner of the largest private menagerie in nineteenth-century Britain, were specimens of Derby's kangaroo (*Macropus derbianus*), the striped eland (*Oreas derbianus*), and the Derby mountain pheasant (*Oreophasis derbianus*) (Catalogue 8 and Moore 6). Nor was this kind of enshrinement reserved for great wealth or power. Sheer enterprise was often similarly acknowledged—for example the name of the *Equus burchelli* or Burchell's

zebra commemorated the achievements of the South African explorer and naturalist William Burchell.

Of course, not all newly discovered species were named after imperialists, or even people. Most received names that, like those of long familiar animals like *Felus catus* or *Bos taurus*, were chosen for their descriptive or identificatory value: for example, *Mephitis mexicanus* (Mexican skunk) and *Ursus ferox* (grizzly bear) (Smith 196, 241). And the explicit purpose of this nomenclatural enterprise was not directly to celebrate individual human accomplishment, however impressive or worthwhile. It was rather an extension of the major project of Enlightenment natural history—to discover and classify all the productions of the planet—which continued to inspire naturalists throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

This project has often been figured as one of conquest or domination, as the extension of human control, at least in the realm of intellect, over the unruly phenomena of nature. Scientific nomenclature functioned as both the instrument of that conquest and a powerful symbol of it. It claimed to replace the chaos of earlier terminology, in which a single animal or plant might be known by dozens of different names in the vernaculars and dialects of Europe, with a single definitive designation for each organism. The use of Latin (or, actually, the semblance of Latin, since species names were often drawn from Greek, as well as from proper names in a variety of modern languages) looked back to the magisterial, supranational scholarship of the Middle Ages (Mayr 109). In addition, most nomenclators used these formal designations not simply for indexing purposes, but also to place each organism in some taxonomic model of the natural system. Such models were necessarily open-ended and therefore comprehensive; they had to be flexible enough to include the whole world, discovered and undiscovered.

This scientific adventure can easily be seen as the metaphoric extension of the European appropriation of much of the rest of the globe. And the relationship was not simply emblematic. The two processes were more or less simultaneous, and, as the celebratory binomials mentioned above show, they were forwarded by much the same personnel. Indeed, so intimately was the advancement of science associated with the march of empire, that it was assumed that British administrators in remote outposts would collect specimens of the local fauna and flora for ultimate deposit in collections at home; museums published and republished manuals with guides for preservation of specimens and exhortations that even lowly functionaries, especially peripatetic members of the navy and merchant marine, be pressed into the service of natural history.

In addition, the scientific enterprise of which nomenclature was the emblem depended on the opening to European scrutiny of previously inaccessible areas of the globe. The naming of new species signalled a process of intellectual appropriation parallel to the annexation of colonial territories. When an exotic plant or animal received a latinized binomial, not only was it wrested from its former ecological and cultural context and relocated within the system of European science,

but its previous history was usually obliterated. Although the humans indigenous to any colonized territory could be counted on to possess sophisticated knowledge about its natural productions, few field collectors bothered to tap this resource, or even, as one eighteenth-century naturalist recommended, to “write in the name by which the animal goes in the country” (Forster 40).<sup>2</sup> This tendency to deny or disparage competing claims to knowledge was so strong and uncompromising that occasionally it could even threaten the systematic project. That is, yanking an organism too abruptly from one context could prevent its smooth insertion into another. Collectors were often so careless about noting even the geographical provenance of their specimens, that experts back in Britain found it impossible to classify them properly—that is, to give them the appropriate names (see, for example, Sclater 76).

Such undercutting was not serious, however. Rather than compromising the sweeping claims of imperial science and politics, it exemplified a blithe intellectual self-confidence that reinforced those claims. But the process of naming exotic species did not always function in this reassuring way. Perhaps because of the authority implicit in its definitive latinized terminology, and certainly because of its association with the process of imperialism, scientific nomenclature also offered an arena in which this intellectual hegemony (and, by implication, the political hegemony it represented) could be contested. Sometimes such contests were blatant reflections of imperial politics. For example, the zoological frontier and the political frontier were not always in the same place—or, to put it another way, territorial claims were easier to challenge in scientific journals than on the battlefield. The competitive colonization of European soldiers and diplomats had its analogue in the activities of field naturalists. Thus, Sir Stamford Raffles once found himself in the unhappy position of having to dismiss “two French gentlemen who [had] appeared qualified” to help him with the preservation and description of his specimens, lest, as a result of what he called their “private and national views” “all the result of all my endeavours . . . be carried to a foreign country.” What he feared was the integration of his specimens into a Gallicized nomenclature—which he characterized, perhaps not surprisingly in view of traditional English attitudes toward their neighbors, as “speculative and deficient in the kind of information required”—and their consequent loss, not only to himself but to his country (239-40).

The existence of rival English and French nomenclatures within a system ostensibly designed to provide a unique and universally accepted designation for every living species signalled a disjunction between the ostensible function of Linnaean terminology and the way it actually operated. At least until the final decades of the nineteenth century, the universality of scientific nomenclature and therefore the uniqueness of individual species names were more matters of assertion than of demonstration. Anybody could present an authoritative-seeming terminology, and, as it turned out, more or less anybody did. In the late eighteenth and early nine-

<sup>1</sup> Among the important discussions of this project are Foucault; Thomas, ch.2; and Allen, chs. 1-3.

<sup>2</sup> There were exceptions to this general neglect. Sometimes, as with the quagga (*Equus quagga*), the indigenous name for a creature became an element of its scientific name.

teenth centuries this uncanonical plethora of names was often acknowledged directly—that is, natural history compendia would begin the description of a species with a synonyma, or list of all the names, both latinate and vernacular, by which the species was known. For example, in his *History of Quadrupeds*, Thomas Pennant listed twelve names of the hippopotamus, nine for the llama, and five for the horse (1: 157, 133, 1). Subsequently, zoologists tended to ignore alternative terminologies, citing only the binomials they preferred, unless they wished to criticize specific alternatives or to inveigh against the proliferation of terms.

Often, they did wish so to inveigh. And although the French drew repeated criticism for their willful and uncooperative “rage for innovation,” as one systematizer rather mildly put it (Lawrence xvi),<sup>3</sup> the most frequent targets of such criticism suggested that, in the view of British scientific establishment, the most serious challenges to the order and hierarchy expressed by scientific nomenclature were not foreign. In 1841 the British Association for the Advancement of Science appointed a committee “to draw up a series of rules with a view to establishing a nomenclature of zoology on an uniform and permanent basis.”<sup>4</sup> This committee was supposed to report back to the British Association the next year, but in fact, its work was not completed for more than two decades.<sup>5</sup> Despite this long delay, the concerns expressed at the outset were those that shaped the entire discussion. It was recognized that there were unavoidable technical causes for some disparities in nomenclature—for example, legitimate disagreement about where a creature’s closest affinities lay, and the occasional necessity of naming on the basis of the smallest possible sample (so that dissimilar members of a single species might be identified as two separate species)—and these unavoidable causes were generally ignored. The Nomenclature Committee instead focused its ire on a source of confusion that it took to be rooted in human nature, and therefore vulnerable to policing.

This source, castigated as an “evil” in the Committee’s initial provisional report, which was circulated for comments to a rather large circle of scientists, was “the practice of gratifying individual vanity by attempting on the most frivolous pretexts to cancel the terms established by original discoverers, and to substitute new and unauthorized nomenclature in their place” (*Proposed Plan 2*). Individual vanity was an issue because, largely as a result of the plethora of competing scientific names for species, ostensibly unique binomials were normally cited with the name of the namer appended in parentheses. Thus, even though scientific etiquette forbade discoverers of new species to commemorate themselves (an attempt to enforce refinement that was routinely compromised by the tendency of discoverers to name species after their employers or sponsors), this parenthetical convention provided a strong incitement to naturalists who might value glory over truth.

In the view of the Committee and its correspondents, these rogue naturalists were not a random sample of the zoological community, distinguished only by moral weakness. Instead, it was implied by the rules that were proposed as correctives for this situation, they also shared other characteristics. The rules stressed the importance of preserving the latinity of zoological nomenclature, in part to supersede possible national differences, but in part also to distinguish zoologists with the command of classical languages normally acquired only through formal education from those whose expertise had been acquired in less genteel academies.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, it was asserted “the *best* zoological names are . . . derived from . . . Latin or Greek,” and namers were warned against designations that revealed a misunderstanding or half-understanding of classical texts, such as referring to an ancient name for a different animal, or a mythological figure that had no relation to the character of the animal being named (*Proposed Plan 11-14*). (That such strictures reflected a desire to establish a binary taxonomy of Victorian zoologists, rather than a more generalized respect for traditional scholarship, was suggested by a warning to nomenclators inclined to delve too deeply into Aristotle, Pliny, and other figures from the prehistory of zoology. Such propensities might result in “our zoological studies . . . [being] frittered away amid the refinements of classical learning” [*Proposed Plan 5*]). Further, whole classes of names were repeatedly banned on the grounds that they revealed vulgarity or lack of taste—for example, nonsense names, names made up of fragments of two different words, hybrid names that combined elements of two languages (often also a telltale indication of insufficient education), and names that instead of commemorating “persons of eminence as scientific zoologists,” celebrated “persons of no scientific reputation, as curiosity dealers . . ., Peruvian priestesses . . ., or Hottentots” (*Proposed Plan 11-14*). A paleontologist primarily interested in the remains of extinct sea monsters characterized the latter transgression in similar terms as “injurious to the dignity of Science, and Taste of the Age in which we live” (Hawkins 9). And in several letters to H. E. Strickland, the zoologist who headed the Nomenclature Committee, Charles Darwin enthusiastically applauded his efforts, while disparaging those naturalists in need of suppression as mere “species-mongers” who wanted to “have their vanity tickled” and were therefore responsible for a “vast amount of bad work.”<sup>7</sup>

Nor did non-elite naturalists pose the only challenge to the authority represented by a uniform, definitive, and exclusive code of zoological nomenclature. Interest in the natural products of exotic territories was not restricted to Victorian scientific circles, however loosely or restrictively defined, and the larger audience for zoological curiosities had little interest in the hairsplitting of nomenclatural purists, or, for that matter, in any latinate binomials. From this perspective, differences within the scientific community were less important than the

<sup>3</sup> Lawrence’s words were an early example of what proved to be a durable strain in British science.

<sup>4</sup> Manuscript note in Scrapbook I, Nomenclature Papers, Hugh E. Strickland Collection, Cambridge University Museum of Zoology.

<sup>5</sup> Such timetables have not been uncommon in the development of a uniform system of nomenclature. For accounts of this history, see Heppell, Heller, and Linsley and Usinger.

<sup>6</sup> For an extended discussion on the the role of class within the early Victorian scientific community, see Rudwick.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Darwin to H. E. Strickland, January 29, 1849, in Nomenclature Papers, Scrapbook I, Hugh E. Strickland Collection, Cambridge University Museum of Zoology.



difference between that self-defined elite, which claimed to control a certain sphere of knowledge, and others interested in the same material, who resented such claims. Thus the very nomenclature used by scientists to symbolize their intellectual hegemony could be subverted to express criticism and even ridicule. In this vein *Punch* occasionally made pseudo-scientific nomenclature the metaphor for the love of obfuscation shared by scientists and most other scholarly specialists, referring to the "Clamour-making Cat (*Felis catterwaulans*), which is well known to all Londoners," the "*Felis omnivora*, or Common Lodging-House-Keeper's Cat," the "Learned British Pig (*Porcus Sapiens Britannicus*)," and the "Rum Shrub (*Shrubbus Curiosus*)" ("Our Cat Show" 101 and "Notes by a Cockney Naturalist" 194).

A more common, and perhaps also a stronger, riposte to the claims implicit in the celebration of scientific expertise was to ignore them completely—to indulge without reservation in what the British Association's Nomenclature Committee referred to as "the vicious taste on the part of the public" for "vernacular appellations" (*Proposed Plan* 3). The public insisted on calling a buffalo a buffalo and also sometimes on calling a bison a buffalo or even a bonassus, no matter how much it was exhorted or bullied to the contrary. And when financial matters were at stake, zoologists stuck to their nomenclatural principles at their peril. For example, the failure of several mid-Victorian zoos resulted from the refusal of their directors to pitch the exhibits to the general public rather than to naturalists (Ritvo 214). In the preface to a new edition of his *Observations in Natural History*, Leonard Jenyns more shrewdly assured readers that he had "transferred to the notes all the scientific names of . . . animals" (1: x).

And so the hegemonic discourse of scientific nomenclature neither told nor constituted, in several ways, the whole story. The claims of imperial British science to name, and implicitly, therefore, to control the exotic regions appropriated by their brothers (or themselves)-in-arms, were contested from within and without the scientific enterprise, and on grounds that varied from nationality to class to commercial interest. From the distance of a century and more, the scientific discourse may seem to dwarf its rivals; it is easy to take its dismissive claims at face value. But this may be a distortion due to distance, and to the fact that, at least in the view from the library, the scientific discourse has had greater staying power and undergone less change than its rivals. But to be misled by this into ignoring the multivocality of Victorian discourse, and the reluctance of many ordinary citizens of nineteenth-century

Britain to acknowledge the claims of self-constituted authorities, is to grant those authorities retroactively a victory that they sought in vain in their own time.

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## The Anti-Comedy of The Trumpet-Major

Richard Nemesvari

Savile Club, / 15, Savile Row. W. / June 9, 1879

Dear Sir,

Some time ago you were so kind as to read a MS. of mine & your remarks upon it were such as to make me feel that I should

like to submit another to you at some future time—one nearer to your own standard of taste. I have now begun a story of this sort, & I should have much pleasure in sending it to you to look over, with a view to its appearance in the magazine if you are willing to do so.

I may just add that it is to be above all things a cheerful story, without views or opinions, & is intended to wind up happily—in short I flatter myself that you would not regret reading it. Believe me, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

Thomas Hardy. (*Letters* 1: 64-65)

Penny Boumelha has said of Hardy's fiction that it is shaped from first to all but last by his desire both to challenge and to keep within the conventions of the Victorian novel (29), and in this letter to John Blackwood may be detected the concerns of an author who, as he attempts to publish his seventh novel, has created for himself an uncomfortable reputation for possessing "views and opinions" antagonistic to his audience. Indeed, at this point in his career Hardy is more than a little unsure of himself. The mixed reviews which greeted *The Return of the Native* were especially discouraging since Hardy considered it his first attempt at "serious" fiction. The result of this discouragement was a period of experimentation in form and method which produced *The Trumpet-Major*, *A Laodicean*, and *Two on a Tower*, three novels whose status as minor works has often prevented a full realization of their complexities. This is particularly true of *The Trumpet-Major*, for in it Hardy employs a technique of genre subversion which, if not observed closely, may easily mislead a reader to include the novel within the very genres being undercut.

At this point I should perhaps clarify my use of the word *genre*. For my purposes I wish to give the term as much flexibility as possible, and it may be helpful here to think of Kant's insistence upon what he called the "exemplary" generation of art. That is, art is not created by a series of rules and constraints which may be analytically isolated and identified. Rather an audience notices certain recurrent regularities and effects which appear to be examples of the working of a rule, while remaining unable precisely to formulate that rule.<sup>1</sup> Thus I do not want to imply that a genre consists of, let us say, six rules or conventions, and that Hardy mechanically subverts it by breaking three, or four, or two of them. Instead Hardy encourages certain types of responses, what Boumelha calls "aesthetic ideologies" (6), through his use of plot and character. It is the suppositions and responses evoked by these elements that I am calling genre, and Hardy's subversion lies in forcing his readers to acknowledge the unresolved and unresolvable tensions created by denying them the resolutions they attempt to impose on the text.

The dominant form being established and then undercut in *The Trumpet-Major* is comedy. But there is another issue which claims attention, particularly in the light of certain judgments made by critics such as John Bayley, in his *An Essay on Thomas Hardy*. Bayley maintains that Hardy wrote two novels that are failures—*Under the Greenwood Tree* and *The Trumpet-Major*. It is not so much that Bayley is wrong in his evaluation that is interesting, although he is most certainly wrong, but rather the way in which he is mistaken. One of his central premises is that the form of a Hardy novel, and its success, is "strongly influenced, if not actually determined, by Hardy's relation to the heroine" (137). Having established this idea, Bayley makes the following observations:

Hardy has two bogus heroines—Fancy Day of *Under the Greenwood Tree* and Anne Garland of *The Trumpet-Major* . . . . In the

case of [these] two the forms have been predetermined: the pastoral and the historical have been set up as forms conventional and secondhand in themselves before the heroines have been tailored to fit them; and from this dead touch—so alien to Hardy's kind of involuntary experiment in form—the two novels do not recover.

Fancy Day and Anne Garland are genre heroines *tout simple*, and their remarkable lack of existence—remarkable in the light of Hardy's successes, sometimes against all odds, in putting it into his other girls—shows how little he is a genre novelist. (143)

Bayley's assertion that Hardy is not a genre novelist is accurate enough, but his assumption that *The Trumpet-Major* may be classified as an historical novel is suspect. Indeed, that *Under the Greenwood Tree* may be easily categorized as a pastoral is equally questionable, but an exploration of this issue is not required here. Bayley has accepted certain elements of *The Trumpet-Major* at face value, without recognizing the resistances to genre also contained within the work. As a prelude to exploring the idea of anti-comedy, then, it may be best to begin by examining the idea of Hardy and anti-history.

There is, of course, no point in denying Hardy's historical research, since the "Trumpet-Major Notebook" demonstrates his concerns about accuracy. But the accurate description of period clothing, and even the direct quotation from early nineteenth-century newspapers and magazines, does not necessarily represent the creation of genre, as Bayley seems to think. Georg Lukács, in his *The Historical Novel*, is very clear about what he calls the "classical form" of historical fiction as developed by Sir Walter Scott. "What is lacking in the so-called historical novel before [Scott] is precisely the specifically historical, that is, derivation of the individuality of characters from the historical peculiarity of their age" (15); and then later—"Scott endeavours to portray the struggles and antagonisms of history by means of characters who, in their psychology and destiny, always represent social trends and historical forces" (33). If Lukács is essentially correct in his analysis of this aspect of the historical novel, and I think he is, then clearly Hardy in no way fits this description. Anne Garland and her suitors, and the Wessex world of Overcombe and Budmouth they inhabit, neither reflect nor represent "historical trends and forces." As Michael Millgate has said, "although the characters of *The Trumpet-Major* are authentically dressed and housed, their lives impinged upon by the great events of the day, little in them as thinking and acting individuals could be said to mark them as belonging quintessentially to their period" (*Career* 162). Further, as far as Hardy may be said to have had a "theory" of history, that theory cannot be reconciled with the Marxist paradigm established by Lukács, or indeed with any formalized view of the past. "History is rather a stream than a tree," Hardy says in the *Life*; "There is nothing organic in its shape, nothing systematic in its development. It flows on like a thunder-

<sup>1</sup> Kant's analysis of this aesthetic effect is complex, but the following quotation may give a general idea of his approach. "As the subjective universal communicability of the mode of representation in a judgement of taste is to subsist apart from the presupposition of any definitive concept it can be nothing else than the mental state present in the free play of imagination and

understanding (so far as these are in mutual accord, as is requisite for *cognition in general*): for we are conscious that this subjective relation suitable for cognition in general must be just as valid for every one, and consequently as universally communicable, as is any determinate cognition, which always rests upon that relation as its subjective condition" (58).

storm-rill by a road side; now a straw turns it this way, now a tiny barrier of sand that” (179). This statement would provoke some harsh words from Lukács, and probably earn Hardy his place with Dickens as a perpetrator of what the critic calls “petty bourgeois humanism and idealism” (292), for both Victorian writers make a distinction between private lives and concerns, which are essentially timeless, and history; a distinction which Lukács denies. Hardy is not concerned with what he perceives as the wayward wanderings of historical forces, nor is he attempting to provide a dialectical analysis of the past, or the present, through the creation of a historical fiction. Instead he focuses on the central concern which is present in all his novels: the complicated antagonisms between desire and fulfillment, and the conflicts created by the coming together of what Pierre D’Exideuil calls the “human pair.”

I would argue, therefore, that by preventing any kind of “historicism” from influencing his plot, Hardy pushes history into the background, and his characters to the fore. In the novel’s transmission from manuscript to serial, and from serial to first edition, Hardy systematically removes any references to specific dates. Thus the manuscript reading describing the “ragged-robins of eighteen hundred and six” becomes in the first edition the “ragged-robins of the following year”; and the manuscript’s “The year eighteen hundred and seven changed” is revised to simply “The year changed . . . .” Of course Hardy cannot alter dates of important events which are reported as happening during the action of the story, such as the battle of Trafalgar or Mack’s defeat at Ulm. But by removing the very precise chronology he had established in the manuscript he causes the novel’s historical “location” to become considerably less obtrusive.

And the ambiguity becomes even greater with the substitution, in the 1895-96 Osgood, McIlvaine edition, of fictitious Wessex place names for the factual ones which the book had contained until that point. While these revisions were not made specifically for *The Trumpet-Major* they increase an effect which was always implicit in the text. In its original form the novel’s juxtaposition of fiction and history created a subdued kind of tension, the reader being well aware that no such characters as the Lovedays and the Garlands ever walked the streets of Weymouth and Dorchester. But when those cities become Budmouth and Casterbridge, and the availability of historic “reality” becomes much more problematic, the juxtaposition becomes overt. After these changes it is the historical figures of George III and Sir Thomas Masterman Hardy, both of whom make appearances in the story, who become “fictional,” because they have been transported, one could almost say translated, from the world of records and chronicles into the world of the imagination. The reader of *The Trumpet-Major* is therefore faced with a kind of temporal disjunction, for Hardy purposefully invokes the past while resolutely avoiding history, and it is through this rather discomfiting framework that we observe the novel’s events.

Yet if Hardy is manipulating the uses of history in the novel, he is equally utilizing the conventions of comedy. Anne’s vacillation between Bob and John, the two brothers’ own shifting attitudes towards her, both real and feigned, along with the interventions and interferences of Festus and Matilda, all create a situation reminiscent of *A Midsummer*

*Night’s Dream*, or even of a Jane Austen novel run slightly out of control. Further, many of the characters fill easily identifiable stock roles. Benjamin Derriman is a Jonsonian miser, constantly worried about his “few poor little deeds” and his guineas. As a *miles gloriosus* Festus is filled with vanity and described in extravagant terms as “gigantic” and “ponderous,” while at the same time being quick to find excuses to avoid his duties as a soldier in the yeomanry. Even the jolly Miller Loveday and the merry Widow Garland, although less “flat” than the Derrimans, are recognizable comic types. Through the complications of his plot and his use of stock characters, and through his development of the novel’s central concern, the choice of a husband by a young woman from among competing suitors, Hardy creates with his reader the expectations of comedy.

In discussing the ways in which *The Trumpet-Major* both utilizes and undercuts genre, I have chosen to employ elements of Northrop Frye’s formulation of comedy, as presented in the “Mythos of Spring” section of his *Anatomy of Criticism*. My reasons for selecting Frye over other theorists who have explored comedy are twofold. First, his view that comedy is a broadly narrative category, and not simply a dramatic one, allows me to apply the term to a novel without being accused of jumbling literary forms. Second, Frye’s emphasis on audience, on the idea that reader or spectator enters into the fulfillment of whatever mode or mythos is being experienced, strikes me as appropriate not only to *The Trumpet-Major* but also to the general body of Hardy’s work. Hardy’s sensitivity to the reception of both his prose and poetry is well known, not to say notorious. His constant surprise at what he insists are his audience’s misreadings takes on an air of disingenuousness through its sheer repetition. In a very real sense Hardy forces this situation. His writing relies upon the reader to fill in the gaps, to complete the text, the two most famous instances being Eustacia Vye’s suicide/accident and Tess Durbeyfield’s rape/seduction. Thus on this point Frye’s theory and Hardy’s practice are complementary, although as we shall see, completing a Hardy text may not be an easy task for the reader.

Frye states that “[t]he obstacles to the hero’s desire . . . form the action to the comedy” (164). There can be no doubt that John Loveday’s desire is to marry Anne Garland, and in *The Trumpet-Major* Hardy appears to provide that most hoary of obstacles to novelistic marriages: class distinction. As the daughter of a landscape painter Anne is apparently out of the sphere of a mere miller’s son. This is ostensibly what makes Festus such a dangerous rival, for as Squire Derriman’s nephew and heir he represents a match which would provide Anne with both social advancement and financial security. However, the seriousness of this issue is called into question early on by a conversation between Anne and John shortly after she has rejected his proposal.

“And that other thing I asked you?” [John] ventured to say at last.

“We won’t speak of it.”

“You don’t dislike me?”

“O no!” she said, gazing at the bathing-machines, digging children, and other common objects of the sea-shore, as if her interest lay there rather than in him.

"But I am not worthy of the daughter of a genteel professional man—that's what you mean?"

"There's something more than worthiness required in such cases, you know," she said, still without calling her mind away from surrounding scenes. "Ah, there are the Queen and princesses at the window!"

"Something more?"

"Well, since you will make me speak, I mean the woman ought to love the man."

The trumpet-major seemed to be less concerned about this than about her supposed superiority. "If it were all right on that point, would you mind the other?" he asked, like a man who knows he is too persistent yet cannot be still.

"How can I say when I don't know? What a pretty chip hat the elder princess wears!" (112)

This passage, and later events, make it quite clear that social differences have little bearing upon Anne's choice, although other characters, including the trumpet-major, continue to convince themselves that they do. And indeed, with the marriage of her mother to John's father, whatever claims Anne might have made about class superiority are literally prevented, because she is now exactly on a level with the miller and his sons. Her insistence that "the woman ought to love the man," however, has an ominous ring, if only because of Hardy's ambivalent attitude towards the causes and effects of that emotion. A statement which, in a work by another novelist, might hold the promise of eventual recognition and fulfillment, is in the context of *The Trumpet-Major* neutral at best. And that John is "less concerned about this" than about other things, reveals that he himself does not fully realize what he is up against in his pursuit of Anne. In any case, the obstacles confronting him are considerably more complex than can be accounted for by relative differences in social rank, and one way to explore those complexities is to use Frye's ideas about blocking characters.

In the *Anatomy* Frye maintains that comedy represents a movement from one kind of society to another, and that the hero's attempt to facilitate that movement may, at least temporarily, be blocked by characters who represent the "old" society (163). Frye also observes that these blocking characters are often parental, and that the success of the hero is signalled by their defeat, and the crystallization around the hero of a new social order. In *The Trumpet-Major*, however, these concepts are turned on their heads. Far from attempting to prevent John's marriage to Anne, Miller Loveday actively encourages the match. After word reaches Overcombe about Bob's affair with another woman in Portsmouth, the miller goes first to John, to encourage him to renew his suit, and then to Anne to ask her if she cannot consider sympathetically John's proposal. As for Anne's mother, while she does for a time entertain hopes that her daughter will marry the moneyed Festus, under the threat posed by the possible French invasion her social aspirations are put aside in the face of larger concerns: "Mrs. Loveday thought how ridiculous a thing social ambition was in such a conjuncture as this, and vowed that she would leave Anne to love where she would" (219). Having disqualified the couple's parents as blocking characters, one must also say that Festus himself provides no real opposition. Anne never seriously considers him as a possible husband, and

indeed the only feeling she has for him is described by the narrator as "mortal dislike" (96). But Frye's theory about blocking characters is not inappropriate to *The Trumpet-Major*. The characters blocking the union of John and Anne—are John and Anne.

On two occasions John is directly responsible for the frustration of his own desire. The first occurs when he breaks the engagement between Bob and Matilda. After inadvertently discovering that Bob has been successfully courting Anne, we are provided with the following unambiguous assessment:

With the conserved hope of more than half a year dashed away in a moment, [John] could yet feel that the cruelty of a protest would be even greater than its inutility. It was absolutely by his own contrivance that the situation had been shaped. Bob, left to himself, would long ere this have been the husband of another woman. (254)

The second, and literally fatal, occasion on which John prepares his own defeat is near the end of the novel, when he writes Bob and all but forces him to return to Overcombe to revive his relationship with Anne. This self-repressive step is taken because John is tormented by finally receiving Anne's favor, but is unable to respond because he also knows that Bob's infidelity to her was temporary and that Bob still loves her. Indeed, both John and the reader are aware that her sudden encouragement of his advances is somewhat suspect. This, however, leads to the question of Anne herself.

It might be objected that if Anne really does love Bob, and not John, then there is nothing problematic about the whole situation. After all, it is her choice. But it is just on this issue of choice that Hardy catches the reader up. By half way through the book it is abundantly clear that John is Bob's superior in every way. Anne at least tacitly admits this when she says "'No one loves me as well as you, John; nobody in the world is so worthy to be loved; and yet I cannot anyhow love you rightly'" (333). It is the last phrase that lies at the crux of the matter, for Anne's vacillation between the two brothers is caused by her recognition of the one's worthiness, and her inescapable love of the other. Love, the emotion which should bring about the desired "happy ending," becomes an unconquerable obstacle. By following its dictates, a decision which in a comedy would be considered right, Anne makes what the reader can only feel to be the wrong choice. The point of this is that Hardy, by investing his main characters with impulses and qualities which militate against the achievement of a certain conclusion, the conclusion which both hero and audience desire, effectively prevents any type of comic resolution. When the blocking figures and the hero and heroine are the same, where is the possibility of reconciliation?

At the end of the novel, then, far from any new society crystallizing around the hero, John Loveday is expelled from his society. And indeed, with the series of emendations Hardy made to foretell explicitly John's death in the Peninsular War, he certainly gives his audience what Michael Millgate has called a characteristic twist of the knife (*Biography* 210). Within the context of the entire work these revisions are quite telling, and not merely because they force the reader into a

world of pathos. Rather, this ending provides a fitting culmination of John's loss in love and to the self-sacrifice which is the cause of that loss.

Unsurprisingly, John Bayley would not agree with such an assessment. He finds almost the entirety of the novel's action unattractive, and accuses Hardy of manipulating his plot "as if it were the sort of contemporary comedy at the Budmouth theatre in which his actress Matilda might be playing a part" (147). As is often the case with Bayley's analysis of *The Trumpet-Major*, this comment contains a legitimate insight which he fails to pursue. In Chapter 30, entitled "At the Theatre Royal," John, Anne and Bob do indeed go to a play at Budmouth in which Matilda is acting, although they are not originally aware that she is part of the cast. This chapter is important in a number of ways, not least because the events which occur here provide the impetus for the last third of the novel. But for my purposes the chapter is significant because of the appearance of two short sentences which may easily be overlooked. In the first version of the manuscript Hardy specifically identifies the play his characters view as Colman the younger's *The Heir at Law*, an eighteenth-century comedy marked by the usual confusions and a happy finale. While Hardy eventually deleted the actual title of this work, so that all printed editions of the text read only "To-night it was one of Colman's" (265), the type of play being observed is revealed by his statement that Matilda's role is that of "one of the subordinate ladies of the comedy" (265). As Bob watches his ex-fiancée on the stage, his old attraction to her begins to revive, as Anne, seated beside him, is only too aware. When her efforts to convince Bob to take her home before the play is finished fail, we are provided with the following: "Anne said no more, but waited on, supremely uncomfortable, and almost tearful. She began to feel that she did not like life particularly well; it was too complicated: she saw nothing of the scene, and only longed to get away, and to get Bob away with her" (268). Perhaps indeed life is "too complicated," too complicated for its conflicting passions and desires to be portrayed as a comedy, at least by an author such as Hardy. Instead he provides a story whose complications, while implying comedy, are embedded in a text which denies the possibility of comic resolution.

It is perhaps an over-simplification to say that the reader of *The Trumpet-Major* cannot help feeling that Anne makes the wrong decision by choosing Bob. Certainly on one level we desire John and Anne's marriage, but on another we also end up thinking that Bob and Anne deserve each other, or, what is perhaps more accurate, that Anne does not really deserve John. It may be helpful here to think of the conclusion of one of the plot lines in *Vanity Fair*, a novel which is sometimes introduced into discussions of *The Trumpet-Major*. When Dobbin, after years of service and fidelity to Amelia, finally grows tired of a thoroughly unreciprocated passion, he roundly proclaims her unworthy of his devotion, and leaves her. This, along with Becky's revelation of George's unfaithfulness, shocks Amelia into recognizing Dobbin's worthiness, and into accepting his proposal, a situation which has led some critics to wonder if Dobbin is really getting such a bargain. In a sense the same feeling operates in Hardy's novel, but my point is that whatever we finally think about Anne, and I would argue that we are meant to feel alienated from her, we

cannot simply accept her rejection of John as appropriate, because of the love *he* still feels for her, and because of the foreshadowed death which is the result of that rejection. It is this factor which prevents the novel from being an ironic comedy; that is, simply a comedy in which only the unworthy deserve the fair. Instead, *The Trumpet-Major* is an anti-comedy, a text which does not allow its audience to make a single evaluative judgment of whether its conclusion is positive or negative, appropriate or inappropriate, but instead forces a permanent suspension of that judgment. Frye says that "[a]s the final society reached by comedy is one that the audience recognizes all along to be the proper and desirable state of affairs, an act of communion with the audience is in order . . . . The resolution of comedy comes, so to speak, from the audience's side of the stage" (164). In the terms of this analysis, Hardy's novel might be described as an exercise in non-communion and irresolution. However much the audience may wish to fulfill its genre expectations, to impose some type of comic closure on a story which appears to encourage such a reading, that wish is frustrated by a text which indefinitely defers what could be called the satisfactions of comedy.

I think it is fair to say, therefore, that Hardy's claim in his letter to Blackwood that *The Trumpet-Major* is a "cheerful story" which "winds up happily," is more strategic than accurate. Certainly when the novel first appeared Leslie Stephen accused Hardy of having his heroine marry the wrong man, and when Hardy objected that they mostly did, Stephen retorted, "Not in magazines" (qtd. in Millgate, *Biography* 211). But at this point Hardy was no longer content merely to be the "good hand at a serial" which he said was his highest aspiration when *Far from the Madding Crowd* made its appearance under Stephen's editorship (*Letters* 1: 28). Shortly before Hardy's death, J. B. Priestly sent him a copy of his essay "The Life of George Meredith," and in writing to thank him for the gift Hardy included this passage:

Meredith was, as you recognize, and might have insisted on even more strongly, and I always felt, in the direct succession of Congreve and the artificial comedians of the Restoration, and in getting his brilliancy we must put up with the fact that he would not, or could not—at any rate did not—when aiming to represent the "Comic Spirit," let himself discover the tragedy that always underlies Comedy if you only scratch it deeply enough. (*Life* 474)

In *The Trumpet-Major* comedy is "scratched" just about as deeply as is possible within the limits Hardy sets for himself, and if this does not result in the great tragedies of his last ten years as a novelist I am not sure that either he or the book need apologize. Hardy always maintained that his work embodied no systematic philosophy, that his novels were instead a "series of seemings" ("Preface" to *Jude* viii), and this is as true of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* or *Jude the Obscure* as it is of *The Trumpet-Major*. Through his portrayal of John Loveday and Anne Garland he explores the topic which continually fascinated him: the conflict between consciousness and existence, between what should be and what is. And the technique Hardy employs, which successfully denies his

reader any easy or pre-determined resolution to the fictional situation, is a more eloquent comment on his perception of that conflict than any didactic statement.

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## Behind "Golden Barriers": Framing and Taming the Blessed Damozel

Andrew Leng

Some time after 1866 Dante Gabriel Rossetti formulated this eroticized theory of *ut pictura poesis*:

Picture and poem bear the same relation to each other as beauty does in man and woman: the point of meeting where the two are most identical is the supreme perfection. (*Works* 606)<sup>1</sup>

Most discussions of Rossetti and the sister arts mention this quotation: Richard Stein sees Rossetti's statement as a "fragment" which "seems to outline and analogy between an intellectualized concept of love and his composite art" (196-97); and Maryann Ainsworth believes it is particularly applicable to "the most successful instances of the picture-poem idea" which "came to him during his last ten years," that is, between 1872 and 1882 (6-7).

Perhaps the fullest and most perceptive analysis of Rossetti's formulation of *ut pictura poesis* has been made by Ian Fletcher, who suggests that

The "beauty" of the picture is reciprocated by the "identical"—if superficially dissimilar—beauty of the poem resulting in an indivisible ideal unity, comparable only to the state of love. In Rossetti's sonnets for pictures of women, the metaphor is actualized as an encounter between observer-poet and portrait-beloved. (28-29)

Certainly Rossetti's emphasis on a reciprocal, identical beauty indicates that his hypothetical point of "supreme perfection" occurs at a moment of higher, aesthetic synthesis. That is, a kind of vicarious, erotic union occurs between male artist-spectator and female art-object, an aesthetically creative rather than a procreative dialectic.

The fictional artist's desire for reconciliation and identity with the female subject of his art—his anima—is, as Barbara Charlesworth Gelpi has shown, a central Rossettian topos. Rossetti's anima first appeared in the selection of poems he sent to William Bell Scott for his perusal in November 1847 under the title "Songs of the Art Catholic," in her guises as the speaker's sister, Margaret, in "My Sister's Sleep," as the Virgin Mary in "Mater Pulchrae Delectionis," and as the eponymous heroine of "The Blessed Damozel." Gelpi argues convincingly that in the poems which feature versions of his anima Rossetti was striving to achieve "union of the self by uniting masculine and feminine principles within the self," claiming that this "internal drama" (1) lends psychological coherence to his work.

Gelpi feels that while it may be coherent "The Blessed Damozel" is problematic. She points out that if the anima "becomes an end in herself, the imaginative symbol of all that the conscious self desires, then she is dangerous," and concludes that the poem "ends not with a union of self achieved but with such a union still hoped for, and in that obsessive, unfulfilled wish for union lies the danger" (4). However, I shall be arguing that although the union of male and female fails to occur in "The Blessed Damozel" the "danger" of the anima's domination of the male is averted because of two factors not considered by Gelpi: firstly, because the poem's "two" male speakers, the omniscient and the parenthetical narrators, eventually unite to form a single voice, a dominant male discourse; and secondly, because as the male position consolidates, the once vociferous and dominant Damozel is neutralized, eventually losing her voice and weeping.

The nature, unity and function of the narrative voices in "The Blessed Damozel" have been the subject of continued

<sup>1</sup> The 1974 edition of the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* translates Horace's dictum *ut pictura poesis* thus: "as is painting so is poetry"; and it gives a brief history of the topos.

debate among Rossetti critics. In his analysis of the first published version of the poem, which appeared in the second number of *The Germ* (80-83) in February 1850, D. M. R. Bentley claims that the poem was intended as an almost polemical exercise in "the re-creation of a medieval awareness" which throws into relief the relationship between "the implied poet and the historical percipient in the poem." Bentley defines this "historical percipient" as

an omniscient and speculative figure whose style and assumptions characterize him as the representative of the medieval-Catholic awareness that the reader is invited to enter. The function of the percipient in "The Blessed Damozel" is complex: like the implied poet of Rossetti's "Sonnets for Pictures" his task is to present a "picture" (in some case the "diptych" composed of the blessed Damozel and her earthbound lover) and to imagine the world and feelings of its personae . . . . Through his re-creation of a spatial and emotional relationship that is radically alien to the "modern" mind, the percipient inducts the reader-spectator into the medieval-Catholic awareness that he was designed by Rossetti to embody. (6)

This ingenious critical construction of a poem equipped with an implied poet, percipient narrator, parenthetical speaker and Damozel, fails to take sufficient account of the fact that as one of Bentley's own footnotes concedes, many commentators see the "entire drama" of the poem as being "enacted within the single consciousness of the earthbound lover," the parenthetical speaker. In part our perception of the whole poem as a product of the parenthetical speaker's schizophrenic consciousness may be a response to Rossetti's failure completely to control point of view in "The Blessed Damozel." This lack of control is sufficient reason to regard Bentley's view that there are four levels of narration as being somewhat optimistic; a more convincing case has been made by Paul Lauter and Thomas Brown for the earthbound, parenthetical-print speaker being the presiding consciousness, the former arguing that the poem's vision "can be regarded entirely as the grieving . . . lover's projection" (346).

With her "blue grave eyes," "three white lilies" and "white rose of Mary's gift" (ll. 3, 5, 9), the Damozel is evidently a Marian anima figure. What the narrator does in an attempt to unite himself with his anima is to activate the simultaneous processes of aesthetic and erotic unification which bring the poem and picture and man and woman into Rossetti's reciprocal state of ideal conjunction. Thus as the poem begins poetry and painting become nearly identical, as the top part of the Rossetian "diptych," the initial description of the Damozel, is presented as a monumental tableau. But this vision is not totally static: the lady's "still look" (l. 16) is, paradoxically, still full of "wonder" (l. 15), a characteristically Rossetian attribution of psychological animation to a static, pictorialized figure. The Damozel's powerful gaze strives to penetrate and thus to overcome the "steep gulph" of time and space which separates her from her beloved.

Consequently she leans out from "the gold bar of

heaven" (l. 2) in an effort to escape the confines of pictorial stasis which the frame-like heavenly barrier imposes. Realizing that she is consigned to remain perpetually silent and still within her golden frame the Damozel immediately challenges the limitations of her condition by leaning and gazing outward, and warming her pictorial barrier with the pressure of her bosom. Eventually and inevitably, after ten stanzas, the Damozel breaks her pictorial vow of silence with a petulant outburst:

"I wish that he were come to me,  
For he will come," she said.  
"Have I not prayed in solemn heaven?  
On earth has he not prayed?  
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?  
And shall I feel afraid?" (ll. 61-6)

The Damozel's prayers have been reciprocated and, significantly, anticipated by her earthly lover, who is encased, as Bentley points out, in parentheses which are the "typographical equivalent of a predella" (39). The parenthetical typography of "The Blessed Damozel" is the most striking example of Rossetti's literary pictorialism, a device which complements the pictorial image of the "gold bar," and appears virtually to have dictated the bipartite form of Rossetti's Early Renaissance style depiction of *The Blessed Damozel* (1875-8).<sup>2</sup>

Bentley claims that the "fantastic mind of the lover" is "separate from yet accessible to the percipient" narrator, but if anything the reverse is true: the parenthetical speaker, who becomes the reclining figure in the painting's predella, has access to the scene described by the seemingly omniscient narrator. He adds an important coda to the initial description, emphatically qualifying it in terms of immediate first-person, present tense experience:

to them she left, her day  
Had counted as ten years.  
  
(To one it is ten years of years:  
. . . Yet now, here in this place  
Surely she leaned o'er me,—her hair  
Fell all about my face . . .  
Nothing: the Autumn-fall of leaves.  
The whole year sets apace.) (ll. 17-24)

The bland omniscience of the first voice which explains that a day for the Damozel counts as ten years for those left behind is abruptly corrected by "one" who apparently knows better, the hyperbolic lover for whom the Damozel's "day" is "ten years of years." Because the main narrative and the parenthetical one substantially overlap there is a sense of reciprocity, and a point of intersection and interaction is thereby established.

Momentarily her lover is convinced that the Damozel has been in contact with him and he fantasizes that it is her

<sup>2</sup> This version is in the Fogg Museum of Art, Harvard University, and is reproduced by Surtees no. 244.

hair—the yellow hair of a corn goddess—which fell about his face. In “Body’s Beauty” “one strangling golden hair” ensnares Lilith’s victims but here the Damozel’s hair is a reassuringly tangible token of her reality. Rapunzel-like it links heaven and earth almost as if it would draw the man heavenward, and like the gold bar of heaven the yellow hair defines the world of its two inhabitants, not as a barrier but as an inclusive and natural frame, embracing both lovers. As this fantasy dissolves it is replaced by a natural correlative for the falling hair, falling leaves, which are an ironic earthly equivalent of the corn image, signifying decay instead of fertility. Both the “hair, lying down” (l. 11) the Damozel’s back and the dead leaves of the parenthetical speaker’s world are featured in the appropriate heavenly and earthbound sections of Rossetti’s painting, reinforcing the reader-spectator’s sense of a close correspondence between bipartite poem and painting.

Although he says relatively little directly the parenthetical narrator in fact controls the movement of “The Blessed Damozel.” Rather like the sestet in a sonnet the parenthetical speaker’s comments initiate a volta, changing our point of view and perception of the Damozel by meditating upon particular aspects of her existence. Subsequently this speaker interrupts the Damozel as she anticipates teaching him in heaven, and again it is evident that he hears or knows what is said in the main body of the poem because he comments directly upon it:

“And I myself will teach him—  
 I myself lying so,—  
 The songs I sing here; which his mouth  
 Shall pause in hushed and slow,  
 Finding some knowledge at each pause  
 And some thing new to know.”  
 (Alas! to *her* wise simple mind  
 These things were all but known  
 Before: they trembled on her sense,—  
 Her voice had caught their tone.  
 Alas for lonely Heaven! Alas  
 For life wrung out alone!  
 Alas, and though the end were reached . . .  
 Was *thy* part understood  
 Or borne in trust? And for her sake  
 Shall this too be found good?—  
 May the close lips that knew not prayer  
 Praise ever thought they would?)  
 (ll.85-102)

The lady’s certainty that her lover’s mouth shall “pause in” between her songs “finding some new knowledge at each pause” is clearly a cue to the earthly lover to rehearse his lines for heaven. He duly responds with a lament which reveals an interesting aspect of their former relationship: with “*her* wise simple mind” the Damozel had had intuitive foreknowledge of heaven’s songs, whereas he had been doubt-

ful. Therefore in the second stanza of his second speech the lover engages in an intense self-interrogation, asking himself: “was *thy* part understood?” “May the close lips that knew not prayer / Praise ever, though they would?” Evidently the earthly lover remains as yet unable to make the leap of faith necessary to re-unite him with the Damozel, and we therefore return to the speaker who knows her part.

When Rossetti published “The Blessed Damozel” in the 1870 edition of *Poems* these parenthetical stanzas were revised, condensed, and I think, clarified:

(Alas! We two, we two, thou say’st  
 Yea, one wast thou with me  
 That once of old. But shall God lift  
 To endless unity  
 The soul whose likeness with thy soul  
 Was but its love for thee?) (ll. 97-102)

In this stanza the prospect of endless unity with the Damozel’s soul seems even more unlikely to her lover because his sense of inferiority has been intensified, and in the oil painting the male’s inferiority is graphically established by the small scale of his figure in comparison with the Damozel’s above him: his head is about the same size as one of her lilies.

The problem which the poem tries to resolve, but which the static painting does not and cannot deal with, is how to subordinate the confident decisive Damozel to a weak, passive male. In *The Germ* version of the poem this problem is particularly acute because it is evident that “*her*” mind is decidedly more wise than simple, while his wallows in repeated lamentation. Rossetti’s revisions of *The Germ* text go some way towards eliminating the repetitive histrionic quality from his voice but in both versions of the poem the male is dominated by the female, and both texts reverse this situation in almost identical concluding stanzas:

She gazed and listened and then said,  
 Less sad of speech than mild:  
 “All this is when he comes.” She ceased;  
 The light thrilled past her, filled  
 With Angels, in strong level lapse.  
 Her eyes prayed, and she smiled.  
 (I saw her smile.) But soon their flight  
 Was vague ’mid the poised spheres.  
 And then she cast her arms along  
 The golden barriers,  
 And laid her face between her hands  
 And wept. (I heard her tears.)  
 (ll. 139-50)<sup>3</sup>

Given the final words in “The Blessed Damozel” the parenthetical speaker is uncharacteristically assertive, and because his statements are affirmations of the percipient’s descriptions they read like parenthetical asides by him. Thus the

<sup>3</sup> There are a few minor changes in punctuation in the 1870 version of “The Blessed Damozel.” In addition, “the light thrilled past her” becomes “the light thrilled towards her,” the angels are in “strong level flight” instead of “lapse,”

and “their path was vague in distant spheres,” instead of “vague ’mid the poised spheres.”



juxtaposition of the impersonal, "Her eyes prayed, and she smiled" with, "I saw her smile," constitutes a significant convergence of "objective" and "subjective" points of view.

The ultimate integration of the twin aspects of the male psychology represented by Rossetti's main and parenthetical speakers is predicated upon a decisive shift in the latter's perception of the Damozel. Previously she had been vastly superior and therefore dominant inducing in her earthly lover a sense of inadequacy which results in his identity crisis. Objectively he recognizes her manifest superiority, but subjectively and parenthetically he is disturbed by this perception, at first rejecting the existence of his vision as "nothing." However, having heard the Damozel speak he is forced to admit her existence and question his worthiness of her.

The strategy finally adopted for reconciling the male to his anima is not to elevate him but to neutralize her. The Damozel's "gold bar" of the first stanza becomes the imprisoning "golden barriers" of the final one behind which she now retreats, becoming "mild" of speech, and regresses into the passive mode of Mariana, waiting for him to come. She becomes silent and therefore meek and benign, praying with her eyes and smiling and although the smile pleases the earthly lover his final triumph occurs when the Damozel cries. Seeing the smile and hearing the tears the earthly lover gains complete control of his vision and her mind. She ceases to be wise and becomes simple, crying for her beloved instead of threatening to teach him.

For the observer-poet of "The Blessed Damozel" the moment of "supreme" perfection occurs only when he is in

complete harmony with himself, when his two voices virtually match, and when his anima is entirely subordinated to him. In a more covert fashion "The Blessed Damozel" makes a similar point to Browning's "My Last Duchess": total male power resides in the complete control of a female art-object. The Duke is only happy when "all smiles" have stopped and Rossetti's earthly lover is happiest when the Damozel smiles contentedly but cries helplessly.

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## Scenes of Marital Life: The Middle March of Extratextual Reading

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What George Eliot entitles the "home epic" refers to any novel in which the home, either its degradation or reformation, functions as the ostensible thematic center; it is the bildungsroman of the family and, for obvious reasons, focuses on the marriage as an explanation of origins. Here is part of a conversation that transpires between two of *Middlemarch's* characters, Sir James and Mr. Cadwallader, about their neighbor Mr. Brooke:

"You look vexed."

Sir James's brow had a little crease in it, a little depression of the eyebrow, which he seemed purposely to exaggerate as he answered.

"It is only this conduct of Brooke's. I really think somebody should speak to him."

"What? meaning to stand?" said Mr. Cadwallader . . .

"Oh, I don't mean that," said Sir James . . . "I mean marriage . . ." (93)

In their misunderstanding, these two community leaders—one a rector and one a baronet—confuse political and marital issues. The rest of the conversation in fact completely subordinates political concerns to domestic ones by omitting any further discussion of the parliamentary question at hand: Mr. Brooke's political irresponsibility thus comes second to his domestic mismanagement. Though momentary, the misunderstanding is significant not because marriage plays a more fundamental role than politics in the psychic makeup of a typical Victorian (although that may or may not be the case),<sup>1</sup> but because the novel form, as the deliberate creation of a single consciousness, records a series of choices for which marriage serves as an analogue. Marriage, as a commonly chosen subject in nineteenth-century novelistic representation, perhaps tells us as much about the mode of representation as about the subject represented. I say "perhaps" not to suggest that when a novel talks about marriage it can confront only a linguistic representation of marriage as it happens in the "real world,"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Socio-historical research on marriage during the Victorian period is extensive, and although this essay is not the occasion to explore them, the cultural roots of particular views of marriage can perhaps offer insights into the cultural origins of the novel as a particular mode of presentation and of

thought.

<sup>2</sup> Since the idea of literature as trapped by its own linguistic and therefore "unreal" nature is common parlance among literary theorists, I do not wish to belabor it.

nor do I mean that such novels use marriage strictly to allegorize their own generic concerns; I mean only that there are aspects of both real and fictive marriages that lend themselves to reflecting on aspects of reading. When George Eliot begins the last chapter of *Middlemarch* with the words, "Marriage, which has been the bourne of so many narratives is still a great beginning . . . It is still the beginning of the home epic" (890), she weds subject to form. In her terms, marriage, as a novelistic subject, quite literally gives birth to the genre she calls "the home epic." And it is my purpose to explore what exactly her terms propose.

## I

## Appositionary Tales: Cautionary Poetics and Plots of Promise

Eliot invites us to associate marriage with the experience of reading different kinds of texts in her treatment of the love plots which flank Dorothea's: the cautionary tale of Rosamond and Lydgate and the fairytale of Mary and Fred. The former reveals its unhappy nature from the very beginning when Eliot explicitly condemns the textual imperialism embedded in Rosamond's preconceived romance: "A stranger," Eliot mocks, "was absolutely necessary to Rosamond's social romance, which had always turned on a lover and a bridegroom who was not a Middlemarcher . . . of late, indeed, the construction seemed to demand that he should somehow be related to a baronet . . ." (145). Here Eliot emphasizes that Rosamond forms her erotic expectations out of literary constructions. By playing on the word "romance" to affiliate the amorous with the fictitious, Eliot uses the "love" of the romance to establish the literary experience not only as that which unjustly determines desires, but that which distorts perception. By imposing the terms of literary romance on her material environment, Rosamond commits a fatal error in judgment.

Describing such errors in figurative terms, "we all of us, grave or light, get our thoughts entangled in metaphors, and act fatally on the strength of them" (*Middlemarch* 111), Eliot places poetic, or linguistic, representation at the center of human thought—or at least at the center of human thought when it focuses on romantic love. Thus Lydgate indulges in a mistaken logic when he addresses a woman he has no intention of marrying and flirts in metaphor, "I am sure you could teach me a thousand things—as an exquisite bird could teach a bear if there were any common language between them. Happily, there is a common language between women and men, and so the bears can get taught" (189). Seen deductively, Lydgate's initial metaphor would read: Bears = men; birds = women; bears and birds do not share the same language; therefore, men and women do not share the same language. Lydgate allows the birds and bears to communicate, however, only by breaking those principles of metaphor-making that demand that equivalences, once established, maintain consistency. Lydgate's blunder reveals that flirtation itself functions like a metaphor in that explicit terms offer themselves as markers for implicit ones. In an effort to communicate what would otherwise remain unutterable (i.e. sexual desire), Eliot attributes both Lydgate's amorous and literary mismanagement to his irresponsible exploitation of verbal conventions.

Eliot reiterates the point when she demonstrates how

Lydgate, as a well-educated British gentleman, subscribes to a conception of Woman born, not of experience, but of Petrarchan poetry:

Lydgate felt sure that if he ever married, his wife would have that feminine radiance, that distinctive womanhood which must be classed with flowers and music, that sort of beauty which by its very nature was virtuous, being moulded only for pure and delicate joys. (193)

In the repetition of the demonstrative pronoun "that," Eliot divulges Lydgate's misvision: "that" qualifies a particular subject, but simultaneously gestures to a recognizable type; it specifies and generalizes: "that" is a way of saying to an audience, "you-know-that-that-that-we-all-know," but in Lydgate's case, it is predicated on a cliché, on a linguistic abstraction, and not on a concrete image or a common experience of quotidian life. Thus Lydgate can unabashedly proclaim that Rosamond "is grace itself . . . That is what a woman ought to be; she ought to produce the effect of exquisite music" (121) and define home as a place where one might "recline in a paradise with sweet laughs for bird-notes, and blue eyes for heaven" (122). Obviously, as the rest of Eliot's narrative teaches us, sharing breakfast with Womanhood or playing whist with Feminine Radiance presents an absurdity incompatible with Lydgate's lofty notions.

Although it sounds odd, we can say that the space between Lydgate's desire and experience derives from the deceit of the demonstrative pronoun. As turns of phrase, his conceptions of Rosamond speak a language that—due to its very familiarity—pledges the accessibility that an abstraction can never really afford. Thus this "nymph-like figure," "this flower of Mrs. Lemon's school" (123), once within domestic proximity, transforms into a monster. Imprisoned within "the hideous fettering of domestic hate" (718), their marriage as a literal mixed metaphor fails in the procreative as well as the creative sense: not only does their baby die prematurely, but Lydgate never "does worthy the writing"—that is, he never achieves the medical discoveries that would require documentation. Thus Eliot depicts the conclusion to the story that began with romantic birds and poetic bears by ironically repeating Lydgate's zoological trope in a vision of their London home as "a cage . . . of all flowers and gilding" (893)—fit for a bird of paradise although perhaps not for the now speechless bear who first introduced the unsuitable metaphor.

To say that the Mary and Fred love plot constructs a fairytale compared to Rosamond and Lydgate's cautioning tale is to suggest that its happy ending marks a lesson learned and a reward procured. As an enactment of a wish fulfillment, it stands in opposition to the disappointments of the Lydgate-Rosamond story. While Lydgate and Rosamond indulge in their respective literary fantasies, Mary very specifically makes fun of using literature as a *literal* real experience: when Fred laments that a woman never falls in love with a man she has always known, Mary answers with good humored derision:

". . . let me see," said Mary, the corners of her mouth curling archly, "I must go back on my experience. There is Juliet—she

seems an example of what you say. But then Ophelia had probably known Hamlet a long while; and Brenda Troil—she must have known Mordaunt Merton ever since they were children; but then he seems to have been an estimable young man; and Minna was still more deeply in love with Cleveland, who was a stranger. Waverley was new to Flora McIvor; but then she did not fall in love with him. And there are Olivia and Sophia Primrose, and Corinne—they may be said to have fallen in love with new men. Altogether my experience is rather mixed. (167)

And yet despite Mary's rhetorical recoil from any application of the romantic plots disclosed in various literary formulae, her own experience plays on certain happy ending conventions. After all, Mary herself introduces the fairytale motif although she displaces it onto Rosamond: in explaining to Fred that, as a maid in mansion belonging to the tyrannical Featherstone, she copes much better than would someone like Rosamond, she then laughs, "'Though she [Rosamond] is just the sort of beautiful creature that is imprisoned with ogres in fairytales'" (165). Mary's "reported speech" here evidences the negative assertion strategy—the posit through denial. Despite her explicit rejection of the fairytale as relevant to her world (which she sees as so removed from Rosamond's), the very fact that her own situation corresponds to the fairytale equivalences she parodies—she *is* trapped at Stone Court, Featherstone *does* act like an ogre—moves to establish the possibility of the parallels she denies. Mary initiates the representation of her experiences as analogous to the plot of a fairytale with a metaphor which, by definition, she means Fred to understand figuratively: her life is not *really* a fairytale, but only *like* a fairytale. The rhetorical nature of the comparison, however, achieves a material manifestation in the sequence of actions that involve Fred—that is, in the plot of their love story. Not only does Mary wed in adult life the man whom she had already married in childhood, the toy umbrella ring thereby giving way to a real wedding band, but Stone Court serves as the reconstituted Home with which both had started: Fred loses the house which was to be his inheritance, but regains it through hard work; and Mary presides as mistress where she had once served as imprisoned maid.<sup>3</sup>

As the wish fulfillment conventions of the fairytale promise, Mary and Fred, unlike Rosamond and Lydgate, are sexually as well as textually productive: they not only bear three "men-children," but write two educational books, one on scientific agriculture and one on classical stories of Plutarch. In contrast to the flowered cage that completes the tale of caution, Eliot finds the appropriate illustration for Mary and Fred's fairytale "mutual happiness" (890) in a characteristic Victorian happy ending idyll:<sup>4</sup> "When Fred was riding home on winter evenings he had a pleasant vision beforehand of the bright hearth in the wainscoated parlour and was sorry for other men who could not have Mary for their wife" (892). In this way, the happy marriage that functions as the happy ending derives from the way in which a metaphor achieves viability only through the particulars of shared experiences that acknowledge its reality. By reifying the initial metaphor

into the concrete elements of plot, Eliot transposes Mary's figurative representation into the truth of her lived reality.

This transposition, which marks the movement from Mary's sentence to her experience, occurs simultaneously within two spaces: the internal expanse of a character's life where a rhetorical construction transforms into a perceived reality and the external frame of reading where the "reality," as a plot function, recovers its rhetorical dimension. Thus Mary's *saying* that her life is like a fairytale triggers a sequence of real experiences (real in so far as Mary is concerned) which, understood from without, call attention to themselves as metaphor in their resemblance to the constituents of fairytales. Seen from within, the happy marriage rests on the "real" experiences that Mary and Fred share. Once transposed back onto the rhetorical plain, or translated back into the formal language of novelistic functions, the happy marriage stands for a story's happy conclusion and the experiences shared by Mary and Fred for the sequences of events shared by author and reader. In this way, both love plots rely on a translatability that unites what happens with the reading of what happens. Lydgate and Rosamond's metaphors are untranslatable, their turns of phrase incompatible, their marriage and their conclusion therefore unhappy. In contrast, Fred and Mary, because they build on the strength of a consistent metaphor made viable in a sequence of shared experiences, receive the reward of a happily-ever-after marriage.

With these two love plots, Eliot tells the story of how a marriage happens, but predicates connubial success or failure on the translatability of the literary experience each actant brings to the action. A character's intercourse with certain literary constructs, whether poetic metaphors as in Rosamond and Lydgate's case or fairytale metonymies as in Mary and Fred's story, functions as a kind of prism through which he/she views and understands another person—a kind of interpretive space whose potential accuracy relies on its real, that is, the concrete application of the metaphors it introduces. That marriage itself literalizes this interpretive, or hermeneutical, space materializes in the emphasis Eliot places on the house each couple comes to inhabit. Mary and Fred's marriage pivots both pragmatically as well as significantly on securing Stone Court as a future residence, while Rosamond and Lydgate find themselves erecting a house divided in their estrangement over the household debts that threaten a consequent relocation to the ominous Bridestreet "cage." In this way, each character begins his or her love story from within the interpretive space of a literary experience. Once they are married, interpretive space bodies forth a house—a material structure with borders and walls and, of course, thresholds.

## II

### Passage through a Locutionary Locale: Dorothea's House

Dorothea's plot, usually considered as central since it begins and concludes the novel as a whole, validates how novelistic space represents marriage. Before Dorothea marries, she articulates her desire for Mr. Casaubon within a spa-

<sup>3</sup> The elements of the fairytale plot that I mean to distinguish here derive from the "functions" delineated in Propp.

<sup>4</sup> By "idyll" I mean "little picture"—the popular happily-ever-after conclusion

encapsulated in a quaint domestic scene. I have in mind specifically Tennyson's "Domestic Idylls," which met with such popular acclaim when they appeared midcentury. See Culler.

tial idiom. "Hemmed in by a social life which seemed nothing but a labyrinth of petty courses, a walled-in maze of small paths that led no whither" (51), Dorothea balks at the "small-talk of heavy men which is as acceptable as stale bride-cake brought forth with the odour of cup-board" (55), a peculiar simile that not only ironically attaches the happy connubial expectancies associated with bride-cake to the deathly stagnant air of a cup-board, but illustrates Dorothea's sense of claustrophobia through the tastes and smells of daily life. The talk is not only small, but distinctly domestic. Casaubon, however, apparently defies all limits: "His very name carried an impressiveness hardly to be measured" (33), his mind an "ungauged reservoir" (46), and as for his Greek and Latin education, "those provinces of masculine knowledge seemed to her a standing-ground from which all truth could be seen more truly" (88). Eliot, of course, mocks the promised openness with the comic vagueness of hyperbolic superlatives: "a man of profound learning" who faithfully poured over "a great work," and who had views "which were to be more clearly ascertained on the publication of his book" (33); but whether or not she suggests stylistically that the undefined might very well reveal itself as simply vapid, the action of Dorothea's story positions the undefined space beyond Mr. Brooke's home as the desired release from a narrow confine.

Upon crossing "the door sill of marriage," Dorothea finds that "the large vistas and wide fresh air which she had dreamed of finding in her husband's mind were replaced by ante-rooms and winding passages which seemed to lead no whither" (227). Instead of "the clear heights where she expected to walk in full communion" (302), the sealed vault of Casaubon's mind, the "dark closet of his verbal memory" (314) threaten to incarcerate her. The Lowick that had previously offered her an imagined airy haven transforms into ". . . a moral imprisonment which made itself one with the chill, colourless, narrowed landscape . . ." (302). Instead of traveling on an open sea, she discovers herself exploring an "enclosed basin" (228), thus arriving at a consciousness of the space dividing her desire for the freedom that marriage to Casaubon seemed to yield and her experience of that imagined prospect.

In this way, marriage takes the shape in Eliot's rhetoric as a confined and confining house unimaginable until the moment that the doors are locked. And yet that hermetic space holds truths indiscernible from the outside vantage point of pre-matrimonial acquaintantship. Thus Eliot uses spatial tropes to articulate the moment of disillusionment:

The fact is unalterable, that a fellow-mortal with whose nature you are acquainted solely through the brief entrances and exits of a few imaginative weeks called courtship, may, when seen in the continuity of married companionship, be disclosed as something better or worse than what you have preconceived . . . (227)

By describing courtship as the experience of brief entrances and exits, Eliot obviously exploits the metaphor which likens marriage to a house. But what is interesting here is Eliot's syntactical displacement of the subject pronoun. The fellow-mortal's true nature is "disclosed," but the interrupted phrasing conceals the fact that the "continuity of married companionship" (which has consistently taken form as a house)

acts as the agent of the disclosure. The marriage as house trope works as an arena of disillusionment—a place where Dorothea enters into an awareness of her "reality" as distinct from her "dream." The marriage, as literally an action in Dorothea's story, exposes the difficulty of translating desire into experience, discloses the disparity between the imagined and the achieved. The marriage, as metaphorically a house in George Eliot's novel, depicts the experience of recognition itself as confining.

The implications of Eliot's use of space in the Dorothea-Casaubon segment of the novel unfold even further when she clarifies the role of "The Key to all Mythologies," the monumental work in which (and to which) Casaubon is obsessively engaged. Both Dorothea and Casaubon, as well as the other *Middlemarch* characters, use the "Key" to speak about marriage. In confessing her love to Celia, Dorothea waxes, "Everything I see in him corresponds to his pamphlet on Biblical Cosmology" (43). When Sir James criticizes Casaubon's lack of "good red blood," Mrs. Cadwallader retorts, "No. Somebody put a drop under a magnifying glass, and it was all semicolons and parentheses . . . Oh, he dreams footnotes, and they run away with his brain" (96). The figure of speech which personifies Casaubon as the marginalia of written language ultimately equates his literary production with his sexual reproduction. When Sir James demands, "Why does he not bring out his book instead of marrying?" he very clearly establishes that the sexual and the textual dimensions of Casaubon's marriage function interchangeably and perhaps ironically. Thus Mr. Casaubon preoccupies himself with leaving a "copy" or an "issue" of himself as eagerly as he desires to issue copies of his mythological key (312). And Dorothea herself marries Mr. Casaubon's text as much as she marries Mr. Casaubon's person. To describe the process by which Dorothea misreads Mr. Casaubon's professions of love, Eliot explains that Dorothea's faith filled in the omissions since "the text, whether of prophet or of poet expands for whatever we can put into it and even its bad grammar is sublime" (73).

It is not surprising then that Eliot articulates Dorothea's disillusionment with her marriage in a lament for her loss of faith in Mr. Casaubon's text. "The poor child," Eliot muses, "had become altogether unbelieving as to the trustworthiness of that Key which had made the ambition and the labour of her husband's life" (519). And her suffocating sense of marital enclosure manifests itself in images of textual imprisonment: in referring to Mr. Casaubon's plans for incorporating Dorothea into his twenty-five year old work, Eliot writes, "To this mental estate mapped out a quarter of a century before, to sensibilities thus fenced in, Mr. Casaubon had thought of annexing happiness with a lovely young bride" (314). Nor can Mr. Casaubon himself, "lost among small closets and winding stairs . . . (forgetting) . . . the absence of windows . . . indifferent to the sunlight" (229), remain exempt from the engorging space of the exitless Key which gradually adumbrates the tomb that awaits: ". . . and he willingly imagined her toiling under the fetters of a promise to erect a tomb with his name upon it. (Not that Mr. Casaubon called the future volumes a tomb; he called them the Key to all Mythologies" (535). Finally, the Key which, by standing for a marriage, had promised Dorothea spiritual freedom and, we have to assume,

sexual procreation exposes itself in her final vision of Mr. Casaubon's notebooks, "the weary waste planted with huge stones, the mute memorial of a forgotten faith" (582)—an Ozymandian monument whose very significance has been erased.

Eliot articulates the sexual/textual barrenness of Dorothea and Casaubon's marriage most clearly by pushing the spatial tropes she establishes visually into linguistic plays. By drawing attention to Casaubon's "iron-grey hair" and his resemblance to a portrait of John Locke (38), Eliot exploits the sexual pun on locks and keys. That Dorothea desires knowledge of the Key as a means of penetrating the realms of male learning invites equating her textual desire with a sexual one.<sup>5</sup> I do not mean to suggest, however, that in Dorothea and Casaubon's case the lock and key pun works to displace Dorothea's repressed sexual instinct by finding a spatial metaphor for it, but merely to emphasize the way in which Eliot associates sexuality and textuality through language which constructs images of closed off spaces; the phallic Key, as Casaubon's great literary text, which promises Dorothea exit from a hemmed in social world transforms into the spatially delineated key of a text which turns the lock on itself.

### III

#### Victorian Scientology: The Key to the Myth

In all three love plots, Eliot's rhetoric, the very mode of representation she chooses, moves to delineate a space where the marital and the literal interpenetrate. The significance of the relationship between these categories emerges from looking more closely at Mr. Casaubon's imposing hypothetical text. Prior to its metaphorical manifestation as an enclosed space which threatens to imprison Dorothea, the Key is literally a text—or at least an imagined text that has yet to take shape. And the terms in which Eliot, through Mr. Casaubon's consciousness, describes the "Key to all Mythologies" betray a peculiar relevancy not apparent in a reader's immediate understanding of its futile and stagnant nature:

and with something of the archangelic manner he told her how he had undertaken to show (what indeed had been attempted before, but not with that thoroughness, justice of comparison, and effectiveness of arrangement at which Mr. Casaubon aimed) that all the mythical systems or erratic mythical fragments in the world were corruptions of a tradition originally revealed. Having once

mastered the true position and taken a firm footing there, the vast field of mythical constructions became intelligible, nay, luminous with the reflected light of correspondences . . . the crowning task would be to condense these voluminous still-accumulating results and bring them, like the earlier vintage of Hippocratic books, to fit a little shelf . . . Dorothea was altogether captivated by the wide embrace of this conception . . . here was a modern Augustine who united the glories of doctor and saint. (46-7)

Of course, the overly complex syntax of constructions like "justice of comparison" and "effectiveness of arrangement" and latinate words like "voluminous" and "luminous" attest to the pretentious abstractions characteristic of Casaubon's idiom; but the semantics of his description, taken without regard to the style of its presentation, carry resonances peculiarly relevant in the nineteenth century. The significance surfaces in his work's title: a Key to all *Mythologies*. The word *mythology*, as Raymond Williams traces it, derives from the Greek word *mythos*, meaning a fable or a story, but functioned in the early seventeenth century to the interpretation or explication of "fabulous tales." In the early nineteenth century the shorter word *myth* distinguishes fables which were "imaginary constructions" from legends and allegories which referred to reality in differing degrees. By the middle of the nineteenth century, myth means not only a fabulous construction, but an intentionally deceptive fabrication. *Myths*, which had until this point denoted the fabulous, whether deliberately deceiving or not, begin to be viewed as linguistic manifestations or codes specific to a particular culture; a myth was not just an unreal story but represented some other unmanifest reality, functioned that is, within a particular cultural context, as an account of rituals or of origins (Williams 210-12). In this way nineteenth-century scientific thought and the century's incipient anthropology engage in a code breaking enterprise, investigating fabulous stories in an effort to disclose the realities embedded but concealed within them. The evolving etymology of *myth* attests then to the claim that George Levine, among others, makes that "one of the primary efforts of Victorian thought was to reconcile empirical science with metaphysical truth" (*The Realistic Imagination* 10), that in a post-Darwinian age of religious doubt, "the faith was that science would reveal the organic, the secularist's last hope for meaning and the validation of morality (*The Realistic Imagination* 19).<sup>6</sup> Casaubon intends that his study of seemingly closed individual mythological systems or fragments

<sup>5</sup> Although overtly Freudian interpretations at times have a tendency to overdetermine the texts they seek to illuminate (to cry displaced coital fantasy at any mention of a lock or key does not always find validation in the text at hand no matter what our own cultural biases make us perceive), the Dorothea-Casaubon episode nonetheless supports such a reading in the very fact that they are newly-weds—a man and a woman on the threshold of sexual initiation. See Gay, who outlines the often terrifying sexual initiation that marriage enacted on men and women alike. According to Gay, sexual intercourse, despite a preponderance of Victorian marital guides, often surfaced only under the guise of such subtle metaphors that neither party had any idea of what intimate knowledge of their newly wed partner entailed. There is then a specific reality in Eliot's use of space to demark marital disillusionment that surfaces in the very fact of the comparatively limited time that Victorian prenuptial couples shared in each other's company. Our casual contemporary aphorism that you never know someone until you live with him or her carries a very potent sense of emotional dissonance for Victorian men and women who experienced that education strictly within the confines of a house they could share only as man and wife.

Moreover, Eliot uses locks and keys elsewhere in *Middlemarch* with similarly sexual overtones. For example, she discusses the "idea of paradise" which Joshua Rigg's "soul thirsted for" as a money changer's shop:

to have locks all around him of which he held the keys, and to look sublimely cool as he handled the breeding coins of all nations while helpless Cupidity looked at him enviously from the other side of an iron lattice.

In the figure of Cupidity, a nominalization of Cupid, Eliot uses mercurial avarice to depict romantic desire (the other side of the same coin, shall we say?) And the picture within the iron latticed space suggests a somewhat profane sexual spectacle of Mr. Rigg's keys penetrating many locks and thereby "breeding" coins.

<sup>6</sup> Cosslett provides an interesting backdrop in her exploration of the values encoded in Victorian scientific culture which came to replace religious faith and thereby to create what Cosslett calls a "scientific myth." Her work explores the "positive ethical and aesthetic implications of Victorian science as they appear in literature" (10). See also Levine, "George Eliot's Hypothesis," Paradis and Postlewait, and Postlewait.

will disclose their corresponding similitude. A study of the particular will yield the universal.<sup>7</sup> And taken within the historical framework that the etymology of *myth* constructs, we can see Casaubon's enterprise, like so many other forms of Victorian inquiry, as an attempt to restore belief in universal truths, an attempt to redeem myth from its degraded status as a false, misleading fable and find in it a new basis for faith. The success of the project pivots, of course, on its scientific methodology, on its structured thoroughness and rational arrangement of facts. Thus Casaubon's language connotes a spirituality in expressions like "luminous with the reflected light of correspondences" whose abstract representation of light subscribes to a biblical idiom, as well as a scientific bent in descriptions like, "had undertaken to show . . . through the justice of comparison, and the effectiveness of arrangement" whose syntactical organization documents a cause and effect logic. That is Casaubon proposes to harness scientific methodology to the job of revealing a transcendent unity. It therefore follows that Dorothea should liken Casaubon to a cross between a saint and a doctor and that Casaubon himself should compare his work to the Hippocratic volumes of medical instructions.

Although Dorothea's allusion to St. Augustine defines "doctor" in the traditional sense of "teacher" (Augustine was one of the Four Latin Teachers), Casaubon's reference to Hippocrates, the father of medicine, not only introduces a modern scientific dimension to the purport of the Key, but specifies the medical intentions of Casaubon's science. Medicine plays a central role in *Middlemarch*, not only as the profession of one of its main characters, but as a category of thought which, interestingly enough, aspires to the same objectives as Casaubon's religious encyclopedia. The similarity lies in the way in which medicine, as Eliot represents it, seeks generalities through an empirical study of the particular. As an empirical mode of thought, medicine examines individual phenomena in the belief that the "justice of comparison" will reveal general rules and facts applicable to all. Thus Lydgate wins Lady Chettam's approval: "He confirmed her view of her own constitution as being peculiar, by admitting that all constitutions might be called peculiar . . ." (118); however diplomatically evasive his response, Lydgate nonetheless articulates exactly the medical objective as Eliot perceives it—a justification for discovering the all's in the peculiar's. In Lydgate's "represented thought," Eliot later explains less ironically, ". . . the careful observation and inference which was his daily work, the use of the lens to further his judgment in special cases, would further his thought as an instrument of larger inquiry" (176). In his depiction of medical methodology, Lydgate also captures the profound spiritual overlay

characteristic of so much of nineteenth-century scientific thought: ". . . Lydgate," Eliot describes, "was enamored; he longed to demonstrate the more intimate relations of living structure and help to define men's thought more accurately after the true order . . . to do good small work for Middlemarch, and great work for the world" (178). With expressions like "true order" and "great work for the world" Eliot invests Lydgate's work with a spirituality no less lofty than Casaubon's luminous correspondences. Whereas Casaubon looks to small mythic systems to find Truth and Lydgate to a small world called Middlemarch, their spirit and method reflect each other. Although Lydgate does not demonstrate any apparent awareness of his aspiration's spiritual quality and Casaubon does not define his approach as specifically "empirical," they share the same desire to use scientific methods to find universal truths.

The comparison between these two doctors, one of theology and one of medicine, finds further validation in their literary goals. Lydgate's vocational epiphany begins as a literary experience, an encounter with a book of anatomy:

. . . the first passage that drew his eyes was on the valves of the heart. He was not much acquainted with valves of any sort, but he knew that valvae were folding doors, and through this crevice came a sudden light startling him with his first vivid notion of a finely adjusted mechanism in the human frame. (173)

Through literature about the human heart, Lydgate finds a luminary truth. He therefore sets within a literary framework the spiritual expression of scientific discoveries.<sup>8</sup> "What I want," Lydgate later tells Rosamond, "is to do worthy the writing,—and to write out myself what I have done" (475). In this way, Lydgate places writing at the center of medical achievement both actually in the sense that medical accounting evidences experienced medical advance, as well as artistically in the syntactical mapping of his phrase: "what I want" (desire)—>"is to do" (action imagined) "worthy the writing" (literature) "and to write out myself" (literature) "what I have done" (action achieved). By making writing the central term in Lydgate's formula, Eliot suggests that it is literature that mediates between desire and its cure, satiation. In this way, both Lydgate and Casaubon associate linguistic accounts of their achievements as cures—Casaubon intends to restore faith, Lydgate to restore health. The Cure, whether spiritual or physical, rests as the ultimate ethical justification for either one's literary achievement. From Lydgate's sentence we can infer that the Cure only satiates the desire which initiated it once it is accounted for in writing. Despite the differences between Casaubon and Lydgate, their

<sup>7</sup> Although Tess Cosslett reads Mr. Casaubon's project as non-scientific, I claim otherwise, given my understanding of Victorian scientific thought as an outgrowth of Darwinian evolutionary theory. K. K. Collins looks at Eliot's portrayal of nineteenth-century social evolutionism and implicitly claims that Darwin, for the nineteenth-century figures who accepted his ideas, discovered the unitary truth of human history by tracing resemblances between seemingly discrete physical phenomena. In this way Darwin discovered by describing, thereby setting a precedent that early social scientists like Herbert Spencer, Friedrich Müller, Edward B. Taylor and John Fiske (all friends of Eliot) adopted. Thus Collins, referring to the assessment of the proliferation of social science works between 1842 and 1851 in Mandelbaum, writes:

"Throughout this entire enterprise, descriptive patterns of events more or less came to represent the laws that produced them" (345).

<sup>8</sup> It is interesting to note here that science in the nineteenth century had not yet differentiated itself as a distinct discipline. And who precisely qualified as a "scientist" was even more vague since in the absence of government grants and private foundations it was often men of means (and usually of liberal arts educations at Oxford or Cambridge) who chose to call themselves men of science. The word "scientist," as the *OED* documents, does not enter English until 1840. Lydgate, as a literary scholar turned scientific practitioner, presents a common mid-Victorian figure.

similarities—in objective, method and expression—tell us something about Eliot's (or her text's) consciousness of the ironies which foil the complicated interconnections between Truth and literary representation.

#### IV

##### The Novelistic Housecall: Scenes of Medical Ministry

It is not surprising then that the vocabulary with which Eliot discusses Casaubon's and Lydgate's work repeats when she outlines her own artistic objectives and methods. She uses one of her favorite images, the web, to express her awareness of the myriad interconnections of human lives:

I at least have so much to do in unraveling certain human lots, and seeing how they were woven and interwoven, that all the light I can command must be concentrated on this particular web, and not dispersed over that tempting range of relevancies called the universe. (170)

Eliot establishes that, although she withstands the temptation to disperse her light over the universe, her concentration on the particular nonetheless reflects that range of relevancies. Her "light" taps on the spiritual associations to holy revelations as well as the scientific associations to a microscope's central mechanism.

In this way, Eliot punctuates her descriptions of her method of representation with images of the microscope, the magnifying glass, the zoom lens effect—all in an effort to bring her subjects closer, to explode the distances that separate the viewer from the viewed. Distance, Eliot demonstrates, functions as a disguise which perpetuates false illusions. When Mr. Brooke receives a letter criticizing his political behavior, its trope draws attention to the unavoidable realities of closed quarters: "We all know the wag's definition of a philanthropist: a man whose charity increases directly as the square of the distance" (418). In a literal reading of the phrase, the distance serves as the precondition for philanthropy—Mr. Brooke's charity exists only as a result of the distance which, if exploded, would expose its falsehood. The aesthetic implications of the misvision distance imposes surfaces when Eliot rallies against the picturesque: "It is true that an observer, under that softening influence of the fine arts which makes other people's hardships picturesque, might have been delighted with this homestead called Freeman's End" (429), she admits, but, as her own picture unfolds, it is clear that Freeman's End names an abysmal scene of rural poverty not pastoral quaintness. Her aesthetic critique thus rests on ideological grounds: the picturesque distorts social ills in the name of beauty. Thus when Dorothea calls Ladislaw's landscape sketches, "a language I do not understand," Eliot is making a statement about the picturesque as a narrative technique. "I suppose" Dorothea continues, "there is some relation between pictures and nature which I am too ignorant to feel—just as you see what a Greek sentence stands for which means nothing to me" (105). In this way her comparison of art to language establishes an aesthetic principle predicated not on abstract beauty, but on human communication; she defines beauty as a felt correspondence between the language and the nature it represents—a correspondence

which insists on accessibility.

In fact, any time a *Middlemarch* character talks about language—from penmanship to grammar to poetry—successful communication appears as the only evaluative criteria allowed. In the movement from the microscope to the pen through a repudiation of the picturesque, the same ideal surfaces: proximity and the human sympathy it affords. While Caleb Garth chastises Frank for his illegible hand with the words, "What's the use of writing at all if nobody can understand it?" (611), Dorothea prides herself on a handwriting "in which each letter was distinguishable without any large range of conjecture" (68). And Mrs. Garth, having made the transition from governess to housewife, uses her nourishing kitchen, the center of her household, as a classroom where she imparts the rudiments of proper grammar. "In a general wreck of society," Eliot explains parenthetically, Mrs. Garth "would have tried to hold her 'Lindley Murray' above the waves" (276). The purpose of grammar, she insists, is to be understood, otherwise people "would turn away from you as a tiresome person." We can see of course how seriously Middlemarchers take this business about being a tiresome person not only in the image of Mrs. Garth brandishing a grammar text book above the ruins of a lost civilization but when Mrs. Cadwallader ascribes the great tragedy of Dorothea's life to a linguistic discrepancy:

"We have all got to exert ourselves a little to keep sane, and call things by the same names as other people call them by."

"I never called everything by the same name that all the people about me did," said Dorothea stoutly.

"But I suppose you have found out your mistake, my dear," said Mrs. Cadwallader, "and that is proof of sanity."

Dorothea was aware of the sting . . . (581)

Nor is poetry excluded when Eliot reduces poetic language to a classification of "slang" when she lets Fred defeat Rosamond in the slang versus poetry argument with the phrase, ". . . well tell me whether it is slang or poetry to call an ox a legplaiter" (126). The absurdity wins the point.

Like Casaubon and Lydgate, Eliot scrutinizes the particular with the universal sight. She in fact finds and defines a literary name for the diastolic movement of her gaze in the "parable":

And here I am naturally led to reflect on the means of elevating a low subject. Historical parallels are remarkably efficient in this way. The chief objection to them is, that the diligent narrator may lack space, or (what is often the same thing) may not be able to think of them with any degree of particularity, though he may have a philosophical confidence that if known they would be illustrative. It seems an easier and shorter way to dignity to observe that—since there never was a true story which could not be told in parables . . . —whatever has been or is to be narrated by me about low people, may be ennobled by being considered a parable. (375)

Although Eliot's statement in context seeks to defend her choice of subject matter (in this case, of Joshua Riggs, a rather disagreeable personality), the way in which she lays out her argument demonstrates her conception of what critics of her day and ours call "realism." The parable, as she names it, is

the "shorter way to dignity" because it uses the small to stand for the grand, because its generic convention posits talking about a "monkey" as merely a convenient way of talking about a "margrave." Unlike its predecessors, however, Eliot's parable does not establish correspondences between "lords" and "loobies" by mere one-on-one substitution, but uses illustrations of the small as a strategy for establishing grander "historical parallels." What is crucial here is that the problem Eliot's parable solves is a "lack of space" which she defines as not being able to think "with any degree of particularity." If we translate the logic of these assertions of lack into their affirmative counterparts, narrative space *is* thinking in the particular.

And this is exactly what the voices in *Middlemarch* insist on—thinking in the particular. Often a reader's sympathies or antipathies derive directly from a description of what a particular character would be like to live with. Celia, for instance, cannot abide the way Mr. Casaubon scrapes his spoon when he eats, or blinks before he speaks so that when Dorothea praises his scholarly likeness to Locke, Celia quips, "I don't know whether Locke blinked, but I am sorry for those who sat opposite him, if he did" (72). Similarly, when Mr. Cadwalader esteems Casaubon's morality, his wife retorts, "Humphrey! I have no patience with you. You know you would rather dine alone under the hedge than with Casaubon alone. You have nothing to say to each other" (98); and when Celia meditates on Dorothea's potentially uncomfortable domestic companionship, she expresses herself in the terms of everyday experience, "Notions and scruples were like spilt needles, making one afraid of treading, or sitting down, or even eating" (43). Nor does this emphasis on the quotidian exclude the narrator's own idiom: "Our passions," Eliot teaches, "do not live apart in locked chambers, but dressed in their small wardrobe of notions, bring their provisions to a common table and mess together, feeding out their common store according to their appetite" (196). Even the metaphors which Eliot chooses to express the complexities of human psychology derive not from the stars or the seas, but from the details of domestic cohabitation. Constantly she seeks to access, to bring into proximity, to place at the dinner table:

Most of us, indeed, know little of the great originators until they have been lifted up among the constellations and already rule our fates. But that Herschel, for example, who "broke the barriers of heaven"—did he not once play a provincial church organ, and give music lessons to stumbling pianists? Each of those Shining Ones had to walk on earth among neighbors who perhaps thought much more of his gait and his garments than of anything which was to give him everlasting fame. (175)

The relegation of capitals to lower cases, of abstract ideals to concrete idylls is, of course, the stuff of humor. But it is also comfortable—consoling in the intimacy it avails and in the relief it furnishes. The passage functions as an example of how Eliot takes the Wordsworthian prescription that poetry should use the "language of everyday men" and translates what that means for narrative, or, in other words, what that means visually, in pictures—in space.

In this way Eliot invests the narrative picture—or, in other words, the spaces that narrative outlines—with an ethical

purpose predicated on intimacy. Representing Herschel, a Shining One, as a piano teacher with an unseemly gait functions as a narrative strategy which aims not at deflating Genius, but at making the abstraction more immediate, at making an ideal more accessible. And it is ultimately such presentations within the novel that provide the grounds for compassion without the novel. "Art," Eliot pronounces in an essay on realism, "is the nearest thing to life; it is a mode of amplifying experience and extending our contact with our fellowmen beyond the bounds of our personal lot" (Haight 610). Art may not equal life, Eliot argues, but the experiential concentrate it yields nonetheless alters what it does not equal. She thereby endows art with a very specific performative function, with an obligation to defeat solipsism—with a duty to affect "life" by taking us out of ourselves, by spatially placing us *beyond* the *bounds* of our own *lots*, in contact—or, in a shared space—with others. It is only with this sense of duty in mind that Eliot's defense of her realistic technique acquires a preacher's tone:

These fellow-mortals, every one, must be accepted as they are: you can neither straighten their noses, nor brighten their wit, nor rectify their dispositions; and it is these people—amongst whom your life is passed—that it is needful you should tolerate, pity, and love—  
(*Adam Bede* 222)

There is then in her rhetoric a fanatical sense of obligation, of duty. Aesthetic concerns are ethical ones. Aesthetic concerns must correspond to human life, not as it is imagined, but as it is lived. The duty for fiction then acquires a religious dimension in that Eliot charges it with the task of producing an effect in the lives of those who read it. "All the more sacred," Eliot declares, "is the task of the artist when he undertakes to paint the life of the People. Falsification here is far more pernicious than in the more artificial aspects of life" (Haight 610). By borrowing a religious idiom, Eliot not only suggests that artistic representation is equivalent to sacred religious belief, but translates misrepresentation as a synonym for heresy. According to this logic, art can defeat heresy only through real world effect. A literary work of the imagination can avoid falsification only if, through a "thorough study," of "specific facts," the work serves as "a valuable aid to the social and political reformer" (612). We have here a wonderful relocation of the ideal *in* the material—or, at least in a linguistic representation of the material. Through the imbricating tropes that inform Eliot's presentation of the work that she shares with Lydgate and Casaubon, she suggests that the union of the doctor and the saint bears forth as the realist novelist—a figure who uses the language of the particular to create visualizable spaces which restore human sympathy and thereby render human transcendence possible.

## V

### In Socio-Historical Perspective

The term *realism*, as William J. Hyde suggests in his essay "George Eliot and the Climate of Realism," outlines more than a nineteenth-century genre category; it names a "climate"—a cultural temperament which conflates epistemological and theological tenets with aesthetic, and spe-



cifically literary, standards. According to Hyde, Eliot constructs an "ideal of realism" (154)<sup>9</sup> out of, so to speak, stones pinched from a ruined cathedral. Hyde demonstrates that the proponents of realism, though espousing an "emphatic realistic creed" as the overriding criteria of assessing a literary work's critical value, nonetheless desist at the point of specifying what a realist method might entail. George Eliot, along with her fellow critics at *The Westminster Review*, where she presided as editor before embarking on her career as a novelist, subscribed almost uniformly to a rubric whereby "truthfulness" or "true to life" equalled aesthetic success, but spoke only in the vaguest terms when identifying the components that create the effect of "truthfulness" or "realistic." By focusing on the nonspecific terms of realist rhetoric, Hyde finds a "creed," an observation which, I might add, finds further substantiation in the almost religious moralizing tone of the rhetoric Eliot uses to postulate her aesthetic. Implicitly, Hyde reveals how realism functions in the period not so much as a practice, but as an ideology disguised as a method of representation.

The displaced religious harmonics of nineteenth-century realist doctrine derive from a particular moment in intellectual and literary history. In *Sincerity and Authenticity*, Lionel Trilling provides some socio-historical background for what he calls the "salient character-type of the Victorian educated classes" to which George Eliot as well as the other proponents of realism belonged. As so many critics, historians, and theorists have emphasized, the great, equalizing, spiritual eclipse of the nineteenth century figures as a consciousness of the devastating loss of faith. By attributing Eliot's own religious disillusionment to her reading *An Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity*, in which her friend's brother, Charles Hennell, argues for interpreting Biblical scripture as a collection of mythologies and not a window disclosing literal truth, Stephen Gill situates her among the other intellectuals of her period who shared the experience of this profound psychological desolation (Intro. *Adam Bede* 16). Because, as Trilling argues, the assumption that the universe is purposive functioned as a category of thought whose "extirpation was a psychic catastrophe" (117), the urgent task of the century was to restore faith in some other form:

We of our time do not share that need of the Victorians. We are not under the necessity of discovering in the order of the universe, in the ineluctable duty it silently lays upon us, the validation of such personal coherence and purposiveness as we claim ourselves. We do not ask those questions which would suggest that the validation is indeed there, needing only to be discovered. (118)

Realism arises against this searching background and claims with pressing fervor that through science-like observation and quotidian illustration, it, as a category of thought, will restore faith by revealing the Truth in the everyday. In this way realism proposes itself as one cure for the century's spiritual disease, a hybrid of science and theology that, through fiction,

can restore belief.

Endowing realism, as a narrative technique, with a medicinal value engages the realist novelist in a moral project whose hidden agenda demands a textual revelation of Truth. As *Middlemarch's* marriage plots demonstrate, the sexual dimensions of the textual enterprise suggest that textual truth relies on a readerly situation analogous to sharing the same concrete experiences or inhabiting the same marital home. In this way, Eliot predicates Truth on the capacity of connubial or novelistic spaces to realize the "mutual consciousness" necessary for the production of belief in an age of disbelief. By staking the possibilities of discovering Truth on the viability of the metaphors motivating the "home epic," Eliot demands that the novel form fulfill the practical and indispensable duty which, now wedded to aesthetic objectives, can answer the anxious questions characteristic of her cultural moment.

## VI

### The Imposture Complex

The frequency with which Eliot justifies her tenor on the basis of its believability obviously suggests that the novel will cure disbelief because quotidian observation can verify its truth. Thus Eliot preaches that the small expanse of a novel can function as a *mise-en-abîme* where the wider world beyond its borders offers itself in a readable paradigm. But when we look at the way in which Eliot's narrative voice establishes novelistic space, the ostensibly justifiable microcosm turns into a solipsism whose truths apply only to a narrow locale. In other words, both narrator and characters express convictions about "the world" and "the way things are" only in association with small spaces set in opposition to any transcendental zone. Mrs. Cadwallader, for example, chastises Mr. Brooke's inconsistent political liberalism with images that align civic clarity with sheltered space and hypocrisy with vagrancy: "... leading a roving life, and never letting his friends know his address. Nobody knows where Brooke will be—there's no counting on Brooke" (77). In Mrs. Cadwallader's metaphor, the address, presumably of a house, carries with it the certainty that relies on Mr. Brooke's interaction with his "friends," a word which suggests that an addressless soul betrays not an abstract community but people to whom he is emotionally bound. Despite Mrs. Cadwallader's conviction, the narrator consistently places the epistemological certainty with which an address, or a particular location, is endowed in a dialectical relationship with an undefined and potentially subversive region lying outside.

This inside/outside dichotomy and its concordant epistemological ambiguity also surfaces in Eliot's use of ironic qualification: she posits truth only to qualify it spatially, thus drawing attention to truth's reliance on a context too parochial for universal application. In chapter one, the narrator describes Dorothea as an heiress, not only because she has a certain amount of wealth of her own, but because her son

<sup>9</sup> See also Wright, who features other works that have documented Eliot's atheism. He quotes Mark Shorer's description of *Middlemarch* as a "novel of religious yearning without a religious object" and refers to the "agonies

endured in the nineteenth century by those learning to live without God" (139).

will inherit the Tipton estate, "a rental which seemed wealth to provincial families" (31) and immediately we move from the realm of Truth to a truth, from a general statement of fact to a phenomenologically defined reality, from a certain "is" to a less certain, but nevertheless accepted "seemed." The same locality awareness surfaces when the narrator declares that Dorothea is "brave enough to defy the world," but quickly situates the characterization within a certain circumference: "—that is to say, Mrs. Cadwallader the Rector's wife, and a small group of gentry with whom he visited in the north-east corner of Loamshire" (33). And again, when Eliot describes Dorothea's temperamental alienation from her contemporaries which made her an interesting though not sympathetic subject, she even lexicographically emphasizes the outside/inside parity: after brandishing a proclamation like, "All people, young or old," she immediately contracts into the enclosed space of parentheses, "(that is, all people in those ante-reform times)"; and after sweeping into a statement like, ". . . no person then living," she alights on firm, dash-delineated ground, "certainly not in the neighborhood of Tipton—" (50). The qualification works to introduce the idea of perspective and dichotomy that would otherwise remain concealed. In this way, Eliot exploits the strategy of the parable in the grammatical qualifier: she speaks of elsewhere only by scoring the border of the here.

Truth's contextual viability demonstrates its textual application in the name "Middlemarch," which juxtaposes a communal space to its novelistic equivalent. For here too, Eliot's narrative voice calls attention to the facts of insulation. Take, for instance, Eliot's use of locks and keys discussed earlier (and in note 6). The obvious pun on locks and keys remains beyond the character's consciousness, but idiomatically permeates the space which Eliot's text images. The lives of her characters inhabit the world of the image—the world of the plot as a *place* of action but the linguistic constructions which Eliot superimposes on them draw attention to their isolation from an extra-referential world. In other words, the very act of telling the plot isolates it. The very fact that the characters cannot know spatially what the author and reader know linguistically emphasizes the spatial closure and the inevitable subterfuge inherent in any storytelling.

Realism, as we find it in Eliot's work, thus contains two contrary impulses: one a desire to believe in its own truth and one a repudiation of that truth's counterfeit nature.<sup>10</sup> And it is precisely the fear and recognition of this space that divide the desire to perform a social function and the experience of fictive borders that find articulation in Eliot's spatial tropes. George Levine articulates this dialectic by characterizing realism as "an attempt to use language to get beyond language, to discover some nonverbal truth out there" (6) and defines it as a historical phenomenon because it pivots on "a writer's and a culture's capacity to believe in the accessibility of experience beyond words" (12). And though Levine picks up on Trilling's stress on the century's search for faith amid an unavoidable sense of psychological fragmentation, he also

emphasizes the chronic doubt that accompanies the searcher:

Their narratives do not acquiesce in the conventions of order they inherit but struggle to reconstruct a world out of a world deconstructing . . . . With remarkable frequency, they are alert to the arbitrariness of the reconstructed order toward which they point as they imply the inadequacy of traditional texts and, through self-reference and parody, the tenuousness of their own. (4)

This self-proclaimed textual inadequacy that Levine finds in self-reference and parody, I see visually in the images of enclosed spaces that pervade novels like *Middlemarch*.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, I see it not only as a self-consciousness of the type common to the eighteenth-century novel, but a distinctly moral anxiety that I would call an imposture complex. Given Eliot's presentation of the novel as a modern day "word made flesh," it is understandable that the mimetic nature of its linguistic medium would produce a form definitively fraught with anxiety. Or in other words, if self-consciousness is categorically a term implicit in the novel form, realistic novels that aspire to ethical impact give playfulness a potential seat of neurosis. Eliot's "home epic," as a paradigm for the realist novel, evidently partakes in the disorder.

## VII

### The Argument in Propinquity

Eliot's decision to manifest her version of the realist novel as a "home epic" suggests that there is something about her subject matter that will rescue her form—or that by uniting her form (the realist novel) with her subject (marriage) in the term "home epic" she can defeat the duplicity that afflicts novelistic representation. Despite the fearful imposturing that surfaces in the qualifications mentioned above, Eliot constructs moments when the gulf between reality and illusion, if not actually bridged, is certainly forgotten. She achieves this effect specifically by manipulating the silent space of the in-between. Take, for instance, the epigram which, in heading the beginning of each chapter, bears either an illustrative or ironic relationship to the contents disclosed within. In this way, the blank page between the epigram and the chapter gestures to the reader, demands an application from an agent outside the novel's boundaries. But because very specific actions unfold within each chapter, the "interpretation" that the novel requires the reader to make refuses any "open" attribution. It is as if the narrative incorporates the reader by giving him lines in a script that remain unuttered until the moment of reading and offer themselves as visible only in the moment of rereading.

Such silent space belongs to the frame of reading where a reader-writer understanding, founded on the experience of sharing this novelistic home, can establish the incontestable truths that the realist novel seeks. The key to locating this space resides in the question, "what does the reader know,

to a comparison with reality and thereby found to be illusion. Or again, molestation is central to a character's experience of disillusionment during the course of a novel. (84)

<sup>11</sup> It is difficult to qualify a statement like "novels like," but consider *Bleak House*, *Wuthering Heights* and *Mansfield Park* as some examples.

<sup>10</sup> Edward Said names this self-conscious textual doubt, "molestation":

Molestation, then, is a consciousness of one's duplicity, one's confinement to a fictive, scriptive realm, whether one is a character or a novelist. And molestation occurs when novelists and critics traditionally remind themselves of how the novel is always subject

when does he know it and how does he know it?" Eliot's treatment of Dorothea's cherished plans to improve the cottages, for example, adumbrates the unproductive marital disillusionment that the plot will later disclose. Dorothea, in her pre-nuptial yearnings, expects her marriage to yield a real life manifestation of the blueprints she elaborately outlines. She endows the defiantly hypothetical cottages with a mystical power beyond their status as dwellings for tenant farmers:

"Life in the cottages might be happier than ours," she declares, ". . . I think, instead of Lazarus at the gate, we should put the pig-sty cottages outside the park gate! . . . It would be as if the spirit of Oberlin had passed over the parishes to make the life of poverty beautiful" (54)

By expelling the cramped "pig-sty cottages" and replacing them with her new ideal ones, Dorothea seeks to give the tenet of convent life ("to make the life of poverty beautiful") a contemporary relevancy that means something very different in nineteenth-century England than it did to the saints who propagated it. Spending money to clean up decrepit cottages is not exactly the same thing as renouncing worldly possessions to live a purely Christian spiritual life. The allusion thus contains two phrases masked as one: the first arising out of an original religious context and the second, a repetition of the original, now recontextualized in Dorothea's story. The space between the two phrases whispers to the reader that the plans, like the marriage attached to them, will never achieve any satisfactory realization. The whisper establishes a time-lapse between the moment when the reader "intuitively" knows what the plot will disclose and the moment when narrative events concretely validate that knowledge. In this way, *Middlemarch* produces a wedded consciousness constructed out of a series of situations available in sum exclusively to Eliot and her reader.

The inevitability of this extratextual communication ultimately cancels the potential interpretive ambiguity that Eliot's disillusioning marriages hold as threatening and that her realism resolutely, though ambivalently, aims to resolve. Thus novelistic clarity, as the offspring of a reading relationship, surfaces in Eliot's use of the dash at the moment that Fred and Mary agree to marry. "When we were first engaged," Fred addresses Mary, "with the umbrella-ring, Mary, you used to—" (889) and, of course, at that moment, Mary's brother Ben and the Garth dog come bounding in to interrupt the scene. And yet everyone knows what Mary used to do when they were innocent children, everyone knows what Fred would want her to do at the moment of their engagement,—in fact, no one (not Fred nor Mary nor a *Middlemarch* inhabitant nor a nineteenth-century English reader nor a twentieth-century American reader)—no one is excluded from recognizing that the dash only substitutes for—a kiss. The reader, no matter what his social, historical or national background, fills in precisely what the narrator desires him to,

again speaks the words that are no less prescribed though they remain unwritten. It is thus the reading itself that functions as the true happily-ever-after marriage.

What these articulate silences suggest is that the space of a novel functions as a space of time in which experiences shared by an author alongside a reader approximate the "mutual consciousness" that the cohabitation synonymous with wedded life affords. The argument in propinquity<sup>12</sup> turns on a conception of belief founded not on the certainty of knowable truth, but on the certainty of experienced intimacy. It is this language of shared experience that provides Mrs. Bulstrode with the vocabulary with which to receive her outcast husband and "espouse his sorrow" (807); and it is this language of shared experience that is the space of reading—a place in between the real and the fictive—in the middle of two marches.

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<sup>12</sup> Hardy 314. In explaining that Tess predicated her hopes for Angel Clare's forgiveness on the condition of their living together in one home, Hardy writes, "Though unsophisticated in the usual sense, she was not incomplete;

and it would have denoted deficiency of womanhood if she had not instinctively known what an argument lies in propinquity."

## "The Coronation of the Whirlwind": The Victorian Poetics of Indeterminacy

Lawrence J. Starzyk

And much of the instinct, which, partially developed in painting, may be now seen throughout every mode of exertion of mind,—the easily encouraged doubt, easily excited curiosity, habitual agitation, and delight in the changing and the marvelous, as opposed to the old quiet serenity of social custom and religious faith,—is again deeply defined in those few words, the "dethroning of Jupiter," the coronation of the whirlwind.

*Modern Painters III*

Ruskin's analysis of the modern landscape provides one of the best definitions, outside of modern physics, of the principle of indeterminacy. The resistance to absolute definitions, the indeterminability of objects or phenomena that we associate with the principle of uncertainty are consequences of what Ruskin identifies as the modern intellectual passion for "what it is impossible to arrest, and difficult to comprehend." The origins of this tendency to subject "all plain and positive facts, to what is uncertain and unintelligible" (5: 318-19) are clearly religious: once faith vanishes, all human endeavors—intellectual and artistic—are liberated from their service to the absolute so that even if man speaks of the Divine, it is of a "Divine presence, not formed into distinct belief" (5: 342).

Artistically, Ruskin finds this indeterminacy most graphically represented in Turner's works. That "aerial perspective" from which we view as through a mist the Burning of the House of Parliament, the Fighting "Temeraire," the Evening of the Deluge depends upon the artist's dedication to "the service of the clouds" (5: 318). The indefiniteness of so many of Turner's landscapes and seascapes derives from a calculated strategy and theory of optics whereby, as Gombrich explains (186-89), an interposing medium (in this case a "cloud") is thrown over a scene so that the perceiver almost literally traces through its medium the objects veiled beneath.

Indeterminacy in art involves suggestive indistinguishableness. The spectator is thus required to attend, not to the objects depicted, but to "the faithful representation of [the] appearance of objects, as seen through" mists (5: 317). Indeterminacy, however, also involves the element of changeableness or movement. In so many of Turner's seascapes, "Keelmen Heaving in Coals by Moonlight" for example, we are invited to penetrate the mist through which objects appear, to witness the seemingly interminable discourse between object and its watery reflections and vanishings, to engage in the vorticular motion ever fining itself down or expanding itself outward toward some indefinable point. To penetrate the mist is not to discover the definite or the absolute, but to be given over, as are the objects depicted, to an endless pyrn-

ing in a gyre in which perceiver and thing perceived attempt to return upon themselves without ever fully possessing themselves.

My main concern in this essay is with this principle of indeterminacy, understood in terms of indefiniteness and motion, and evident in the poetic theory and poetry of the Victorian era. The first part of the essay will discuss the aesthetic principles in which the concept of artistic indeterminacy is rooted. The second part will discuss select poems as illustrative of the operation of the indeterminate in Victorian poetry.

### I

Ruskin's chapter on "The Modern Landscape" suggests that the "coronation of the whirlwind" was aesthetically necessitated by the repudiation of both the classical-participatory and the romantic-projectionist aesthetics. Victorian critics and artists alike viewed these artistic orientations as distorting the object art attempted to represent. Classical theory's emphasis on artifact as "imitation" of absolute form or idea relegated objects of the physical universe to icons: the reality or truth of the represented (whether physical object or artistic imitation) derived, in Barfield's words, from what "stands behind the phenomena, and on the other side of them from" the perceiver or artist (42). Discrete aspects of the physical universe, including artistic reproductions of them, were to be viewed, as Browning states in "Old Pictures in Florence," as embodying "The Truth of Man, as by God first spoken" (l. 85). Art was a reutterance, the validity of which depended on that first Divine utterance.

The Victorians' criticism of the romantic-projectionist position similarly derives from the distortion to the object occurring as the result of what Clough labelled "mawkish sentimentality." Writing specifically of Wordsworth, Clough indicts the poet on the same grounds that Arnold, Ruskin, and Carlyle censure the English romantics.<sup>1</sup> "Instead of looking directly at an object and considering it as a thing in itself, and allowing it to operate upon him as a fact in itself, he takes the sentiment produced by it in his own mind as the thing; as the important and really real fact." The consequence of this "sentimentalizing over sentiment," Clough concludes, "is that real things cease to be real; the world no longer exists; all that exists is the feeling somehow generated in the poet's sensibility" (121).

In an era in which it was becoming increasingly difficult to deny Carlyle's diagnosis that "Faith has well-nigh vanished" (28: 29) the artist and critic found the classical, imitative

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle's most pointed attack against the romantics comes in *The Life of John Sterling* (11: 52-57). For a detailed analysis of Ruskin's disagreement with the romantics, see Helsing ch. 2. Arnold summarizes the attitude of the majority of Victorian critics when he writes in the "Heinrich Heine" essay (1863) that "The greatest of them, Wordsworth, retired . . . into a monastery. I

mean he plunged himself into the inward life, he voluntarily cut himself off from the modern spirit. Coleridge took to opium. Scott became the historiographer-royal of feudalism. Keats passionately gave himself up to sensuous genius, to his faculty of interpreting nature" (2: 121-22).

aesthetic to be untenable, no matter how the lost faith was defined. We find throughout the period, even in a writer like Newman, the rejection of the Aristotelian idea of poetry as the "representation of the ideal" for the notion that poetry, "generalizing from the phenomenon of nature and life supplies us with pictures drawn, not after an existing pattern, but after a creation of mind" (64). Dallas complains that Aristotle's critical legacy is "a sort of hereditary squint," which renders poetic theory "one-sided" because of its rationalistic approach to objects and its consequent dismissal of the artist's imaginative vision (1: 26).

The Victorians' romantic inheritance is clearly evident in Newman's assertion that art is essentially a "creation of the mind" and not the representation of "existing patterns." Similar statements are to be found in virtually every major critic in the period. For Mill, poetry is "the nearest possible representation of the feeling in the exact shape in which it exists in the poet's mind" (195). Art, writes Dallas, "is the mind's play" (1: 171). The Pre-Raphaelites' view of poetry is "the reflex of the living image in his own mind of the idea treated" (Hunt 740). For Masson, "The poet is emphatically the man who continues the work of creation, . . . who breathes his own spirit into things" (309). Browning's Paracelsus similarly regards the poet in "creationist" terms when he remarks that

God is the PERFECT POET  
Who in creation acts his own conceptions  
Shall man refuse to be ought less than God?

(Part II, ll. 663-65)

Superficially, these Victorian definitions of art and poetry appear inconsistent with the criticism most Victorian theoreticians leveled against the romantics' sentimentalizing of objects. The "real world" reduced to sentiment in the romantic poetic appears reduced to an imaginative figment in the Victorian. The solipsism attributable to each is only one reason why Arnold complained that "almost the last thing for which one would come to English literature is just that very thing which Europe most desires—criticism," the seeing the object as it is in itself (1: 140).

But Newman's and Paracelsus's aesthetic position, in which the poetic act is viewed as analogous to the Divine creative act, must be understood in terms of the prevailing typological approach of many Evangelical writers who regard the "word" or the universe as a text of God.<sup>2</sup> "The characteristic tendency of poetical minds," Newman remarks in "Tract 89," "is to make the world of sense, from beginning to end, symbolical of the absent and unseen" (6: 185). Everything demands to be read as a sign of some higher form, and consequently man, as poet, cannot refuse to be less than God. His

function, as Browning explained to Ruskin, involves "a putting the infinite within the finite" (Ruskin 26: xxxiv). In Tennyson's words, he must attempt "to attain / By shadowing forth the Unattainable" ("Timbuctoo," ll. 192-93). The very nature of the poetic enterprise insures that he, and his creations, must fail—be less. The failure was nevertheless acceptable to those artists and critics having faith in a divinity whose creative acts they imperfectly emulated.

For critics and artists incapable of accepting this typological or analogical orientation because they could not see, like Tennyson, "That all, as in some piece of art, / Is toil coöperant to an end," (*In Memoriam*, 128: 23-24), the romantic-projectionist aesthetic posed serious problems, among them the "trecherous" solipsism Shelley warned of and the "falseness" Benthamites like Macaulay complained of.<sup>3</sup> Such an aesthetic undermined the reality of an object as it is, without, however, saving the appearances by informing them with a viable principle. If man, in other words, could no longer hope from outward forms (the Divinity or beneficent Nature) to win passion and life for his world, there was serious question that he could find them within either.

Arnold's redefinition of poetry as "the priestess of the imaginative reason" (3: 230), his impassioned plea for critical disinterestedness represent the most serious attempt among Victorian critics to save the appearances of things, to see the object as it is in itself, and yet to do so while preserving the organic and "creationist" or endogenous orientation of romanticism. In this respect Arnold's, Clough's, and Ruskin's poetic theories are fundamentally allied—all seek, in Clough's words, "to fix a centre around which the chaotic elements of human impulse and desire might take solid form and move in their ordered ellipses" (119). And that center, identified as human nature "harmonized," would permit seeing life steadily and seeing it whole because the poet would begin by seeing himself steadily and seeing himself whole.

Two points need to be emphasized in Clough's statement: (1) the notion of stability or fixed center located in human nature harmonized, and (2) the sense of movement of human elements around this fixed center. Regarding the first point, I wish only to emphasize the concerted effort of all major Victorian critics to inventory human nature's faculties and to define genuine poetry in terms of the synergistic combination of these powers.<sup>4</sup> My principal concern, however, is with the second point Clough raises—the movement of these elements in their ordered ellipses.

In complaining of eighteenth-century writers like Dryden and Pope, Arnold similarly demands both a point of psychic or spiritual permanence as well as development or movement about this point if art is to be possible in the nineteenth century. Dryden and Pope, Arnold argues, were men "composing without their eye on the object." Unfortunately,

Gazing in dreams over the gloomy grave,  
Sees his own trecherous likeness there. (ll. 469-74)

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed discussion of the role of typology in Victorian critical thought, see Landow ch. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Charting the poet's internal and external quest for identity in *Alastor*, Shelley writes of the artist as he gazes narcissistically into a well:

Hither the Poet came. His eyes beheld  
Their own wan light through the reflected lines  
Of his thin hair, distinct in the dark depth  
Of that still fountain; as the human heart,

While admitting that "truth" is essential to poetry, Macaulay insists that it is the truth of madness. The reasonings are just; but the premises are false" (1: 209).

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed discussion of human nature "harmonized" as the basis of Victorian poetics, see Starzyk ch. 4.

Arnold adds, such an approach “does not take us much below the surface of things, it does not give us the emotion of seeing things in their truth and beauty.” Genuine poetry, he concludes, requires the poet to compose “with his eye on the object; its evolution is that of a thing which has been plunged in the poet’s soul until it comes forth naturally and necessarily” (9: 202). The comment recalls Wordsworth’s definition of poetry as emotion recollected and Keble’s psychologically oriented aesthetic of reserve or the cathartic outpouring of feeling in the creative act. It reminds us as well of Ruskin’s description of the imaginative act in which an object is exalted “by gathering round it, in farther vision, all the facts properly connected with it; this being as it were, a spiritual or second sight, multiplying the power of enjoyment according to the fullness of the vision” (5: 355). According to Ruskin and Arnold, then, “seeing the object” involves an evolutionary process in which the object is plunged into the poetic soul, gathers round it all that is connected with it, and is then epigenetically expressed. This is the same process we find operative in so many of Turner’s works: artistic object—the represented—is a trace; it discloses what it is, but also what, as the result of being plunged into the artistic soul and breathed forth again into the world’s multitudinousness, it has become and is evolving toward. Wordsworth describes this vision and visionary process when, contemplating a watery reflection in “Home at Grasmere,” he writes

Behold the universal imagery  
Inverted, all its sun-bright features touched  
As with the varnish, and the gloss of dreams;  
Dreamlike the blending also of the whole  
Harmonious landscape; all along the shore  
The boundary lost, the line invisible  
That parts the image from reality;  
And the clear hills, as high as they ascend  
Heavenward, so piercing deep the lake below.

(PW 5: 332, ll. 571-79)

Art exists at that “line invisible” at which object (hills, the shore) discourses with its reflection, at which image parts from reality. The whole, in art, is harmonized in a “Dreamlike . . . blending,” attains the illusion of stability or finality when, in reality, the process of “parting” continues unabated.

This process, it should be noted, can move inwards—the perceiving self looking intently past the watery reflection to see “below the surface” of things—or it can move outwards towards the ascending hills. According to Hazlitt, art is thus the “revelation of the workings of the mind within.” It is, however, also “a language pointing to something beyond, and full of this ultimate import” (17: 145). In Coleridge’s words, an object in the hands of an artist, expresses “a divine something corresponding to [something] within, which no image can exhaust” (*Lectures* 194). What distinguishes the romantic position from the Victorian, however, is the belief in what

Coleridge variously identifies in the *Biographia* as the essential “coincidence,” “coalescence,” or “reconciliation” of object with subject, thought with thing, image with reality. Both the romantic and Victorian critic agree that art involves what Arnold defines as an “evolution” requiring the poet to go beneath the surface of things in order to express from within the garlanded object. Both agree also on the inexhaustibility, in time, of this process. But where Wordsworth, as Weiskel has perceptively noted, recognizes an “energy that ensures continuity” (144)—the “correspondence” Coleridge speaks of—linking image and reality, object and reflection, the typical Victorian poet recognizes the reflection or represented as “other,” as something discontinuous from the soul in which it was plunged and from which it evolved. He acknowledges the signifier as basically empty of absolute or definitive signification, because, as Carlyle points out, a particular object in space or time “can be the fac-simile of no prior one” (1: 97). It is, at best, a “trace” bespeaking difference instead of resemblance.<sup>5</sup>

This crucial distinction can be briefly illustrated by comparing Arnold’s exploitation of what Ball calls one of the “profound ironies of modern life: that self-consciousness equals self-alienation” (187) with the following passage from Wordsworth’s *The Prelude*

so wide appears  
The vacancy between me and those days  
Which yet have such self-presence in my mind,  
That, musing on them, often do I seem  
Two consciousnesses, conscious of myself  
And of some other Being.

(Pt. 2, ll. 28-33)

The vacancy between the present and past selves, wide as it is, nevertheless is only apparent: it “seems.” Whatever distinctions or differences exist between the two are negligible; the “self-presence” of both within the recollecting poet annihilates the vacancy. The essential “correspondence” of the “two consciousnesses,” however, is not as significant as the movement between them. Frequently in Wordsworth, the vacancy is defined spatially as place—Tintern Abbey or Peele Castle, for instance. It is within the context of that vacancy that discourse between the two consciousnesses occurs, that the essential correspondence or unity of the two evolves outward or inward, into the future or into the past. And so a place—an object, or even a person—can serve as analogue not only of “What then I was” (“Elegiac Stanzas,” l. 76), but also of the “Something ever more about to be” (*The Prelude*, Pt. 6, l. 608.).

In Arnold’s “Resignation” no such unity binds into correspondence the discrete objects remembered and viewed again. A place, or object, can in Wordsworth’s reflections revive “the picture of the mind” and in the process feed a life “For future years” (“Tintern Abbey,” ll. 61 & 65), but in Arnold’s we discover the phantasms: “The self-same shadows now, as then,” (l. 98) the “Ghosts of that boisterous company”

<sup>5</sup> Miller (5-6) quotes Gilles DeLeuze’s distinction between Platonic and Nietzschean repetition. “Let us consider two formulations: ‘only that which resembles itself differs,’ ‘only differences resemble one another’ . . . It is a question of two readings of the world in the sense that one asks us to think of difference on the basis of preestablished similitude or identity, while the other

invites us on the contrary to think of similitude and even identity as the product of a fundamental disparity. The first exactly defines the world of copies or of representations; it establishes the world as icon. The second, against the first, defines the world as simulacra. It presents the world itself as phantasm.”

l. 89), who like the gypsy band determined by "their hereditary way,"

rub through, if they can  
Tomorrow on the self-same plan,  
Till death arrive to supersede,  
For them, vicissitude and need.

("Resignation," ll. 139-43)

So many of Arnold's poems are haunted by the reality that "tomorrow'll be / Today's exact repeated effigy" ("Tristram" 3: 94-95). Wordsworth's sense of time measures evolution synergistically: the present (or future) self is greater than the simple sum of its preceding selves. But it is a sum. Arnold's sense of time chronicles no such connection or correspondence; it measures, rather, vanishings, endless repetitions of self that recursively "roll" and "again unroll" ("Resignation" ll. 157 & 94) yielding consciousness of self as alien. As a result, the discourse between Arnold's "two consciousnesses" is not nourishing of future life, but "devouring" of it. The Victorian romantic is compelled to engage in the unproductive dialectic in which he must seek to "rid him of the presence of himself, . . . till the absence from himself, / That other torment, grow unbearable" ("Empedocles" Act II, ll. 223 & 225).

This sense of the indeterminate self—inexhaustible possibilities of identity incapable of realization save as "other"—informs Victorian poetry and poetics from Tennyson through Hardy. Whether indeterminacy is rendered meaningful, as it is in Tennyson and Browning's thinking, or considered absurd replication, as it is in Arnold and Hardy's works, one crucial element remains operative throughout the period: the dynamics of the indeterminate. This evolutionary process, whether defined in the Wordsworthian terms I've suggested (synergistic) or in the Arnoldian terms I've described (recursive), clearly functions as an integral element of Victorian critical theory and practice. According to Carlyle, for example, the first law of existence is "To unfold your self" (5: 225). In the *vates* or poet, this process involves the self's engaging its internal world of Madness, the artist's encountering his Daimon or Manes. "In every the wisest Soul lies a whole world of Madness, an authentic Demon Empire; out of which, indeed, his world of Wisdom has been creatively built together, and now rests there, as on its dark foundations does a habitable flowery Earth-rind" (1: 207). The building process is on-going and vorticular. "Once set it *revolving*," Carlyle remarks in *Past and Present* of this internal world, it "grows round and ever rounder; ranges itself by mere force of gravity into strata, spherical courses" (10: 197). The reality generated out of this daimonic world, however, is "the multiplex 'Image of his own Dream'" (5: 26), as indistinguishable and ephemeral as a dream, a vesture always being retailored. For the poet "alternates between the highest height and the lowest depth; can, of all things, the least measure—Himself" (5: 25). "Deep as we dive in this Profound," Carlyle concludes, "there is ever a new depth opens: where the ultimate bottom may lie, through what new scenes of being we must pass before reaching it . . . is altogether a mystery to us" (28: 48).

The sense that the projected "self"—what Browning calls "A shadow mocking a reality" ("Paracelsus" Pt. V, l. 818)—is always alien is as important in Victorian thinking as the dynamics or vorticular movement involved in this process of visionary projection. Writing to his mother of his agreement with Goethe's idea of the "daemonic," Arnold observes that "the right thing is, while conscious of this element, and of all there is inexplicable around one, to keep pushing on one's posts into the darkness" (*Letters* 147). This is an innate desire—"A longing to inquire / Into the mystery"—frustrated of satisfaction since "deep enough, alas! none ever mines" ("The Buried Life" ll. 51-2, 56). Keble defines the pleasures of art as involving "the consciousness of some such operation" in which the poet is regarded as acting or doing: "embodying something visionary, presenting something absent, bettering something imperfect" (1: 158)—being, in Browning's words, something less.

"Poetry is feeling," Mill writes, "confessing itself to itself in moments of solitude, and embodying itself in symbols, which are the nearest possible representation of the feeling in the exact shape in which it exists in the poet's mind" (195). The embodying process, however, fails to define absolutely what is. The sense of the "nearest" indicates that the image, no sooner expressed from the poet's solitude, is recognized as having parted from reality, that it is already "other" than or distant from the self projecting it.

Of all the Victorian critics, Dallas more eloquently than most expresses the poetic dynamic resulting in the prevalence of the indeterminate when he describes the artist as "communicating to the world, through his works, a secret that he and it will never unravel" (1: 314). It is the secret of what he calls "the hidden soul," the "*je ne sais quoi*," a "something which is beyond and behind knowledge, a hidden treasure, a mental possession whereof we are ignorant" (1: 318). The fragmentary character his sister "K" observed of his 1852 volume, the "indeterminate" nature of which Arnold himself admitted (*Unpublished Letters* 18), is clearly attributable to the poet's attempt to render effable the ineffable, to establish absolutely in identity that which is in process of becoming, to freeze in the imaginative moment that which temporally is already in the present evolving to something other than it is. It is also attributable to his understanding of the universe as being "*ondoyant et divers*, balancing and indeterminate, the plaything of cross motives and shifting impulses, swayed by a thousand subtle influences, physiological and pathological" (4: 274). One of the central ironies of the Victorian imaginative effort involves the passion for telos or finality, not only being frustrated, but being rendered in poetic structures which, in Mitchell's words, "resist closure [and] push beyond poetry, language, or even the imagination itself" (135).

Before examining representative poetry of the indeterminate, it is instructive to consider Browning's definition of the subjective poet in which he describes what it means for the poet to attempt to express from himself the objects plunged within and garlanded by the hidden soul. In his "Introduction to Shelley," Browning intentionally confuses classical and romantic, Platonic and Plotinian notions of art. In one sense, the confusion bespeaks the Victorian repudiation of both aesthetic orientations on grounds of inadequacy; it

more properly indicates how the Victorian poetic dialectically harmonized what writers like Browning felt were the best elements of each.<sup>6</sup> I wish to call attention to the dynamic involved in this description, as well as to the alien character of the result of that process. Of the subjective poet, Browning remarks,

Not what man sees, but what God sees—the *Ideas* of Plato, seeds of creation lying burningly on the Divine Hand—it is toward these that he struggles . . . he digs where he stands,—preferring to seek them in his own soul as the nearest reflex of that absolute Mind, according to the intuitions of which he desires to perceive and speak. Such a poet does not deal habitually with the picturesque groupings and tempestuous tossings of the forest-trees, but with their roots and fibres naked to the chalk and stone. He does not paint pictures and hang them on the walls, but carries them on the retina of his own eyes. . . . He is rather a seer, accordingly, than a fashioner, and what he produces will be less a work than an effluence. That effluence cannot be easily considered in abstraction from his personality,—being indeed the very radiance and aroma of his personality, projected from it but not separated.

(Scudder 1009)

Art is a creation—something originating from within the artist—not a work or imitation—something grounded in what is immutably beyond the artist and his artifact. It involves a process, internal (the poet “digs” within himself) as well as external (a breathing out, an effluence). It results in something projected (a picture) but not separated (hung on the poet’s retina, not on a wall).

The image employed here to define the creative act—picture hanging on the retina of the artist’s eye—bears within it a contradiction as productive as the one occasioned by the confusion of Platonic and Plotinian terms.<sup>7</sup> Browning wants to annihilate the apparent “vacancy” between two consciousnesses (artistic self and its product) by insisting that the one is not “separated” from the other. Wordsworth’s “one Life” informing all effectively accomplished this so that discontinuity was merely apparent. Coleridge found in the watery reflection of the sky in Malta an image of the absolute identification of the two: “*Logos ab Ente*—at once the existent Reflexion, and the Reflex Act—at once actual and real & therefore, filiation not creation” (*Notebooks* 2: 3159). What I wish to argue in the next section is that the Victorians, including Browning, despite their attempts to insure for their poetic the possibility of correspondence (filiation), were forced to conclude that artifact constituted “otherness,” something separated or discontinuous from the projecting self. There are only two possibilities when we speak of the kinds of near-identification Browning and Coleridge describe as analogues of the artistic effort: the identification either “diminishes the ontological status of the represented ‘reality,’” as Heffernan persuasively argues, or it “elevates the reflection to the point where it participates with the ‘reality’ in a newly created

whole” (222). Early Victorian poets like Tennyson and Browning seek to operate with the second alternative as their underlying poetic assumption, only to discover that the first alternative must inform their critical theory and art.

## II

The indeterminate is strong in Browning’s poetry, as it is in Ruskin’s critical theory, primarily because in both existence is viewed dialectically as a becoming instead of disjunctively as a being.<sup>8</sup> “All forms,” Ruskin notes in his *Diaries*, “are thus either indicative of lines of energy, or pressure, or motion, variously impressed or resisted” (2: 370-71). As Carlyle’s “Characteristics” essay (1831) made clear for his contemporaries, a dialectical understanding of life required antithetical elements to fuel its motion. Aesthetically, this meant, according to Rosenberg, that “the greatest creative artists are all Manichees in spirit, possessed of a vision of blessedness beyond our grasp of joy and of an inferno more profound and actual than we can fathom” (189). They exist, as Tennyson suggests his artists do, on either side of artifact: on the one that “showeth fair to the eyes”; on the other exhibiting “Disorder of a system which seemed Order” (“The Devil and the Lady” Act 1, Scene 3, ll. 37 & 44). Neither the *terminus ad quem* nor the precise nature of the antithetical elements is significant; the indeterminate movement is: the being less than God, the “finding failure in [his] scope” (“Childe Roland,” l. 24); the seeing “Each life unfulfilled” (“Youth & Art,” l. 61); the inability, in the last analysis, to order Disorder.

And this is precisely what Browning discerns as the essence of the “revolution” in which the “perfect” (l. 123) and the unchangeable are displaced by the “rough-hewn” (l. 126) and unfinished as artistic criteria. Having “turned your eyes inwardly one fine day” (l. 114), “To become now self-acquainters” (l. 147), Browning argues in “Old Pictures in Florence,” his contemporaries must acknowledge as consequence of this shift the fact that “The Artificer’s hand is not arrested / With us” (ll. 125-26).

The artistic plenitude of the newly self-acquainted self working to express this “wider nature” (l. 119) of modern man explains one reason why art is indeterminate and the artist’s work never arrested: so many of Browning’s characters feel the alienation consequent upon “a most clear idea of consciousness / Of self-distinct from all its qualities” (“Pauline,” ll. 219-20). The dialectic itself explains another: the fact that in an antithetically driven hypothesis, a living organism must be regarded in any given historical moment as becoming something other than it presently is. And this recognition motivates Cleon to confess to Protus, a king obsessed with death and immortality, the “deadlier fate” an artist suffers: “all my works wherein I prove my worth, / . . . mock me in men’s mouths” (ll. 318-19). The King had earlier, in Cleon’s words, argued the artist’s immortality on the grounds that “a poem,

<sup>6</sup> See Shaw’s discussion (*The Lucid Veil* 126-29) of the contradictory character of Victorian critical speculation.

<sup>7</sup> For a detailed analysis of the purposeful confusion of these seemingly contradictory aesthetic orientations, see Abrams (*Mirror* 57-69). Park’s clarifica-

tion of Abrams’s position indicates how this confusion of orientations continued to function as the basis of much nineteenth-century critical theory.

<sup>8</sup> Hewison (ch. 8) provides a valuable discussion of the dialectic and the indeterminate in Ruskin’s aesthetic thinking.



... a painting lives" (l. 277). To which Cleon replies that, while a painter can paint a king and a philosopher write a dissertation on kingship, only Protus is king, lives kingship. The artifact (poem, painting, philosophical discourse) is a mockery. But far "deadlier" in Cleon's mind is the mockery an artist is fated to as he realizes that his imaginative movement to exercise his plenitude and therefore identity are bound to disclose a self that is alien, that is "other."

I shape me—  
Ever  
Removed!

("Life in a Love," ll. 20-22)

Nowhere is that sense of indeterminacy more poignantly expressed in Browning's work than in his poetic analogue to the prose passage defining the subjective poet. Childe Roland represents lines of energy resisted, an endless return of the self upon itself without possession, a diminishing of the ontological status of the represented self, the "equivocal triumph" of what Bloom calls Kierkegaardian repetition over Platonic recollection (120). We are confronted—as Cleon and Roland are—with the painful recognition that even the most perfect representation, artistically, intellectually, or psychologically, is, in Derrida's words, "always already other than what it doubles" (292).

The notion of "doubling" or "repetition" is central to Browning's poem and evidences itself, superficially at least, in the poem's first line (its title) coming back on itself in the poem's last. Coleridge would have spoken approvingly of the poem's dynamics in this respect. He would have admired Browning's ability "to make those events, which in real or imagined History move on in a *strait* Line, assume to our Understandings a *circular* motion—the snake with its Tail in its Mouth" (*Letters* 4: 545). The image of the serpent—or work—coming back upon itself suggests closure and determinacy. That finality, the sense of self absolutely defined, is suggested by Browning's use of "Came": the act or accomplishment of Roland absolutely signifies his being.

The poem's line of energy, however, is not, properly speaking, circular but vorticular. It rounds on itself without ever attaining closure or, for Roland, definition. A knight who spent years "training for the sight" (l. 180) ends by being seen. The hills, the squat tower, his predecessors in the quest, at the poem's seeming conclusion, have all gathered

To view the last of me, a living frame  
For one more picture! (ll. 200-201)

These lines invite comparison with Browning's statement about the "picture-hanging" artist who mounts on the retina of his eye as in a frame the individual paintings he completes. The circular dynamic suggested by the doubling of title in concluding line—a movement reinforced by internal doublings (the Donne recursion, ll. 25-30; the reflection on Cuthbert and Giles, ll. 91-102)—indicates the absence of finality or determinacy, rather than what Roland "tricks" us into believing: this is "the last" of me (although he admits at the poem's opening that what follows is "My first thought"). We have suggested here the experience of looking at vacation photo-

graphs sequentially arranged. Having looked at the last photo in the sequence, the observer returns upon the first. That circular image becomes the poem's structural principle, suggestive, however, not of closure, but of indeterminate movement, a spiral motion in which, with every rereading, with every viewing of the "last" picture, we begin the poem anew as someone other than we were at the last reading. Consequently, we see—and Roland sees—the questing knight as the same, but different than he was at first. The work "mocks" itself and its readers, because it provides no last or definitive self or meaning. It defies closure.

If we examine the picture-hanging act in relation to Roland's attempt at self-assertion, we can understand precisely why a poem which structurally seems to close upon itself, continues instead to round out from itself as center in ever widening gyres. From the spectator's perspective, a picture mounted on an artist's retina is viewed as integrally related to the artist's being. The two can be seen as indistinguishable, the identity of the one meaningfully confused with the other. From the artist's perspective, however, no such indistinguishableness exists. The very act of hanging an artifact external to the creative self suggests separateness, "otherness." But so too does the poetic dynamic Browning speaks of in "Old Pictures in Florence," "Rabbi Ben Ezra," "Abt Vogler," and other poems—the dynamic in which the creative self can never come to perfection or finality, must forever remain indefinite and undefined. It is inaccurate, I think, to claim, as Shaw does, that "The truth" many Victorian lyrics seek to repress "is the truth that the poet is the subject of his own nightmares," that Browning's profound undertaking in "Childe Roland" involves the "gradual coming to consciousness of the repressed awareness of a human face behind the mask" (*ELH* 484). It would be far more accurate to state that the artist becomes painfully conscious that the mask (the assumed identity, the "represented," the picture) does not correspond with the face (the evolving self) behind it. Unlike the romantics who, as Abrams argues ("Structure and Style" 224), are conscious of no distinction, for whom the parting of image from reality indicates the annihilation of what separates self from other, the Victorians read amid all things, semblances or correspondences especially, the unbridgeable vacancy separating self from its representations.

Perhaps the most graphic demonstration of this principle of indeterminacy occurs in the major Victorian poets' reliance on what Joseph, borrowing from Derrida, labels the *mise en abîme*: endless replication that elaborates and uncovers "bottomless *differance*" (403). Such recursions ostensibly seek to repeat in miniature a pattern or form represented by a larger piece, as in Chinese dolls isomorphically set within each other. The technique, as a structural principle (for example in Browning's "Dis Aliter Visum," and Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott"), however, functions to dramatize *differance*, not similarity.

Describing the soul in the poetic act of creating its Palace of Art, Tennyson observes that

all things that she saw, she multiplied  
A many-faced glass;  
And being both the sower and the seed,

Remaining in herself became  
All that she saw. (1832 version, ll. 130-34)

The organic metaphor employed here to suggest the equivalence of artist and artifact also represents what Park defines as "the involution of the individual or the material in the universal or immaterial" (161). But as in Hazlitt's "fine gallery of pictures," the artistic multiplications of Tennyson's Palace "turn to shadows" (X: 19). "Thy mimic form," so many of Tennyson's personae ultimately discover, is "Full opposite to thy reality" ("Ode: O Bosky Brook," ll. 49-50). And so the palaces of art—whether Wordsworth's in "Elegiac Stanzas," Shelley's in *Alastor*, or Tennyson's in "The Lady of Shalott"—must be abandoned, not, I think, as Van den Berg suggests (65), because the soul in order not to get ill "has to aim itself on objects outside the self" (a divine being, human kind), but because, as Shelley more accurately observed, "the period arrives when these objects cease to suffice" (14).

Now the insufficiency is understandable in terms of the impossibility of achieving the involution of the immaterial in the material, the infinite in the finite. It is also understandable in light of the prevailing dialectical mode of thought which compelled Victorians to

Look higher, then—perchance—thou mayest—beyond  
A hundred ever-rising mountain lines,  
And past the range of Night and Shadow—see  
The high-heaven dawn of more than mortal day.  
(*The Ancient Sage*, ll. 281-84)

The compulsion to seek transformation and transcendence and, specifically, to posit some ultimate synthesis toward which the dialectic is ineluctably moving is self-contradictory. No such predication of absolutes is logically permissible, despite early Victorian writers' attempts to the contrary. What remained inescapable was the recognition that any reflex of the poetic soul, like any picture mounted on the poet's retina, was unmistakably "other" than the projecting poetic anima.<sup>9</sup>

Even Tennyson, passionately committed to belief in "one far-off divine event, / To which the whole creation moves" (*In Memoriam*, Epilogue, ll. 143-44), could recognize this insufficiency, the inability of any evolving mask to disclose the face beneath. In the opening stanza of *In Memoriam*, he remarks "That men may rise on stepping-stones / Of their dead selves to higher things." The progressive thrust of this movement ("higher") suggests vertical transcendence. It is vorticular motion, however, that is more accurately the nature of the

poem's development. Speaking of a child's egocentric identification of self with what his senses disclose, Tennyson observes that human development demands recognition of the self's otherness.

So rounds he to a separate mind  
From whence clear memory may begin,  
As through the frame that binds him in  
His isolation grows defined. (XLV 9-12)

Whether that vorticular movement is internally or externally directed—and Carlyle makes clear to his contemporaries that poetic activity requires both motions<sup>10</sup>—isolation and indeterminacy are heightened; the self discovers itself as "other."

What find I in the highest place,  
But mine own phantom chanting hymns?  
And on the depths of death there swims  
The reflex of a human face. (CVIII 9-12)

It is only in death that signifier becomes one with signified, as Geoffrey Hartman observes of the departed Lady of Shalott (8). During the process of life, however, we are confronted with reflexes of self recursively emanating outward or turning inward without ever attaining. In the waking world of the Lady as in the self-recapitulating realm of Roland, all is vanishing, nothing is ever signified.

So many of Arnold's finest poems can similarly be viewed as structures in which repetition is not a duplication so much as a recursion acknowledging lack of signification. The mythic tales repeated in Callicles's songs, for instance, may be viewed as objective correlatives of various stages in Empedocles's development prior to his suicidal end. They more painfully and poignantly acknowledge, however, that Empedocles is simultaneously more and less than Cadmus and Harmonia, Typho, Marsyas, or even Apollo. These masks signify not identity but otherness. They are at best "effigies" of self.

Arnold carries this recursive technique to its extreme in "Tristram and Iseult." Following Tristram's death, we are shown a room in which the knight's body is laid, the mourning Iseult of Ireland attending the corpse. Arnold physically and visually distances us from this scene by calling our attention to a tapestry in which a hunter is caught spying into a room where a fair lady kneels near a pillowed knight. The series of questions the hunter asks himself—who? how? what?—are

<sup>9</sup> Both Heidegger and Magritte offer provocative statements about the "otherness" of artifact. In terms reminiscent of Browning's picture-hanging analogy, Heidegger remarks that the artist "makes a picture world for himself. He puts the world forward and places it in front of himself. He is not in unity with the world, but torn from it. He is an isolated, worldless 'I'" (cited in Vycinas 31). Magritte's statement in "The Human Condition I" offers a different, though related, perspective. "I placed in front of a window, seen from a room, a painting representing exactly the part of the landscape which was hidden from view by the painting. Therefore the tree represented in the painting hid from view the tree situated behind it, outside the room. It existed for the spectator, as it were, simultaneously in his mind, as both inside the room in the painting, and outside in the real landscape" (cited in Hofstadter 705).

<sup>10</sup> Carlyle's "Characteristics" essay thematically and structurally illustrates this dual movement within and without. He counsels his contemporaries to

look within for wisdom and cure to their debilitating self-consciousness, but he insists that health can only be realized if the individual completes himself "without," in Society. Arnold's remark in "Stanzas in Memory of the Author of 'Obermann'" indicates how this dual motion is of the essence of the poetic life:

Ah! two desires toss about  
The poet's feverish blood.  
One drives him to the world without,  
And one to solitude. (ll. 93-96)

Tennyson's "Ode: O Bosky Brook," Part I, graphically depicts the "mind dilate" (l. 16) and then "pry curiously down" (l. 30) to disclose "mysterious beauty" (l. 36).

not merely rhetorical marks forcing recapitulation of details and facts; they are signs to us that absolute signification is impossible.

The same may be said of Arnold's closing the third section of the poem by having Iseult of Brittany repeat to her children the story of Merlin's entrapment by Vivian. The obvious parallels between Merlin's fate and Tristram's—perhaps even between Arnold's and Marguerite's or Francis Lucy Wightman's<sup>11</sup>—become inconsequential when we realize that the differences disclose the inability of something similar or analogous to render fully intelligible its correspondent. Artistic repetition, Iseult concludes, makes of "All which we did before, shadow and dream" (l. 132).

Rossetti's work visually dramatizes the dialogue or discourse of similarities confessing *differance*. The conflation in his works of pictorial and verbal elements, in fact, marks a culmination of sorts in the poetic developments suggested so far. Artistic object in much of Pre-Raphaelite art becomes icon celebrating the complex dynamic, not only between the spectator and picture hung on the poet's retina, but also between the poet and picture hung. In fact, at its most complex, the icon, as Prince points out (568), dramatizes the interaction between artist mounting picture and spectator viewing hung artifact. We find this evident in Rossetti's companion pieces, "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin" and "Ecce Ancilla Domini." The paintings, in discoursing with one another,<sup>12</sup> reveal to the spectator and artist numerous points of similarity: Mary as subject, the presence in the foreground of an angel and a lily, Mary as artist learning how to weave and then displaying her handiwork. The essential difference between the two pieces has little to do with the fact that in one we have a young girl, in the other, a young woman about to become the mother of God. Careful scrutiny of the companion pieces discloses that we, and Rossetti as well, are invited to move beyond these framed pictures, to trace through the work of art itself another work of art. The companion paintings are in this sense reflexes of the artistic activity Rossetti engaged in and completed. The first painting mirrors in Mary's activity the process the artist goes through in representing an object. The second painting reflects the result of that activity—the finished tapestry hanging in the foreground before Mary's bed. What Mary's work discloses is that human artifact is not "the icy double" of an object (Hunt 740) but, at best, an imperfect representation. Art yields discontinuity and indeterminacy. God can make himself Man. The human artist, however, is always less.

Rossetti's lesson, though, is not touched with the plaintiveness of Arnold's poetry in which there is "mingling, breaking in upon, hurrying all away" (Allott 277). Nor is it inspired with the religious faith of so much of Tennyson's and Browning's poetry in which there is frequently held out the possibility of a Heaven beyond man's grasp which makes his reaching meaningful. Rossetti delights in the indeterminacy and vanishings for their own sakes, as in "The Portrait," a poem about—a repetition of—the painting of a dead beloved depicted amid mystic woods. The poem begins by "repeating"

the lines from Browning's "My Last Duchess,"

This is her picture as she was;  
It seems a thing to wonder on,  
As though mine image in the glass  
Should tarry when myself am gone.

Browning's Protus might well cite these lines against Cleon. He might also remind the royal artist that artifact memorializes the man and the moment: "its face reveals / The Soul—its converse, to what Power 'tis due" ("The Sonnet," *House of Life*, ll. 9-10). Poet and poem are indistinguishable. Artifact does not mock artist here or in men's mouths. Line 3, however, does not indicate a saving determinacy responsible for the sanguine attitude of Rossetti's speaker. Indeterminacy prevails here, too. The purposeful ambiguity of the line, suggesting as it does the coexistence on the canvas of both represented and representor, is undermined by the transience suggested by "tarry." The painted face, like Wordsworth's memoried places, embodies both the past self who painted the lovely features and the present self regarding them. For Rossetti, however, there is the recognition characteristic of so much Victorian thought that the picture also bespeaks something that no longer exists—the beloved and he who painted her. If there is an important difference between Tennyson's, Browning's, and Arnold's attitude on the one hand and Rossetti's on the other toward the indeterminacy of an age that necessarily informed their work it would be best expressed in Rossetti's poetic trust that

Two separate divided silences,  
Which brought together, would find loving voice;  
Two glances, which together would rejoice  
In love. (The House of Life XL, ll. 1-4)

As the age progresses, there is an increased fascination with what Pater called the "perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves" ("Conclusion," *The Renaissance*) and of all that was not ourselves. Ecstasy involved capturing and delighting in those moments when two separate divided silences or glances conspired before going on their way. Whatever their attitude, whether despondency, acceptance, or delight, Victorian poets and critics were compelled to allow "the whirlwind" to inform their works and to address themselves to "what it [was] impossible to arrest."

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<sup>11</sup> For the autobiographical significance, see Allott 196.

<sup>12</sup> For a detailed discussion of Pre-Raphaelite art as discourse or dialogue, see Meisel.

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## The Dover Switch, Or the New Sexism at "Dover Beach"

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Gerhard Joseph's recent discussion of "Dover Beach," "The Dover Bitch," and indeterminacy of meaning was fascinating. It is thus ironic that his article prompted such an overt example of unwarranted textual determinacy as Tom Hayes's "Why Can't a Duck Be More Like a Rabbit?" Propping up an untenable assumption with gender stereotyping, Hayes's commentary fails to recognize that sexism is a two-way street.

A preliminary note: the following essay does not discuss Hayes's comments on Anthony Hecht's "The Dover Bitch"; it is only his assessment of Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach" that is in question here.

According to Hayes, the speaker of Arnold's poem reveals "a decidedly patriarchal voice, one with which we white men are all too familiar" (his italics).

On the contrary, the poem's text contains no evidence whatsoever to indicate whether Arnold's speaker is male or female, much less patriarchal or matriarchal. At one point, the speaker addresses the beloved as "love," but that is a gender-neutral term that could easily be used by a male or a female speaker. Any attempt to determine the sex of the speaker will necessarily involve gross stereotyping. When, for example, I asked one of my classes to decipher whether Arnold's speaker is male or female, students rehashed numerous gender clichés to do so. Eventually, they realized what they were doing, and seventeen out of twenty students concluded that the text gave no decisive clue to the sex of the speaker. The two students who still thought that the speaker is male gave these reasons: "A woman would not have referred to Sophocles" and "A

woman would not have used battle imagery." The one student who still thought that the speaker is female said: "A man would never have said, 'Sweet is the night air.'" Clearly, such "evidence" draws heavily upon gender stereotypes. Similarly, Hayes's reasons for determining that the speaker is male boil down to his own preconceptions about women and "bourgeois white" men.

To say, as Hayes does, that "Dover Beach" is marked by the "absence of *the voice of the woman*" (his italics) is to assume falsely that the text tells us whether the speaker is a man or a woman. And, most decidedly, the text does not tell us. Every line of the poem could just as plausibly be spoken by a woman as by a man. When Hayes claims that in the poem "the story is told entirely from the man's point of view—from a masculinist point of view," there is not a shred of evidence in the text to support such an assertion.

We have no reason to assume that in "Dover Beach" the author is speaking in his own voice. For all we know, the poem's speaker may be a recreation by Arnold of what a woman (Marguerite? Mary Claude? Frances Lucy Wightman? someone else?) said to *him* Dover (or Thun or Fox How or wherever). For all we know, the poem's speaker—whether male or female—and its dramatic situation may be entirely imaginary.

Parenthetically, one might also observe that "Dover Beach" tells us nothing whatsoever about the speaker's race or even sexual orientation.

Hayes goes on to say that in "Dover Beach" the male speaker's voice

is smug, but at the same time self-doubting, pouting, even whining, one that revels in its neediness, its helplessness before that public thing called "fate" that Victorian men loved to hate, much in the same way that they hated to love that private thing, the body of a woman.

The first part of Hayes's remark strikes me as the worst sort of macho twaddle, and the second part contains a glib over-generalization about Victorian males.

Hayes apparently believes that Real Men keep a stiff upper lip at all times in the face of anything that life might throw at them; above all, a Real Man would never confess his need for a woman's love. "The speaker in Arnold's poem is transparently vulnerable," Hayes writes. "He presents a facade of masculinist bravura, but he is weak and dependent and we can now hear this in the poem." What I hear in Hayes's commentary is a reactionary assertion that it is unmanly for a man to express certain feelings, especially to a woman.

Hayes seems to believe that only males have created poems in which a speaker expresses fear of fate and need for love. What, then, are we to make of the following poem?

Accuse me not, beseech thee, that I wear  
Too calm and sad a face in front of thine;  
For we two look two ways, and cannot shine  
With the same sunlight on our brow and hair.  
On me thou lookest, with no doubting care,  
As on a bee shut in a crystalline,—  
Since sorrow hath shut me safe in love's divine,

And to spread wing and fly in the outer air  
Were most impossible failure, if I strove  
To fail so. But I look on thee . . . on thee . . .  
Beholding, besides love, the end of love,  
Hearing oblivion beyond memory!  
As one who sits and gazes from above,  
Over the rivers to the bitter sea.

Once again, the text provides no clue as to whether the speaker is male or female, but the creator of this vulnerable lover's voice is Elizabeth Barrett Browning (*Sonnets from the Portuguese* XV). In other words, there is nothing particularly masculine or patriarchal about creating a needy poetic voice.

Hayes's remark that Victorian men loved to hate fate and hated to love women's bodies badly oversimplifies matters. One way to test the statement's validity would be to restate it, substituting feminine terms for the masculine ones. Would it not be equally as true—or false—to say that Victorian women loved to hate fate and hated to love men's bodies? Certainly, one could easily generate some evidence to support such a generalization.

But this tactic is unfair to Victorian women as Hayes's comment is to Victorian men. Such over-generalizations deny the diversity that existed among nineteenth-century men and women, as well as class and geographic differences in Victorian society. They ignore the social and cultural pressures with which Victorians—males and females alike—had to contend. They substitute finger-pointing and ideology for sympathetic understanding.

Nowadays, male-bashing is the acceptable sexism of the academic community—or at least a noisy segment of it. Hayes's essay is an unfortunate example of this new sexism. In *Why Men Are the Way They Are* Warren Farrell explains the term:

Something becomes racist or sexist when some truth gets distorted to fit a preconceived image. *The Hite Report* found that *men* prefer intercourse more than women; the *American Couple* survey by Schwartz and Blumstein found that *women* prefer intercourse more than men. Hite interpreted her findings to mean that men preferred intercourse because intercourse is male-centered, focused on penis pleasure, an outgrowth of male dominance and ego gratification. Schwartz and Blumstein interpreted their findings: "We think women prefer it because intercourse requires the *equal* participation of both partners more than any sexual act. Neither partner only 'gives' or only 'receives.' Hence, women feel a shared *intimacy* during intercourse . . . . The findings are diametrically opposed, yet both interpretations could only consider the possibility that women favor intimacy and equality, and men favor ego gratification and dominance. This is distortion to fit a preconceived image—or, when it is applied to men, the new sexism."  
(197; all italics in the original)

Similarly, Hayes begins with the unwarranted determination that the speaker in "Dover Beach" could only be a male, and then he proceeds to vilify the poem's voice as "patriarchal," "smug," "pouting," "whining," and "weak and dependent." In reality, Hayes is not addressing the text of the poem at all; he is merely indulging in a display of trendy sexual bigotry.

These are harsh words, but they can have a positive,

long term effect—especially if they spur academics to work toward the day when we will reject both the “old” sexism directed against women and the “new” one directed against men. Let us, as members of the academic community, recognize that replacing the old misogyny with a new misandry is hardly a gain toward the goal of treating all people fairly. And, finally, let us look forward to the day when “Dover Beach” will be read as an expression of a *human* feeling shared by women and men alike.

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- Arnold, Matthew. “Dover Beach.” *The Poems of Matthew Arnold*. Ed. Kenneth and Miriam Allott. 2nd ed. London and New York: Longman, 1979.
- Browning, Elizabeth Barrett. “Sonnet XV.” *A Variorum Edition of Elizabeth Barret Browning's “Sonnets from the Portuguese.”* Ed. Miroslava Wein Dow. Troy, NY: Whitson, 1980. 53.
- Farrell, Warren. *Why Men Are the Way They Are: Male-Female Dynamic*. New York: McGraw, 1986.
- Hayes, Tom. “Why Can't a Duck Be More Like a Rabbit?” *Victorian Newsletter* No. 76 (Fall 1989): 35.
- Joseph, Gerhard. “The Dover Bitch: Victorian Duck or Modernist Duck/Rabbit?” *Victorian Newsletter* No. 73 (Spring 1988): 8-10.

University of Dayton

Coming in

## *The Victorian Newsletter*

Nathan Cervo, “Sara Coleridge: The Gigadibs Complex”

Patricia Marks, “On Tuesday Last at St. George's . . .”: The Dandaical Wedding in Dickens”

Warren Dwyer, “Ruskin to the ‘Elusive’ Mr. Horn: An Unpublished Letter from a Neglected Friendship”

Joanne Thompson, “Faith of Our Mothers: Elizabeth Gaskell's ‘Lizzie Leigh’”

Andrew Leng, “‘Three Cups in One’: A Reading of ‘The Woodspurge’”

Linda K. Hughes, “*Sartor Redivivus*, or, Retailoring Carlyle for the Undergraduate Classroom”

R. Bland Lawson, “The ‘Condition of England Question’: *Past and Present* and *Bleak House*”

Roger Platizky, “The Diachronic Frame of Tennyson's ‘Morte d’ Arthur’”

Stephen Bernstein, “*Oliver Twisted*: Narrative and Doubling in Dickens's Second Novel”

## Books Received

- Altick, Richard D. *Writers, Readers and Occasions: Selected Essays on Victorian Literature and Life*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1989. Pp. xii + 358. \$30.00. Includes essays published between 1951 and 1982 divided into "Writers" (Browning, Carlyle, Dickens and "The Sociology of Authorship")—8 essays; "Readers"—6 essays; "Occasions"—6 essays.
- Blight, J. T. *A Week at the Land's End*. 1861. Bosulval, Newmill, Penzance, Cornwall: Alison Hodge, 1989. Intro. Charles Thomas. Pp. [xx] + [232]. £5.95 (paper). A reprint of the 1861 edition, which contained this comment in the preface: "The following pages are intended to illustrate, by aid of pen and pencil, the extreme western point of England; its romantic scenery, its natural productions, and its ancient legends" ([ix]).
- Browning, Robert. *The Complete Works of Robert Browning*. Ed. Roma A. King, Jr. and Susan Crowl. Vol. 9. Athens, OH: Ohio UP; Waco: Baylor U, 1989. Pp. xxiv + 360. \$55.00. Includes the last four books of *The Ring and the Book*.
- Cohan, Steven and Linda M. Shires. *Telling Stories: A Theoretical Analysis of Narrative Fiction*. New Accents. New York and London: Routledge, 1988. Pp. x + 197. \$39.95 (cloth), \$12.95 (paper). "Narrative . . . cannot be considered apart from language. The post-Saussurean theory of language as system and discourse, as structure and play, therefore demands a revision of traditional notions about narrative. To start with, this theory calls for rigorous attention to narrative as a set of signs. It requires a method of textual analysis responsive to both the structuring operation of sign system and the instability of signs in discourse" (20).
- Davis, Gwenn and Beverly A. Joyce, comps. *Personal Writings by Women to 1900: A Bibliography of American and British Writers*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1989. Pp. xx + 294. \$65.00. Approximately 3,000 entries 1475 to 1900—"autobiographies, letters, diaries and travel literature"—focus on "American and British women's published accounts of their own experiences" ([vii]).
- Edwards, P. D., I. G. Sibley and Margaret Versteeg, comps. *Indexes to Fiction in "Belgravia" (1867-1899)*. Victorian Research Guides 14. Queensland: English Department, U of Queensland, St. Lucia, Queensland 4067, Australia. Pp. 91. \$8 (Australian) (paper).
- Fryckstedt, Monica Correa. *On the Brink: English Novels of 1866*. Studia Anglistica Upsaliensia. Uppsala: Uppsala, 1989. Pp. 157. Sek 113 (paper). Discusses some forty novels, their reviewers, reviewing practices and the reviews in which they appeared.
- Gardner, Joann. *Yeats and the Rhymers' Club: A Nineties' Perspective*. American University Studies, Series 4, vol. 47. New York: Peter Lang, 1989. Pp. [xv] + 249. \$39.50. "This study then intends to offer a reliable account of the Rhymers' Club and to plot the evolution of the myth surrounding it. Additionally, it addresses questions of artistic success and failure: how Yeats benefited from his association with the Club and how he was able to succeed while others of his cénacle failed" (4).
- Gates, Barbara Timm. *Critical Essays on Charlotte Brontë*. Critical Essays on British Literature. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1990. Pp. viii + 327. \$36.00. Inc. 22 essays + an intro.
- Goldfarb, Sheldon. *William Makepeace Thackeray: An Annotated Bibliography 1976-1987*. Garland Reference Library of the Humanities vol. 857. New York & London: Garland, 1989. \$25.00. Pp. xxi + 175. 509 entries, plus some additional reviews from 1974 and two subject indexes. "Including dissertations, I have found about 450 items on Thackeray for this period" including foreign language items.
- Goslee, David. *Tennyson's Characters: "Strange Faces, Other Minds"*. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 1989. Pp. xxiv + 307. \$32.50. Goslee "explores a paradox. . . : fictional contexts throughout Tennyson seemed to place constraints upon the characters who inhabited them, while characters throughout Tennyson seemed self-consciously restive within these or any other constraints upon their fictional autonomy. . . . I found throughout Tennyson's poetry an elaborate and remarkably consistent psychomachia, a structural model which not only dramatized the original conflict but shaped it into an elaborate yet flexible pattern of meanings" (xi).
- Harris, Jocelyn. *Jane Austen's Art of Memory*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989. Pp. xi + 271. \$49.50. "Jane Austen read very extensively in history and *belles lettres*, and her memory was extremely tenacious. Her invention sprang largely from books . . . . I here set her books against other books to show how memory gives origins to art . . ." (ix).
- Henderson, Heather. *The Victorian Self: Autobiography and Biblical Narrative*. Ithaca & London: Cornell UP, 1989. Pp. x + 205. \$24.95. Examines *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, *Praeterita*, *Father and Son* and typology and autobiographical fiction: the story of David.
- Hopkins, Gerard Manley. *The Early Poetic Manuscripts and Note-books of Gerard Manley Hopkins in Facsimile*. Ed. with annotations, transcriptions of unpublished passages and explanatory introduction by Norman H. MacKenzie. New York & London: Garland, 1989. Pp. x + 287. \$100.00.
- Ingham, Patricia. *Thomas Hardy. Feminist Readings*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities P International, 1990. Pp. xi + 124. \$29.95 (cloth), \$12.50 (paper). Relates the novels "to the historical context that produces them, including the context of Hardy the man. It is usual to illustrate this kind of approach by a comparison with the way one decodes advertisements in a consumerist society and identifies the meaning (signified) attaching to the signifier. . . . The signs can be straightforwardly used or abused, challenged or transformed, but no speaker starts with a vacuum; to an extent the language thinks him" (7).
- Kilvert's Cornish Diary: Journal No. 4, 1870, From July 19th to August 6th, Cornwall*. Ed. Richard Maber and Angela Tregoning. Bosulval, Newmill, Penzance, Cornwall: Alison Hodge, 1989. Pp. 136. £7.95 (paper).

## Books Received

- Kohl, Norbert. *Oscar Wilde: The Works of a Conformist Rebel*. Trans. David Henry Wilson. European Studies in English Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989. Pp. x + 439. \$59.50. Published 1980 as *Oscar Wilde: Das literarische Werk zwischen Provokation und Anpassung*. "The present study sets out to integrate the various approaches of the past—biography, source-history, and history of ideas—in an overall interpretation of the works based first and foremost on analysis of the texts. The aim is to attain an understanding of their literary and artistic substance, and unlike most previous studies, it focuses squarely upon the individuality of the work and not upon that of the author." (13).
- Letley, Emma. *From Galt to Douglas Brown: Nineteenth-Century Fiction and Scots Language*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic P, 1988. Pp. xiv + 351. \$39.95. In "the work of the most interesting of nineteenth-century writers . . . the multiple meanings which accrue to the regional language give it the literary status of an image, a sign whose presence in the text generates meanings beyond those which the words alone convey. The reader accepts and retains the associations of both the Scots and the standard language in a given novel; and this, I suggest, is a crucial part of his experience of that novel's meaning" (xii).
- Levine, Philippa. *Victorian Feminism 1850-1900*. Tallahassee: Florida State UP, [1989]. Pp. [1]-176. \$14.95 (paper). Levine seeks "the connections between individual feminist campaigns through their shared understanding of their own position as women and their shared commitment to a wider vision of the future" ([11]). "[C]hapters are designed both to follow the histories of campaigns at their individual level and, at the same time, to provide a view of a more sustained political analysis running through the specific protests which ordered and made vocal the wider demands of a movement battling against entrenched power and privilege" (23-24).
- Lockridge, Laurence S., John Maynard and Donald D. Stone, eds. *Nineteenth-Century Lives: Essays Presented to Jerome Hamilton Buckley*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989. Pp. xix + 216. \$29.95. 11 essays by Margaret Atwood, Carl Woodring, Richard Altick, Robert Keily, John Rosenberg, Morton Cohen, Hillis Miller, Norman Kelvin, Margaret Diane Stetz, Phyllis Rose and David Staines, entitled respectively: "Biographobia: Some Personal Reflections on the Act of Biography," "Shaping Life in *The Prelude*," "Writing the Life of J. J. Ridley," "Charles Dickens: The Lives of Some Important Nobodies," "Mr. Darwin Collects Himself," "Lewis Carroll: 'dishcoveries'—and More," "Prosopopoeia and *Praeterita*," "Patterns in Time: the Decorative and the Narrative in the Work of William Morris," "Life's 'half profits': Writers and Their Readers in Fiction of the 1890s," "Fact and Fiction in Biography," and "Jerome Hamilton Buckley: A Bibliography."
- Louis, Margot K. *Swinburne and His Gods: The Roots and Growth of an Agnostic Poetry*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1990. Pp. [1] + 242. \$34.95. "The subtlety and precision of Swinburne's religious polemics have never been fully appreciated. Nobody has yet examined in any detail the poet's early devout Anglo-Catholicism, and his violent repudiation of Christianity after his 'deconversion' at Oxford; but consideration of his High Church background will show that his attacks on orthodox Christianity were at least well informed. Moreover, a careful analysis of the way in which he manipulates sacramental imagery within his lyrics and dramas proves that his criticism of High Church sacramentalism is at once radical and exact. Swinburne suggests that the analogical universe of Keble and Newman expresses the self-contradictory, self-destructive violence inherent in the natural world: the Christian God is Time, disguised as Eternity" ([3]).
- Marshall, George. *In a Distant Isle: The Orkney Background of Edwin Muir*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic P, 1987. Pp. 1-184. \$24.95. "Possibly alone among the major British poets of this century, Muir grew up in a rural, traditional, isolated, and self-contained community, following a way of life on which the Industrial Revolution was only beginning to have an effect. . . . [He] spent the first [15] years of his life in the Orkney Islands. . ." ([1]).
- Mazzeno, Laurence W. *The Victorian Novel: An Annotated Bibliography*. The Magill Bibliographies. Pasadena, CA & Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Salem P, 1989. Pp. vii + 222. \$40.00. Includes general studies entries for 13 novelists, and entries for 56 specific works. Designed for the high school student and college undergraduate.
- McGann, Jerome J., ed. *Victorian Connections*. Virginia Victorian Studies. Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 1989. Pp. [1]-226. \$29.50. A collection of 10 essays: McGann on American scholarship after World War II and on Arnold, Karen Chase on feminist literary history, Ross Murfin on politics and Victorian fiction, Carolyn Williams on *Jane Eyre*, David Riede on Carlyle, Herbert Tucker on Tennyson, J. Hillis Miller on Ruskin, William Fredeman on the Pre-Raphaelites, and Daniel Albright on lyrical antibiography.
- Naiditch, P. G. *A. E. Housman at University College, London: The Election of 1892*. Leiden, New York, København, Köln: E. J. Brill, 1988. Pp. xxi + 261. \$47.50 (paper). "This volume is principally composed for the use of three classes of readers: specialists in the life of A. E. Housman, historians of classical scholarship, and historians of education in Great Britain" ([xi]).
- Newcomb, Mildred. *The Imagined World of Charles Dickens*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1989. Pp. xxi + 243. \$37.50. "The following chapters will isolate and scrutinize in turn the various groupings of associated images that seem to constitute Dickens's perceptual universe. Chapters II and III consider the river and marsh configurations, which place human life in the perspective of eternity. The remaining configurations primarily suggest attitudes toward temporal life. . . . Chapter IV explores the relationship between sensitivity to time and capacity



## Books Received

for life. Chapters V through VIII . . . trace the development of a synthesized human life through its various stages to its ideal achievement of full humanity" (6).

Ottewell, David. *The Edwardian Garden*. New Haven & London: Yale UP, 1989. \$ Pp. x + 230. An analysis of the "combination of formal and informal elements" which gave the Edwardian garden its "distinct Edwardian character" (ix) and the architectural battles behind these elements. Profusely illustrated.

Reece, Benny R. *The Mystery of Edwin Drood Solved*. New York: Vantage, 1989. Pp. [74]. \$10.00. "The solution to the crime will prove to be in the  *motive* of the murderer. . . . When we have discovered the true motive, . . . Dickens's novel will take its place among the greatest mystery stories of all time" (xiv).

Reed, John R. *Victorian Will*. Athens: Ohio UP, 1989. Pp. xvi + 493. \$39.95 "Victorian Will is not intended as an exhaustive study of the will in nineteenth-century England . . . . Instead I offer here a core sample of attitudes toward the will understood in its different senses as free will (as opposed to determinism), volition (as the power to initiate action), and strength of will (as a character trait revealed in assertion and self-control). I have tried to direct this core sample in such a way that it discloses a chronological order while also traversing various intellectual strata from philosophy, through moral injunction, historical interpretation, scientific theorizing, medicine, and law, to literature, which here chiefly means fiction" (ix).

Ritvo, Harriet. *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, [1989]. Pp. viii + 347. \$12.95 (paper). Paper ed. of 1987 cloth ed. (\$25.00) noticed in VN No. 73 (1988).

Shafir, Gershon. *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict 1882-1914*. Cambridge Middle East Library No. 20. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989. Pp. xvi + 288. \$19.95 (cloth), \$7.95 (paper).

Tarr, Rodger L. *Thomas Carlyle: A Descriptive Bibliography*. Pittsburgh Series in Bibliography. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1989. Pp. xxi + 543. \$110.00. "This descriptive bibliography of Thomas Carlyle's writings is limited to writings by Carlyle. It does not describe writ

ings about Carlyle, except in cases where they include something by Carlyle published for the first time. There is also an alphabetical list of principal books about Carlyle in Appendix 2" (xv). Also includes a section on Jane Welsh Carlyle's publications.

Thackeray, William Makepeace. *The History of Henry Esmond*. Ed. Edgar F. Harden. Garland Reference Library of the Humanities vol. 863. The first vol. of the Thackeray Edition Project. New York: Garland, 1989. Pp. xxix + 659. \$65.00. "The purpose of this new edition is, first, to present the text as much as possible as Thackeray produced it, free of the unnecessary interference of the publishers and printers, and, second, to show the composition and revision of the work" ([ix]). Includes an historical introduction, an editorial introduction, a record of composition and revision and an editorial record (263 pp. in all).

\_\_\_\_\_. *Vanity Fair: A Novel Without a Hero*. Ed. Peter L. Shillingsburg. A New Critical Edition. Garland Reference Library of the Humanities vol. 864. The 2nd volume of the Thackeray Edition Project (see above). New York & London: Garland, 1989. Pp. xxii + 758. \$90.00. Includes an historical introduction by Robert Colby, commentary on illustrations by Nicholas Pickwood, a textual intro. by Shillingsburg, textual apparatus, list of symbols, record of composition and revision and an editorial record. The text includes Thackeray's illustrations.

Tiffin, Chris. *Rosa Praed (Mrs Campbell Praed), 1851-1935: A Bibliography*. Victorian Fiction Research Guides 15. Queensland: English Department, U of Queensland, St. Lucia, Queensland 4067, Australia, 1989. \$8 (Australian) (paper). Pp. [66].

Warhol, Robyn R. *Gendered Interventions: Narrative Discourse in the Victorian Novel*. New Brunswick & London: Rutgers UP, 1989. Pp. xvii + 246. \$37.00. "I contend that our prejudice against earnest (as opposed to ironic) direct address [in narrative discourse] stems from our culture's aversion to feminine gestures. In Victorian novels written by women, earnest direct address evolved as an alternative to public speaking 'in person,' which was forbidden to respectable females" (vii).

# Victorian Group News

## Announcements

Gale Publishing seeks contributors to a historical encyclopedia of British literary publishers founded since 1820 for Dictionary of Literary Biography series. American contributors contact Jonathan Rose, 340 E. 81st St., New York, NY 10028; British and Canadian, Pat Anderson, 12 Kidderpore Gardens, London NW3 7SR, England.

A British, Canadian, and European Interest Group was formed at a recent meeting of the American Journalism Historians Association. Others interested in this aspect of journalism history may join the AJHA and become participants in our group. Contact: James D. Startt, History Department, Valparaiso Univ., Valparaiso, IN 46383.

Newman International Summer School, Somerville College, Oxford, 15 - 29 July 1990. For booking form and further details write to: Revd Ian Ker, The Old Palace, St. Aldgate's, Oxford OX1 1RD, England.

July 6-8, 1990, Warwick Univ., England, will host an interdisciplinary conference, *Fin-de-siècle / Fin du globe*, to reconsider the eschatological ideas of the 1890s as they appear a century later. We expect contributions from art historians, sociologists, literary critics, and social historians. Further details from John Stokes, European Humanities Research Centre, Univ. of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, U.K.

The *Victorian Review* is a refereed biyearly interdisciplinary journal, welcoming submissions on all aspects of the nineteenth century—history, literature, art, science, religion, music, and law. Papers 10 to 20 pp. should follow the MLA style sheet. Contributions (7 pp.) to a forum on the influence of recent critical thought on the teaching of the nineteenth century are also welcome. Send 2 MSS and, if possible, a diskette, preferably wordperfect, to G. Stephenson, Editor, *Victorian Review*, English Dept., Univ. of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 2E5.

VICTORIANS AND THE PERIPHERY will be the topic of the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Midwest Victorian Studies Assoc., in Urbana, IL, 27-28 April, 1990. For info. write Micael Clarke, English Dept., Loyola Univ., 6525 N. Sheridan Rd., Chicago, IL 60626. Topic for the conference is: Victorian Virtue and Vice.

Victorian Literature and Culture Series (formerly Virginia Victorian Studies) welcomes work from any disciplinary—or interdisciplinary—perspective. Inquiries and proposals to: Editors, Victorian Literature and Culture Series, Univ. Press of Virginia, Box 3608 Univ. Station, Charlottesville, VA 22903.

The Carolinas Symposium on British Studies Appalachian State Univ. 20-21 October 1990. Proposals for papers (no more than 20 min.), full sessions, and panel discussions. \$250 for best paper. Proposals or papers by 15 April 1990 to Sophia B. Blaydes, English Dept., West Virginia Univ., Morgantown, WV 26505. Submissions for Student Session (both undergraduate and graduate students), with a prize in each category, to Charles Carlton, History Dept., North Carolina State Univ., Raleigh, NC 27695.

*Nineteenth Century Prose* seeks MSS for "Politicians and Prose," a special number designed to evaluate the rhetoric and function of writing among nineteenth-century British political figures. Treatments of both general themes and specific author / politicians in duplicate to John Powell, History Dept., Hannibal-LaGrange College, Hannibal, MO 63401. MSS in MLA style by Dec. 1, 1990.

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