

The Victorian Newsletter

Editor

Ward Hellstrom

Managing Editor

Louise R. Hellstrom

Number 83

Contents

Spring 1993

	Page		
Agents of Empire in <i>The Woman in White</i> by Lillian Nayder	1	22	Hopkins's Best Poem by Francis J. Smith, S. J.
Good Housekeeping: Job-Searching in Victorian Fiction by Monica Feinberg	7	25	Culture, Nature, and Gender in Mary Ward's <i>Robert Elsmere</i> and <i>Helbeck of Bannisdale</i> by Laura Fasick
Utopian Dreams / Heterotopian Nightmares: Disease and Discourse in Carlyle's <i>Latter-Day Pamphlets</i> by John B. Lamb	11	31	The Personification of Death in the Poems of William Ernest Henley Joseph S. Salemi
<i>Oliver Twist</i> and the Contours of Early Victorian England by David Paroissien	14	35	Down Garden Paths: Charlotte Brontë's Haunts of Self and Other by Barbara Gates
Alice's Ab-surd-ity: Demon in Wonderland by Pamela K. Gilbert	17	43	Tennyson and "The Spirit of the Age" by Judith Kennedy
		47	Books Received

Cover: On the 150th anniversary of the publication of *Past and Present*, John Everett Millais's portrait of Thomas Carlyle

The VICTORIAN NEWSLETTER is sponsored for the Victorian Group of Modern Language Association by Western Kentucky University and is published twice annually. Editorial and business communications should be addressed to Ward Hellstrom, CH 106, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY 42101. Please use *MLA Handbook*, 2nd Ed. for form of typescript. MSS cannot be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscription rates in the United States are \$5.00 for one year and \$9.00 for two years; foreign rates, including Canada, are \$6.00 per year. Checks should be made payable to *The Victorian Newsletter*.

Agents of Empire in *The Woman in White*

Lillian Nayder

With all her faults, . . . a writer like George Eliot may look down from a very far height on such a dweller in the plains as he who wrote *The Woman in White*. . . There is not one lifelike character: not one natural dialogue in the whole book. . . Even Mr. Tulliver, drawn as he is by a woman's hand, has far more of living flesh and blood in him than the drawing-master who runs off to America because his steps are dogged for a while by the paid spies of a secret enemy.

—"Recent Popular Novels," *Dublin University Magazine*, February 1861 (Page 104-105)

To those who admire the psychological realism of George Eliot's novels, their intricate analysis of the motives governing human behavior, Wilkie Collins's mode of characterization may, indeed, appear inadequate. When Walter Hartwright, the hero of *The Woman in White* (1859-60), abruptly leaves England for Honduras, Collins does not explain or analyze his character's motives at any length. Hartwright is a lowly drawing-master made wretched by his love for the well-born Laura Fairlie, and frightened by the spies who track him in the London streets. Left "pale and haggard" by his sufferings, he decides to "go . . . to another country to try a change of scene and occupation" (178). While George Eliot's characters reach such decisions only after prolonged inner debate, Hartwright gives little thought to it. Telling Mr. Gilmore that he "do[es]n't care where [he] goes, what the climate is, or how long [he is] away" (179) he accepts the first position that he is offered; on 24 November 1849, he sails for Honduras from Liverpool, the draughtsman on "a private expedition to make excavations among the ruined cities of Central America" (200).

Judged by the standard of psychological realism, Hartwright's journey to America seems unaccountable; if we expect him to behave like one of George Eliot's characters, we are bound to be disappointed. But if we approach *The Woman in White* as an example of Victorian ideology rather than as an example of Victorian realism, we can begin to uncover the logic of Hartwright's actions. Rather than "running off" to America, Hartwright can be seen to take part in an imperial venture that satisfies certain ideological needs.

In his well-known essay on *The Woman in White*, D. A. Miller demonstrates that an ideological approach to the novel can make sense of Walter's journey. Examining "the larger cultural allusions" of Collins's sensation novel—what he considers its "ideological valences"—Miller argues that it "makes us nervous" by exposing the femininity of the presumably masculine reader. According to Miller, Collins portrays "gender slippage" among his male characters, and thus promotes a "particular fantasy about male homosexuality," the formulation of "the woman-in-the-man" (148-56). At the same time, he defends himself against this fantasy, counteract-

ing the threat of "female contagion" in various ways. The incarceration of Anne Catherick and Laura Fairlie is one such defense; Walter's journey to Central America is another. In Miller's view, Hartwright subjects himself to a host of perils in order to "master . . . the 'woman inside'" of him:

The sufficiently manly husband needs to have survived plague, pygmy arrow's, and shipwreck in Central America, and the suitably feminine wife must have been schooled in a lunatic asylum, where she is half cretinized. Such desperate measures no doubt dramatize the supreme value of a norm for whose incarnation no price, including the most brutal aversion therapy, is considered too high to pay. (166)

As Miller points out, Walter is "cured" by his travels, returning to England "a changed man": "I had gone out to fly from my own future. I came back to face it, as a man should" (Miller 165).

Miller's analysis of sexual constructions and the way in which they are "'engendered' in the course of the plot" is astute;¹ yet it only implicitly acknowledges a crucial point about Hartwright's manhood—that it is "engendered" in an imperial outpost. In recent years, literary critics and historians have shown that a defense of patriarchy is often coupled with a defense of empire in Victorian thinking.² As we will see, Collins's novel is no exception to this general rule.

My reading of *The Woman in White*, like Miller's, examines the "cultural mediations" of the novel, the ways in which it indirectly speaks for Victorian culture by constructing an ideological defense. But while Miller focuses on the strategies by which patriarchal ideology is defended in the novel, I examine the ways in which imperial ideology is secured. Anticipating the themes of H. G. Wells and Bram Stoker, Collins writes a "reverse colonization narrative" in which Count Fosco, an aristocratic invader, threatens to colonize the English. Portraying Fosco as a grotesque mirror image of his hosts, Collins subtly criticizes Britain's imperial ideology; he uses Fosco to call into question the scientific and moral pretenses of empire building, and to expose its reactionary social agenda. At the same time, however, Collins answers this critique by sending Hartwright on his own imperial mission, one that is represented as historically innocent and ideologically pure. Stressing the "primeval" condition of the natives encountered by the Englishman, Collins justifies Hartwright's presence in Central America; defining his hero against this racial other, he empowers him. Collins transforms the English servant into a gentleman by means of his contact with the savages, and thus obscures what is apparent elsewhere in the novel—the alien status of the English lower classes.

¹ For a feminist critique of Miller's argument, however, see Langbauer.

² See, for example, Gilman, Spivak, and Minh-ha.

A number of Collins's critics, explicating the topical allusions of *The Woman in White*, have recognized that it is, in some sense, a novel about empire. In his notes to the Oxford edition of the novel, for example, Harvey Peter Sucksmith suggests that Count Fosco, its Italian villain, comes to England in the service of Austrian imperialism, to spy on the Italian revolutionaries living in London at the time of the Great Exhibition (624). Collins sets his novel in 1849-51, years in which the Austrian government intensified its surveillance of Italian exiles in London out of fear that they were hatching conspiracies against the Austrian Empire.³ In the course of the novel, Hartwright discovers that Fosco, an Italian who lives in Vienna rather than Italy (245), heads this network of spies. Although Sucksmith does not elaborate on the point, a substantial amount of evidence supports his reading; not only the Italian subplot of the novel but also the political context in which it was first presented in the weekly journal *All the Year Round* indicate that Collins intended his novel, in part, as a critique of Austrian imperialism. Hartwright's journey to Honduras is motivated by this critique.

When *The Woman in White* was first published, Italy had been a part of the Austrian empire for more than forty years. The country became an Austrian possession as a result of the treaty of Vienna (1815), which established a balance of power in Europe after the fall of Napoleon. Although the Italians had hoped for independence after the defeat of the French, and had been encouraged to fight for a liberal constitution by members of the British government, their wishes were wholly ignored by the European statesmen who gathered at the Congress of Vienna. Under the reactionary regime of the Habsburgs, the Italians were subjected to economic exploitation, military occupation, police surveillance, imprisonment, torture, and censorship, and they repeatedly rebelled against their conquerors. Not until 1859, after decades of revolution and unrest, did they win their independence.⁴

In the nineteenth century, England became a refuge for many of the Italian nationalists persecuted or exiled by the Austrian government, and a number of prominent Victorian writers supported their cause. Thomas Carlyle befriended Mazzini, the founder of *Young Italy*, a revolutionary organization devoted to the cause of a united republican Italy. When, in 1844, it became known that Sir James Graham, the Home Secretary, was secretly opening Mazzini's private letters, Carlyle wrote an indignant letter to *The Times* in his behalf (Rudman 62-63). Dickens, too, supported Mazzini and his followers, balancing their revolutionary tactics against the "great wrongs" inflicted upon them by Austrian despots.⁵ Dickens solicited aid for Italian refugees, and published articles harshly critical of Austrian tyranny in both of the journals he edited, *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. Collins, a member

of Dickens's staff, wrote one such article. In "My Black Mirror," he describes his own experience of police surveillance in Austrian Italy, a "despotic country" controlled by "continental tyrants" (238). Like Dickens, Collins was personally acquainted with Italian revolutionaries living in London. Through his brother Charles, he met the Rossetti family; Gabriele, the father, was an exiled member of the Carbonari.

The context in which *The Woman in White* was presented to the public suggests that Collins expected his audience to understand its allusions to the so-called "Italian Question." The first weekly installment of Collins's novel, published in *All the Year Round* on 29 November 1859, focuses on the character of Professor Pesca, an Italian exile who teaches Dante to the children of wealthy Englishmen. We later learn that Pesca belongs to "The Brotherhood," a revolutionary society dedicated to "the destruction of tyranny and the assertion of the rights of the people" (595). Readers of *All the Year Round* were made ready to sympathize with Collins's character by a series of articles on Austrian Italy which preceded the publication of *The Woman in White*—"Austria" (18 June 1859), "Viva L'Italia!" (9 July 1859), "Piedmont" (16 July 1859), and "North-Italian Character" (10 September 1859). These articles describe Austrian imperialism as "savage brigandage," and compare the "continental tyrants" to "slave traders." Rapacious, insolent, destructive, and lawless, the Austrians treat Italy as "a country to be sacked and bled to death" ("Austria" 175-76). While the Italians are not "made of the same stuff as Nelson's hearts of oak" and are "nearly two centuries in arrear" of English civilization ("North-Italian Character" 465), they are "a continental people" capable of self-government. Despite their status as Europeans, however, they are treated as a subject race by the Austrian imperialists.

In *The Woman in White*, Collins attacks Austrian imperialism on exactly these grounds—that the Italians, while "in arrear" of the English, are not a subject race. Hartwright opens his narrative by describing the nature of his friend Professor Pesca, the Italian nationalist struggling against Austrian tyranny. Unlike the "primitives" whom Hartwright later encounters in the jungles of Central America, Pesca is a colonist-in-the-making; at one and the same time, he is the colonizer and the colonized:

Without being actually a dwarf—for he was perfectly well proportioned from head to foot—Pesca was, I think, the smallest human being I ever saw out of a show-room. Remarkable anywhere, by his personal appearance, he was still further distinguished . . . by the harmless eccentricity of his character. The ruling idea of his life appeared to be, that he was bound to show his gratitude to the country which had afforded him an asylum and a means of subsistence by doing his utmost to turn himself into an Englishman. Not content with paying the nation in general

the compliment of invariably carrying an umbrella, and invariably wearing gaiters and a white hat, the Professor further aspired to become an Englishman in his habits and amusements, as well as in his personal appearance. (35)

Despite his dwarf-like stature, a trait he shares with the "primitives" of Central America (296), Pesca models himself on the civilized Englishmen who travel in savage lands. Like a colonist, Pesca "emigrate[s] to England" (595), where he goes native, adopting the ways of the "aboriginals" there. Although his "Southern nature" occasionally breaks through the "English restraint" he has adopted (36), the Italian will eventually learn to control his "wild" impulses. Comparing Pesca and his countrymen to the English in an earlier stage of development, under the reign of Charles I, Collins suggests that they will evolve into Englishmen. "In the time of your first Charles you might have done us justice," Pesca tells his English friend; "the long luxury of your own freedom has made you incapable of doing us justice now" (596).⁶

The Honduran subplot of *The Woman in White*, like the Italian subplot, examines the nature of a subject race, but one whose traits differ strikingly from those of the southern Europeans. Exploring the ruins of the Mayan empire, Hartwright encounters hostile "primitives," "dark, dwarfish men" who "lurk . . . murderously among the trees, with bows in their hands, and arrows fitted to the string" (296). Unlike the dwarf-like Italians, who are evolving, and will attain the stature of the English in a matter of time, these "dark, dwarfish men" are products of cultural regression. They are the degenerated descendants of the founders of the great empire whose ruins Hartwright travels to Central America to explore. By sending his hero to Honduras, Collins thus develops a subtle counterpoint between two imperial subplots and two subject races; in so doing, he underscores the illegitimacy of an empire in which the colonized are themselves embryonic colonists.

Hartwright's journey to Honduras, though it appears psychologically unmotivated, is an integral part of Collins's political critique. As we will see, it is also a crucial element in Collins's ideological defense. At one and the same time, Hartwright's experience among the savages reveals the illegitimacy of one empire and justifies the existence of another.

II

On a first reading of the novel, its defensive needs appear rather straightforward—the English characters must defend themselves against a foreign invasion. Although Count Fosco travels to London to spy on subversive Italian refugees, he devotes his energies, by and large, to "conquering" England.

Instead of hunting down the members of "The Brotherhood," he spends his time "taming" the English—the baronet, Sir Percival Glyde, exhibits "the sullen submission of a tamed animal" under his control (269), while the Count's "tigerish" wife, the former Eleanor Fairlie, is forced to behave like "a faithful dog" in his presence (239). Echoing Caesar, Fosco boasts that he "came, saw, conquered [Frederick] Fairlie" (625), and he attempts the "conquest" of Marion Halcombe as well (239-40).⁷ Ostensibly a spy paid by the Austrians, Fosco "colonizes" England, treating its inhabitants as "barbarians" (243), and taking possession of their capital (587). Casting himself in the mold of Napoleon (241, 615), he proclaims his desire to "rule the world" (622).

Yet Count Fosco is not simply a foreign conqueror who threatens the British empire from without; he is also a mirror-image of his hosts, and threatens them from within. In his characterization of the villain, Collins thus anticipates the "reverse colonization narratives" written later in the century by Bram Stoker and H. G. Wells. As Stephen Arata explains in his study of Stoker's *Dracula*, narratives of "reverse colonization" appear with increasing frequency as the Victorian period draws to a close; turning the tables on the British imperialists, they portray the colonization of England by primitive forces: "the colonizer finds himself in the position of the colonized, the exploiter becomes exploited, the victimizer victimized" (623). As the terms of Arata's description suggest, stories in which the British are themselves colonized are not merely the product of fear—they are the product of guilt as well.⁸ On the one hand, these narratives express the fear that the British are in a state of moral and racial decline, and hence vulnerable to attack; on the other hand, they reflect a sense of "cultural guilt," since "the marauding, invasive Other" mirrors back to the British their own "imperial practices" in "monstrous forms." Containing "the potential for powerful critiques of imperialist ideologies," reverse colonization narratives represent the conquest of England as a "deserved punishment"; they provide a means by which the British can imaginatively "atone" for their "imperial sins" (Arata 623).

Like Bram Stoker and H. G. Wells, Collins was burdened with a sense of "cultural guilt"; his response to the Indian Mutiny (1857) makes this clear. Two years before *The Woman in White* appeared, the Indian sepoy in the British army, provoked on religious and political grounds, rebelled against and murdered their commanding officers, killing English women and children as well.⁹ At home, the English responded to the revolt with racist virulence; expressing the public opinion, Dickens called for the "extermination" of the Indian race,¹⁰ and applauded the "mutilation" of the "wretched Hindoo[s]" who, in retribution, were "blown from . . . English gun[s]" ("Speech" 284). But Collins was considerably more

³ Dickens parodies this fear in "The Metropolitan Protectives": "plot-dreading diplomatists . . . all having the fear of the forthcoming Industrial Invasion before their eyes, are becoming very anxious respecting the adequate efficiency of the London Police. Horrible rumours are finding their way into most of the clubs. . . . A complicated web of machination is being spun . . . against the integrity of the Austrian Empire, at a small coffee-shop in Soho."

⁴ For an account of Austrian rule in Italy, see King, Smith, and Woolf.

⁵ In a letter written on 3 February 1860, for example, Dickens told Henry Chorley that the wrongs suffered by the Italians "are so great that they will rise from time to time somehow": "Unavailing struggles against a dominant tyranny precede all successful turning against it. And is it not a little hard in us Englishmen, whose forefathers have risen so often and striven against so much, to look on, in our own security, through microscopes, and detect the notes in the brains of men driven mad?" (See *Letters* 3: 149-50).

⁶ As Miller argues, "The Brotherhood owes its existence to the political adolescence of Italy . . . only a phase that in the normal course of political or personal development will be superseded" (187-88).

⁷ The interrelation of patriarchal and imperial ideologies is perhaps most clear in Collins's treatment of the "gypsy-like" Marion, whose "swarthy" complexion is a measure of her otherness in the novel.

⁸ Arata notes, for example, that Wells prefaces his story of reverse colonization in *War of the Worlds* by recounting a discussion he had with his brother about the extermination of the Tasmanians by the British (623).

⁹ On the subject of the Indian Mutiny, see Hibbert, *The Great Mutiny* and Metcalf.

¹⁰ "I wish I were Commander in Chief in India," Dickens wrote to Angela Burdett-Coutts on 4 October 1857. "The first thing I would do to strike that Oriental race with amazement . . . should be to proclaim to them, in their language, that I considered my holding that appointment by the leave of God, to mean that I should do my utmost to exterminate the Race upon whom the stain of the late cruelties rested" (see *Letters from Charles Dickens to Angela Burdett-Coutts* 350).

moderate in his reaction to events in India, and expressed sympathy for the insurgents. When asked by Dickens to write an article on the Mutiny for *Household Words*, he agreed to do so—but rather than calling for the extermination of the Indian race, he provides his readers with examples of Muslim virtue.¹¹ His sympathy for the natives is again apparent in “The Perils of Certain English Prisoners” (1857), a story loosely based on the mutiny, to which both he and Dickens contributed. Whereas Dickens portrays the savagery of the mutineers in “The Perils,” Collins calls attention to their exploitation by dandified commanders. Modelled on the officers in the Indian Army, Englishmen notorious for their haughty treatment of the sepoy, Collins’s Captain uses a “black man’s back” as a writing desk, complaining all the while of his smell (271).¹²

Although Collins dramatizes the exploitation of the Indians by the British in his novel *The Moonstone* (1868), he makes no mention of British India in *The Woman in White*.¹³ The Austrian empire rather than the British appears to be his target. Yet the issue of Britain’s own “imperial sins” was inevitably raised whenever Austria’s were exposed; this was the case, in part, because Austrian officials responded to their British critics by reminding them of their own imperial atrocities—their savage suppression of native insurrections, and the brutal history of English rule in Ireland (Rudman 254-55, 259-60). Thus while the articles that Dickens published on “the Italian Question” define the villainous behavior of the Austrians against the “heroics” of the British in their colonies, this contrast is itself a defensive strategy.

In *The Woman in White*, Collins uses Fosco, an Austrian agent, to call attention to the “cultural guilt” of his imperial hosts.¹⁴ The Count comments on the crimes committed by “John Bull,” and alludes to the reprehensible actions of the British during the Opium War (1839-42), which was fought to protect the “rights” of British opium smugglers in China. When Marion Halcombe defines the virtues of the British against the vices of the Chinese, and insists that her compatriots are “free from . . . guilt” and “abhor reckless

bloodshed with all [their] hearts,” Fosco asks her if the British are really “so very much better” than the foreigners whom they “condemn.” While he concedes that “John Bull . . . abhor[s] the crimes of John Chinaman,” Fosco points out that the British, though “quick . . . at finding out faults that are [their] neighbours’,” are “the slowest . . . at finding out the faults that are [their] own” (257).¹⁵

Fosco implicates the British not only through his political commentaries, but also through his imperial behavior, a grotesque mirror-image of their own. Like the British, who justify their conquest of foreign lands on scientific grounds, in the name of Zoology, Fosco masks his imperial will-to-power with his dedication to science.¹⁶ Having acquired a variety of exotic animals in the course of his travels, he donates his collection of birds to “the Zoological Gardens of London” on the eve of his departure from England. His catalogue of “unrivalled” specimens, which are worthy of both “the garden of Eden” and “the garden in the Regent’s Park,” parodies the propagandistic rhetoric used to advertise zoological spoils to the British public, and suggests that scientific classification serves the interests of British hegemony. Doing “homage to British Zoology,” Fosco becomes a patron of the British empire, and renders suspect the scientific pretenses upon which it rests (616).

But like Stoker and Wells, whose “reverse colonization narratives” Arata describes, Collins not only acknowledges the “cultural guilt” of the British—he assuages it as well. His novel, like theirs, is characterized by its “erasures,” “disclaimers” and “disavowals.”¹⁷ He simultaneously confesses to Britain’s “imperial sins” and denies them, relieving the anxiety produced by his confession. On the one hand, he expels the “foreign” invader from England, disclaiming Fosco’s connection to his hosts; on the other, he sends his hero on an imperial mission that he knew Victorian readers would see as historically innocent and ideologically pure. Reinscribing the imperial ideology that he exposes by means of Count Fosco, Collins portrays Hartwright as a disinterested explorer, a draughtsman whose concerns are archaeological rather than

political.¹⁸ Whereas Fosco compares the Zoological Gardens to the garden of Eden, parodying British claims of divine mission (616), Hartwright essentially makes good on these claims—his survival in the “primeval” jungle is part of a providential plan; “lost in the wilderness,” he is “the instrument of a Design that is yet unseen” (296).¹⁹ Furthermore, Hartwright’s destination is Honduras rather than India or Ireland, a country unsullied by British imperial history. Although Belize became a British colony in 1862, the British had no claim to Honduras, which had been colonized by the Spaniards in the sixteenth century. Hartwright thus travels to a place where, as Collins knew, the British conceived of themselves as liberators rather than oppressors.²⁰ Collins himself promotes this belief in “Blow Up with the Brig,” first published in *All the Year Round* in the same year as *The Woman in White*, and set in the Spanish Main. In this story, “Englishmen and Irishmen with a turn for fighting” heroically come to the assistance of General Simon Bolivar in his battle against the Spaniards. Appropriately, the ship on which they sail is called “the *Good Intent*” (543-44).

Characterized by their good intentions, the British in Central and South America are further justified in their imperial mission by the primitive condition of the natives who “require” their assistance in order to develop their land. As one *Household Words* article explains, the British—in contrast to the Spaniards—will assume “the white man’s burden,” and enable the “sluggish” and infantile natives to realize the full potential of their land:

The present inhabitants of Central America—Spanish, mixed or coloured—know no more of the use which they might make of their unlimited resources, than a baby knows what it can buy with a half crown. . . . Nothing but Anglo-Saxon energy will ever stir this sluggish pool into life. . . . Who is to fell the trees, to destroy the sickliness of an excessive vegetation? Who is to form the roads, to work the mines, to make the cultivated soil yield its best treasures in their full abundance? When the commerce of Europe shall flow into the Pacific, through the Nicaraguan Canal, those questions will be answered readily (“Our Phantom Ship. Central America” 521).

In *The Woman in White*, Collins is less interested in the development of Central America than he is in the development of his hero. Hartwright does not build canals or roads in Honduras, but explores its ruins, and in so doing he discovers his own manly strength. Nonetheless, in putting the imperial outpost to a personal use, Collins draws upon the same ideological presumptions that this *Household Words* article expresses—he highlights the contrast between the “civilized” Anglo-Saxon and the “primeval” native. Indeed, the growth of the imperial hero, in Collins’s novel and in Victorian literature generally, is only made possible by the primitive condi-

tion of the “savages,” since it is measured by the ability to withstand or resist them. For Hartwright, as for Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*, the primeval serves as a “stern school of extremity and danger” in which the “will” of the Englishman “learn[s] to be strong, [his] heart to be resolute, [his] mind to rely on itself”: “I came back as I had hoped, prayed, believed I should come back—a changed man . . . I came back to face [my own future], as a man should” (427).

III

Commenting on Walter’s imperial experience and the terms in which it is described, D. A. Miller notes that it has a “therapeutic” value—that it “engenders” the hero. But Hartwright’s journey does not merely make him “a man”—more specifically, it makes him a gentleman. Before he leaves England for Central America, Hartwright is described as “a gentlemanlike young man” (151, 178). But after his return he is, more simply, a “gentleman” (540, 553). In a telling moment, he is mistaken for the baronet, Sir Percival Glyde, by one of Glyde’s own servants (534). The ideological function of Walter’s journey thus appears to be twofold—it not only assuages Collins’s sense of “cultural guilt,” but also makes possible the hero’s social rise.

Yet because imperial ideology has a social purpose—because it is informed by a reactionary social agenda—these two functions are interrelated. The gentrification of the drawing master is itself a means of defending Britain’s imperial practices, since it obscures the social inequities upon which the empire rests.

As Patrick Brantlinger explains in his study of imperial literature, “imperialist ideology . . . preserved and nurtured various conservative fantasies . . . against the corrosive effects of popular reform and democratization.” By channeling class resentment into aggression toward the racial other, “imperialism functioned as a ideological safety valve,” and helped to maintain “aristocratic authority at home and abroad” (35). Collins was clearly aware that imperialism served this social function; in his first published novel, itself a “reverse colonization narrative,” he criticizes the Roman empire on precisely these grounds. In *Antonina: Or the Fall of Rome* (1850), Collins uses what is essentially an imperial motif—a barbarian invasion—to address class issues. Examining the social and racial conflicts that, in his view, caused the decline and fall of the Roman empire, Collins develops an analogy between them—the exploitation of the Goths by the Romans is mirrored in the exploitation of the Roman middle class by the upper. Treated as a subject race by the decadent nobles—as “exile[s] of [their] country’s privileges”—the members of the middle class become the allies of the Goths. After his property has been appropriated by neighboring nobles, who wish to “swell their own territorial grandeur,” the character Probius declares his allegiance to the barbarian invaders:

¹¹ Instead of “preaching” to the rebellious Indians from a Christian text in his “Sermon for Sepoys” (27 February 1858), Collins draws his “sermon” from one of their own—he quotes the lesson delivered to the seventeenth-century Muslim Emperor Shah Jehan (“the wise, the bountiful, the builder of the new city of Delhi”) by a wise man named Abbas. In this article, Collins recounts what is essentially an Oriental parable of the talents, and represents benevolent and charitable Muslims; he suggests that the Indians are capable of moral goodness, a suggestion strikingly at odds with the racist sentiments of the day.

¹² The 1857 Christmas Number of *Household Words*, “The Perils” consists of three chapters, the first and third by Dickens, and the second by Collins. Its inconsistencies in tone and characterization suggest that the intentions of the coauthors are at odds. Dickens’s chapters are melodramatic, and pit the “demonic” mutineers against their innocent British victims. But Collins’s chapter is comic, and blurs the stark moral distinctions that Dickens establishes. On the subject of “The Perils” and its relationship to the Indian Mutiny, see Brantlinger 206-08 and Oddie 3-5.

¹³ Collins begins *The Moonstone* by dramatizing the criminal behavior of the British during the Siege of Seringapatam (1799). For a discussion of Collins’s critique of imperialism in *The Moonstone*, see Reed 281-90 and Lonoff 178-79.

¹⁴ U. C. Knoepfelmacher was one of the first critics to recognize that Fosco functions as Collins’s spokesman in the novel, and enables the reader to grasp “the truths that Marian Halcombe rejects” (351-68). Similarly, Winifred Hughes discusses the importance of Fosco’s “subversive ironies,” and sug-

gests that Collins uses him to undermine “the foundation of Victorian social dogma” (143-45).

¹⁵ As Sucksmith notes, Marian Halcombe and the Count appear to argue over the Chinese custom of “holding the group collectively responsible for a crime by one of its members and of imposing the death penalty in cases of accidental death, among the causes of friction between the British in China and the Chinese authorities which led to the first Opium War” (612). Collins was no doubt aware of the moral culpability of the British in their dealings with the Chinese, since the subject was loudly debated in the 1840s, and since it was treated in a series of articles that appeared in *Household Words* in the 1850s. See, for example, “China with a Flaw in It” (3 July 1852), which describes the Chinese as victims of British aggression in the Opium War, and parodies the assumption that the “thrashing” of an “Asiatic state” by Westerners is a means of progress. On the subject of the opium trade and the Opium War, see Greenberg and Hibbert, *The Dragon Wakes*.

¹⁶ As Harriet Ritvo notes, British Zoology served the interests of the empire, and was itself an emblem of British dominion over remote territories. Far from a disinterested field of scientific study, Zoology was an “elaborate figuration of England’s imperial enterprise.” See *The Animal Estate* 205-42 and “The Power of the Word” 5-8.

¹⁷ In *The War of the Worlds*, for example, Wells initially criticizes the Darwinian theory used to justify the extermination of the Tasmanians by the British, but then employs it to repulse the Martian invasion—humanity is “saved” by virtue of natural selection. Ultimately, then, Wells reinscribes the ideology that he sets out to critique.

¹⁸ But as David Grant Adamson points out in his discussion of imperial rivalries in Central America, archaeological exploration (like zoological study) served the interests of British hegemony: “if in order to claim an interest in the region it was necessary to send expeditions to ruins, then Great Britain would be in the forefront” (126-27).

¹⁹ For a general discussion of providential design in Collins’s novel, see Hughes 138-43.

²⁰ On the “friendly relations” between the British and the Central American Indians, who “consistently refused to recognize Spanish authority,” see Humphreys.

Goths! . . . Is there one among us to whom this report of their advance upon Rome does not speak of hope rather than of dread? Have we a chance of rising from the degradation forced on us by our superiors until this den of heartless triflers and shameless cowards is swept from the very earth that it pollutes? . . . Do you wonder now that . . . I say to the Goths—with thousands who suffer the same tribulation that I now undergo—"Enter our gates! Level our palaces to the ground! Confound, if you will, in one common slaughter, we that are victims with those that are tyrants! (81-83)

Representing social alienation in racial terms, Collins speaks of the Roman middle class as a "race . . . suffer[ing] throughout civilized Europe" at the hands of "conquering" nobles (83); he thus exposes what imperial ideologies obscure: their reactionary social agendas. In *Antonina*, Collins brings to light the social subtext that, according to Brantlinger, underlies much of imperial literature. Probius treats the Goths as his political allies rather than as his racial enemies because he perceives that the subversion of empire and the subversion of the aristocracy go hand in hand.

In *The Woman in White*, as in *Antonina*, this social subtext is apparent. Once again, Collins uses imperial motifs to represent class relations—most obviously, by characterizing the empire-builder, Fosco, as a Count. Unlike the foreign conquerors commonly found in reverse colonization narratives, who exhibit atavistic or instinctual behavior (Arata 624), Fosco is noted for his artistic and intellectual refinement; as Marion Halcombe observes, he would appear "the prominent personage of any assembly in the civilised world" (243). A cultured nobleman rather than a member of a barbaric tribe, Fosco "asserts . . . the rights of the aristocracy" (644) when he is among the English instead of imposing savage customs on them. While imperial relations are described in social terms, class relations are represented in terms of empire. Frederick Fairlie, the privileged heir of Limmeridge House, conceives of himself as a cultured Roman, and considers his inferiors as "Goths" (361). Hartwright, one of Fairlie's hired servants, is accordingly cast in the role of "barbarian," treated like a "domestic animal" by members of the English upper class (89), and forced by "cruel . . . social inequalities" to suppress his love for Laura Fairlie (95). He appears, like Probius, an "exile of his country's privileges," and thus it seems only appropriate when he makes his home in "the far east of London" (452).

Unlike Probius, however, Hartwright is defined against the racial other in the course of the novel; the "barbarians" prove to be his enemies rather than his allies. Pitting his hero against the "dark, dwarfish men" who "lurk murderously" in the jungles of Central America, Collins obscures the connection between the English lower classes and the so-called subject races, and lays the ideological groundwork for his hero's

social rise. Before Hartwright's departure from England, Mr. Gilmore describes him as downwardly mobile: "his dress, which I remembered as neat and gentleman-like when I saw him at Limmeridge, was so slovenly now that I should really have been ashamed of the appearance of it on one of my own clerks" (178). But in the "primeval" jungle, the English "barbarian" becomes an agent of empire and, in consequence, a gentleman. While he does not become "Honourable Hartwright, M. P." upon his return, as Pesca had hoped he would (46), he literally takes the place of the baronet, Sir Percival Glyde, by marrying Laura Fairlie, and he sires "the Heir of Limmeridge," "one of the landed gentry of England" (646). Providing his readers with yet another defensive disclaimer, Collins uses Hartwright's experience in Honduras to conceal the "cruel" social inequalities fostered by imperial ideology.²¹ He suggests that the empire, far from enforcing the social status quo, offers members of the lower classes an opportunity to effect their social rise, and thus rein-scribes the ideology he critiques elsewhere in the novel.

IV

In recent years, Collins criticism has been dominated by an increasingly marked disagreement over the novelist's political agenda. On the one hand, critics such as D. A. Miller, inspired by the work of Michel Foucault, have approached Collins as an ideological "medium" of sorts, a novelist who is fated to serve the social status quo.²² On the other hand, various critics, reacting against this Foucauldian reading, have made a case for the politically subversive nature of Collins's work, arguing for "his genuine desire to expose the inequities of Victorian gender and social conventions" (Perkins and Donaghy 392). With few exceptions, those currently writing about Collins's fiction have been unable to mediate between these two critical poles.²³

My approach to Collins's novel will, I hope, suggest what is wrong with the battle lines that have been drawn. As his treatment of imperial ideology makes clear, Collins's fiction necessarily generates antithetical readings—it does so because its resistance to dominant ideologies and its reinscription of them go hand in hand. While the disavowals and erasures of *The Woman in White* are common to "reverse colonization narratives," they are also typical of Collins's fiction as a whole. What Tamar Heller says of *The Moonstone* is equally true of many Collins novels—they are characterized by their "ideological doubleness," and simultaneously convey and contain their subversive tendencies (163).

Works Cited

Adamson, David Grant. *The Ruins of Time: Four and a Half Centuries of Conquest and Discovery among the Maya*. New York: Praeger, 1975.

²¹In his essay on the sensation fiction of the 1860s, Jonathan Loesberg provides a different reading of the social implications of *The Woman in White*. Focusing on the fall of Laura Fairlie rather than the rise of Walter Hartwright, Loesberg argues that Collins's novel dramatizes a "loss of class identity," and reflects the fear that the social structure of England is in a state of decay (119-38).

²²In particular, Miller discusses his debt to Foucault's concept of "discipline" (viii).
²³One striking exception is Tamar Heller's *Dead Secrets: Wilkie Collins and the Female Gothic*, which brilliantly traces "the ideological and generic tensions" that characterize Collins's work.

- Arata, Stephen D. "The Occidental Tourist: *Dracula* and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization." *Victorian Studies* (Summer 1990): 621-45.
- "Austria." *All the Year Round* 1 (18 June 1859): 173-77.
- Brantlinger, Patrick. *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988.
- "China with a Flaw in It." *Household Words* 5 (3 July 1852): 368-74.
- Collins, Wilkie. *Antonina: Or the Fall of Rome*. Vol. 17 *The Works of Wilkie Collins*. 30 vols. New York: AMS, 1970.
- _____. "Blow Up with the Brig!": A Sailor's Story." Vol. 2 *The Works of Wilkie Collins*. 30 vols. New York: AMS, 1970. 541-58.
- _____. "My Black Mirror." *Household Words* 14 (6 Sept. 1856). Rpt. in *My Miscellanies*. Vol. 20 *The Works of Wilkie Collins*. 30 vols. New York: AMS, 1970. 231-51.
- _____. *The Woman in White*. Ed. Julian Symons. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985.
- _____. and Charles Dickens. "The Perils of Certain English Prisoners." *The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices and Other Stories*. London: Chapman & Hall, 1890. 237-327.
- Dickens, Charles. *Letters from Charles Dickens to Angela Burdett-Coutts*. Ed. Edgar Johnson. London: Jonathan Cape, 1953.
- _____. *The Letters of Charles Dickens*. Ed. Walter Dexter. 3 vols. Bloomsbury: Nonesuch, 1938.
- _____. "The Metropolitan Protectives." *Household Words* 3 (26 April 1851): 97-105.
- _____. *The Speeches of Charles Dickens*. Ed. K. J. Fielding. Oxford: Clarendon, 1960.
- Gilman, Sander L. *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985.
- Greenberg, Michael. *British Trade and the Opening of China: 1800-1842*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1951.
- Heller, Tamar. *Dead Secrets: Wilkie Collins and the Female Gothic*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1992.
- Hibbert, Christopher. *The Dragon Wakes: China and the West, 1793-1911*. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.
- _____. *The Great Mutiny: India 1857*. New York: Penguin, 1980.
- Hughes, Winifred. *The Maniac in the Cellar: Sensation Novels of the 1860s*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980.
- Humphreys, R. A. *The Diplomatic History of British Honduras, 1638-1901*. London: Oxford UP, 1961.
- King, Bolton. *A History of Italian Unity*. 2 vols. New York: Russell & Russell, 1899.
- Knoepflmacher, U. C. "The Counterworld of Victorian Fiction." *The Worlds of Victorian Fiction*. Ed. Jerome H. Buckley. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1975. 351-69.

- Langbauer, Laurie. "Women in White, Men in Feminism." *Yale Journal of Criticism* 2 (1989): 219-43.
- Loesberg, Jonathan. "The Ideology of Narrative Form in Sensation Fiction." *Representations* 13 (Winter 1986): 115-38.
- Lonoff, Sue. *Wilkie Collins and His Victorian Readers: A Study in the Rhetoric of Authorship*. New York: AMS, 1982.
- Metcalf, Thomas. *The Aftermath of Revolt: India, 1857-1870*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1964.
- Miller, D. A. "Cage aux folles: Sensation and Gender in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*." *The Novel and the Police*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1988. 146-91.
- Minh-ha, Trinh T. *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1989.
- "North-Italian Character." *All the Year Round* 1 (10 Sept. 1859): 461-67.
- Oddie, William. "Dickens and the Indian Mutiny." *Dickensian* 68 (Jan. 1972): 3-15.
- "Our Phantom Ship. Central America." *Household Words* 2 (22 Feb. 1851): 516-22.
- Page, Norman, ed. *Wilkie Collins: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974.
- Perkins, Pamela and Mary Donaghy. "A Man's Resolution: Narrative Strategies in Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White*." *Studies in the Novel* 22 (Winter 1990): 392-402.
- "Piedmont." *All the Year Round* 1 (16 July 1859): 269-74.
- Reed, John R. "English Imperialism and the Unacknowledged Crime of *The Moonstone*." *Clio* 2 (June 1973): 281-90.
- Ritvo, Harriet. *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1987.
- _____. "The Power of the Word: Scientific Nomenclature and the Spread of Empire." *Victorian Newsletter* No. 77 (Spring 1990): 5-8.
- Rudman, Harry W. *Italian Nationalism and English Letters: Figures of the Risorgimento and Victorian Men of Letters*. New York: AMS, 1966.
- Smith, Denis Mack, ed. *The Making of Italy, 1796-1870*. New York: Walker, 1968.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. New York: Methuen, 1987.
- Sucksmith, Harvey Peter, ed. *The Woman in White*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989.
- "Viva L'Italia!" *All the Year Round* 1 (9 July 1859): 253-57.
- Woolf, Stuart. *A History of Italy, 1700-1860*. London: Methuen, 1979.

Bates College

Good Housekeeping: Job-Searching Victorian Fiction

Monica Feinberg

George Orwell once complained that even when popular Victorian fiction features characters who had jobs, it leaves the concreteness of work blandly and hesitatingly drawn. By saying for example that Dickens "has no ideal of work . . . Home life is always enough" (qtd. in Welsh 79), Orwell con-

tributes to a depiction of Victorian attitudes toward work that is by now commonplace: attributed partially to the social code that forbade a gentleman from working for a living, and partially to a watered down Calvinism whereby works paradoxically stand as signs of salvation but have nothing to do with

achieving salvation, the Victorian doctrine of work has come to be understood as deeply ambivalent. By saying, however, in this context that "Home life is always enough," Orwell insinuates that whereas the details of work are neglected, it is no coincidence that the details of home life are not. What does it mean, one is tempted to ask, for home life to be "enough"? Enough to answer what need? What Orwell and the tradition of criticism that follows him do not take into account is that even if it is true that work does not appear in high Victorian novels in all its glorious material details, housework most certainly does.

I

The paradox so many scholars designate as central to the Victorian doctrine of work generally derives from a reading of Weber's Protestant ethic. As Weber has outlined it, the conceptualization of worldly engagement as the highest form of moral activity that an individual can assume is complicated by the doctrine of predestination according to which work is a sign of grace but never a path to it. Only a "rationalized" method for supervising one's personal state of grace can assuage the religious anxiety of knowing one cannot earn election, only perhaps display it. Asceticism thus invades the everyday life of Europe because Calvinism demands not single good works that can buy salvation, but "a life of good works combined into a unified system" (Weber 117) by which one shows evidence of having already been saved.

Regardless of how strictly religious Victorian England actually was or was not, or how many sects of Christianity participated in the period's religious and political discourses, it is nonetheless fair to say that Victorians inherited a religious history that predisposed them to locate the highest form of spiritual life in a rationalized method for engaging with worldly materials, and consequently to value the notion of method as an ennobling process ostensibly at work for its own sake rather than aimed at winning any particular end. In terms of the specific home scenes that elicited Orwell's scoffing, it is perhaps a recognition of the qualities belonging to this quasi-religious make-up that can answer some of the more purely aesthetic questions concerning the "quality" of those precisely mannered passages; for certainly the saccharine wordhoard and postured exclamatory punctuation purfling a typical Victorian housework scene carry a rather high wince factor. Read against this particular cultural context, however, Victorian housework resounds far differently than such stylistic affectations would ordinarily suggest. Take for example this newlywed scene from *Our Mutual Friend*:

But, John gone to business and Bella returned home, the dress would be laid aside, trim little wrappers and aprons would be substituted, and Bella, putting back her hair with both hands, as if she were making the most business-like arrangements for going dramatically distracted, would enter on the household affairs of the day. *Such weighing and mixing and chopping and grating, such dusting and washing and polishing, such snipping and weeding and trowelling and other small gardening, such making and mending and folding and airing, such diverse arrangements, and above all such severe study!* For Mrs. J. R. . . . was under

the constant necessity of referring for advice and support to a sage volume entitled *The Complete British Family Housewife* which she would sit consulting, with her elbows on the table and her temples on her hands . . . with all her dimples screwed into an expression of profound research. (749, my emphasis)

In their phonemic repetitions and rhythms, the gerunds of the scene's central housekeeping sentence effect a symmetry among the various activities whereby the significance of an individual instance such as dusting is less important than the concept of the whole: housework. Exhausting in its exhaustive catalog of household management, the scene's technical construction thus reveals the operation of an ethos, a spirit according to which the performance of household tasks means something more than just sweeping the floor or cleaning the dishes. Although there is no doubt that Bella is actively engaged, the passages passive voice and subjunctive phrasing collaborate to muffle the sense in which her work might be purposeful. So while the cropped cadences and anaphoric phrasing set a quickened, anticipatory tempo, the gerunds, in their omission of direct and indirect objects, go on to convey a sense of energized movement divorced from any idea of progress, as if to suggest that home work is meaningful without being teleologically directed—that is, meaningful in a more hidden way than goal-oriented action. In this sense, the formal technicalities presuppose a kind of organic unity, a single spirit which animates and gives meaning to such "diverse arrangements." A spirit in fact that we might call Protestant in a Weberian sense. For the effect of the passage's technical orchestration is to make home work appear as inspired and holy, but not efficacious; in the same way that there is no object pronoun for each verb, no syntactical aim for each activity, and therefore literally no end to housework, there is no literal objective in the Protestant notion of work since works cannot buy salvation.

Moreover I want to suggest that by divorcing movement from context, the gerunds, coupled with the passage's static present tense verbs, function very much like cinematic close-ups of incomplete and ongoing activity. In this way, the technique that constructs and conveys housework as something like a single spiritual concept might be labelled narrative montage. Montage is, in its original sense, the juxtaposition of disparate elements, but in its cinematic sense, "the production of a rapid succession of images in a motion picture to illustrate an association of ideas" (*Webster's*). According to Eisenstein, Griffith invents montage when he learns from the failure of "representational" montage pieces in *Intolerance* that trope in cinema can never be located in an isolated image; a static picture that "represents" an idea in literally symbolic terms cannot fully convey a sense of that idea. This is why the image of Lillian Gish rocking a baby cradle does not successfully depict the idea of eternally reborn epochs. Cinematic trope is, however, located in montage juxtaposition, that is, in the effect that the relations between a series of images produces. As Eisenstein explains it, the problem for Griffith was how to go beyond the narrowly representational and perform supra-representational, "conveying" tasks. He discovers that it is only through pictorial juxtapositions, through montage, that film can go beyond the limits of a situation, such as a stage or

a set, and convey its ideological conception. As a result, montage also entails an abstraction of the lifelike representation, for, as Eisenstein points out, "Only by abstracting 'hot' from a thermometer reading may one speak of a 'sense of heat'" (243). Although Eisenstein leaves unclear the relationship between montage juxtaposition and images like the close-up that work as abstractions of lifelike representations, I take him to mean that montage is most effective when the pictorials it collates consist of such abstractions—of such cuts.

As one might abstract a sense of heat by viewing in juxtaposition a thermometer reading, a bright sun, and a sweaty brow, so might one read the conveying properties of the housekeeping passage; and what we abstract from the juxtaposition of housework close-up pictorials is a sense of busyness—of being busy and therefore maybe even a conception of this housewife's "most business-like arrangements" as constituting a kind of business. What is happening therefore in the housekeeping passage is that we not only have an impression of housekeeping as an ideological conception—as an idea lying beyond the representational limits of the material details belonging to the scene itself—but a sense of housekeeping as business. The busyness and business of worldly engagement.

II

In theory, it would make sense that housekeeping might rise in nineteenth-century England as a representation of work capable of alleviating some of the religious anxieties belonging to the kind of Protestant culture Weber describes. As busyness, housework can figure as a methodical, systematized engagement with the materials of the world. Since it is continuous (though one task may be completed, the work of maintaining a house is never done) and unpaid (the housewife of this passage is no maid), it can serve as proof of a condition, such as a state of grace, rather than an attempt to win an end; whereas it would be absurd to think that dusting the table might buy a place in heaven, the condition of keeping the house might represent the work in a calling necessary as a sign of election. Thus the *OED* confirms that "business" in the Nineteenth century refers not only to trade, commercial transactions and engagements in general, but more frequently to "that about which one is busy," not as a quality proper to a single person, nor as a momentary state, but as something that is more distinct and discrete from the subject. Something perhaps like a methodology.

Historically, there is evidence to suggest that housekeeping surfaces in the period as attracting a new kind of attention. For example, a fashionable new ornament popular among bourgeois ladies in the second half of the century was called a chatelaine. Worn at the waist, a chatelaine consisted of a collection of charms that represent in miniature various household implements such as a bunch of keys, a pen knife, a thimble case, a pin cushion, a pair of scissors, a button hook, maybe even a pencil and a note pad. Etymologically, "chatelain[e]" derives from the medieval word for a castellan, or a keeper of the castle of chateau who wore at his or her waist the keys to the house's various rooms. The fact that chatelaines occur as couture at the height of the Nineteenth century and not either previously or subsequently suggests that housekeeping functioned for a time as an available semiotic

field. The fad suggests that the fact of housekeeping had turned into an idea of housekeeping. Miniaturized into representative forms, household implements surface in bourgeois fashion as something like icons whose original significance has been refined into ornamentation; collated into fashions like the chatelaine, representative housekeeperly items assume the Eisensteinian conveying task of representing the idea of housework.

Moreover, housekeeping appears in the census of 1851 not only as an identifiable occupation, but as a position differentiated from that of a housekeeper on the domestic staff of a large estate. Housewifery rises as a category that designates what someone "does"—what her vocationally derived position is—but also as a category whose identification is somehow necessary to the larger process of articulating a domestic ideology centered on a well-swept home. Home is thus acknowledged as a national ideal in the same breath that housewifery is recognized as a demographically significant occupation:

By mid-century the middle-class ideal of bread winning husband and domesticated wife and children had become so widespread that the registrar general was able not only to introduce the new category of "housewife" to the census but also to state in his introduction to the report of 1851: "The possession of an entire house is strongly desired by every Englishman; for it throws a sharp well-defined circle round his family and hearth—the shrine of his sorrows, joys and meditations." (Aries and Duby 74).

Although there is no logical connection between the introduction of the word "housewife" in the census and the remark that the ultimate English cultural fantasy is a happy home (certainly there were housewives and housekeeping duties long before the "family craze" [Aries and Duby 134] sweeps England), the presentation here suggests that the housewife would play the heroine in the nineteenth-century domestic fantasy. Obviously, housewifery is not an invention of the Nineteenth century. But if its identification as a position, and perhaps even as a heroic vocation or calling in the Weberian sense, indicates a historical change in awareness, then we can say that Victorian domesticity itself functions as a representation of holywork. Thus it is no coincidence that when the hero of *Great Expectations* fantasizes about the house he wants to make home, he portrays himself as a knight, but a knight engaged in housework:

She had reserved it for me to restore the desolate house, admit the sunshine into the dark rooms, set the clocks a going and the cold hearths a blazing, tear down the cobwebs, destroy the vermin—in short do all the shining deeds of the young knight of romance, and marry the Princess. (253)

Instead of seeing himself killing dragons or fighting infidels, Pip pictures himself dusting away cobwebs and resetting clocks.

III

Housekeeping thus emerges in Victorian novels as a rhetoric whose ethical charge at first appears excessive given

that it uses unmade beds and unwashed dishes as signs of profound immorality. *Villette's* Lucy Snowe for example castigates both the unbound eroticism of Cleopatra as well as the connoisseurship of the ogling male audience viewing her portrait by presenting a colossal nude female body as nothing but a bad housekeeper:

For the wretched untidiness surrounding her, there could be no excuse. Pots and pans—perhaps I ought to say vases and goblets—were rolled her and there on the foreground; a perfect rubbish of flowers was mixed amongst them, and an absurd and disorderly mass of curtain upholstery smothered the couch and cumbered the floor. (276)

What emerges out of the passage's almost comical effect is that there are two orders of appraisal at work: though a nude female figure of literally epic proportions would represent an aesthetic, maybe even classical ideal, she holds diminished value in a housekeeperly economy. In this sense, keeping a well-organized household provides the means of establishing a scale of values whose set of priorities is different from that which would traditionally earmark Cleopatra as desirable. It is not merely that neatness provides a strategy for controlling or even repressing sexuality, but that neatness as a quality proper to housekeeping provides a language for marking the good from the bad in more absolute terms than those available in discourses focused on sexuality. Thus when Lucy sketches a gruesome portrait of injustice, she allegorizes Human Justice as a poor housekeeper presiding over a den of confusion, ignoring the calls of her hungry children while beating them with a hearth-brush (495). It would seem that moral outrage relies on what is entrusted in a semiotics of housework, on a peculiarly Protestant set of values that not only makes housekeeping itself a good, but that uses housekeeping metaphors as a representational strategy for determining the good.

This is why being tidy is not enough for Lucy Snowe; for it is only by capitalizing on her constitutional and fortuitous association to housekeeping in particular that she proves her heroism—her novelistic election, so to speak. Thus she not only declares self-righteously that she would “deliberately have taken a housemaid's place, bought a strong pair of gloves, swept bedrooms and staircases, and cleaned stoves, and locks” (382), rather than earn her living as a governess or paid companion, but comes to tell her story when she hears by chance through a network of housekeepers that there are job opportunities abroad: “I stored up this piece of casual information, as careful housewives store seemingly worthless shreds and fragments for which their prescient minds anticipate a possible use someday” (104-05). Good housekeeping as a quality of mind thus provides Lucy with a vocation, with literally a job, at the same time that it marks her as the nar-

rator: for as she goes on to say, she only mentions the incident to explain how she came to get a job abroad, and hence how she came to write the story; and thus how she came to be its heroine. The causal inferences such a sequence invites are not insignificant.

In association to a narrative's protagonist, housekeeping and the scale of appraisal it evinces thus play a central role in developing a specific stamp of Victorian novelistic heroism. It is not accidental that Esther Summerson saves Bleak House with her jingling keys and Dame Durden ways; or that Mary Garth is housekeeper of Stonecourt before becoming its mistress; or that Dinah Moore, having “made great advances in household cleverness” (353), surfaces as *Adam Bede's* heroine when she trades in her “work” as a Methodist preacher for the housework of being a wife. Given its groundings in Protestant conception of the work that proves election and the ethical order its metaphors consequently display, housekeeping thus surfaces in Nineteenth-century English fiction as a business that needs no justification because its goodness is self-evident. This context is crucial for understanding the “happiness” of marriage plot happy endings and the ethical evocations that bolster a heroine's choice of home life. In this sense, the housekeeping passages that typically gloss a heroine's decision to marry provide a conceptual framework for exploring how such “unhistoric acts [of those] who lived faithfully a hidden life” (*Middlemarch* 896) can constitute a meaningful career and hence a meaningful life. It is consequently only when home work represents far more than a job that home life can be enough.

Works Cited

- Aries, Philippe and George Duby. *A History of Private Life*. Vol. 4. Ed. Michelle Perrot. Trans. Arthur Goldhammer. Cambridge: Belknap, 1990.
- Brontë, Charlotte. *Villette*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1987.
- Dickens, Charles. *Great Expectations*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1985.
- _____. *Our Mutual Friend*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1986.
- Eisenstein, Sergei. “Dickens, Griffith, and the Film of Today.” *Essays in Film Theory: Film Form*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Jovanovich, 1977.
- Eliot, George. *Adam Bede*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1987.
- _____. *Middlemarch*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1986.
- Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Charles Scribner's, 1958.
- Welsh, Alexander. *The City of Dickens*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1986.

Columbia University

Utopian Dreams / Heterotopian Nightmares: Disease and Discourse in Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlets*

John B. Lamb

Writing in 1831 to Gustav d'Eichthal, Thomas Carlyle claimed that he could, “with few reservations,” subscribe to the Saint-Simonians' “*Prophecy of an Ultimate Perfection*,” if it was only posited as a scientific doctrine and not as a religion (*Letters* 5: 278). By 1848, however, he was apt to skeptically characterize all utopian ventures, not only those proposed by the Saint-Simonians but also those of Louis Blanc, Robert Owen, and Charles Fourier, as “dreams of Fraternity, Equality, and Paradise-made-easy” (“*Irish Regiments*” 465). Two years later, his pessimism toward the utopian projects of social and political reformers—what he calls “Prurient influenza of Platform Benevolence, and ‘Paradise of All-and-Sundry’”—turned to despair (*Latter-Day Pamphlets* 80). While the advocates of universal suffrage prophesied the coming of a future utopian dream state forged by voice and vote; in *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, Carlyle read in the present time a heterotopian nightmare of a body politic infected by a plague of stump oratory and given over to babble. “In these tragic days,” Carlyle observes, “when, for very speaking, the voice of man has fallen inarticulate to man; and hearts, in this loud babbling, sit dark and dumb toward one another” (213). But while Carlyle diagnoses the plague-ridden state of Victorian society and the “Benevolent-Platform Fever” engendered by the utopian projects of political and philanthropic reformers, his heterotopian vision serves, ironically, to foreground his own utopian dream of a state founded on the worship of and obedience to silent working heroes.

The distress Carlyle feels in *Latter-Day Pamphlets* is the anxiety of those whose language appears to be destroyed, whose speech has failed to produce order and, instead, has infected the world with anarchy and chaos. Such distress is part of Carlyle's deep-seated and lifelong distrust of words. “The faithfullest, most glowing word of man,” Carlyle declares in *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, “is but an imperfect image of the thought . . . that dwells within him; his best word will never but with error convey his thought to other minds: and then between *his* poor thought and Nature's Fact, which is the Thought of the Eternal, there may be thought to be some discrepancies, some shortcomings!” (203). Since democracy depends upon discourse, upon voice and vote, it will rule at best imperfectly, and when that discourse is infected with cant, it will fail to rule at all.

Utopias bring consolation, but heterotopias produce uneasiness and dismay, perhaps, even fear. The are disturbing, Michel Foucault claims,

because they make it impossible to name this *and* that, because they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy “syntax” in advance; and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things . . . to “hold together.” (*The Order of Things* xviii)

Heterotopias “dissolve our myths”; they may shatter our

dreams of utopia as well. If utopias provide alternative perspectives from which vantage point we can reassess our political and social life, heterotopias seem aimed at revealing the fabulous nature of utopias themselves, particularly their claims to make realizable through discourse that which is, in fact, impossible: to bring the “noplacé” or nowhere of the utopian future into the present day. While utopias represent our yearnings for a world of social, political and linguistic order, heterotopias “dessicate speech, stop words in their tracks” (*The Order of Things* xviii). Heterotopias make clear the precarious nature of all cultural orderings, since they are ultimately dependent upon language. Modern man is born after Babel, and as with those in the land of Shinar our language is often confounded and we do not always understand one another's speech.

The biblical story of the Tower of Babel, perhaps one of the first heterotopias, resonates throughout *Latter-Day Pamphlets*. The nineteenth century, Carlyle feels, has turned its back on God, and, in its pride, it has attempted to claim for itself a name. But Carlyle calls this heterotopian nightmare not Babel, but “Jesuitism”—the speaking and writing of a deliberate insincerity:

We have to report that Human Speech is not true! That it is false to a degree never witnessed in this world is lately. Such a subtle virus of falsity in the very essence of it, as far excels all open lying, or prior kinds of falsity: false with consciousness of being sincere! The heart of the world is corrupted to the core. (312)

But there is, Carlyle claims, a greater danger yet in Jesuitism: “For the falsity of speech rests on a far deeper falsity. False speech, as is inevitable when man long practices it, falsifies all things; the very thoughts, or fountains of all speech and action become false. Ere long . . . a man's intellect ceases to be capable of distinguishing truth, when he permits himself to deal in speaking or acting what is false” (312).

So while utopian visionaries announced after the passing of the First Reform Bill of 1832 the coming of “the New Era, and long expected Year One of human felicity” (101), Carlyle believes that England has become a “terrible new country” (46), filled with the “universal syllabub of philanthropic twaddle” (67) and “vacant hearsays of windy babble” (72). England and the English government of 1850 are infected, Carlyle proclaims, with “the poisonous atmosphere of universal Cant . . . Cant moral, Cant religious, Cant political,” and that atmosphere, he adds, “has as good as choked the spiritual life” out of his fellow Victorians (74).

The failure of reform governments and universal suffragists to redress the social ills of Victorian England and resuscitate its spiritual life, the failure of democracy, Carlyle maintains, lies in the fact that talk has replaced action, that words have taken the place of work. England's governors have been trained not to govern, but to “‘rise in Parliament,’ to

compose orations, write books, or in short to speak *words*, for the approval of reviewers; instead of doing real kingly *work* to be approved of by the gods" (29). Carlyle attributes this preference for words over work and the inertia it produces in government to the general principles of *laissez faire*, to the "Leave alone principle" that leads directly to the rule of "No-Government." "By multifarious devices," Carlyle claims, "we have been endeavouring to dispense with governing; and by very superficial speculations, of *laissez-faire*, supply-and-demand, &c &c to persuade ourselves that it is best so" (31). Content that present-day social ills will be completely healed once universal suffrage is achieved, democratic reformers, Carlyle insists, have failed to act. Hence, the body politic displays the primary symptom of the pathology of utopia: escapism. As Paul Ricouer suggests:

The nowhere of utopia may become the pretext for escape, a way of fleeing the contradictions and ambiguity both of the use of power and the assumption of authority. This escapism of utopia belongs to a logic of all or nothing. No connecting point exists between the "here" or social reality and the "elsewhere" of utopia. This disjunction allows the utopia to avoid any obligation to come to grips with the real difficulties of a given society. (17)

This is exactly what Carlyle feels has occurred in England during the forties. The utopian rhetoric of progressive economics and democratic reform, that "multitudinous efflux of oratory and psalmsody" (10), has little in common with the "fact" of social conditions for many of England's poor, and Parliament appears to feel little obligated to work at actually bettering those conditions. As long as English politicians continue to talk, the spiritual and economic malaise infecting the body politic will only worsen.

Ruled by the rule of "No-Government," Carlyle warns, British economic and social existence is "fast becoming one huge poison-swamp of reeking pestilence physical and moral; and, hence, instead of cosmos come again through the ballot-box," "Constituted Anarchy" infects England: "the choking, sweltering, deadly rule of No-rule; the consecration of cupidity, and braying folly, and dim stupidity and baseness, in most affairs of men" (29). What Carlyle sees in the present time is not the advent of a Victorian utopia but "Authentic Chaos come up into this sunny Cosmos again; and all men singing *Gloria in excelsis* to it" (29). It was, however, not simply that utopian visions of a democratic paradise had failed to produce real reform, but that those visions had engendered the very inertia English politics suffered from; they had given rise to a plague of talk and the "misuse of words" (181).

What England needed, Carlyle argues is not a "better Talking Apparatus," but "an infinitely better acting Apparatus" (194). But in 1850, "Vox is God of this Universe" (192), and he feels that so long as the political, social, and spiritual affairs of Victorians were resigned to the ballot-box and the gathering up of the "vote, *Vox* or voice of all the two-legged animals without feathers" in England the outlook for true reform is dismal:

Voting, never a divine Apollo, was once a human Bottom the Weaver; and, so long he continued in the sane and sin-

cere state, was worth consulting about several things. But alas, enveloped now in mere stump-oratory, cecity, mutinous imbecility, and sin and misery, he is now an enchanted Weaver,—wooed by the fatuous Queen of constitutional Faery. (237)

The *vox populi* is inadequate to the task of governing. Speech is at best an imperfect medium; at its worst, according to Carlyle, it disturbs, obstructs, and abolishes the "real answer of fact" (196). A world created through voting is a Tower of Babel, "maddened into all manner of delirious clamour" (68).

The lord of misrule in this heterotopian empire of vox is the Stump-Orator, and the essay of that name in *Latter-Day Pamphlets* occupies a central place in the work and sums up much of what Carlyle thought about the relationship between politics and discourse. "In ancient healthy times," Carlyle claims, outward speech was the "tangible sign of what other faculties a man had in the silent state" (178); and despite that lifelong suspicion of language as a vehicle of truth, he insists that "If speech is the banknote for inward capital of culture and noble human worth, then speech is precious, and the art of speech shall be honoured" (179). But speech in those latter-days was, to Carlyle's way of thinking, full of "continents of empty vapour, of greedy self-conceits, commonplace hearsays, and indistinct loomings of sordid chaos" (183). The mouth-piece of said chaos is the Stump-Orator, a new and "scandalous idol" for humans to prostrate themselves before. In public and private life, the "Talker" has been "established in the place of honour, and the Doer, hidden in the obscure crowd" (175). Furthermore, talk is the "Atropis of Human Virtue; the sure Destroyer, 'by painless extinction' of Human Veracities, Performances, and Capabilities" (193).

Carlyle envisions the Stump-Orator as a kind of Black Plague infecting Victorian culture with cant and bringing "asphyxia and death everlasting" (175). The collective wisdom of England, its Parliament, has become "a solemn Convocation of Stump Orators" and a "National Palaver" that has "diffused itself into oceans of windy talk" (220). Parliament, Carlyle argues, "is by express appointment the Talking Apparatus" (194) and it goes on "screeching and gibbering, words without wisdom, without veracity, without conviction more than skin-deep" (212). Since Parliament produces only talk and "froth dialect," it is incapable of governing; as long as it is merely a "talking Parliament" it cannot serve as the collective wisdom of the country and has, indeed, already given up that function. Led by a convocation of Stump-Orators and infected by Jesuitism, England is on the brink of spiritual bankruptcy; its inward capital of culture is wasted, and it is about to fall into the abyss of heterotopian anarchy: "Excellent stump-orator; eloquent parliamentary dead-dogs, making motions, passing bills . . . From the Universe of Fact he has turned himself away; he is gone into partnership with the Universe of Phantasm; finds it profitablest to deal in forged-notes, while foolish shopkeepers will accept them" (206). For Carlyle the Black Plague of stump-oratory rages out of control and the fate of the body politic is in question.

Ironically, the antidote Carlyle prescribes to heterotopian nightmare of an England where "the voice of man has fallen inarticulate to man" is itself a utopian vision. Ultimately, in one way or another, all utopias deal with the problem of

authority and they attempt to reveal ways that people may be governed other than by the state. "The idea of a moral or ethical power is very tempting. Thus, the utopia has two alternatives: to be ruled by good rulers—either aesthetic or ethical—or to be ruled by no rulers" (Ricouer 299). It is the first alternative that Carlyle adheres to in his own utopian solution to the heterotopian nightmare of his own day. In fact, just as Carlyle seems to claim that the infectious babble and cant that are symptomatic of the Victorian heterotopia have their cause in the utopian visions of Democratic reformers, so too, it appears his own claims to a hierarchy of worthy and able rulers have their correlative in the very heterotopian nightmare he imagines. As Foucault points out in *Discipline and Punish*, "underlying disciplinary projects the image of plague stands for all forms of confusion and disorder" (199). While Carlyle is particularly concerned with the linguistic confusion and disorder that defines the heterotopia, throughout the text he images forth that chaos in terms of plague and disease. The political dream of the plague is that of a disciplined society and "in order to see perfect disciplines functioning, rulers dream of the state of plague" (*Discipline and Punish* 199). Carlyle's heterotopian nightmare, therefore, is strategically employed to foreground his own utopian dream of a perfectly ordered and disciplined society, a society based upon hero-worship, based upon reverence for men "able to command men in the ways of industrial and moral well-doing" (165). It is also an attempt to discover a world of sincere speech, a world before Babel, where words do not fail to convey men's thoughts and the wisdom that lies therein. This is his "reform of reforms."

Carlyle's utopia is a vision of rule by wise, ethical, and silent rulers. England's hope for regeneration, for a "world of some veracity and some heroism" lies in its silent workers, who, "far away from platforms and public palaverings" imprint the image of their nobleness on the world not "in transitory words," but in "silent facts" (32). It is, he proclaims, "the everlasting privilege of the foolish to be governed by the wise" (23); and "States are to be called happy and noble," Carlyle maintains, "in so far as they settle rightly who is slave and who free" (250). Carlyle defines the "free man" as he who is "loyal to the Laws of this Universe" and the "first symptom of such a man is not that he resists and rebels, but that he obeys" (251). The reverence and obedience of the free man is to be directed at a ruling body of silent "Soul-Overseers," who attack the ills of Victorian society not with words but with actions. Once this is accomplished, true kingship will replace the "Public Haranguer," and England will be ruled by a "new veritable Hierarchy of Heaven" (341):

In the course of long strenuous centuries, I can see the State become what it is actually bound to be, the keystone of a most real 'Organization of Labour'—and on this Earth a world of some veracity, and some heroism, once more worth living in! (159)

Like other utopian projects, Carlyle's world of hero-worship is an imaginary attempt to replace the state with an administration "whose only role would be to recruit and support a high council of learned persons, a lay priesthood"

(Ricouer 288). The task of England's ministers is to "constitute into some Sacred Corporation, bearing authority and dignity in their generation, the Chosen of the Wise, of the Spiritual and Devout-minded, the Reverent who deserve reverence" (168). Once the "Chosen" have been identified, it is the duty of the people of England to follow and to obey them. If this could be accomplished, Carlyle suggests, then a utopia of hero-worship, with the just and ordered society which is its byproduct, would arise:

Give every man the meed of honour merited, you have the ideal world of poets; a hierarchy of beneficences, your noblest man at the summit of affairs, and in every place the due gradation of the fittest for that place: a maximum of wisdom works and administers, followed, as is inevitable, by a maximum of success. It is a world such as idle dream of,—such as the active poets, the heroic and true men, are incessantly toiling to achieve, and more and more realize. (259)

Beneath his suspicion of words and his anxiety over the power of his own prophetic voice, beneath his despair over English politics and his execration of would-be reformers, Carlyle yearns for a utopia of wise rulers and for a state built on order and degree. This is Carlyle's own refuge from reality and from the nightmare of heterotopia he envisions. Ultimately hero-worship suffers from the same pathology of all utopias; it is escapist. And, ironically, it is a utopia which can only be realized in discourse, in writing and speech. As Paul Ricouer notes in his *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, "when we cannot act, we write. The act of writing allows a certain flight which persists as one of the characteristics of literary utopias" (309). Thus while Carlyle's world is besieged by babble and infected by discourse, it is only through discourse and the utopian imagination that he can create the "ideal world of poets." Implicit in *Latter-Day Pamphlets* is Carlyle's recognition that, like a doctor of infectious diseases who has diagnosed the plague, proposed solutions for its cure, and ministered to the sick and dying, he carries the contagion and he may be the next victim, that he, too is infected with words.

Perhaps, this explains the rather Swiftian conclusion to "Stump Orators." Carlyle, in the voice of a "benevolent man" suggests an alternative antidote to the babble and cant of his day: "To cut from one generation, whether the current or the next, all the tongues away, prohibiting literature too; and appoint at least one generation to pass its life in silence" (209). While utopias are clearly the product of the literary imagination, is this not, for Carlyle, the ultimate utopia, a silent world where people work and words do not confound because they are never spoken? Is this not Carlyle's last refuge from heterotopias and the disease of discourse? I think it may well be. For while Carlyle in *Latter-Day Pamphlets* invokes the image of heterotopia in order to propose his own utopian dream of hero-worship as the antidote to it, eventually Carlyle falls silent never to complete the epic project he had at one time imagined the *Pamphlets* would be. And, so, he resigns himself finally to live in his own utopian fantasy, becoming one of what he calls the "happy tongueless generation" (210).

Works Cited

- Carlyle, Thomas. *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*. Ed. Charles R. Sanders and K. J. Fielding. Durham: Duke UP, 1970.
- _____. "Irish Regiments (of the New Era)." *Spectator* 21 (1848): 464-65.
- _____. *Latter-Day Pamphlets*. Vol. 20. *The Works of Thomas Carlyle*. Ed. H. D. Traill. 30 vols. New York: Scrib-

ner's, 1903.

- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Pantheon, 1977.
- _____. *The Order of Things*. New York: Vintage, 1973.
- Ricouer, Paul. *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*. Ed. George H. Taylor. New York: Columbia UP, 1986.

West Virginia University

Oliver Twist and the Contours of Early Victorian England

David Paroissien

Readers familiar with literature about Britain written during the interval between Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in 1815 and the coronation of Queen Victoria twenty-two years later know how rich it is in studies that map the distinctive features of the post-war period. Some writers, like Bulwer Lytton in his *England and the English* (1833), mixed sociology and history in order to analyze society in the manner of De Toqueville and Montesquieu. Others—David Ricardo, Sismondi, the Swiss economist and historian, and Patrick Colquhoun, are examples—focussed more specifically on the best ways to exploit the source of England's wealth. Some took the position that a free economy would promote social harmony and growth. Dissenters, like Sismondi, advocated government controls as the best way to ensure stability by regulating the production of goods and slowing the economy in order to counter the increasing gap between the rich and the poor.¹ Other barometers of the period include its fiction, which provided commentary of a different sort, as readers discovered in their vicarious participation in the imagined settings of novels truths about the real world they inhabited. It is my contention that *Oliver Twist* (published serially from February 1837 to April 1839) can be read as a literary work that reveals a good deal about the period which shaped Dickens's early life, those years in which people faced, for the first time, some of the public and private challenges posed by the Industrial Revolution.

The distinctive features which characterize *Oliver Twist* as an imaginative instrument for the empirical exploration of early Victorian England require enumeration. Dickens uses the novel to explore two major concerns: first, the plight of children born into the early phase of the Industrial Revolution, and, second, the difficulty of reading "correctly" the external signs of the new urban culture, whose impact on the class system, to take one important instance, rendered unreliable previous assumptions about both the means by which one social group was distinguished from another and the underly-

ing presumption of separateness. These two social realities form the novel's moral agenda and account for a determined effort by Dickens to create a new literary form in which to convey his vision. Prototypical features of *Oliver Twist* include the use of a child hero to convey the specific threats the young faced in their painful initiation into life, the suspenseful revelation of unsuspected connections between different social groups, and the employment of several characters and a narrator to assemble clues and solve mysteries in the manner of a detective.

I shall begin with the foundling hero, whose illegitimate birth in a workhouse many Victorians evidently read as a prelude to the boy's almost certain misfortune and descent into crime. Dickens plays on this likely response to Oliver's fate in several scenes early in the novel. Members of the managerial class who administered the New Poor Law of 1834, for example, are portrayed as taking pleasure in humiliating Oliver, and they aggressively predict his demise. "I know that boy will be hung," warns one member of the Board of Guardians, a prophecy he and his companions do their best to assist by handing over Oliver to anyone willing to take him on as an apprentice.

Once parish overseers resigned juvenile paupers in their care to an employer, children were generally subject to further degradation, a point made clear by Oliver's apprenticeship to an undertaker. In the hands of cruel employers, typified in the novel by Gamfield and Sowerberry, children often ran away and drifted into crime. And when apprentices fled from the harsh conditions and brutal treatment commonly associated with menial jobs, adolescents often took to stealing, parliamentary investigators discovered, because they had no other way to survive. This development, in turn, had further destructive consequences. If they were caught, boys and girls were taken before police magistrates, who sentenced them to several months in jail.² If they remained free, they might fall prey to villains like Fagin, who specialized in training boys to

pick pockets. In return for the stolen goods, which the adults fenced for a profit, Fagin and his kind provided food and shelter for their young associates.³

The sequence of events showing Oliver's journey from the workhouse in Mudfog to Fagin's den in London shapes the novel's narrative structure and gives it an almost epic scope. In Dickens's own words, the tale portrays a classic struggle of "little Oliver . . . surviving through every adverse circumstance" (1841 Preface). Because Oliver is "so jolly green," he is quickly spotted as a potential recruit by the alert young thief who finds him starving in Barnet High Street.⁴ And he is easily ensnared with the promise of help, the first kind word or gesture Oliver has ever received in his life. "Don't fret your eyelids on that score," says the Artful Dodger, sympathetically, when Oliver confesses that he has no money and nowhere to stay. "I've got to be in London to-night; and I know a 'spectable old genelman as lives there, wot'll give you lodgings for nothink, and never ask for the change'" (48; ch. 8).

Fagin's warm welcome and invitation to eat pointedly contrast with Oliver's earlier experiences concerning food and accommodation. In the workhouse he had been reviled for asking for more, a direct attack on the dietaries introduced by the government in 1836,⁵ which ignored the needs of growing children and simply stipulated that the young should be fed "at discretion." Later, on the evening of his arrival at the undertaker's, after he had been sold by the parish officials, Mrs. Sowerberry's preparations for the apprentice's first meal go no further than ordering her servant to "give this boy some of the cold bits that were put by for Tip," the family dog (24; ch. 4). "We are very glad to see you, Oliver—very," said Fagin, commanding the Dodger to remove some sausages from a skillet and draw up a tub "near the fire for Oliver," making an offer no hungry boy could refuse (50; ch. 8).

The guiding principle of parsimony written into the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834—I refer to the euphemistic notion of "less eligibility"—also meant that Union authorities were not encouraged to spend money educating children or providing vocational or industrial training for their charges.⁶ Instead, they were urged to reduce administrative expenses for

the young as quickly as possible, a justification for the practice of offering a nominal premium to masters as an inducement to take on apprentices as a cheap supply of labor.

Children thus forced into the labor market were so commonly abused that the young "slaves" often ran away from their employers, preferring to fend for themselves in the streets and survive by stealing. And once on a course that doomed them to an outlaw existence, one of two possibilities usually prevailed. They might live relatively well while their luck held, like the boys in Fagin's gang, who drank heavily, gambled and enjoyed the sexual favors of their female companions.⁷ Or, if they were caught, they faced prosecution and certain imprisonment, thus completing a downward spiral from which there was almost no chance of escape.

Dickens drives this point home through the juxtaposition of the parallel court appearances of Oliver and the Artful Dodger in chapters 11 and 43. For the hero to escape, "a stronger hand than chance" must intervene to rescue Oliver from the Hatton Garden magistrate, Mr. Fang, and effect his miraculous delivery into middle class respectability and ease. Lacking Oliver's good fortune and help from wealthy friends, Fagin's "best hand" has no one to come to his aid when, later in the novel, he is arrested and tried at Bow Street police court. Instead, the Artful Dodger is convicted and sent abroad to a penal colony in Australia, lagged as a lifer for stealing a twopenny sneeze-box, in the "flash" idiom of the thieves.

Modern readers sometimes object that Oliver's final removal from London and adoption by Mr. Brownlow "as his own son" conflict with Dickens's realistic treatment of poverty and its inevitable link with crime. On the contrary, I suggest that the novel's emphasis on Oliver's happy survival calls attention to the failure of government officials to offer a constructive response to the problem of juvenile delinquency. Orphans and abandoned children in early Victorian England, Dickens realized, constituted an entire class at risk, feral children of the slums destined either for the hangman's noose or transportation to a penal colony.

Finding a solution to the problem of juvenile crime assumed particular urgency in the 1830s when the commitment and conviction of those under sixteen rose more rapidly

³ Dickens's portrait of Fagin closely reflects arrangements in the London underworld at the time. Fences typically provided boy thieves with accommodation and trained new recruits as pickpockets in the manner Dickens describes. Fagin's mode of operating—meeting his contacts in a typical London "flash house" and his use of a crucible to melt down stolen silver—can also be documented from contemporary sources. Further realistic elements include the use of slang, reference to Fagin as a Jew and the location of scenes in settings that reflect accurately the topography of London in the 1830s. See my *Companion to "Oliver Twist."*

⁴ Dickens's choice of location for the meeting between the two boys appears to be part of the novel's verisimilitude. Barnet's High Street was full of posting inns and the town crowded with visitors to the weekly cattle and horse markets. An influx of thieves and troublemakers to the annual fair added to Barnet's reputation as a neighborhood in which pawnbrokers were active and one where a flourishing trade in stolen goods prompted the police to single out Barnet for surveillance.

⁵ In 1836 the Poor Law Commissioners introduced six numbered dietaries for adoption by Boards of Guardians and use in workhouses throughout England and Wales. Dickens's exaggerated attack, which appears to follow bitter criticism of the standardized dietaries in the press, in fact misses the point that comparatively the prescribed amounts of food were not ungenerous in the

context of the monotonous and inadequate diet of the urban poor and standardized diets for men in the services and passengers on emigrant ships run by the government. Children under nine, however, received inadequate consideration by the Commissioners, who state unhelpfully that they should be "dieted at discretion."

⁶ The lack of emphasis on the need for education and training within the workhouse reflects prevailing indifference to the concept of state-supported education, although this idea had been proposed by Jeremy Bentham and taken up by others in the 1830s. The assistant Commissioners gathering data between 1832-34 found some evidence of schooling, but instruction was at best rudimentary.

⁷ In a Report prepared for a government Select Committee in 1835, William Augustus Miles estimated that young pickpockets could make between four and six shillings a day from the sale of stolen handkerchiefs. Costs for food and accommodation typically came to a little over two shillings, the sum the honest wage earner needed to spend a week to support a child. The relative affluence enjoyed by the young thief meant that he had considerable discretionary money to spend, much of which went on drink and girls. These youths, Miles reported, "indulge in the deepest excess and debaucheries; nor is it to be wondered at if they lose sight of all morality when every facility is afforded to sell stolen property, and every gratification of vice is at their command" (*Companion to "Oliver Twist"* 108-09).

¹ Patrick Colquhoun in *Wealth of the British Empire* (1815) and David Ricardo in *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (1817) both affirmed the principles of classic economic theory established by Adam Smith and other proponents of *laissez-faire*. Sismondi also advocated the abolition of government constraints in his *On Commercial Wealth* (1803), but changed his views after his second visit to England in 1818. His *Political Economy and the Philosophy of Government* (1819) directly challenged prevailing assumptions that wealth should not be regulated.

² Penal sentences for children and youths convicted of misdemeanors remained standard practice until later in the century. The magistrates before whom children were brought for "summary convictions" could either sentence children to transportation or let them go free. Following the Juvenile Offenders Act of 1847 and the Youthful Offenders Act of 1854, magistrates had the option of sending boys to reform schools, where they were given industrial training and the means to make a living by honest work.

than ever before in English history.⁸ Public officials and members of Poor Law boards who sat "in solemn conclave," like the sadistic "white-waistcoated gentleman" and his fellows, often viewed young offenders as incorrigibles, "A distinct body of thieves whose life and business it is to follow up a determined warfare against the constituted authorities by living in idleness and on plunder."⁹ Sentiments like this pervaded government reports and oral testimony from prison governors, policemen and magistrates, witnesses united in a belief that the maintenance of law and order required tough penal measures.¹⁰

Indifference to children's needs, the most pressing of which were voluminously documented in parliamentary papers published by the government from 1800 onwards, clearly angered Dickens. In novel after novel he aimed a series of sledgehammer blows at some of the instances of misery he saw around him. The defacto infanticide practiced in the country's baby farms, the sexual exploitation of girls on a scale surpassing any previously known and the absence of government regulations for promoting public health all receive careful attention in *Oliver Twist*.¹¹ In Dickens's view, England's conduct deserved the severest censure. The country seemed willing to pay for its post-war prosperity by using its young as carelessly as we dispose of plastic cups and paper plates today.

Dickens's choice of a child hero to call attention to the plight of the nation's youth is closely related to the second part of his agenda. This aspect of *Oliver Twist* was equally unique, especially in the novel's emphasis on the care middle-class readers needed to take when they attempted to interpret the external signs of England's new urban culture. If urban reality made it easy to overlook the needs of infants and juveniles, as they were being generated in record numbers for almost certain destruction during the first three decades of the nineteenth century, that same new world also created, through the anonymity and multiplicity of city life, interpretative challenges unknown to earlier generations.

Reference to the novel's treatment of class and the apparent separateness of traditional social groups suggests that Dickens saw this phenomenon very clearly. In a society whose social structure remained relatively stable, customary markers of difference such as dress, vocabulary, accent and occupation served two general functions. They tended to limit

opportunities for social mobility by confining individuals to the circumstances into which they were born. They also provided an aid to recognition most people were quick to assimilate. The way one spoke and dressed, together with one's occupation and source of income, offered reliable clues to status and position.

The four apparently distinct groups of characters in *Oliver Twist* illustrate how these notions of class and separateness were challenged by an urban culture, whose contours Dickens read and mastered perhaps more quickly than most of his contemporaries. One at first assumes that the novel's different groups have nothing in common, that beadles, criminals, businessmen and genteel members of the middle class are set apart on the opposite side of gulfs, destined never to meet. Only in fiction, runs one likely objection, do thieves rub shoulders with innocents and respectable upholders of the law, in turn, commit actions that, on a moral plane, reduce them to the level of criminals.

On the other side of this formulation are deserving individuals whose goodness and virtue are assessed negatively on the basis of misleading external appearances. Oliver's own birth in the workhouse furnishes the most obvious example of an infant who, initially, defied attempts by even "the haughtiest stranger" to assign him to "his proper station in society," until he was "badged and ticketed" as a parish child the minute he was wrapped up in old calico robes "which had grown yellow in the same service" (3; ch. 1). The dilemmas of Rose Maylie and Nancy carry this theme even further. Nancy, thief and prostitute, can only be placed outside the law, despite her goodness and courage, while her respectable "sister" Rose, the embodiment of every domestic virtue Dickens can summon from the culture, nevertheless remains under a "stain," forbidden to marry the man who loves her because she is thought to be illegitimate. Revelations at the end of the novel clear up the ambiguities surrounding Rose's birth, and Oliver's ancestry proves sufficiently worthy to justify his assumed middle-class status. But for Nancy heroic death and implied forgiveness in heaven must suffice.

The novel's mystification and literary devices drive home Dickens's point about class interconnectedness in other ways. Punctuating the narrative, for example, are a series of journeys, each presented with scrupulous care for accuracy and topographical detail. The expedition of Oliver and Sikes

is perhaps the most dramatic instance, a twenty-five mile trip from Bethnal Green to Chertsey, a remote Thames-side village in Surrey, where Mrs. Maylie and Rose reside. Dickens devotes two chapters to their foray and the attempted robbery in order to warn readers about dangers many overlooked (chs. 21 and 22). Sitting in her "detached house surrounded by a wall," Mrs. Maylie has no idea that her home has been under surveillance by a member of Fagin's gang for two weeks, or that Sikes so covets her silver plate that he submits to Fagin's proposal to use Oliver as the means of breaking in through a small, unsecured lattice-window at the back of the house.

The linking of inhabitants from widely disparate locales is further reinforced by the sudden and mysterious appearance of Fagin and Monks outside Oliver's study one midsummer evening later in the story. Safe though Oliver is at Mrs. Maylie's summer cottage, goodness, Dickens appears to suggest, never remains completely invulnerable. In the new urban world of the 1830s, criminals and law-abiding citizens seemed to share the same ground, or to have access to it on nearly equal terms. Similar instances of this theme appear elsewhere in the novel. On one occasion Oliver runs into Monks as he leaves a country inn while on an errand for Mrs. Maylie (ch. 33); on another, Nancy, whose life had been squandered in the streets, makes her way to "a family hotel in a quiet but handsome street near Hyde Park," to meet Rose Maylie and provide information that Mr. Brownlow uses to solve the mystery

of Oliver's identity (268; ch. 39).

Brownlow's role as a prototypical detective is reinforced by the narrator and by Rose and Nancy, all of whom patiently assemble clues and demonstrate a keen intelligence. This very quality, privileged by its prominent role, seems to be one Dickens wants to propose for adoption by his readers. Extend your sympathies to those whose suffering deserves support. And sharpen your ability to decode the complicated social messages embedded in city life.

This summary makes mine a reductive reading on *Oliver Twist*, one that deliberately links the novel with its formative social and historical contexts. A more expansive inquiry would admit as evidence the literary features of the novel Dickens inherited from his predecessors. It would also take into account the compelling biographical aspects of Oliver's story, into which Dickens confessed to his publisher that he had thrown his "whole heart and soul" (*Letters* 227). My account, nevertheless, accords with Dickens's deepest conviction that fiction always tells us something about the way readers thought and lived and how he, like his contemporaries, tried to make sense of the bafflement of existence. To this end, I have focussed on the experience of reading *Oliver Twist* as a novel dedicated to reading experience as it was shaped, for many readers, by the urban conditions of the 1830s.

University of Massachusetts

Alice's Ab-surd-ity: Demon in Wonderland

Pamela K. Gilbert

All art is at once surface and symbol. Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril. Those who read the symbol do so at their peril.

Oscar Wilde, Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

"There's glory for you!"

Humpty Dumpty

Alice's identity as both child and woman make her the peculiarly apt vehicle for the expression of Carroll's fondest fears. In order to discuss her role as a signifier in which Dodgson's delectable demon may be both bodied forth and imprisoned, we shall briefly examine the theoretical orientation of Dodgson's mathematics in respect to the nature of the mathematical symbol system, its relation to his own worldview, and his manipulation of Alice as an aggressively intrusive entity which Dodgson, both attracted and repelled by, would desperately like to have marginalized.

Linguists have long noted that language is a system of empty signifiers and that much of meaning is located in the gap between the signifier and the signified, the total of which may be referred to as the sign. Of the various "languages," including all systems of signifiers, mathematics represents itself as the "purest"—the most abstracted from any concrete referent. Indeed, the only referent in mathematical language is

itself; not only can one not hold "2" in one's hand, "2" is meaningful only in relationship to other numbers: specifically, as a whole number that is greater than one and less than three. Its usage, in any given situation, will depend on whatever quantity or quality of thing or relationship the mathematician has, quite arbitrarily, determined will serve as defining the unit "1."

This is (rather sketchily) the nature of the mathematical symbol system as we understand it today. Acceptance of the non-referentiality of numbers and mathematical symbols allows us to contemplate with relative equanimity the existence of googols and tesseract, and has paved the way for post-Newtonian physics. It is, in fact, our lack of investment in the "objective" reality of the mathematical sign which has formed the basis for modern technology and science. However, just as in most cultures writing was iconically based before other methods were adopted, mathematics, particularly in the (Greek) Western tradition, developed from plane geometry and was once felt to be almost entirely referential. Even now, when we are not actively using numbers in the context of mathematical problem solving, numbers tend to "concretize" in our perception, becoming lucky, unlucky, attaching themselves to birthdays: in short, becoming weighted with referential meaning.

⁸ Figures in Parliamentary returns and other documents showed a conclusive increase in the number of commitments and convictions for criminals under twenty. In 1835, 6,803 criminals under twenty were committed to prison; in 1844, the number rose to 11,348. Reference to the numbers and the rise in crime among youthful offenders was made by the City Solicitor in a printed document called "Juvenile Offenders" presented at a meeting with the Lord Mayor of London in which the writer put forward a plan to counter the growth of juvenile crime by providing industrial training for the destitute youth of both the metropolis and other large cities and towns (Chadwick MSS, University College, London).

⁹ "Juvenile Offenders," 14 February 1846 (Chadwick MSS, University College, London).

¹⁰ In his Report delivered to the House of Lords on 29 June 1835, Miles cites several authorities who were "hard" on crime. In one section the Report concludes: "There is a youthful population in the Metropolis devoted to crime, trained to it from infancy, adhering to it from education and circumstances, whose connexions prevent the possibility of reformation, and whom no punishment can deter; a race 'sui generis,' different from the rest of society . . ."

. . ." (*Companion to "Oliver Twist"* 93). Dickens, by contrast, took a different and more optimistic view of the young offender. Like Bulwer Lytton, he was appalled at the evidence of abuse abundantly documented by the government in its investigations into the conditions under which children lived and worked in the first half of the nineteenth century. In Bulwer's phrase, evidence gathered for the Factory Bill of 1833 about the way young employees were treated, constituted a "huge calendar of childish sufferings."

¹¹ Dickens's exposure of abuses in *Oliver Twist* preceded systematic investigations by Parliament in each of the named areas. Edwin Chadwick initiated full-scale inquiries into public health matters in the 1840s; legislation to protect infants in day care came later in the century, while attempts to regulate prostitution were confined to controversial efforts to safeguard public health (the Contagious Diseases Act of 1864). Numerous philanthropic organizations offered some help to young women, but juvenile prostitution remained a major social evil until publicity aroused by W. T. Stead's articles in the *Pall Mall Gazette* (1883) led to the passage of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, which raised the age of sexual consent from thirteen to sixteen.

Therefore it is not surprising that, although other cultures had grappled with these issues long before, the paradigm shift from the practical to the purely symbolic use of math in Western culture came (is coming) about very late in the day. Roy Dubisch notes that "it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the subject of negative numbers was adequately treated in some school algebras" (59). The reasons for this resistance were various. Part of it had to do with a "common sense" referential mindset: "2" could be applied to houses. "1/4" to a piece of land. But who had ever seen, say, a negative number of roses? There has been a sense, having a long and honorable lineage from the Pythagoreans and the Quabalah, through Leibniz, and down into the lively interest of the latter centuries in numerology, that the universe of positive integers was somehow divinely inspired, representing and referring to God's creation of the universe. There is no place in numerology for negative numbers, and imaginary or unresolvable numbers in such a context take on the force of demonic laughter at the perfect order of creation.

When the meaning is too full for myth to invade it, myth goes around it, and carries it away bodily. This is what happens to mathematical language. In itself, it cannot be distorted, it has taken all possible precautions against *interpretation*: no parasitical significance can possibly worm itself into it. And this is why, precisely, myth takes it away en bloc" (Barthes 132)

Barthes's comment highlights a central characteristic of signifiers: the "emptier" they are of referential meaning, the more they invite (even demand) to be mythologized, to be invested with meaning in the most direct and primitive libidinal fashion. The irresistible emptiness and abstraction of the mathematical sign must be "impregnated" and made referential. From the iconic representation of even and odd numbers as female and male respectively to Leibniz's binary logic representing zero and one as the absence and presence of God to the Victorian passion for statistical measurement, numbers have *meant*. Even now, the number "666" evokes an immediate and visceral response in most people of Western European descent; even now the appendage of statistical support for any assertion, be it ever so specious, has the force of gospel.

And so we come to the temporal heart of this shift, the mid-nineteenth century, and one eccentric, conservative, delightful purveyor of "nonsense": the mathematician Charles Lutwidge Dodgson. It seems undeniable that Dodgson's attitude toward mathematics and logic mirrored, to some extent, the Pythagoreans. "God's in his heaven; all's right with the world," Browning's Pippa says, and to Dodgson, *God's* world was a closed hermeneutic circle in every way: eminently explicable. That which was not explicable, or "would not solve" was outside God's plan, and practical mathematics was a hedge against irrationality which was actually evil. In the Introduction to *Pillow Problems*, Dodgson earnestly argues

there are mental troubles, much worse than mere worry, for which an absorbing subject of thought may serve as a remedy. There are sceptical thoughts, which seem for the moment to uproot the firmest faith; there are blasphemous

thoughts, which dart unbidden into the most reverent souls; there are unholy thoughts, which torture, with their hateful presence, the fancy that would fain be pure. . . . That "unclean spirit" of the parable, who brought back with him seven others more wicked than himself, only did so because he found the chamber "swept and garnished." (xv)

The absorbing subject which he proffers to the thus haunted reader is a series of mathematical problems, apparently a subject proof against any demonic force of "scepticism," wholly and unquestionably true and good. Even here, we find a trace of unease, an acknowledgement of realms left unexplored: to readers who criticize his conservative use of the simpler maths, he includes one (we might be tempted to say "token") problem in "Transcendental Probabilities"—a subject in which, I believe, *very* little has yet been done. . . . To the casual reader it may seem abnormal, even paradoxical; but I would have such a reader ask himself, candidly, the question "Is not Life a Paradox?" (xvii). Although Carroll never answers this promising question, we may observe that the problem, which begins as a rather simple problem in basic probabilities, is neither correctly posed nor correctly solved. Warren Weaver, mathematician and Carroll enthusiast, is forced to conclude that Dodgson's solutions of the problems in this collection are generally clever and accurate, "but one of them ludicrously exposes the limitations of his thinking," noting that the problem cannot be solved as stated and that the unfounded conclusions that Carroll draws from his inadequate premises are "good Wonderland but very amateurish mathematics" (270). No, Lewis Carroll, fascinated as he was by paradox, was not sufficiently tolerant to allow it to enter Dodgson's mathematically perfect world.

Helena M. Pycior, in an insightful article entitled "At the Intersection of Mathematics and Humor: Lewis Carroll's *Alices* and Symbolic Algebra," argues

The *Alices* embodied the mathematician Dodgson's misgivings about symbolical algebra, the major British contribution to mathematics of the first-half of the nineteenth century. The theme of meaninglessness . . . can be traced back to Dodgson's encounter with the symbolical; approach; the roots of his nonsense verse may also be in symbolical algebra, which stressed in mathematics structure over meaning. (149)

Pycior's argument postulates that Alice is the authorial figure striving to find meaning—and establishing that no meaning can be found—in a world troubled with symbolical, and therefore non-pragmatic, approaches to algebra. She states that "algebraic meaninglessness and arbitrariness went directly counter to [Dodgson's] deep-seated belief in the absolute certainty and truth of mathematics" and quotes Dodgson himself to prove it: "The charm [of mathematics] lies chiefly, I think, in the absolute certainty of its results; for that is what, beyond almost all mental treasures, the human intellect craves for. Let us only be sure of *something!*" (162)

However, lest us not assume that Lewis Carroll was so naive as to have been first exposed to negatives and other such distressing phenomena in the 1830s, as Pycior's article may seem to suggest. (We should also avoid assuming that sym-

bolic algebra was invented in the nineteenth century by the British, although that is when it attained popularity there.) Even if conservative mathematicians avoided teaching negative numbers to schoolboys, they certainly were aware of them. And of course, even the refusal to deal in negative numbers would not buy freedom from such troublesome entities as the irrational numbers. Regardless of this familiarity, however, Dodgson never seems to have much *liked* them, excluding them, so far as possible, from his mathematical recreations. On the other hand, he deals with the negative numbers at least three times in the *Alice's*, as Pycior notes, and at least once in *Pillow Problems*. Clearly, we cannot utterly dismiss Dodgson's attempts to address these issues.

A fuller reading may be obtained by recognizing that Dodgson's ambivalence toward symbolical algebra was not merely a temporary phenomenon, but long term, and representative of a fundamental ambivalence in his worldview. By examining Alice's role as a signifier rather than as the authorial figure, we may shed some light on these difficult questions. The child-woman Alice, empty as a mathematical symbol, serves a variety of functions, not the least of which is indeed to body forth Dodgson's uneasiness about the perils of symbolical algebra. As a female, Alice embodies the tremendous and demonic mutative force which subverts order. As a child, she is the protected signifier in which that which cannot otherwise be decently expressed, may be bodied forth without incurring harm. And as the dreamer who awakens to a reality in which she is young, powerless, and destined to be controlled and domesticated (as her older sister is at the end of *Wonderland*), she is the figure through which the meaninglessness which tempted Lewis Carroll and terrified Charles Dodgson can be embodied and contained. Alice is a surd.

No mathematician can escape surds. Long before the Greeks confronted negative numbers, they had to confront the surd: a number which must exist, yet cannot be expressed rationally. The square root of two is the most common example of a surd; pi is another. (For the purpose of this discussion, let the term "surd" represent all such "magical" phenomena which cannot be expressed in rational, positive numbers, with particular emphasis on the set of irrational numbers to which it was first applied.)

The source of the word is Latin; it is the root of the modern word "absurdity." Specifically, however, its colloquial meanings include deaf(ness), (being) unheard, and (being) unvoiced. Historically, it has generally been used negatively, and often carried the force of "the unspeakable." An apparently unrelated, but interesting meaning is its Old English one: to defile.

Dubisch offers a brief history of the surd in its mathematical incarnation in a chapter humorously entitled "The Unspeakable." The Pythagorean society of the fifth century B.C., with the characteristic human fondness for imposing meanings which naturalize purely artificial constructs, had created a "theology" of numbers. With this in mind, Dubisch asks the reader to

invest himself with just a little of this mysticism in order that he may attain some appreciation of the loathing of the Pythagoreans for the "unspeakable" number that they found they were nurturing in their midst. . . . The brotherhood,

horrified by the existence of such a creature, attempted to keep it a trade secret—to the extent, so legend has it, of arranging a shipwreck for one of their group who divulged it to the uninitiated. Obviously, it seemed to them, the existence of such a number as $\sqrt{2}$ completely wrecked their plan to run the universe through integers. (73-74)

One need merely note the number of books on numerology available at most popular bookstores to realize that our society is not so terribly different from the Pythagoreans as Dubisch's amusement would seem to imply. Dubisch's tongue-in-cheek description, humorous as it is, gives us a glimpse of the profound challenge of surds to the paradigmatic existence of mathematics as an absolutely logical and self-contained science, and particularly as such a science which has purported, in addition, to be completely referential! (What proportion of an apple is the square root of two such fruits?)

Pycior has noted that *Alice* was incubated when Dodgson was forced to confront symbolical algebra and non-Euclidean geometries (which he later attacked in *Euclid and His Rivals*). How can the man who Pycior quotes as writing "We cannot, rationally, either assent to, or deny, any Proposition of which the words seem to convey to us no idea" (163) have written the deliciously non-referential Jabberwocky? "The question" as Dumpty would say, "is who is to be master, that's all!" It follows that Carroll, drawn by paradox and non-sense as a supplicant to the altar, (or as Dodgson to Alice Liddell), needed to find some way of dealing with these concepts without threatening Dodgson's worldview.

Why was Dodgson so fascinated and so repelled by surds? The answer may lie, as Dodgson's suggestion to the *Pillow Problems* reader who cannot safeguard his or her thoughts implies, in issues of control. We know that Charles Dodgson manifested the minor obsessional neurosis (the compulsive cataloguing, cleaning, indexing of correspondence, etc.) often seen in persons whose need for absolute control over their immediate environment betrays their deep-seated fear of losing all control over themselves and their bodies. It is therefore a "masking" neurosis; the demonstrable control Dodgson had of, for example, his correspondence covers for his lack of control over the correspondents themselves. In this context, his stuttering affords us material for an interesting speculation: might his stuttering have been caused by anxiety over what he might, against his intention, verbally express? In this sense, his outpouring of "nonsense" verbiage, apparently unfettered, but in reality carefully controlled, may be seen as the attempt to create a "smokescreen" of words, expressing and veiling his own anxieties. Closely tied to this is his love of mathematics, which seems, for Dodgson, to offer a way to hermeneutically seal and explicate the universe, but which actually contains paradoxes which open that universe outward, toward a more chaotic non-sense that Dodgson was prepared to address. Dodgson's longing for utter control, obliterating all uncertainty, forced him to confront and desire the very phenomena that made such control impossible. Carroll's dangerous flirtation with non-sense—as carefully contained and rule bound as a demon invoked by a master magician—expresses and contains Dodgson's terrified desire for the unspeakable.

Lured by the gap between signifier and signified,

Dodgson was evidently also repelled by its indeterminacy. So, just as he displaced the appetitive / receptive drives onto his "child-friends" in his literature and photography, he displaced the generative / aggressive drives onto that subset of his own personality, Lewis Carroll. As Elizabeth Sewell argues, "The problem is merely this: what made Carroll so desperate to keep Lewis Carroll and Dodgson, Nonsense and Religion, separate? . . . there is . . . a terror of any rapprochement between these two sides of life. . . . The answer seems to be that it is not God who is being protected but Carroll" (179). Sewell also analyzes Carroll's work as a persistent attempt to close the circle of super-logical nonsense, and refuse to "step outside" those safe domains. (Obviously, the separation of Carroll and Dodgson is psychologically problematic, but it serves as a useful metaphor—and one of Dodgson's own making—to body forth the opposing poles of a troubled unity.)

Much of Dodgson's ambivalent attitude toward the irrational (or unspeakable) is summed up in his response to an invitation to contribute to a philosophical symposium:

And what mean all these mysteries to me
Whose life is full of indices and surds?
 $x + 7x + 53 = 11/3$

This interesting bit of doggerel, although a straightforward and gently humorous refusal on the surface, is actually filled with rich ambiguities. First, it refuses to address abstract "mysteries," which are without "mean"ing, in comparison to the work of the author, which is preoccupied with surds (the not able-to-be-expressed meaningfully) and "indices" (signals or signs of meaning).

The equation itself cannot be solved without the use of an imaginary number.

A strange choice for a man who consciously avoided all contact with negative numbers, except, as Pycior believes, to ridicule them! It is true that in Carroll's published mathematical recreations, *Pillow Problems* and *A Tangled Tale*, he avoided them for the most part. However, at least one of the "pillow problems" (#6) utilizes negative numbers in Dodgson's own solution. And since the problems he presents almost always proceed from "real" events (thus partaking more of the syntactic than symbolic approach to algebra), and indeed, in the second book, are entirely embedded in a narrative format, it impossible to explain such neglect of the purely abstract. (How, for example, could heroines Clara and Mad Mathesis meet less than no trains?) However, no man who concerned himself with Zeno's tortoise-and-Achilles paradox (which concerns itself with the paradox of an infinite series which converges toward a finite sum), as Carroll did in his *Symbolic Logic*, was completely disinclined to engage the surd. Indeed, Carroll was not able to be as dismissive of philosophical puzzles as Dodgson might have preferred.

Perhaps the principal difference between mathematics and a language such as English is that verbal signifiers are so indefinite that even as they propose their own inability to represent reality, they become omnivorous in their connotations, shifting to express / create whatever reality is necessary. A word can, so to speak, be made to do "extra work," if one is willing to pay overtime for it. But there are no synonyms, no

forgiving substitutions in math. The square root of two cannot be described by, say, "seven." The inexpressible reality of the surd lies baldly on the surface of the mathematical language; no self-protective verbiage can distract from the failure of the supposedly closed field of math to account for its unspeakable member. The only way to "cover up" the surd is to clothe it in another symbol, to cloak its dangerous nature in the disingenuous sheep's clothing of the pinafore. Thus, Alice was born.

What is Alice, that she should take this role? The threat of a woman in a prepubescent and therefore harmless child's body? The chaotic energy of generation bound within the charmed circle of the hymen? The masculine desire to penetrate the mysteries of a female child's Wonderland displaced and made harmless by its transmutation into a masturbatory epic? Dodgson's perception of children and his hunger for their innocence have been a subject for critical speculation for some time. It seems clear that he regarded them as somehow "protected" by their innocence, untouchable, and paradoxically therefore more exploitable because of that protected status. There is an ease and a candid eroticism in his photographic treatment of nude prepubescent girls that one cannot imagine him giving to an adult woman; more than one commentator has remarked the strain on the features of eighteen-year-old Alice Liddell in Dodgson's photograph, a strain unprecedented in Dodgson's studies of her as a child.

A child could go, so to speak, where Dodgson feared to tread. An interesting passage from one of Dodgson's letters carries through on this theme:

[Please do not] tell any more stories, such as you did on Friday, of remarks which children are said to have made on very sacred subjects—remarks which most people would recognize as irreverent, if made by grown-up people, but which are assumed to be innocent when made by children . . . the strange conclusion being drawn that they are therefore innocent when repeated by a grown up person. (Qtd. in Collingwood 237).

Apparently a child can voice what a man cannot decently even think. What then are we to make of the role of the man who "repeats" childhood's innocent nudity through photography? Or who "repeats" remarks and actions "innocently" made by Bruno, but which might strike us as very odd coming from a grown man who created Bruno to carry them out?

Perhaps if Alice is the "surd" which expresses the unspeakable, she is allowed to express it because she is protected by the sign of innocence: childhood. Nina Auerbach notes "the little girl alone is free to dream, to grow, to metamorphose; she is a pristine but safely guarded vehicle of female power" (59). Virginal, pure, untouched, prepubescent, seven years old (oh seven! that luckiest of numbers, and prime into the bargain, indivisible, irreducible, save by the unity of itself, by "1"), Alice affirms the irrational that so attracted Carroll because she alone can do it without incurring any responsibility; her irrationality is innocent by her nature, and therefore not dangerous to God's order. (Although Dodgson's deliberate slip about "malice" may give us pause in this context.)

Yet within the constraining identity of the innocent child,

harming nothing because powerless except through the investment of her creator / idolator's will, there is also the nascent germ of another powerful icon: woman. As Auerbach suggests, Alice's dangerous facility for mutation and growth and her "unregenerate" oral appetites ("Nurse! Do let's pretend I'm a hungry hyena, and you're a bone!") align her squarely with the demonic side of literary Victorian womanhood. Wonderland's series of mediated enclosures—first in the anteroom between reality and dream and secondly in the domesticated consciousness of her older sister—suggest that even the innocent child must be constrained in her irrationality to prevent contamination to Dodgson's "real" world. One way that Carroll does this is to restore her vengefully from the timeless domains of Wonderland to the march of time that means both mortality and possible violation in an "unwilling bed," as well as his enclosure of her in a world which seems to lend itself to the infinite possibilities of dreaming, but actually is, as Elizabeth Sewell noted, "a carefully limited world, controlled and directed by reason, a construction subject to its own laws" (5).

In subsequent works, as the child-woman begins to emerge from her restrictive dystopia, Dodgson's sporadic attempts to control her become more startling. In *Through the Looking Glass*, Alice is able to consciously initiate the transfer into the looking-glass world; however, she is then informed that she is merely the dream creation of the red king, and the reader is aggressively reminded so at the end. In *Sylvie and Bruno*, child Sylvie and woman Muriel blend into each other in startling and nearly undifferentiated movements between waking and sleeping; indeed, toward the middle of the book, such barriers break down altogether and the characters meet and interact in the "real" world. The echoing of words and gestures between the two women—most graphically present in the twin images of Sylvie throwing herself in anguish down beside the hunted hare and of Muriel's prostration at her husband's grave—further indicates the little girl's accession to the queenly status of marriageable womanhood in their blending, (an accession, it would seem, marred by images of death and loss, as Dodgson's child friends were dead to him upon their accession to puberty). However, in this late novel, all the aggression which animates Alice is displaced to Sylvie's younger brother Bruno, leaving Sylvie, siren singer though she is, free from any taint of appetite or sexual energy of her own. The oral imagery which pervades the first *Alice* is displaced entirely onto the animal world (and to Uggug, who eventually becomes an animal also), in which badgers carry Haddocks in their long sharp teeth without harming them, and the wolves which consume first all the food and then themselves—leaving only a free floating mouth like the Cheshire Cat's—are forced to disgorge themselves unharmed and then are punished by Bruno. Thus are unseemly appetites rewarded. (It is worth noting that Muriel, though married, does not consummate her marriage within the timespace of the novel, remaining thus within the charmed circle of childhood / virginity. Her appetites, then, never have to be directly addressed in the world of the book.)

If, as Auerbach argues, "Woman" symbolizes a demonic force, a force Dodgson never allowed to invade his bachelor life, what better vehicle to embody and simultaneously contain

the attractively threatening power of the irrational than a little girl—a demon with all powers still in a state of winsome latency? The irrational number—the only mathematical phenomenon that neither Dodgson nor the Pythagoreans could successfully ignore—bursts through the sublime proofs of practical math with the force of a Joker gone wild, three dimensionally embodied and grown gigantic sweeping aside order like pack of helpless paper cards. Denying the completion of the knave's trial, the Alice / surd allows of no closure; its truth which is irreducible and unrepresentable can only be approximated. The surd is "bottomless"; its frustrated hunger for closure, like Alice's appetite, can never be sated. The circle, as Dodgson insisted, *cannot* be squared, and it is folly even to try. The surd number, as a relationship that cannot be represented, only indicated, is therefore mutable, because it is hidden and not able-to-be-fixed by being signified; it calls attention to itself as an entity rather than a symbol precisely because it cannot be symbolized, and therefore calls attention to its symbol as specifically non-referential and therefore part of an arbitrary and artificial symbol-system.

The surd, therefore, is embarrassing. In a symbol system (math) which tries to naturalize itself as absolutely referential, it is a vortex of non-referentiality, pulling the rest of the divinely ordered mathematical world in after it. Alwin L. Baum observes, "*Wonderland* represents the underground of language, its literal self-reflection which is always present but disguised. . . . [Carroll takes] the game a step further in allowing the signified to collapse into the signifier" (69). The catalyst for this excess of reality entering the linguistic system of signs is the attempt to counter the reality / significance pouring *out* of the mathematical system. As Roland Barthes writes, "Signs ought to present themselves only in two extreme forms: either openly intellectual and so remote that they are reduced to algebra . . . or deeply rooted, invented, so to speak, on each occasion. . . . But the intermediate sign . . . reveals a degraded spectacle, which is equally afraid of simple reality and of total artifice" (28).

Barthes mathematical image confirms an amusing degree of difference between our perception of mathematics as symbolic and the vexed perception of Dodgson's time. But the second statement in his "ethic of signs" is a vital one. The degraded spectacle, in this case, the degrading admission of the unassailable unspeakable-ness of an entity such as pi, is for Dodgson, equally *threatening* to "simple reality" and to "total artifice." Truly, the surd is the intermediate sign which invalidates the algebra of sense and allows for new non-sense signifiers to be introduced at strategic points in the relationships of signs, just as Carroll placed nonsense signifiers at grammatically strategic places in poems such as "Jabberwocky." Thus the synecdochic Cheshire smile may stand for a whole which is more than the sum of its parts (an infinite series which converges to a definite amount may indeed add up to more than that amount—another of Zeno's troubling paradoxes—like Life). And slithy toves are just as good as yellow finches—if the theory precedes (and therefore supplants) the praxis. The totality of any experience, if ultimately inexpressible, need no longer attempt to embody itself in an exactly representative signifier.

Just as Carroll appears to be achieving "mastery" of his

difficult subject, by abandoning referentiality and validating non-sense as a signifying system, thus recasting the universe-game in his own rules, Dodgson undercuts him. "Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty Dumpty had a great fall." A facile theorist, Humpty Dumpty, and highly confident—Carroll dooms him only, out of all his characters, and makes him a bad arithmetician into the bargain. Evidently the substitution of one symbol for another is not permissible at such a practical level! (And even Mr. Dumpty feels that the terms "cravat" and "belt" are not interchangeable. Names, in *Alice*, are crucial, and, as the disgusted Humpty Dumpty indicates, should resemble their referent. Once again, Dodgson insists that the signifier be a form of the thing-as-such. Once again, the ab-surd Alice triumphs. Superficially reasonable, when asked to recite poems named by the other characters, Alice persistently and unavoidably substitutes entirely different, ironically mutated versions, unquestionably the thing-of-the-name, and just as unquestionably, *not*.

The nature of the surd is to expose the non-referentiality of its signifying system. The cat that comments so lucidly on its own madness is the opposite of Alice, who is sublimely unaware of the havoc she creates, simply by being a "monster" / little girl. In this case, the cat's mocking smile, avatar of Dinah's teeth, which so terrify the Wonderland fauna, may be seen as the self-conscious sign of the surd, often appearing on the horizon when remarkable mutations are about to occur. Alice may be regarded as the entity thus symbolized, the true catalyst of all transformations. (Clearly, in any equation which contains a surd, all terms are "contaminated" by the irreducibility of that term. For example, in the equation $7x=y$, where $x=\pi$, neither x nor y can be fully expressed, but only approximated.) Paradoxically, however, the surd reveals the true nature of entities, perhaps because "real" phenomena are rarely reducible to a single simple sign although the plasticity of language often masks this fact: the boy turns into a pig; the mild mannered King of Hearts (another red king / Dodgson surrogate, like the dreamer in *Looking Glass*) shows his true desire to initiate executions rather than leaving the bloodshed to his wife; the circle yields up the tempting, if inexact secret of its area.

Judith Crews notes that much of the badinage that takes place in the *Alices* about mistaken identities (of objects referred to) stems from the use of indefinite pronouns with unclear referents, and points out that these pronouns fit Carroll's playful definition of a political (or linguistic) surd: "A SURD is a radical whose meaning cannot be exactly ascertained. This class comprises a very large number of particles" (92) The indefinite pronoun is the closest relative of

the "variable" in algebraic notation; "it" and "x" are equally mysterious, equally indeterminate, and can only be identified by an analysis of their positions and relationships to the more clearly defined signifiers surrounding them. Ultimately, we are, perhaps, not given enough data to solve for the entire set of Alice's referents; her particular *it*-ness remains inviolate and serene as Tenniel's illustrations of her cradling the pig. However, of all her attributes or determinants the most important, paradoxically, is indeed that she is, "a radical whose meaning cannot be exactly ascertained"—and, as Mr. Dumpty said, "There's glory for you!"

Works Cited

- Auerbach, Nina. "Alice and Wonderland: A Curious Child." *Victorian Studies* 17.1 (1973): 31-47.
- _____. *Woman and the Demon*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1982.
- _____. "Falling Alice, Fallen Women, and Victorian Dream Children." *English Language Notes* 20 (1982): 46-64.
- Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*. Tr. Annette Lavers. New York: Hill & Wang, 1972.
- Baum, Alwin, T. "Carroll's *Alices*: The Semiotics of Paradox." *American Imago* 34.1 (1977): 65-82.
- Carroll, Lewis. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. London: Macmillan, 1866.
- _____. *Pillow Problems and A Tangled Tale*. (Bound as one vol.) 4th ed. New York: Dover, 1958.
- _____. *Sylvie and Bruno in The Complete Works of Lewis Carroll*. New York: Random House, 1939.
- _____. *Symbolic Logic*. Ed. William Warren Bartley III. New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1977.
- Collingwood, Stuart Dodgson. *The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll*. London: Unwin, 1898.
- Crews, Judith. "Plain Superficiality." in *Lewis Carroll* Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea, 1987.
- Dubisch, Roy. *The Nature of Number*. New York: Ronald, 1952.
- Kasner, Edward and James Newman. *Mathematics and the Imagination*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1940.
- Pycior, Helena M. "At the Intersection of Mathematics and Humor: Lewis Carroll's *Alices* and Symbolical Algebra." *Victorian Studies* 28.1 (1984): 149-70.
- Sewell, Elizabeth. *The Field of Nonsense*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1952.
- Weaver, Warren. *Science and Imagination: Selected Papers of Warren Weaver*. New York: Basic Books, 1967.

University of Southern California

explications of the sonnet, twenty-four of them, most of which profess to give the final clarity intended by the poet. And Robert Boyle, a few years earlier, marshalled all the then important views and solutions together, clearly categorizing

and criticizing the various opinions (82-92). There has been, especially, a spate of little treatises, arising from the suggestiveness of the poem, on the Ignatian spirit, on Jesuit life, on the *Spiritual Exercises*, issuing from critics, both Jesuit and otherwise, who read the sonnet with a pious bias. One wonders if such reading would ever have been written if Hopkins had not dedicated it to "Christ Our Lord." For many of the "religious" interpretations appear to accept the assumption that the dedication automatically infuses the poem with direct Christ-images.

The variety of conclusions is not surprising. For there is an admirable mistiness in the daring juxtaposition of royalty, figure-skating, plowing a field, conflict, burning embers that "gall" themselves, all in fourteen lines. Whatever final meaning is attributed to it, the disparate parts are alchemized into a whole that evokes the strenuous practice of a violinist aiming at perfection or of a Glenn Gould, as well as the fun of achievement and the explosive beauty of being. Read well, it has an incantatory quality that is spellbinding.

Fortunately, no one any more takes seriously those few cynical interpretations, in which Hopkins is said to have been yearning to escape from his vows or to fly away from the repressive life of a Jesuit, subject to unsympathetic superiors. Starting from this interpretation (and prejudice), we could say the "Windhover" does represent Hopkins's urge for freedom; but such an assumption also reduces the poem to a self-pitying expression of one who finds the gall of religious life too much to bear. It will suffice (for those unacquainted with the *Letters*) to quote Austin Warren on the issue.

Neither Catholicism nor his order crippled Hopkins. The Jesuits did not ask him to burn his pre-Jesuit poems or to write no poetry till bidden by authority or to refuse publication or to eschew poetry in favor of classical philology; those were Hopkins' own interpretations of his duty as priest and Jesuit . . . His superiors handled him with indulgence, tried to find suitable scope for his talents, gave him frequent vacations, respected his fine integrity. (13-14)

Likewise, readers who pursue Hopkins's depression and dark hours, miss in "The Windhover" the poetic and spiritual joy of the poem and read into it a defeatist mood, supposedly caused by demands of the Jesuit life. Hopkins's confessions about his depression lead us to believe that he suffered this malady early in life and would have suffered in whatever form of life he chose to live. Two facts mainly contribute to this state: he disliked teaching and parish work in general; and, secondly, he suffered from a chronic melancholy that he compared to madness. In 1885, writing to Baillie, he says, "The melancholy I have all my life been subject to has become of late years . . . more distributed, constant, and crippling. . . My state is much like madness" (Roberts 113). And to Bridges, he confesses, "I think that my fits of sadness, though they do not affect my judgment, resemble madness. . ." (134). And again, to Baillie, he says, ". . . soon I am afraid I shall be ground down to a state

like this last spring's and summer's, when my spirits were so crushed that madness seemed to be making approaches—and nobody was to blame, except myself partly for not managing myself better and contriving a change" (136).

Denis Donoghue was one of the first to apply to the sonnet the principle that the "total meaning of a poem should be conveyed by the poem itself." However, his conclusions are wrong-headed, petulant, and reductive. He thinks, for instance, that "Spelt from Sybil's Leaves" is a better sonnet (291-99). Ivor Winters characteristically concluded that the poem was constructed carelessly (73). As far back as 1944 Thomas J. Grady read the poem as an excited description of a falcon without being embarrassed by the dedication to Christ Our Lord and resisted the temptation to paste onto the words any direct parallels or analogues from Hopkins's life as a Jesuit (465-66). And David Stempel keeps Christ reflections outside the poem, where they belong. After his explication of the poem, which excludes Christ references, he *adds* that the flight of the kestrel "is a prefiguration on the natural level, of the struggle of Christ against opposition and the turning of that resistance into victory and achievement" (306).

There is a little more to be said about "The Windhover." Following the cue, given by new critics, and remembering Auden's classic advice, warning critics about the vice of gossip curiosity with reference to Shakespeare's sonnets, (Barnet 1722) I suggest that the something more to be said is not another detailed explication of the sonnet but a fresh, steady view of the structure, frankly accepting the terminology and the ordering of images—to see the general pattern of the poem. This approach does not prescind from biographical facts about Hopkins nor in any way preclude rich connotations, but, *in the first place*, focuses on the poem as an artwork that can stand on its own merits.

Briefly, let me paraphrase. Hopkins is first delighted with the stunning vision of the bird in the morning sky. (Whether he was observing a stuffed bird inside or actually looking at one outside makes little difference; his imagination puts the falcon in the air and in motion.) All of the octet, down to "My heart in hiding," describes only a windhover in flight; the bird is described enthusiastically as the prince of dawn in his beauty, striding as if proud of his achievement, and even ecstatic. All of this finely detailed motion concludes with the fact that he (the falcon) "Rebuffed the big wind." Not Hopkins. Not Christ. We are told in terms of heraldry and sport that the bird revels in what he does and that he "fights" against the wind in order to stay aloft. His flight is an achievement. It is masterful.

"My heart in hiding," the subject of "stirred for a bird," can only refer to the inner soul of the poet that is excited by what he sees, the utter gracefulness of the bird in flight, and by the fact that it fulfills its being in doing perfectly what it was meant to do. It is a symbol of perfection. Whether he speaks to Christ or to himself or to an imagined listener when he says "Ah, my dear," the sigh is a spontaneous reaction to sudden recognition and to the insight that there is, indeed, a patter in the scene.¹

¹ Marylou Motto, in discussing intimacy in the poetry of Hopkins, argues convincingly that "my dear" is addressed to himself.

Hopkins's Best Poem

Francis J. Smith, S. J.

Can anything more be said about "The Windhover," which Hopkins called his best poem two years after composing it? The bibliography on this single poem is formidable. Twenty-four years ago, John Pick published a volume of

The pattern that Hopkins sees is a duality, a need for two elements for flight. The two here are bird ("Brute beauty and valour and act . . . pride, plume") versus air. Between these is "buckle," which is definitely indicative, meaning "coming together with force" and defines the phenomenon of flight. Simple law of aerodynamics, for atmosphere is dense and is considered so by the poet here, comparable to water that keeps a ship afloat. The result of this buckling the poet sees as a kind of fire, a very special beauty like "shook foil," a blazing or shining image. Similarly, Hopkins said "As kingfishers catch fire." At an earlier time, in the *Journal* he suggests we "Take a few primroses in a glass, the instress of—brilliance, sort of starriness; I have not the right word. . ." (House 142-43). There is no suggestion of diving for prey; he prescinds from such a motion and limits his attention to the encounter itself.

The pattern established thus far in the poem is simply A versus B = C. Spelled out, this pattern concretely contains: Bird Versus Air = Flight. Further we can say with Hopkins that the bird of muscle and feathers and skill must struggle against the air and the wind in order to fly; that this achievement participates in brightness, as in the blaze of a fire. He is filled with wonder and admires the bird in flying.

Having caught this basic pattern, he reacts like one who finally figures out a problem. "Of course!" he says ("No wonder of it.") and thinks of two other examples, taken from ordinary life, which display the same pattern and further prove his point: a plow that pushes, struggles against the soil with the result of a shine on the metal (or on the soil) and a dying ember (hardly seen in a darkened room) falling against the floor of the hearth and the sudden explosion of light that issues from that buckling,

The falcon rides upon the "solid" air as a knight upon his horse. He is a brave chevalier. And his motion is an examples of perfection in the natural world.

This is the basic, direct meaning of "The Windhover." However, its arrangement of parts, its pattern, leaves the issue open-ended; the reader is immediately prompted to think of other instances that fit the pattern. The list could go on: the artist who struggles with his material so that his product shines with beauty; the athlete who practices and sweats to reach the blaze of victory; any man who struggles against his own selfishness and ego for virtue; and, the prime analogate, Christ, who, like St. Ignatius's knight, conquered sin and death to rise glorious on Easter Sunday. All three examples given in the text do suggest "agere contra," a Jesuit byword, an expression that is applied to the spiritual development of a Jesuit.

That Hopkins omitted any reference to Christ within his sonnet should not embarrass us. He had a remarkable degree of mysticism and saw Christ in all things. Consider his affectionate description of the bluebell in the *Journal*. He gives a detailed account of its variety and graceful lines; he even makes a drawing of it. But of this bluebell Hopkins says

without making any metaphorical connection, "I do not think I have ever seen anything more beautiful than the bluebell I have been looking at. I know the beauty of the Lord by it. Its inscape is mixed of strength and grace like an ash tree" (House 133-34). In the same year that he composed "The Windhover," he said, "All things therefore are charged with love, are charged with God, and if we know how to touch them they give off sparks and take fire" (Devlin 142-43).

This reading of "The Windhover," focusing on the pattern that is established in the first eleven lines and mirrored in the final three, features "buckle," a key word, as an indicative verb that links two elements in three examples: the falcon that meets the wind, the plow against the soil, and the ember against the hearth-floor—all implying some force or strenuous activity. With this approach, the temptation to read religious meanings into the poem itself is controlled; and excluded are bizarre associations desperate critics or Freudian sleuths might ferret out of the sonnet—such as, that Hopkins yearned to be a farmer or that the insertion of "my dear" confirms the sexual interpretation, suggested by flying, two elements coming together, plowing, or the passionate ember glowing with satisfaction at the end.

Works Cited

- Auden, W. H. "Introduction to Shakespeare's Sonnets." *The Complete Signet Classic Shakespeare*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972.
- Boyle, Robert. *Metaphor in Hopkins*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1960.
- Devlin, Christopher, S. J. ed. *The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. London: Oxford, 1937.
- Donoghue, Denis. "The Bird as Symbol: Hopkins's Windhover." *Irish Studies* 44 (Spring 1949): 291-99.
- Grady, Thomas J. "Windhover's Meaning." *America* 70 (Jan. 29 1944): 465-66.
- House, Humphry, ed. *The Note-Books and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. London: Oxford, 1937.
- Motto, Marylou. "Mined with a Motion." *The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1984.
- Pick, John, ed. *Gerard Manley Hopkins: "The Windhover."* Columbus, OH: Merrill, 1969.
- Roberts, Gerard, ed. *Gerard Manley Hopkins, Selected Prose*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980.
- Stempel, Daniel. "A Reading of 'The Windhover.'" *College English* 13 (Jan 1962): 305-07.
- Warren, Austin. "Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889)." *Gerard Manley Hopkins*. The Kenyon Critics. New York: New Directions, 1944.
- Winters, Ivor. "The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins." *Hudson Review* 2 (Spring 1949): 65-73.

John Carroll University

Culture, Nature, and Gender in Mary Ward's *Robert Elsmere* and *Helbeck of Bannisdale**

Laura Fasick

With the publication of *Robert Elsmere* in 1888 Mary Augusta Ward, the niece of famous social critic, essayist, and poet Matthew Arnold, became a celebrity in her own right.¹ Her novels, despite their romance plots, address themselves to the same weighty issues with which Arnold deals in his essays, particularly the decline of Christian orthodoxy and the need for a new faith to reinvigorate the age. Ward's success with her contemporaries, including many who probably never read Arnold, indicates that she struck a nerve. This success makes it all the more interesting that her way of dramatizing and resolving the issues involved in the nineteenth century's putative loss of faith in some ways encapsulates the late nineteenth-century clash between two modes of discourse: the humanist, morally absolutist rhetoric of which Matthew Arnold is a pre-eminent practitioner, with its emphasis on human consciousness and responsibility, and a new scientific discourse that sees heredity and environment as the determining factors in human character.² Ward consciously positioned herself in the Arnoldian tradition, yet her treatment of her female protagonists betrays a determinism that belongs more to the new models of scientific thought.

Ward's heroes, however, exemplify the "disinterestedness" Arnold prizes: they are willing to engage in the "free play of the mind" ("Function of Criticism" 168) and yet still to respect Jesus's moral teachings as among "the best that has been known and thought in the world" (283). Their combination of intellectual rigor with suppleness frees them from the slavery to convention that both Arnold and Ward saw as central to the "Philistine" religion of their day. Their conscious autonomy identifies them with the broader humanist "Culture" that Arnold opposed to the cultural parochialism of Victorian England. This endorsement of "Culture," however, necessitates a re-evaluation of "Nature." Arnold himself had set out to correct what he perceived as the overly romanticized Nature of his revered Wordsworth by offering the bleaker vision of such poems as "To an Independent Preacher."³ Ward's treatment of Nature goes further: beneath a pseudo-Wordsworthian patina of rapture in fine scenery lies a deep distrust based on the incongruity between Darwinian determinism⁴ and humanist belief in self-

formation—a distrust that eventually implicates her heroines.⁵

Even the sensuous refreshment Nature can provide loses value in Ward's handling because it lacks the spiritual component that is the essence of humanity. Ward regarded her own responsiveness to nature with a certain shame "as something involuntary and inbred; independent—often selfishly independent—of the real human experience" (*Writer's Recollections* 89). Significantly for someone who constantly sought authority figures to admire and emulate (Sutherland 26), Ward declares that the "best and noblest people I have known have been, on the whole—except in first youth—without this correspondence between some constant pleasure-sense in the mind, and natural beauty. It cannot therefore be anything to be proud of" (*Writer's Recollections* 90). Nature is background to the human drama. Its profoundest significance lies in the record it offers of human lives and values, as when "slight but significant modifications" in the Westmoreland countryside signal "a changing social order and a vanishing past," the arrival of "new ideals . . . and a milder race" (*Robert Elsmere* 7).

Yet Ward aligns women with this non-human Nature, hence abandoning humanist conventions in her quasi-scientific portrayal of female character as the helpless product of natural forces. Consciously, Ward opposed "modern [reliance on] psychology, with its deterministic bias" and "the new scientific fatalism which, in denying human responsibility, weakened the hold of all moral systems" (Peterson 200). But her novels resort to the language of these new theories in order to explain the behavior and personalities of her heroines. At the same time, her faith in individualism leads her to overlook or downplay those versions of Darwinism that focus on the energy and activity implicit in Nature's evolutionary changes. To her, Nature is an emblem of stasis because nowhere does it allow for the energy and activity of human personality or the spiritual presence that Ward believed to inspire human personality. The importance of heredity to evolutionary theory suggested that inherited traits could be a determinant of moral character at odds with religiously based concepts of free will and moral choice. Darwin himself believed that "various dispositions and habits," including both "virtuous tendencies"

*I would like to thank Adele Fasick and Margaret Goscilo for reading and commenting on earlier versions of this essay.

¹ William S. Peterson's *Victorian Heretic: Mrs. Humphrey Ward's Robert Elsmere* amply documents the book's success.

² The use of scientific concerns and language in nineteenth-century society and literature has been the subject of intensive study in recent criticism. Among the books on this subject are George Levine's *Darwin and the Novelists*, Gillian Beer's *Darwin's Plots*, Peter Allan Dale's *In Pursuit of a Scientific Culture: Science, Art and Society in the Victorian Age*, Peter Morton's *The Vital Science: Biology and the Literary Imagination, 1860-1900*, Tess Coslett's *The "Scientific Movement" and Victorian Literature*, and the collection of essays *Victorian Science and Victorian Values: Literary Perspectives* edited by James Paradis and Thomas Postlewait.

³ Peter Collister offers an interesting analysis of Matthew Arnold's influence

on Ward's treatment of landscape in *Lady Rose's Daughter*. Collister also notes Ward's eagerness "to celebrate the conscious self" (298), although he does not explore the differences between her depiction of male and female consciousness.

⁴ As will be obvious throughout this essay, I am using the terms "Darwinian" and "Darwinism" not in reference to the writings and theories of Charles Darwin alone, but to the far larger current of scientific and quasi-scientific speculation and hypothesizing that Darwin touched off. Donald Benson observes that *The Origin of Species* was "the single most powerful stimulus to popular interest in science of the nineteenth century" (299), and this interest, both among scientists and laypeople, sometimes led to developments far removed from Darwin himself.

⁵ As U. C. Knoepfelmacher notes, revisions of Wordsworth's "child of nature" are common in later Victorian writing. Knoepfelmacher's "Mutations of the Wordsworthian Child of Nature" includes Ward and Arnold among the writers it discusses.

and tendencies for evil, could be transmitted through heredity (*Descent* 140). According to Lamarck, one of Darwin's predecessors in evolutionary theory, environment itself could produce inheritable attributes in human subjects, so that milieu, far from providing an alternative to the determinism of heredity, actually produced only another version of it. The dramatization of these theories in fiction constituted "a purely mechanistic determinism" firmly based on "late-Victorian . . . science" and its notion that "No one can escape the tyranny of his [sic] organization" (Myers 10-11). Certainly Ward applies this deterministic model to her women.

By contrast, Ward's heroes—particularly the path-blazing hero of *Robert Elsmere*—are reassuring proof that the dissipation of Christian certainty need not dissolve belief in human identity and moral responsibility. Ward claimed that the inspiration for *Robert Elsmere* was the desire to refute a sermon preaching that "the present unsettlement in religion" was caused by "sin" (*Writer's Recollections* 168). That sermon's topic was typical of a period of heated debate over religion, when it was widely feared that belief in God was declining, and that "[w]ithout God, morality would have no foundation" (Marsh 316). As a result, Ward's most famous hero is perhaps also her grandest paragon; he serves as a point-by-point demonstration that an unbeliever can remain a model of Victorian respectability.

For Ward, as for Arnold, culture can provide a moral foundation. When dealing with her male characters, Ward is as insistent as Arnold that traditional moral conceptions of human character can survive the loss of miraculous religion. Peter Allan Dale has traced the "hermeneutic move" (171) whereby Arnold reinterprets religious language in order to "release[e] it . . . from science's requirement of objectivity and thus fre[e] it to exert its customary effect on human action" and "the moral order of the individual" (173). Ward is perhaps more simplistic and certainly more optimistic in her version of the Arnoldian belief that the development of the mind and of the personality can lead to the present-day equivalent of grace. She simply "insist[ed] upon a total acceptance of traditional Christian morality even though she rejected the dogmatic basis of that morality" (Peterson 200). The development of the mind, therefore, is not to be confused with pure intellectualism; as William Peterson points out, "[c]onduct was for [Ward] not simply three-fourths of life, as Matthew Arnold had said, but rather very nearly the whole of it" (199-200). Like Arnold, however, Ward linked mental development with conduct; both had great faith in the spiritual value of a cultivated taste. The "best fruits of letters," Arnold claims, are "the qualities of flexibility, perceptiveness, and judgment" ("Preface" to *Last Essays on Church and Religion* 148), traits on which the survival of religion depends. This trust in human capacity to discriminate the genuinely spiritual from the merely superstitious, to reject the latter and to appreciate the former is essentially a trust in human intelligence as the source of virtue and the sign of free will. That the educated and sensitive intelligence can choose the

better path is an article of faith with both Ward and Arnold. As Robert Alan Donovan puts it, the "knowledge" that Arnold identifies with "truth" and with "the idea of right reason" is a knowledge that Arnold "persists in regarding as not only possible, but, under certain conditions, easy of attainment" (191). For Ward, this faith justifies the apparent contradiction of remaining "always an absolutist" in "the sphere of ethics" even though "[o]ne of the favorite terms of approbation in [her] vocabulary was 'modern,' and she regarded intellectual and theological relativism as the hallmark of the modern mind" (Peterson 200). Having thus defined intellectual maturity, Ward finds it inseparable from emotional responsiveness; like Arnold, she cherishes "ethics heightened, enkindled, lit up by feeling" (*Literature and Dogma* 176), and so she wants to do more than to discard religion as "propositions about the Godhead of the Eternal Son": she wants to insist on "the true meaning of religion . . . [as] morality touched by emotion" (emphasis in the original 176). This vision of the responsive and responsible mind presupposes an autonomous and conscious individual, who can both understand and control the influences he encounters and whose development is toward increased responsibility and volition. Arnold's praise for "disinterestedness" ("Function of Criticism" 270) is praise for an awareness of possible influences that itself constitutes freedom from those influences, the ability to judge and resist the forces that would impel a less conscious individual into opinions and actions not entirely self-willed.

Ward goes beyond Arnold, however, in the immediacy and practicality of her interest in leadership politics and her willingness to anoint her own heroes of culture as redemptive figures for the society as a whole. More than Arnold's essays, Ward's novels credit the cultivated mind and healthy personality with the capacity for leadership—indeed, with the obligation to lead. Thus a sub-text in her works is the proper disposal of power.

In that disposal, however, Ward allows no place for women except submission to masculine authority, thus complementing Ward's real-life anti-feminism, which motivated her to wage strenuous anti-woman's suffrage campaigns. Ward argued that to deny women the vote was to continue their supposed tradition of moral influence over men (and, by implication, men's votes). But her novels, by consistently associating women with a Nature void of moral presence, implicitly deny the moral presence of women themselves.

I

Robert Elsmere (1888) and *Helbeck of Bannisdale* (1898), perhaps Ward's two most important novels,⁶ and ones parallel with each other in many ways, demonstrate with particular clarity Ward's gendered inscription of Arnoldian culture and Darwinian nature. Both books embody the conflict between belief and disbelief in the struggle between two lovers: Robert and Catherine Elsmere in the first book, Alan

Helbeck and Laura Fountain in the second.⁷ In both cases, the influence of the woman's father becomes central and destructive because the woman cannot resolve the tension between inherited religious positions and the changing circumstances in which she find herself. Ironically, the beliefs that have been bred into the woman as a fixed characteristic originated in the father as a result of intellectual self-making: this contrast aligns men of whatever religious attitudes as self-aware individuals and lumps women together as repositories of unconsciously received ideas.

Thus that "Victorian heretic" Robert Elsmere and the ardently Catholic Alan Helbeck, despite their radically differing beliefs, share associations with the weight of masculine intellectual history. It isn't surprising that Robert's entrance into Oxford is his initiation into "virile energies and functions" (53). "[T]his imposing University organisation" becomes the prototype of "the great human society" while yet excluding women (such as Robert's mother) as "insignificant" (53). Robert leaves this male sanctum only to embark on his next stage of mental expansion in Squire Wendover's magnificent library (192-93). There Robert's mind "grow[s], . . . reach[es] to a fuller stature than before," a process that contributes to "the maturing of his best self" (254). It is somewhat surprising, however, that Alan Helbeck enjoys a gravitas similar to Robert's despite being the representative of a religion that Ward saw as "alluring . . . if only consciously or unconsciously, you 'hate history, reason & freedom'" (qtd. in Peterson 41). In Alan "those treasures of spiritual experience which Catholicism has secreted for centuries" (332) mingle with "a sense of unity and law . . . a hidden dignity and poetry" that rebukes "smaller mortals" such as the Cambridge-bred but mentally raw Laura Fountain (192). Ward never claims that Helbeck has more than "a serviceable intelligence," but "it knew itself. It was at command" (277), for "he had lived and thought; his mind had a framework" (276-77). The obverse of Ward's unexpected respect for the mindset of a devout Catholic is her undercutting of Laura's university-fostered pretensions. The Oxbridge that had stimulated Robert's masculine mind has no intellectual significance for Laura, whose femininity gives her "an invincible repugnance" (58) to mental activity. Passionate devotion to her father (a proof of Laura's womanliness) leads her to "clai[m] jealousy, with a silent passion" any mechanical drudgery that her father could set her, . . . [b]ut, with an obstinacy equally silent, . . . [to] set herself against the drudgery that would have made her his intellectual companion" (57). The result is the shallowness that makes Laura's only possible response to "the very great villains" of the world an evasive "I don't like to think about them" (142). Problems of evil and pain are purely physical phenomena for Laura: a matter of "people who are born wrong and sick" that can be solved by "weed[ing] them out, or improv[ing] the breed" (142). This is the vocabulary of eugenics, one offshoot of Darwinism. While Ward never allows her heroes such a vocabulary, here Laura's thoughtless, self-serving use of it betrays her materialism. The inadequacy

of her tone and thought here discredits her later homage to her father's university "Ethical Society" as a moral guide preferable to "the ideals of the Catholic Church" (298). Ward herself may have "thought . . . in her heart" that "the novel was too favorable to the opposition [the Catholic Church]" (Sutherland 158), but that positive bias seems her inevitable response to one of the great institutions of masculine thought when its counter is a feminine figure.

The limitations of the female mind, however, are suited to the limitations of the female role. The masculine mind, on the other hand, is noble partly because it is an instrument for power. Alan's ultimate tragedy is that losing Laura leads him to renounce will and authority by entering a monastery. That tragedy appears in another form in the fates of Squire Wendover and Edward Langham in *Robert Elsmere*, two near-caricatures of dediticated intellectuals, men of prodigious erudition and stunted emotional lives. Their insufficiency, however, is not the result of their finely developed minds, but of their cowardly abdication of the power that those minds should bring them. Both Langham and Wendover retreat from those whose lives they might be able to influence and to change. Langham shuns the teaching side of his university duties, and Wendover abjures responsibility not only as a scholar but as a landowner: he leaves all management in the hands of a corrupt agent. Learned in esoterica, he is ignorant of what is occurring on his own estate. Wendover eventually seems to Robert a victim of Medusa, Medusa being understood as "that absorbing and overgrown life of the intellect which blights the heart and chills the senses" (254).

The lifelessness of stone might appear a suitable image for the joyless existences in which both Wendover and Langham end. Yet just as Freud claimed that the Medusa's threat included castration, the punishment that comes to both men also seems to be a psychic emasculation. Wendover, spouseless and childless, is impotent to secure Robert as a surrogate son, a follower in his own path of sterile scholarship. Langham, even more painfully, undergoes the humiliation of an abortive courtship of Robert's sister-in-law, a courtship that leads to his realization of his own inability to function as a normal man.

These quasi-sexual failures push both men to the final rejection of scholarship itself. Wendover ends his life ready to throw his magnum opus "into the fire" (562); Langham retreats into sterile valetudinarianism (517). No wonder that Wendover and Langham remind the reader not of Robert, but of Father Newcome, the Roman Catholic priest who wishes to "mutilate and starve the rebellious intellect," including his own (323). Although Newcome's intellectual values might seem diametrically opposed to Wendover's and Langham's, he is like the two other men in his symbolic self-castration: his denial of his own powers. It is a denial that implicitly condemns Newcome's religious faith to the same ineffectuality as the two scholars' atheism.

Yet if these men end in defeat, it is at least conscious and self-willed—if perverse—defeat. By contrast, Catherine

ses—both artistic and financial—before a literary decline and "inexorable downward slide as a popular writer" (Sutherland 158).

⁷ Ward had personal reasons for being fascinated by the difficulties of union between people of differing religious opinions, since her own parents experi-

enced severe marital difficulties after her father converted to Roman Catholicism, thereby alienating his devoutly Protestant wife.

Elsmere and Laura Fountain suffer defeat because their immersion in the "natural" replaces the consciousness that would allow them control over their own destinies. The "natural" here takes two forms: the power of heredity that shapes and binds the women's characters, and the presence of the landscape with which the women merge. For Catherine and Laura, this merging ends with their deaths and the symbolic identification of femininity with the nullity of death itself.

Catherine is a feminine version of her father, Richard Leyburn, whom she resembles (12), who took her with him "everywhere" (29), from whom she inherited even her "deficien[cy] in the sense of humour" (153). Richard, however, is one of Ward's self-realizing men: the sole studious and spiritually-minded member of an oafish country family. Having found at university the intellectual life he craves, Leyburn retreats when he begins to fear that the academic community is antipathetic to religious faith. Morally, Richard's life is as exemplary as Catherine's, but emotionally it is far less satisfying, for he must struggle all his life against the intellectual curiosity he has tried to repress (29). Ward unites the father and daughter as pastoral figures by making Richard explicitly Wordsworthian (12, 29) and later clustering echoes of Wordsworth's poetry around Catherine. Yet she reserves synthesis with Nature (which implies stasis) for Catherine, who feels none of the complexities that beset her father. As morally pure as he is, she is yet intellectually as stationary as the hills that surround her.

Laura's relations with her father carry the same weight and place in *Helbeck* as Catherine's do in *Elsmere*. Stephen Fountain is another man who has radically reshaped his life. Rejecting the rural background in which Laura revels and which she identifies with her father (86), he seizes educational opportunities until he ends as a university don. However, Stephen's relative freedom to go beyond family circumstances merely accentuates Laura's slavery to paternal imprinting. Reminiscent of Stephen in her facial expressions (111), echoing his opinions (258), Laura is the "pure product of environment" (277) in the Lamarckian sense. The intellectual atheism of her father and his circle is a visceral element of Laura's being, so ingrained that "it is not in her blood, scarcely in her power to yield" to religious suasion (315). Yet she cannot articulate or understand the stance that she has inherited (296); in her, it is only "a blind instinct" (315).

Ward emphasizes from the beginning the futility of these daughters' blind continuation of the paths that their fathers painfully worked out for themselves. The identification of Catherine Elsmere and of Laura Fountain with landscape, on the other hand, initially seems positive. Catherine's features themselves mark her as belonging to the Westmoreland region (10), while the "feeling of blood" (29) between her and the other country folk enables her to minister to them as even the local clergyman cannot. Catherine's strength comes from the hills, not in the Biblical sense that she herself accepts but from the strength bred into her by the surrounding countryside, "something which harmonized with the bare stretches and lonely crags of the fells, something which seemed to make her a true daughter of the mountains, partaker at once of their gentleness and their severity" (10). She seems to Robert an

ideal pastoral figure, although her rural environment is one of poverty, disease and despair, not idyllic country peace. Catherine's "one white life" (30) is the idyll of the countryside: she alone matches in spirit the beauty of the landscape.

Catherine believes that her mission is to Christianize the landscape through her teaching of and ministrations to its inhabitants. To her enthusiastic but mistaken perception, the significance of the landscape lies in "trac[ing] amid the shadows of that dappled moorland world, between her and the clouds, the white stoles and 'sleeping wings' of ministering angels" (102). Yet Robert, it transpires, embodies the real significance of the landscape. Even his inspiration to propose to Catherine comes from "measuring his tall frame against the gusts, spirits and masculine energy rising higher with every step" (113). Welcoming the rain and wind "as a friend" (114), he strengthens himself by his "wrestl[e] with the weather" until renewed "courage" emboldens him "to face his fortunes like a man" (113). By rejecting Robert's proposal Catherine betrays her own misreading of nature: she does not realize that just as it yields to Robert's determination, so should she. Instead she interprets life as continuity with "the past," involving as this does the abstention from "new ties" (117). Having promised her dying father years ago that she would look after the family, Catherine believes she can fulfill this promise only by remaining exactly as she is, without even knitting . . . new [ties] to the old" (117).

This climax of her efforts to resist Robert's power over her life coincides with the climax of her efforts to spiritualize the landscape. Almost immediately after rejecting Robert's marriage proposal, Catherine attempts to dissuade a dying country girl from her belief in malign spirits of the region. For Mary Backhouse, the hills near her home harbor an evil presence that will snatch her life. Catherine undertakes a trek up the hill to convince Mary that the hills manifest the presence of God rather than of ghosts. Her mission, however, confirms neither the demonic nor the divine: rather it brings her face to face with Robert. During their encounter she finally accepts his proposal. In place of the Christian divinity whose powers Catherine had sought to prove, the triumphant force here is Robert's masculine reason inspired by sexual love—"morality tinged with emotion" indeed! [*Literature and Dogma* 177]—that irresistibly compels female conservatism into joining its own onward motion.

Robert's eagerness to marry is a sign of his capacity to accept changes in his life, just as his recognition that Catherine's refusal is submission to a false duty shows sign of free thought triumphing over blind obedience to inherited patterns. According to Catherine's constrictive Christianity, that refusal is a sacred renunciation. But Ward makes Catherine's wish to remain in the past the means whereby Catherine discovers her own obsolescence. In the "bitterest moment of Catherine Leyburn's life" (130), Catherine discovers that her supposed importance as her family's protector and guide is nothing compared to the advantages her family (correctly) expects to accrue from having a man in that role. Little though Catherine realizes it, this "shrivelling" (131) revelation is an appropriate prelude for Robert's appearance on the peak. Catherine belongs to the past in the clash between "two

estimates of life—the estimate which is the offspring of the scientific spirit, and which is for ever making the visible world fairer and more desirable in mortal eyes; and the estimate of Saint Augustine" (131). Robert, however, as a master of scientific and religious discourse, is able to continue the "thirst for . . . a perfect moral consistency" without denying "the dearest claims of earth" (132). His reconciliation of the two establishes the male human figure—not God or demon—as the center of the "visible world."

After marrying Catherine, Robert continues to redefine the meaning of landscape in ways that emphasize the centrality of masculine progressiveness. One of Robert's great successes as a clergyman is to subject the region to scientific inspection, to the "analytical responses of . . . directed intellect" that James Paradis describes as Darwin's counterbalance to "the aesthetic idealism of Romantic art" with its emphasis on "the emotions" (85-86). Robert elevates the minds and spirits of the village boys (and men) by introducing them to natural studies, in particular the classification and systemization of the neighborhood's flora and fauna. Robert's intent is not the theologically inspired one of proving God's wisdom through the study of His creation, nor the romantically motivated one of turning to nature for spiritual sustenance. He seeks, rather, to induce in his boys the self-respect born of a sense of mastery and accomplishment: the mastery of knowledge and of Nature itself, the accomplishment of being able to view the environment from a superior vantage point of information and awareness. Nature neither has a spirit of its own, nor is it infused with God's, and therefore it can be understood only as a quickener of the sense or (even better) as a range of phenomena about which men can expand their knowledge. That expanded knowledge, however, will increase their appreciation not of Nature but of themselves.

Robert, of course, combines the masculine drive toward knowledge with the middle-class literacy that enables him to decipher books as well as bushes and butterflies. Books finally lead him to the realization that "God . . . is in you and me" (353), in which he asserts divinity within the human as much as he denies the divinity of Jesus Christ. Only the human mind can bear witness to goodness: "Miracle is a natural product of human feeling and imagination" (353), not a supernatural process through which natural phenomena shed the usual laws of their being to become manifestations of divine will. The proper attitude of man—and the gender exclusivity here is deliberate—toward nature is not awe before a presence capable of revealing the transcendent, but a thirst for knowledge that conduces to man's own transcendence of limitation: his ability to go beyond nature by "understanding" it. Robert, of course, comes to conceive of traditional Christianity in the same terms: something that man goes beyond by "understanding" it. Catherine, however, cannot transcend what is bred into her, an inseparable and instinctual part of her being.

Since men should use their knowledge for social lead-

ership, it is appropriate that Robert's own increase in knowledge, which has cost him his faith, indirectly leads him from the rural to the urban, to the London that for Ward was the center of English life and influence.⁸ There Robert establishes the movement that gives meaning to his life and to his death. His success as a leader is a personal success, based on his learning, his status as a gentleman (with which that learning is intimately connected), his vitality, and above all, his adaptability (531-32). This Pauline agility at being all things to all men is a feature that Ward emphasizes from the beginning of the story (63-64), but this flexibility, which in other hands might suggest superficiality or weakness, for Ward is proof of his stature. His is a story of personal evolution upward to greater good, but an evolution that he directs and controls. His adaptability itself is a mark of mind: he has the mental capacity to distinguish and to appreciate a wide range of social and intellectual phenomena. Moving freely from one environment to another and equally at home in all, he rises above the Darwinian hypothesis that individuals of a species are fitted for one place only and that they can thrive only in a transformed environment through adaptation of the species as a whole.

Catherine, however, is all too trapped within an inherited pattern of personality and instinct. Not for her is Robert's enviable ability to adapt consciously to new stimuli. Her inability to modify or alter her religious views parallels her inability to fit into her new urban surroundings. The efficacy and strength she had once seemed to possess lose their impact when revealed as fitness for a particular climate only. Robert is able to make new friends, to attract followers to his position, above all to work for good and for progress. Catherine can only "doo[p] like a plant cut off from all that nourished its life" (496). Loyal to her father's "ghostly hold" rather than to Robert's living one, "she went about rigid and silent, in reality living altogether in the past, among the gray farms, the crags, and the stony ways of the mountains" (489). Even Robert's death brings with it more ideas of progress than Catherine's later life in stasis. His "struggle" is part of a larger effort, part of "the Divine force" itself (576), and inevitably triumphant. Catherine outlives him only as a "black-veiled . . . motionless" figure uncomprehendingly funding his cause while continuing herself to worship "in the old ways" (576). Her death, when it comes, is set in the context not of human progress, but of unvarying nature, as she expires while resting in a rural setting. When her "tired eyelids fell, . . . the song of the robin and the murmur of the stream flowed on—unheard" (*Case of Richard Meynell* 630). The faint echo of Wordsworth's "A Slumber Did My Spirit's Seal" only emphasizes that Catherine's death here is the ultimate nullification of consciousness rather than fusion with pantheistic energies.

II

The same movement of identifying the female first with nature and then with nature as death occurs in *Helbeck of Banisdale*. Like Catherine, Laura Fountain initially gains from

⁸ Ward's *A Writer's Recollections*, for example, emphasize her move from Oxford to London as a transition from the realm of pure intellect to the hub of practical life (175-81), although John Sutherland's account of the financial

realities behind the Wards' change of location (75) is a corrective to her rather euphemistic version.

her identification with the countryside. Unlike Catherine's, however, Laura's responsiveness to landscape is a purely sensual reaction indicative of her entire character. From birth, Laura has had "the most surprising gift for happiness," so innate that even in sleep "the pretty mouth was still eagerly open, as though sleep had just breathed upon its chatter for a few charmed moments, and 'the joy within' was already breaking from the spell" (51). Although city-bred, Laura is immediately capable of "ecstasy" in the face of a "Westmoreland wood in daffodil time" (85). Her quick responsiveness to the "intimate, . . . appealing voice" of "this exquisite country" comes from "[o]ld inherited things," from the fact that her "life sprang from [this country's]" (86). The sympathy between Laura's "eager sense" and the "blossoming spring" seems to make her, like the landscape, an emblem of "daintiness and joy" (85-86). Her love for the land is a "fiery, tameless something" in the "blood" (145). Meanwhile, Alan's "own strong feeling for his native place" is "all a matter of old habit and association" (145), emblematic of his tendency to sustain his emotions through an intellectual and spiritual component. Laura's physicality, however, means that she distrusts abstract influences: she dreads the thought of married life with a man whose passion for her will co-exist with loyalty to intangible ideals. Typically, she perceives Alan's faith as a sexual barrier: to marry him with this difference between them would mean to "live a lie—upon his heart, in his arms" (387). The same sensuality that fuels Laura's appreciation of landscape thus ultimately helps lead her to death. Indeed, the landscape offers the first warning that Laura's love affair will end fatally as Laura feels "something in her own lot akin to the wilder and more tragic aspects of this mountain land, to which she had turned from the beginning with a daughter's yearning" (275). The foreboding here overshadows Laura's longing to find "sacrament" in the "beauty and bounty of the continuing world" (364). She cannot find comfort in Nature for Ward imposes a physical rather than spiritual model of both Nature and of her own "nature" upon her: Laura's "sensuous craving nature f[i]ght[s] like a tortured thing" for satisfaction it can find only in sexual love (343).

Confronted with the prospect of permanent separation from Alan, Laura faces a future of nihilistic despair. "Beauty? Nature? . . . Music?—books?—the books that 'make incomparable old maids'—friends" (343)—Laura rejects them all. In doing so, she explicitly rejects the possibility of those wider sympathies and "constant energies of the intellect" that console Ward's heroes when faced with personal sorrow and that rouse them from "the languor of . . . grief" into a renewed sense "of the awfulness of the claim made by God and man on the strength and will of the individual" (*History of David Grieve* 576). Laura cannot assuage her pain so easily because her own nature is trapped within a Nature unable to offer palliation for the loss of instinctual satisfactions.

Laura's suicide itself is almost lemming-like in its compulsiveness, its blind obedience to the father's voice that "beat[s] her] down" (387). Tamie Watters enthuses that Laura dies to save her "mental freedom" (xv) but the irony is that Laura's freedom is slavery to "forces . . . of which . . . she knew little or nothing," indeed, "something . . . of which she was the mere instrument" (*Helbeck* 276-77). Ward herself, in her preface to *Helbeck of Bannisdale*, claims that she

deliberately made Laura the "representative of the critical, scientific mind," only to add that "[e]vidently she could not be so, argumentatively, intellectually. Under the primeval, universal laws of romance, in such a reading of the situation there would be neither story nor charm" (xiii). Rather, Laura's "instinctive loyalty to something greater than herself, which she cannot expound or analyse" will parallel the tragedy and the greatness of the Catholic story" (xiv). But what is "evident" here is that "story" and "charm" are dependent upon female identification with the "primeval"—the natural rather than the civilized (xiii).

Thus it is fitting that Laura's death is a merging with the landscape with which from the first she has identified. The river is "her comrade" well before she drowns herself in it (364), and after her death and burial the "Westmoreland rocks and trees will be about her forever" (388). Like Catherine's, Laura's entry into the landscape might seem a final allusion to the "earth's diurnal course" in which Wordsworth's Lucy joins. But this vision of death is one whose application Ward confines exclusively to the female. Earlier, after witnessing a man's death, Laura had taken "the place of her sex. . . organically necessary to the act" of comforting the dead man's child (206). Yet if Laura as universal woman is necessary to complete the scene of death and of mourning, that is because of her "instinct" (208), the same instinct that later leads her to death herself. Instinct in both cases robs Laura of personality, of individuality, of the "life all within" that ennobles Alan, intensifying his sense of self until others "must be as shadows to him; as men like trees walking" (388). For Alan, whose consciousness still burns, Laura's instinctual death, her "awful spending of her young life" becomes the stuff of "memories" (389)—the material for that contemplation and inward growth in which Ward's men, but not her women, excel.

III

The identification of "Woman" with "Nature" is, of course, a frequently recurring theme in Western literature and thought. Ward's use of that theme in itself is no certain sign of modernity, but there is a self-conscious modernity in her reliance upon the vocabulary of "instinct" and "heredity." In the same way Ward makes the feminine "landscape" not a traditional symbol of sensuous plenitude or of God's bounty, but an object of scientific inquiry that man dominates by exploring and categorizing. The disjunction between these modern elements in her fiction and the absolutist earnestness of her intellectual and ethical imperatives show her, like Arnold, "wandering between two worlds" ("Stanzas from the Grand Chartreuse" 85), although in Ward's case these two worlds might be more aptly defined as two different conceptual modes: Arnoldian idealism and scientific "objectivity."

It is easy to see the limits—the gender, class, and Eurocentric biases—interwoven with Ward's "humanism," so circumscribing her appreciation of human range that she could claim that "Christianity was superior to other religions because it had been associated with the greatest of all human culture" (Peterson 156). Despite her belief in her own modernity, it was Ward's "middle-class, late-Victorian values" that infuriated her immediate successors, among them Lytton

Strachey, Max Beerbohm (who called her "Ma Hump"), and H. G. Wells (Sutherland 200-201). Arnold Bennett declared himself pleased to imagine Ward's heroines, noxious representatives of idealized Victorian femininity at it worst, being gang-raped by the soldiers of an invading army (201). Clearly, for these observers, it is far easier to discern Ward's ties with the past—and to deplore them—than to notice her tentative forays into the present. Just as clearly, the violence with which they reject Ward and what she represents is meant as a liberatory move. At the same time, there is no denying the misogyny infusing that very violence, just as it is important to note that Ward's own misogyny is at least as powerfully fueled and expressed by the most modern components of her thought as by the most nostalgic. Thus perhaps the final irony of Ward's lop-sided gender treatment and the responses to it is that both inadvertently undercut belief in the continual improvement (or evolution) of discourse, society, and self put forward as a possibility by some versions of both humanist and scientific faith.

Works Cited

- Arnold, Matthew. "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time." *Lectures and Essays in Criticism*. Ed. R. H. Super. *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*. Vol. 3. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1962. 258-85.
- _____. *Literature and Dogma. Dissent and Dogma*. Ed. R. H. Super. *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*. Vol. 6. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1968. 139-411.
- _____. "Preface to *Last Essays on Church and Religion*." *Essays Religious and Mixed*. Ed. R. H. Super. *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*. Vol. 8. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1972. 148-62.
- Beer, Gillian. *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*. London: Ark, 1983.
- Benson, Donald. "Facts and Constructs: Victorian Humanists and Scientific Theorists on Scientific Knowledge." *Victorian Science and Victorian Values*. Ed. James Paradis and Thomas Postlewait. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1985. 299-318.
- Collister, Peter. "Alpine Retreats and Arnoldian Recoveries: Mrs. Humphry Ward's *Lady Rose's Daughter*." *Durham University Journal* 47 (1986): 289-99.
- Dale, Peter Allan. *In Pursuit of a Scientific Culture: Science, Art, and Society in the Victorian Age*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1989.

The Personification of Death in the Poems of William Ernest Henley

Joseph S. Salemi

When William Ernest Henley published his second volume of verse, *London Voluntaries*, in 1893, two of the three great calamities of his life were already behind him. He had lost his left leg to tubercular arthritis in 1865, and a quar-

- Darwin, Charles. *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*. 2nd ed., rev. and augmented. New York: Burt, 1874.
- Donovan, Robert Alan. "Mill, Arnold, and Scientific Humanism." *Victorian Science and Victorian Values*. Ed. James Paradis and Thomas Postlewait. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1985. 181-96.
- Knoepfelmacher, U. C. "Mutations of the Wordsworthian Child of Nature." *Nature and the Victorian Child of Nature*. Ed. U. C. Knoepfelmacher and G. B. Tennyson. Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1977. 391-425.
- Levine, George. *Darwin and the Novelists: Patterns of Science in Victorian Fiction*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1988.
- Marsh, Joss Lutz. "'Bibliolatry' and 'Bible-Smashing': G. W. Foote, George Meredith, and the Heretic Trope of the Book." *Victorian Studies* 34 (1991): 315-36.
- Morton, Peter. *The Vital Science: Biology and the Literary Imagination: 1860-1900*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984.
- Myers, Walter L. *The Later Realism: A Study of Characterization in the British Novel*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1927.
- Paradis, James. "Darwin and Landscape." *Victorian Science and Victorian Values*. Ed. James Paradis and Thomas Postlewait. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1985. 85-110.
- Peterson, William S. *Victorian Heretic: Mrs. Humphry Ward's "Robert Elsmere"*. Swansea: Leicester UP, 1976.
- Sutherland, John. *Mrs. Humphry Ward: Eminent Victorian, Pre-Eminent Edwardian*. Oxford Lives. Oxford, New York: Oxford UP, 1987.
- Ward, Mary Augusta. *The Case of Richard Meynell*. New York: Doubleday, 1911.
- _____. *Helbeck of Bannisdale*. 1898. Ed. Brian Worthington. Penguin English Library. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983.
- _____. *The History of David Grieve*. New York: Macmillan, 1892.
- _____. "Preface." *Helbeck of Bannisdale. The Writings of Mrs. Humphry Ward*. Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1911.
- _____. *Robert Elsmere*. 1988. Ed. Rosemary Ashton. The World's Classics. Oxford, New York: Oxford UP, 1987.
- _____. *A Writer's Recollections*. 1918. London: Collins, 1919.
- Watters, Tamie. "Introduction." *Marcella*. By Mrs. Humphrey Ward. Virago Modern Classics. New York: Penguin, 1984.

Moorhead State University

victim of his own splenetic temperament, Henley might well have succumbed to the despair and pessimism that have disfigured lives less blighted than his own. He never did so, but instead after each fresh disappointment and grief pledged himself all the more fiercely to the twin Victorian deities of Duty and Work. The essentially celebratory character of Henley's poems, as well as his prodigious output of literary comment and first-rate journalism, attest to the triumph of his energy and tenacity over misfortune and disability.

It is no surprise, in the light of his manifold afflictions, that the theme of mortality is a frequent one in Henley's verse. However defiantly faced down, death was an enduring presence for Henley—one that added a somber note even to his most joyous moments. In a number of his lyrics the figure of death appears in vivid and memorable personifications, several of which are sustained for the entire length of the poem. In some instances these personifications serve to soften and humanize death; in others, they add to its horror *via* the amplification of imagery. In any case, Henley's imagined *personae* make of death a ghastly companion or familiar, reminiscent of *ces testes entassees en ces charniers* of his beloved Villon, or of the grinning skeletons in Holbein's *Totentanz*.

As early as his *In Hospital* verses, Henley had described the Royal Infirmary at Edinburgh (where he spent nearly two years in convalescence) as a place "Where Life and Death like friendly chafferers meet."¹ The picture of death and life bargaining in a hospital must have suggested itself naturally to the bedridden Henley, surrounded by the suffering of his fellow patients and barely enduring his own. But even the *In Hospital* verses betray that strong sense of the complementarity of death and life which was to permeate many of Henley's later poems. In "Ave, Caesar!" (fourteenth in the series) the two are seen as linked in unending cyclical recurrence:

From the winter's grey despair,
From the summer's golden languor,
Death, the lover of Life,
Frees us for ever.

Inevitable, silent, unseen,
Everywhere always,
Shadow by night and as light in the day,
Signs she at last to her chosen;
And, as she waves them forth,
Sorrow and Joy
Lay by their looks and their voices,
Set down their hopes, and are made
One in the dim Forever.

Into the winter's grey delight,
Into the summer's golden dream,
Holy and high and impartial,
Death, the mother of Life,
Mingles all men for ever. (23)

The title ("Hail, Caesar!") obliquely alludes to the gladiatorial salute given to Roman emperors before combat in the arena: *Nos morituri te salutamus* ("We who are about to die salute you"). This reference conjures up the real fear that grips any patient facing the surgeon's knife, along with the typically Henleyan bravado that dismisses such fear as unmanly. The poem's real achievement, however, is its evocation of a calm detachment that looks upon life and death with equanimity. The achievement is largely due to the double personification of death as mother and lover, a pairing that takes many shapes in other poems by Henley: reaper and sower, womb and grave, the "Secular Accomplices," the "Twin-ministers."

That Henley was partial to personification as a device is evident from a number of his other poems not specifically concerned with death. For example, in his extended lyric "The Song of the Sword" (originally the title piece in what later became *London Voluntaries*), the bulk of the poem is spoken by the sword, conceived as a symbol of imperial conquest, warfare, and virile excellence. Again, in the forty-first poem in the collection *Echoes*, the spirit of wine is given a voice to sing its own praises. More interesting than either of these two pieces, however, is the untitled third poem in *Rhymes and Rhythms*, which contains unforgettable personifications of the moon, the sea, and sunken ships, imagined by Henley as two accomplice murderers and their hapless prey. The poem is worth quoting at length, both for its haunting imagery and as an example of Henley's skill with *vers libre*:

A desolate shore,
The sinister seduction of the Moon,
The menace of the irreclaimable Sea.

Flaunting, tawdry and grim,
From cloud to cloud along her beat,
Leering her battered and inveterate leer,
She signals where he prowls in the dark alone,
Her horrible old man,
Mumbling old oaths and warming
His villainous old bones with villainous talk—
The secrets of their grisly housekeeping
Since they went out upon the pad
In the first twilight of self-conscious Time:
Growling, hideous and coarse,
Tales of unnumbered Ships,
Goodly and strong, Companions of the Advance,
In some vile alley of the night
Waylaid and bludgeoned—
Dead.

Deep cellared in primeval ooze,
Ruined, dishonoured, spoiled,
They lie where the lean water-worm
Crawls free of their secrets, and their broken sides
Bulge with the slime of life. Thus they abide,

Thus fouled and desecrate,
The summons of the Trumpet, and the while
These Twain, their murderers,
Unravined, imperturbable, unsubdued,
Hang at the heels of their children—She aloft
As in the shining streets,
He as in ambush at some accomplice door. (214-15)

The power of such free verse lies not merely in its precise diction, its command of English idiom, or its acute sensitivity to rhythm. More important are the unspoken yet palpable personifications at the poem's heart: the Moon and the Sea are a strolling prostitute and her male confederate, luring men (the Ships) to their deaths in dark alleys. The comparisons are nowhere explicit but still inescapable—pure products of the descriptive force of well-wrought language. One cannot help asking, in despair more than hope: in the ruck of "free verse" being published today is there anything that can match this century-old poem in the sheer polished literacy it embodies?

The prostitute-and-accomplice image must have pleased Henley as much as it discomfited his contemporaries, for he used it again in the untitled ninth poem in *Echoes*, where life and death are similarly personified, this time in trochaic quatrains. It is one of Henley's most effective poems—racy, colloquial, and graphically imagined:

Madam Life's a piece in bloom
Death goes dogging everywhere:
She's the tenant of the room,
He's the ruffian on the stair.

You shall see her as a friend,
You shall bilk him once and twice;
But he'll trap you in the end,
And he'll stick you for her price.

With his kneebones at your chest,
And his knuckles in your throat,
You would reason—plead—protest!
Clutching at her petticoat;

But she's heard it all before,
Well she knows you've had your fun,
Gingerly she gains the door,
And your little job is done. (126)

The images of death as a ruffian pimp, waylaying his woman's clients outside her room, and of life as a duplicitous harlot, momentarily enjoyed and then ruinously paid for, are daring even by relaxed late Victorian standards. It was very likely poems of this tenor in Henley's *National Observer* that prompted the devoutly Catholic Coventry Patmore to cancel his subscription, lamenting the editor's "uneconomical allusions to sex" (qtd. in Buckley 156). Nevertheless, the erotic references in this poem and the preceding one pale before the more dominant note of impending threat. In both poems death is a menacing figure, a "horrible old man" and a "ruffian" who evokes our dread in the manner of the traditional Grim Reaper. Two other poems in *Rhymes and Rhythms* (the seventh and the

sixteenth, both untitled) also depict death as a coarse and brutal male. The former poem says

Death, as he goes
His ragman's round, espies you, where you stray,
With half-an-eye, and kicks you out of his way
(219)

while the latter poem speaks of death as the sea's "grey hen-chman" (234). In both cases Henley has imagined a disreputable, lower-class character, potentially violent and contemptuous of the finer feelings.

A gentler—and feminine—personification of death appears in the twenty-ninth poem of *Echoes*. Here death is a kindly nursemaid, to whom a tired child turns for solace:

A child,
Curious and innocent,
Slips from his Nurse, and rejoicing
Loses himself in the Fair.

Thro' the jostle and din
Wandering, he revels,
Dreaming, desiring, possessing;
Till, of a sudden
Tired and afraid, he beholds
The sordid assemblage
Just as it is; and he runs
With a sob to his Nurse

(Lighting at last on him),
And in her motherly bosom
Cries him to sleep.

Thus thro' the World
Seeing and feeling and knowing,
Goes Man: till at last,
Tired of experience, he turns
To the friendly and comforting breast
Of the old nurse, Death. (152-53)

The moralized allegory at its end gives this poem the air of a seventeenth-century emblem—all that is needed at the top of the text is a small woodcut of a child running from his nurse, with the Latin motto *Mors ultima mater*. In the previously quoted piece from *In Hospital* Henley had called death "the mother of Life." Here that notion is recalled, but with even more vivid images of nurturing: death has a "friendly and comforting breast," and a "motherly bosom." The poem turns death into an icon of peaceful repose, as quiescent and unthreatening as the ruffian pimp is menacing. It would be idle to ask which image was closer to Henley's heart—both are consciously crafted conceits that, in their respective contexts, are equally successful.

This gentle, womanly death appears again in the poem "[I[n] M[emoria] R. G. C. B." in the collection *Bric à Brac*. This lovely rondeau is much vaguer in its depiction—death is merely a comforting female presence—but a memorable instance of Henley's experimentation with fixed French forms:

¹Poems 3. All subsequent quotations are from this comprehensive collection of his own verse that Henley put together for his publisher Alfred Nutt in

1897. The collection came out in 1898, and was reprinted frequently thereafter.

The ways of Death are soothing and serene,
And all the words of Death are grave and sweet.
From camp and church, the fireside and the street,
She beckons forth—and strife and song have been

A summer night descending cool and green
And dark on daytime's dust and stress and heat,
The ways of Death are soothing and serene,
And all the words of Death are grave and sweet.

O glad and sorrowful, with triumphant mien
And radiant faces look upon, and greet
This last of all your lovers, and to meet
Her kiss, the Comforter's, your spirit lean.
The ways of Death are soothing and serene. (110)

The masterly use of sibilants in this poem has the double effect of uniting disparate images of "strife," "song," and death's "kiss," while at the same time charming—and lulling—the reader with an auditory smoothness that disguises the poem's harsh sense. This rondeau demonstrates what W. B. Nichols long ago called Henley's two salient characteristics, "a delicacy that is almost robust and a robustness that is almost delicate" (153).

Why this Janus-faced death, at one time kind and at another cruel? Marietta Neff once remarked about Henley's diction that "For some reason psychically significant, no doubt, he returns caressingly to 'sleep' and 'death' and 'peace' and 'dream'" (560). The reason is not far to seek, and is not peculiar to Henley. Death, which is technically beyond human experience while ever-present to reflective consciousness, always evokes equivocal responses. As La Rochefoucauld points out, "We cannot look squarely at either death or the sun." It is too terrible and indomitable a reality to be unthreatening, but it is also, for that very reason, conducive to what psychologists call reaction formation. Our hatred and fear of death compel us to imagine it sometimes in a positive light. Henley's soothing and serene death is merely the Grim Reaper in disguise, rendered less terrifying *via* feminization and sleep imagery.

The collection *London Voluntaries* has a sustained instance of Henley's favorite trope in its untitled fourth poem, a dazzling evocation of the discomfort caused by hot weather and fog in London. The poem begins with an image of the evil east wind that brings about such conditions:

Out of the poisonous East,
Over a continent of blight,
Like a maleficent Influence released
From the most squalid cellarage of hell,
The Wind-Fiend, the abominable—
The Hangman Wind that tortures temper and light—
Comes slouching, sullen and obscene,
Hard on the skirts of the embittered night;
And a cloud unclean
Of excremental humours, roused to strife
By the operation of some ruinous change,
Wherever his evil mandate run and range,
Into a dire intensity of life,

A craftsman at his bench, he settles down
To the grim job of throttling London Town. (196)

This is one long periodic sentence, every element perfectly subordinated, with a cumulative momentum that is truly incantatory. The triple personification, however, is its backbone. The use of three separate metaphors for the wind ("Wind-Fiend," "Hangman-Wind," and "craftsman") reveal Henley's penchant for turning the impersonal into the personal in order to characterize it punitively. The power of the quoted description resides in the intensely negative judgment of his subject that Henley's word-portrait makes—we are not in the presence of a mere wind, but an active malevolence worthy of our hatred. The poem continues with a vivid account of London in the grip of this vile east wind and its concomitant fog, and then ends with an arresting image of death as an attending physician:

And Death the while—
Death with his well-worn, lean, professional smile,
Death in his threadbare working trim—
Comes to your bedside, unannounced and bland,
And with expert, inevitable hand
Feels at your windpipe, fingers you in the lung,
Or flicks the clot well into the labouring heart:
Thus signifying unto old and young,
However hard of mouth or wild of whim,
'Tis time—'tis time by his ancient watch—to part
From books and women and talk and drink and art.
And you go humbly after him
To a mean suburban lodging: on the way
To what or where
Not Death, who is old and very wise, can say:
And you—how should you care
So long as, unreclaimed of hell,
The Wind-Fiend, the insufferable,
Thus vicious and thus patient, sits him down
To the black job of burking London Town? (198-99)

The rhyme pattern here, vaguely reminiscent of some complex fixed form, provides only a fitful linkage *via* fugitive couplets and quatrains. The irregular rhythms render the seemingly fortuitous rhymes all the more striking—an effect also noticeable in the poetry of T. S. Eliot. Used together, they make for a poem that is colloquial and rhetorically polished at the same time. The implied personification of death in these lines is that of a kindly doctor at a patient's bedside, a doctor whose "well-worn, lean, professional smile" and "expert, inevitable hand" on one's windpipe and lungs are disquieting rather than calming. Henley's long stay in the Royal Infirmary may provide the personal context for this particular image, which encapsulates the simultaneous trust and dread of the medical profession felt by a chronic invalid.

Henley's seventeenth piece in *Rhymes and Rhythms*, the "Carmen Patibulare" (gibbet poem) provides another example of his skill with this rhetorical device. In this poem he sings the praises and the permanence of the gallows (*patibulum*), while at the same time deriding the crackpot idealism of those who would abolish it:

But Tree, Old Tree of the Triple Bough
And the ghastly Dreams that tend you,
Your growth began with the life of Man,
And only his death can end you.
They may tug in line at your hempen twine,
The may flourish with axe and saw;
But your taproot drinks of the Sacred Springs
In the living rock of Law. (237)

The "Carmen Patibulare" is not an instance of personification in the strict sense, but rather an apostrophe to the gibbet. Nevertheless, the poem's figurative language does recall the imagery of the previously quoted texts, for when Henley speaks directly to the *patibulum*, as if it were a living being, there is an implicit personification of the thing addressed. In any case, the gallows in "Carmen Patibulare" is clearly another metaphoric rendering of death—not as a human being, but as a dread instrument of execution.

In the light of the foregoing discussion, one might infer that Henley's muse always hovered in funereal regions. It was not so. His poetry reveals a wide range of interests and emotional commitments, and it is a shame that he is so little read today. A perusal of his collected verse discovers well-crafted poems on love, friendship, art, nature, dreams, conflict—all of them marked by meticulous diction and a peculiar power of description that was Henley's *forte*. Though frequently alluded to, mortality is not an obsession in Henley's verse, as it is for example in John Webster or Edgar Allan Poe. On the contrary, what fuels Henley's poetic fire concerning this subject is an offhand and almost cavalier disdain for mortality, as if he were a member of the Spanish military unit that styles itself *novios de la muerte*—the sweethearts of death. The multiple personifications of death in his poetry suggest not a fascination with mortality, but rather a dismissal of it as irrelevant to the tasks of life, and as powerless before the force of imagination.

Consider the resonance of the following lines, where a full-voiced Henley calls for life, even if it must be accompanied by the "Arch-Murderer" and the "Avenger":

Life—life—let there be life!
Better a thousand times the roaring hours
When wave and wind,
Like the Arch-Murderer in flight
From the Avenger at his heel,
Storm through the desolate fastnesses
And wild waste places of the world!

Down Garden Paths: Charlotte Brontë's Haunts of Self and Other

Barbara Gates

Complaining to George Henry Lewes of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Charlotte Brontë wrote that she found in Austen "a carefully-fenced, highly-cultivated garden, with neat borders and delicate flowers; but no glance of a bright,

Life—give me life until the end,
That at the very top of being,
The battle-spirit shouting in my blood,
Out of the reddest hell of the fight
I may be snatched and flung
Into the everlasting lull,
The immortal, incommunicable dream. (235)

These are uncertain personifications; the syntax suggests that the murderer and the avenger represent "wave and wind," but their position in the text makes them foils to the reiterated "life." It is clear that Henley saw life as a gauntlet flung in the face of death, and that for him it was precisely the courage to stare death down that gave existence its meaning and texture.

When Henley greets death as a friend or familiar, he is neither morbid nor suicidal. He simply follows the venerable Western tradition, as old as the Homeric texts, that defines manhood in terms of what it can endure without flinching. With Hector he can say "Death is no longer far away; he is staring me in the face and there is no escaping him" (22: 300-301). The defiant Henley of the overquoted "Invictus" owed his bravado not to Victorian arrogance or self-conceit, but to a kind of serene clairvoyance into the utter contingency of human hopes and happiness in the face of the All-Annihilating. What Yeats called Henley's "intensity that seemed to hold life at the point of drama" (qtd. in Symons 477) is, I suggest, this unfeigned acknowledgement of death's power, and a concomitant hunger for life's feast.

Works Cited

- Buckley, Jerome H. *William Ernest Henley: A Study in the 'Counter-Decadence' of the 'Nineties*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1945.
Henley, William Ernest. *Poems*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909.
Homer, *Iliad*. Trans. E. V. Rieu. New York: Penguin, 1985.
Neff, Marietta. "The Place of Henley." *North American Review* 211 (1920): 555-63.
Nichols, W. B. "The Influence of Henley." *Poetry Review* 12 (1921): 153-59.
Symons, Arthur. "Some Makers of Modern Verse." *Forum* 66 (1921): 476-88.

New York University

Brontë uses a vision of natural spaces—trimmed or untrimmed—to gain entry into cultural and literary space. Metaphoric gardens and wilder prospects arise in all four of Brontë's published novels and in each case allow us to expand our understanding of the texts. Mark Schorer notes something of this in his prefatory essay to the Riverside *Jane Eyre*, where he describes how "natural settings are the external representations of psychological conditions" (xiv). And Andrew Griffin finds aspects of Lucy Snowe's yearning and vitality in *Villette's* gardens (172). Each of these insights is useful and accurate, so far as it goes. But Brontë's flowers and shrubbery are testimony to more than individual character or seasons of life, to more than topography. Through them Brontë also tells us something about socialization, especially about the cultural and sexual attitudes of men and women—where they touch, and where diverge.

The Professor, for example, a work distinguished by its masculine first-person narration, is dominated by a proprietary attitude toward growing things—whether they be greenery, young women, or children. William Crimsworth tells a story that reveals a man determined not only to find a place he feels is worthy of his self-image but also to find a space stocked according to his needs. This accounts for his enormous frustration early in the novel, when his masculine right to gaze is thwarted. Hired as a professor at a pensionnat, he finds himself denied a view of the garden where the young demoiselles romp. He cannot even "peep at the consecrated ground" because of boards nailed across his window. Yet Crimsworth longs to gaze and yearns "to have looked out upon a garden planted with flowers and trees, . . . to have studied the female character in a variety of phases, myself the while, sheltered from view" (65). His language here links growing greenery with growing women, a conjunction that he will maintain throughout his life's story. Like John Ruskin in "Of Queens' Gardens," Crimsworth sees the garden as a province of women; as Ruskin would say, one of the "pleasant places which God made at once for their schoolroom and their playground" (135).

While he is denied access to this garden, Crimsworth continues to invest it with supernatural power. It becomes "the mysterious garden," a place of "angels and their Eden" (76). But once he is shown the garden by the headmistress and discovers her own proprietary interest in the place, it becomes overtly sexual for him. Offered a better view of the sacrosanct enclosed garden by Mdlle. Reuter herself, Crimsworth begins to associate it with her more mature femaleness:

I saw in full the enclosed demesne which had hitherto been to me an unknown region. It was a long not very broad strip of cultured ground, with an alley bordered by enormous old fruit trees down the middle; there was a sort of lawn, a parterre of rose-trees, some flower-borders, and, on the far side, a thickly planted copse of lilacs, laburnums, and acacias. It looked pleasant, to me—very pleasant, so long a time had elapsed since I had seen a garden of any sort. But it was not only on Mdlle. Reuter's garden that my eyes dwelt; when I had taken a view of her well-trimmed beds and budding shrubberies, I allowed my

glance to come back to herself, nor did I hastily withdraw it. (79)

Aware now of his initial misapprehension of the garden as an inaccessible enclosure, a *hortus conclusus* for young virgins, Crimsworth is as yet unaware of investing the space with a female sexuality over which he is even more powerless.

On the other hand, Mdlle. Reuter is proprietress of her garden as she is of her school, and completely at home in its landscape. Fully alert to Crimsworth's associations of herself with her garden, she presses her advantage there. Drawing him into its secluded parts, Reuter plays upon Crimsworth's gullibility. As he tells it, once "released from the stifling class, surrounded with flowers and foliage, with a pleasing, smiling, affable woman at my side—how did I feel? Why—very enviably. It seemed as if the romantic visions my imagination had suggested of this garden, while it was yet hidden from me by the jealous boards, were more than realized" (106). Bolstered by this false sense of confidence, Crimsworth asks Reuter for a flower, and when the proprietress tells him to gather "two or twenty, if you like," he assertively insists that she do the gathering and handing over, feeling very self-satisfied when she gives him a spray of lilac. All the same, this garden is not Crimsworth's. Mdlle. Reuter orders his window to be unboarded, possibly so that he can gaze and learn that Mdlle. Reuter's favors belong to M. Pelet, his employer, and not to himself. Mademoiselle does what she likes in her own garden. Stung with this recognition, Crimsworth will never again allow a woman to lead him metaphorically down the garden path. The next time Mdlle. Reuter edges him into her allée, he allows her to presume his gullibility but then confronts her with the words "I have no wish to usurp Pelet's place" (155).

Earlier in his narrative, Crimsworth reveals a great respect for Yorke Hunsden, a bachelor friend who suggests that one of Crimsworth's future goals should be to "have a garden like me!" (35). After his disappointment over Mdlle. Reuter, Crimsworth sets out to establish just such a garden with his pupil Frances Henri at its center. Always the observer, he watches Frances begin to bloom under his tutelage "much as a gardener watches the growth of a precious plant . . . I contributed to it too," he adds, "even as the said gardener contributes to the development of his favourite" (148). The newly orphaned Frances affords exactly the vulnerability that Crimsworth has learned to seek in a woman, and he can therefore set about transplanting her. As his story unfolds, Crimsworth never revises his assessment of Frances's flower-like vulnerability. Writing of her ten years later, long after they are married, he finds in Frances

firmness, activity, and enterprise, covered with grave foliage, poetic feeling and fervor; but these flowers were still there, preserved pure and dewy under the umbrage of later growth and hardier nature: perhaps I only in the world knew the secret of their existence, but to me they were ever ready to yield an exquisite fragrance and present a beauty, as chaste as radiant. (250)

Their son too becomes a part of Crimsworth's garden, although Crimsworth sees the young male as a person capable

of eventual self-nurture, one able to discover "in the garden of his intellect a rich growth of wholesome principles" which promise "if not blighted, a fertile bearing" (265). Crimsworth opts to plant this family in an English style garden not far from Hunsden's, not in a Belgian garden like Mdlle. Reuter's. Here there are no hidden allées and no walls. His house is "picturesque," his garden, "chiefly laid out in lawn, . . . with herbage short and soft as moss, full of its own peculiar flowers" (258). Crimsworth can take in all this openness at a glance and feel secure in what he sees. In such a setting Frances remains to him a presence "as pleasant . . . as the perfume of the fresh hay and spicy flowers" (267).

In *The Professor*, unpublished until after her death (1857), Brontë envisions a masculine point of view toward women and cultivated nature: both are to be gazed at; both need tending and trimming to keep them vital. Crimsworth anticipates Ruskin's quite typically mid-Victorian association of women with growing things: "You cannot hammer a girl into anything. She grows as a flower does,—she will wither without sun; she will decay in her sheath, as a narcissus will, if you do not give her air enough; she may fall, and defile her head in the dust, if you leave her without help at some moments of her life" (131). Brontë's first novel thus ignores the female quest for what Annis Pratt calls a "green world"—the margin to one side of civilization where women's imprisoned energies can be released, the innocent pre-enclosure where the young woman can possess "herself" (17). In *The Professor*, Mdlle. Reuter comes to us fully fledged and invested with authority as proprietress of a green place where young girls can grow unimpeded by the male gaze; the young girls themselves are ignored in terms of their needs or development; and Frances Henri is seen from the outside rather than the inside. We will never know of her own spatial needs, nor whether they were served in Crimsworth's English garden.

Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), written soon after the initial rejections of *The Professor*, presents quite another view. Unlike Crimsworth, Jane is leery of gardens almost from the outset. As an orphan at Gateshead she opts to remain indoors, separated from the parkland and the winter, "shrined in double refinement" behind both glass and a curtain, sequestered from "wet lawn and storm-beat shrub" (5). Later, at Lowood, she ventures further into her natural environment but remains cautious and wary. Her first trip to the garden occurs only when she is forced to go out, and her initial description is very bleak:

The garden was a wide inclosure, surrounded with walls so high as to exclude every glimpse of prospect; a covered verandah ran down one side, and broad walks bordered a middle space divided into scores of little beds: these beds were assigned as gardens for the pupils to cultivate, and each bed had an owner. When full of flowers they would doubtless look pretty; but now, at the latter end of January, all was wintry blight and brown decay. I shuddered as I stood and looked around me. (41)

This winter garden is a prison to the young woman inside its walls and replicates her dead-ended sense of self at this point in the novel. Jane's impressions are always colored by her inner weather. In spring, when there is disease at Lowood,

Jane finds that the garden too seems tainted. Although it

glowed with flowers; hollyhocks had sprung up tall as trees, lilies had opened, tulips and roses were in bloom; the borders of the little beds were gay with pink thrift and crimson double-daisies; the sweetbriars gave out, morning and evening, their scent of spice and apples . . . these fragrant treasures were all useless for most of the inmates of Lowood, except to furnish now and then a handful of herbs and blossoms to put in a coffin. (67)

During her tenure at Lowood, Jane is not shut-in, as she was at Gateshead, but Brontë makes it clear that she will need a new prospect in order to grow.

Thornfield offers that prospect, but it is of course Rochester's domain, as Gateshead was the Reeds's. Since Rochester is mainly an absentee landlord, however, Jane begins to feel at home in her new surroundings. Winter walks among hedges, so threatening in the landscapes of her childhood, now please her. When spring comes, she is comfortable enough with her green-world environment to explore the garden's recesses with Rochester. She is unaware that, like Mdlle. Reuter, proprietor Rochester knows the wooing power of the garden. Alone in the orchard at Midsummer's Eve, Jane believes the place "Eden-like" (217). Astutely sensing her mood while fixing a gaze far more powerful than Crimsworth's upon her from inside his library, Rochester comes out to press his suit and diverts her by pointing out a moth, a creature free like him to come and go from their orchard. Unlike both man and moth, Jane is caught in this lush space by her station, her naïveté, and her increasing attraction to Rochester. When the chestnut tree at the bottom of the orchard is split by lightning that same night, Jane cannot see its ominous significance. She has been trapped in her young woman's Midsummer's Night's green dream but is as yet unexpelled from Eden.

Scenes like the orchard scene in *Jane Eyre* were becoming common in mid-century Victorian iconography. Susan Casteras reminds us that Victorians often placed love in "the sovereign domain of the earthly paradise" which they envisioned as a garden "or its perimeters in nature" (71). In mid-Victorian paintings, women awaited lovers in garden after garden, like latter-day nuns awaiting Christ in cloistered enclosures. Men entered these spaces as encroachers upon inviolability—as interlopers, no matter how eagerly awaited, and sometimes as satanic tempters. Something like this occurs with Rochester in *Jane Eyre*. Jane feels and in fact is safe in the garden until Rochester enters it but must be disabused of her illusions in order to save her integrity.

After discovery of Rochester's bigamy, Jane is metaphorically exiled from the garden to the wintry landscapes of her childhood:

Jane Eyre, who had been an ardent, expectant woman—almost a bride—was a cold, solitary girl again, her life was pale; her prospects were desolate. A Christmas frost had come at midsummer, a white December storm had whirled over June; ice glazed the ripe apples, drifts crushed the blowing roses; on hay-field and cornfield lay a frozen

shroud: lanes which last night blushed full of flowers, today were pathless with untrodden snow; and the woods, which twelve hours since waved leafy and fragrant as groves between the tropics, now spread, waste, wild, and white as pineforests in wintry Norway. (260)

Jane has become like a person "who is taken out to pass through a fair scene to the scaffold [and] thinks not of the flowers that smile on his road, but of the block and the axe-edge" (282). She is not, yet, however, disabused of romantic notions about correspondences between nature and human nature and throws herself upon the mercy of nature as "universal mother" (284). And so Brontë next places her in a kind of "wild zone"—Elaine Showalter's term for a natural female space forbidden to men (262). Orphan Jane flees from the eroticized, heterosexual landscape of Thornfield to what she senses may be a safer, more homoerotic, mother-daughter openness in the moors. Much to her chagrin, as she quests for the maternal in nature, she finds that the moors are bleak, not nurturing, and wanders guidelessly until she finds herself on the doorstep of Moor House, a place with none of the Edenic features of Thornfield in summer. The door here is flanked by dark holly and yew, and only the hardiest species of flowers can bloom in the garden. But Jane now needs this sexless natural austerity, represented also by St. John Rivers. The closeness to moor and heath she now equates with a deeper sense of reality about the less cultivated aspects of human life. All of these realizations help prepare for her ultimate meeting with Rochester on completely new turf at Ferndean.

Like Jane, Rochester has learned to do without the sensual flowery abundance of the orchard at Thornfield, just as he had to learn to do without the even more sensual "wet garden" of orange trees and pomegranates in Jamaica (271). Blind and grieving, he is well enough served by the half-light of Ferndean, where there are "no flowers, no garden-beds, only a broad gravel walk girdling a grass-plot, and this set in the heavy frame of the forest" (379). It is to this situation that Jane is called to brighten Rochester's inner vision of self:

"I am no better than the old lightning-struck chestnut-tree in Thornfield orchard," he remarked ere long. "And what right would that ruin have to bid a budding woodbine cover its decay with freshness?"

"You are no ruin, sir—no lightning-struck tree: you are green and vigorous. Plants will grow about your roots, whether you ask them or not, because they take delight in your bountiful shadow; and as they grow they will lean towards you, and wind round you, because your strength offers them so safe a prop." (391)

After this exchange, Jane sets about building a vision of a new world for them both, an interpreted landscape brought into focus for each through Jane's verbal powers. "He saw nature . . . through me," says Jane. "And never did I weary of gazing for his behalf, and putting into words the effect, of field, tree, town, river, cloud, sunbeam—of the landscape before us: of weather round us—and impressing by sound on his ear what light could no longer stamp on his eye" (397). This is the only one of Brontë's books where we encounter that ideal state where a male lover—Rochester—for a moment

truly sees the world through a beloved's eyes. This correspondence is matched by that other ideal state where a woman—Jane—cannot doubt that her point of view and her lover's are completely attuned. But this is not a vision of nature transplanted from wildness to picturesqueness, as in the domesticated English garden of William Crimsworth. For Jane Eyre owns no plot of ground, nor will she. Her culture dictates that the new, young Rochester will be heir to the elder Rochester's lands, including Ferndean. Instead, like Brontë, Jane must translate a mindscape of the natural into the art of prose. In this way she determines exactly how her lover will relate to their nesting space and its environs. For author Jane, landscape and lovescape are transformed into womanspace through the empowerment of the word.

In *Shirley* (1849), the omniscient narrator seems to believe that a matching of visions is impossible. Natural spaces abound, but no two people are ever made to look at them in the same way. In this book about bifurcations, landscapes become indexes of difference, especially difference in gender. Women listen to and sometimes absorb one another's appreciative sense of non-human nature, and sometimes they share their vision with youthful or disadvantaged men. Men with social, economic or political power, on the other hand, consistently undermine or undervalue the natural, impervious to its female interpreters. In this industrial novel with warring feminine and masculine values, nature—like art and home and feeling and religion—is one of the battlegrounds.

This is clear from the outset, where masculine values are first represented by the "shower of curates" (7) that has fallen upon an arid land and failed to revitalize it. As early as chapter two, the narrator directs our attention to Malone, a man not "given to close observation of Nature; her changes passed, for the most part, unnoticed by him; he could walk miles on the most varying April day, and never see the beautiful dallying of earth and heaven" (24). Such indifference is equally clear at the novel's end, where "tradition says" the Hollow, "once green, and lone, and wild" embodies the "manufacturer's day-dreams . . . in substantial stone and brick and ashes" (739). Callousness on the part of clergy and industrialist alike frames a book painted large with the hopes and dreams of women and youths and working-class gardeners, all impotent to bring into fruition landscapes and mindscapes that better suit their own natures and needs. In the skirmish over nature, the battle between what become masculine and feminine values in *Shirley* has a decisive winner. Only female folk memory ("tradition" as told by the narrator's old housekeeper) has any recollection of how green were once the worlds of Shirley, Caroline, Henry Sympson, Martin Yorke and William Farren.

Shirley and Caroline, who themselves hold different conceptions of the natural, embody the book's feminine values. Susceptible to the garden like Jane Eyre, Caroline is woable through cultivated nature, as both Robert and Shirley intuit when each offers her a nosegay. On the other hand, Shirley is wilder and warier, more like the panther that Louis Moore equates her with, and finds herself at home in less tempered landscapes. She believes the garden is a woman's province and expels the curate Donne from hers, yet she yearns for other, broader prospects, as she tells Caroline on several occa-

sions. The first occurs at their "very first interchange of slight observations," where Shirley immediately reveals that she loves "the green sweep of the common turf, and, better still, the heath on its ridges" (235). Caroline then introduces her to a description of Nunnwood, a female space: "a dell; a deep hollow cup, lined with turf as green and short as the sod," in the bottom of which "lie the ruins of a nunnery" (238). Both young women agree that this is a place where they must go alone one day, "for the presence of gentlemen dispels the last charm" of such female retreats. Here is a representation of the "wild zone" that seems realistically accessible to its heroines. It does not threaten to kill them as Mother Nature does Jane Eyre. But in the dark world of *Shirley*, young women will never be able to achieve this sacred place that signifies both their anatomy and their yearning for sanctuary in a world dominated by "gentlemen."

A second interchange occurs when the two female heroes come late to the church after the school-feast. Caroline observes the beauty of the calm evening, and Shirley coaxes her to stay outside the hot church to listen instead to Shirley's homily about Eve, the woman-Titan—a kind of Great Mother with whom Shirley prefers to stay "in these days called Nature" (361). "These days" are the "green-world" days of young womanhood, when for a moment Shirley persuades herself that freedom from patriarchal religion and social sanctions is hers. Caroline is wary of Shirley's goddess-talk, preferring an image of mother as something softer, gentler and more human than the "mighty and mystical parent of Shirley's visions" (362). Ironically, even though her own mother, as yet unknown to her, is a nature-lover, a woman familiar with wild birds and English natural history, a recognizer of "all the wild flowers round their path" (420), Mrs. Pryor is not a nurturer. In this respect, Brontë's book offers an example of an errant woman as well as errant men. Nothing is simply black and white in *Shirley*, and Mrs. Pryor is the one-time rejecter of the infant Caroline (for being too much "an aristocratic flower" [492]) who has left Caroline to be raised unnurtured by the patriarchal, unnatural Helstone.

Helstone is not unique in this aspect. In their love of nature the female heroes have few allies among the men of the novel. One of those few is the gardener, William Farren, to whom they give plants and with whom they prefer to exchange conversation "far before that of many coarse, hard, pretentious people, immeasurably higher in station" (364). Gentle Farren is set in ideological opposition to the young, rejecting Mrs. Pryor and to Joe Scott, mill worker and purveyor of advice like: "women is to take their husband's opinion . . . it's wholesomest for them" (371). Farren tends Caroline's plants when she is ill and even takes several of them home to nurse. When Caroline begins to get well, he wheels her around the garden and talks to her of "animals, birds, insects, and plants," for "they held similar doctrines about humanity to the lower creation; and had a similar turn for minute observation on points of natural history" (501). Such conversation helps heal Caroline and is in complete contrast to her earlier, unrealistic dreams of another garden—Robert Moore's at Hollow's End. Fantasies about Hollow's End are what have made Caroline sick in the first place. Her identification with Eve—so different from Shirley's—has

made her long to return to Moore's place "as much almost as the First Woman, in her exile, must have longed to revisit Eden" (281). Caroline's love-longing increases until in a fever Caroline rambles on about seeing Robert in a make-believe garden. To recover from feverishness, Caroline needs to re-ground her views of nature and self, and through his nurturing, William Farren helps her to achieve this.

In addition to the older Farren, Caroline and Shirley each have a youth who admires them and partly answers their feminine feelings about the natural. Shirley fosters the talent of Henry Sympson, whom she counsels to love nature without fear in hopes that he will then become not a soldier or sailor but rather an "author—perhaps a poet" (524). Young Sympson joins Shirley in her garden where, unlike Caroline, the assertive Shirley makes the nosegays herself. He would love Shirley as well as nature, and his family would like Shirley to invest this young cousin of hers with her property. But Shirley's special gift to Henry will be the nurturing of his sensitivity, not the bestowal of love or of inheritance. The novel's other schoolboy, Martin Yorke, is equally forbidden his heart's desire: a retreat to wild Australia as an escape from his family's tyranny. Martin escapes instead to the solitary mountains and sea-shores of fairy tales. He only rouses himself from these texts to daydream his own fairy tales about Caroline as the wood-nymph whom he will offer to escort out of the dangerous, patriarchal woods of his father, where his brother crushes blackbirds.

Far from a wood nymph now, the real Caroline will accept his services merely as a go-between and escort into the Yorke household, where Robert Moore lies ill. Chastened and ruined in business, Moore still retains a proprietary view of nature. Earlier in the novel he had seen the future opening "like an Eden" (327) before him. Now, even as a sick man, he has visions of crossing the sea, of snatching a sapling from fortune and planting it "in American woods" (679). Ultimately, with the repeal of the Orders of Council, he will be the one determined to change the landscape of the Hollow, planting it "with lines of cottages and rows of cottage gardens" and shocking the response from Caroline: "And root up the copse?" "The Copse," he replies,

"shall be firewood ere five years elapse: the beautiful wild ravine shall be a smooth descent; the green natural terrace shall be a paved street: there shall be cottages in the dark ravine, and cottages on the lonely slopes: the rough pebbled track shall be an even, firm, broad, black, sooty road,—my mill shall fill its present yard."

"Horrible! You will change our blue hill-country air into the Stilbro' smoke atmosphere."

"I will pour the waters of Pactolus through the valley of Briarfield." (737)

Through this interchange between Robert and Caroline, Brontë suggests the incurability of Robert's nature-destroying instincts. The novel's conclusion shows their inexorability.

In *Shirley*, Robert Moore is not the only proponent of this destructive view of nature and the women who love her. He and his brother Louis harness Shirley and Caroline along with the landscape. Louis tames the wild Shirley because he takes nature as his province. When Shirley says to him "my

roses smell sweet to you, and my trees give you shade," Louis responds, "no caprice can withdraw these pleasures from me: they are *mine*" (517). Likewise Shirley seems *his*, and he delights in the conquest of her wildness. He does not want to gain ascendancy over a "trimmed, artificial mound" but over a "natural hill, with its mossy breaks and hollows, whose slope invites ascent" (593)—something sexual and non-cultivated, therefore less controllable and more like the wild, female dell at Nunnwood that the young women have never themselves been able to gain.

Louis has, however, been empowered by Shirley herself. For all of her vision and energy, Shirley eroticizes heterosexual domination. Her *devoir* shows this quite clearly, particularly when compared with her Eve speech to Caroline. In the *devoir*, Shirley's Eva enjoys all the privileges of the child of nature. She is strong because she is nurtured by wilderness. But her solitariness nevertheless impels her to turn to a male comforter. She becomes a "Daughter of Man" (551), acceding to a union with Humanity. Louis seems to have memorized every word of this *devoir*, a fact that attests to the power of Shirley's woman-language. It also attests to Louis's shrewdness, for he uses Eva's submission to elicit Shirley's. He has recited her *devoir*, now she must recite the lessons he once taught her. As she complies, Shirley falls back into her role as a pupil, allowing Louis to master her once more. Nunnwood, a kind of homoerotic retreat, becomes inaccessible to the Shirley who repeats Louis's lessons rather than giving voice once again to her own more adult version of the Eve myth as offered to Caroline.

After Shirley has agreed to marry Louis, she becomes a pantheress which "gnaws her chain," still full of "dreams of her wild woods, and pinings after virgin freedom" (718-19). But the two Moore brothers have denatured land and women as Sympson has Henry, and Shirley and Yorke would Braimains, if it were not for Farren. All these men help lead the novel *Shirley* and the woman Shirley to their deflowered endings, where only memory ("tradition") can recall their wildness. Shirley's myth-spinning voice is stilled, and the book concludes with a landscape devoid of dream places for the likes of Titan-worshipping women and poetic, fairy-tale loving boys. As the narrator is told by Martha, the old housekeeper who knows the tradition, it has been fifty years since a "fairish" has been seen in Fieldhead Hollow. In the present there are no spaces left for odd women, their myths and legends, or their protégés. All female authority over land and self has been removed. Only the womanworld of folklore retains the women's hopes, long since blasted.

In *Villette* (1853) Brontë returns to the garden—for the first time a place where a female hero will indeed find her self. In French, the word for the garden bower or arbor, "*berceau*," also means cradle, and the book's bowers and arbors generally serve as nurseries for Lucy's growing sense of her selfhood. If the garden at the Rue Fossette nurtures Lucy's hopes, fears, and doubts, the garden at Faubourg Clothilde will reflect her adult presence. In both places Brontë represents a different interpretation of the garden from those of the juvenilia, *The Professor*, *Jane Eyre*, or *Shirley*. In all of the earlier works it is a place of courtship, hope, delusion and disillusion: a seemingly safe place that can in fact be a trap to the

uninitiated, an Eden preparing for a fall. Shirley is the only one of Brontë's female characters to stay free of its snares, but as we have seen, her longing for wilder spaces, like Jane Eyre's trial out on the moors, does not and cannot fulfill its promise of personal freedom. She is trapped in a male-dominated industrial culture and in a narrative that ultimately allows such a culture to have its way. In *Villette*, the novel with the most restrained and difficult of Brontë's female heroes, the restricted garden of the Rue Fossette holds a whole world of emotions for Lucy Snowe. Here Brontë's intentions seem more akin to the Victorian practical gardener Shirley Hibberd's 1855 exclamation in *Brambles and Bay Leaves*: "O heaven and O earth! In the garden is your meeting place, for there God talked with Adam, and there the Saviour wept in agony for all . . . A garden is like a Divine institution, a Biblical reminiscence, a present solace, a refuge, a retreat" (Carter 9).

A garden is also a place marked by human dimensions and dictated by human taste, and a space in some way attached to human dwellings. In *Villette* it echoes not only the tastes and desires of its designers and owners but also the fears and aspirations of those who, like Lucy, tend and inhabit it. Safer for Lucy than is Thornfield for Jane Eyre, the pensionnat's garden is fraught with dangers enough—dangers intensified by its own cloistered limitedness, its architectural perimeters, and its history. At the same time it is ample and nook-filled enough to provide Lucy with a number of favored walks and corners. "The whole day did I wander or sit there alone," she tells us, "finding warmth in the sun, shelter among the trees, and a sort of companionship in my own thoughts" (181). Lucy spends many such days in this garden, enough to give her reader indexes to her thoughts and moods throughout the many months spent in its purview. Her early descriptions of the garden space are her fullest and are in direct contrast to Lucy's early views of the unappealing countryside beyond the garden, which she calls "bare, flat and treeless" with "slimy canals" that "crept, like half-torpid green snakes beside the road; . . . formal pollard willows edged level fields, tilled like kitchen-garden beds" (81). The garden, by contrast, is luscious, sensuous and inviting, though in the heart of the city:

The turf was verdant, the graveled walks were white; sun-bright nasturtiums clustered beautiful about the roots of the doddered orchard giants. There was a *berceau*, above which spread the shade of an acacia; there was a smaller, more sequestered bower, nestled in the vines which ran all along a high and grey wall, and gathered their tendrils in a knot of beauty, and hung their clusters in loving profusion about the favoured spot where jasmine and ivy met and married them. (148)

At the back of this garden lay the *allée défendue*, Lucy's favorite haunt because of its seclusion, its closeness to the far wall, and its exclusion of the young students. Lucy becomes its chief tender, making herself "gardener of some tintless flowers that grew between its closely-ranked shrubs" (150) and the freer of its vegetation-choked rustic seat. It is also the home of an ancient peartree, said to be a lone remnant of an ancient convent garden once planted in this spot, and

underneath that pear, goes the local legend, lay a long-buried nun who in some way violated her vow.

The garden, its *allée*, and the pear tree all have other visitors who disallow Lucy's private retreat and force her to grow both within and without their purview. The brash young De Hamal tosses a love note and a bunch of violets stored inside an ivory casket into Lucy's secluded "green world," thereby violating Lucy's sense of safety and tranquillity; and Dr. John, beloved as he is in the early parts of *Villette*, perpetrates a "sacrilege" as he wanders "down the alleys, looking on this side and on that—he was lost in the shrubs, trampling flowers and breaking branches in his search—he penetrated at last the 'forbidden walk'" (157). These interlopers into Lucy's *allée* provide an interesting variation on a Victorian theme of the 1850s and give us new insight into Lucy Snowe's story. Casteras notes that the paintings of this period are full of nuns and virgins in walled gardens, prototypes "for the secularization of circumscribed feminine chastity." In such painted gardens, walls divide chaste women from potential lovers until the purity of the lovers' intentions can be sanctioned by "matrimony, fate, or God" (83). Brontë's garden at the Rue Fossette at first functions in this way for Ginevra, separating her from the wily De Hamal, who defies its boundaries. But it only partially functions in this way for Lucy. Lucy's waiting for Dr. John is futile, and her nun—the surrogate for her own cloistered virginity—turns out to be the racy De Hamal. Moreover, the figure who will ultimately legitimate Lucy's stay in the walled garden of purity is a man who has had at least equal rights to that space all along.

M. Paul functions in utter contrast to Dr. John Bretton throughout Brontë's novel. When Lucy opens her eyes at the Brettons' house after the deep depression during her first long vacation at the Rue Fossette (when the garden seems "gloomy" and "forsaken," "grey now with the dust of a town departed" [236]), she sees what seems to be an "endless garland of azure forget-me-nots" (236), "autumn-tinted foliage" and "brilliant flowers on a dark ground" (237). In reality these are just decorations on the Bretton's furnishings, far removed from Lucy's flowery *hortus conclusus*. They allow her to go "down to dreamland by a pathway bordered with pleasant thoughts" (267), but they *are* a dreamland, removed like all decorative art from the nature that inspires them. They indicate the superficiality of Lucy's connection with John and his mother, as does the nosegay John indifferently offers Lucy the night they go out to the concert. "'Here Lucy are some flowers'" (295), he says offhandedly, failing to take real notice of the significance of her daring pink dress. In contrast to this well-mannered indifference stands Paul, whose modest offering of white violets echoes Lucy's own desire not to gather the living garden flowers in honor of Paul's fête.

Paul is even more at home in the garden of the Rue Fossette than is Lucy. Voyeur-like and Crimsworth-like, he gazes at the girls playing in its confines from his professorial window, yet he also belongs to its inner walkways. When Lucy is with him in the garden or watching him in his own chosen parts of the *berceaux*, she has no longing to escape garden "walls," as she does at the Brettons'. The *hortus conclusus* at Rue Fossette now seems to echo her heart's desire. In Lucy's company Paul strolls the *allée*; in Lucy's company

he sees the nun step from the *berceau* into the *allée*. On his own Paul waters the potted plants and digs into the garden soil far more than does Lucy, for, says Lucy the observer,

M. Emanuel had a taste for gardening; he liked to tend and foster plants. I used to think that working amongst shrubs with a spade or a watering-pot soothed his nerves; it was a recreation to which he often had recourse; and now he looked to the orange-trees, the geraniums, the gorgeous cactuses, and revived them all with the refreshment their drought needed. (595)

All in all, Paul is as tender a nurturer of the garden as he will be of Lucy, whom he will help transplant outside its confines. In him Brontë defies the stereotype of the Victorian painters and of her own earlier heroes. Fiery and difficult though he is, he is allied with both the natural and the female, as only younger or more impotent men have been in the earlier books. In contrast to the Moores in *Shirley*, he can help insure the authenticity of his beloved's adult survival. However, in order for him to do so, Lucy must shed the vestiges of her own adherence to the stereotype of the garden's forsaken and waiting young woman.

Difficult for most women, this shedding is even more difficult for the lonely and often troubled Lucy. Like Jane Eyre she must make an archetypal journey from garden to garden, not yet knowing her final place of rest. Unlike Jane Eyre she believes she has only one dark night in which to effect that journey, for Paul is rumored to leave England on the next day. Nevertheless when this female hero defies conventions and leaves her *hortus conclusus*, she is as much in search of herself as she is of her lover. Garbed in her gardening straw hat bound down "gypsy-wise" and in her gardening "costume," she sets off "safe as if masked" (656) into the night. "Quiet Rue Fossette!" she exclaims, . . . "here I cannot stay; I am still too near old haunts: so close under the dungeon. This solemn peace is not what I seek . . . let me seek the park" (653). Lucy walks until she finally finds the park and takes cover "amidst grouped tree-stems and branching brushwood" (669)—the vegetation of the *allée*—in order to watch Paul and his relatives at the midsummer fête.

What drugged Lucy overhears in that darkened greenery and what she sees pull her in different directions and lead her to wrong conclusions. She is not gullible as was Jane Eyre on Midsummer's Night. Lucy's dream is a falsehood of her own making, concocted out of her persisting insecurities. Although she finds out that Paul has put off his journey for a fortnight, in a "rage of haste" (676), she wrongly assumes him to be in love with the young ward who is present at the revelry. When she returns to the Rue Fossette and finds the stuffed nun in her bed, she shakes it up in defiance, believing it emblemizes her triumph over all visions and delusions, including her love of Paul.

Nevertheless Paul will not die to Lucy so easily as did Dr. John and the nun, nor will Lucy be buried under the garden of the pensionnat. Paul has been off preparing Lucy a modest, un-walled garden and will point her to the spot, though he will not be able to help her complete her life there. When they exit from the *hortus conclusus* of the Rue Fossette, Lucy finds herself on a tiring journey where en route she must rest

"on the seats stationed under the lime-trees" (698). When they arrive at the Faubourg Clothilde, Lucy discovers a new openness that will soon match the new openness in herself. In the Faubourg Clothilde, the insides grade into the outsides, the house into its neighboring gardens:

... the recess of the a single ample window was filled with a green stand bearing three green flower-pots, each filled with a fine plant glowing in bloom; in one corner appeared a guerdon with a marble top, and upon it a work-box and a glass filled with violets in water. The lattice of this room was open; the outer air breathing through gave freshness, the sweet violets lent fragrance. (701)

Lucy and Paul must return to the Rue Fossette, but as they do, the moon shines as freely and openly on them as it did on the "Great Garden." Says Lucy, "once in their lives some men and women go back to these fresh days of our great Sire and Mother—taste that grand morning's dew" (709). This, their brief Eden, lives in the fullness of one moment and its retelling and is a far cry from the "Eden" of the male writer of the billet doux who glances into the garden from a safe window hideaway and gazes at the comings and goings of the girls (155). Lucy, by her own admission "naturally no florist," will soon be alone but because of love for Paul, will be growing "the plants he preferred" (714) and tending her new young students, her school, and herself. Living in a flat, unappealing Belgian landscape reminiscent of the landscape of Tennyson's "Mariana," the loverless Lucy Snowe will learn to defy the forlornness of the lone woman, to cultivate her small space, and to live on in it with plants that at the novel's end are, like herself, "yet in bloom" (714). She encodes her victory in a first-person narrative that reappraises the spaces that unmade and made her.

Villette eventually grows the most mature and least compromised of Brontë's protagonists and the one who lives least like the Austen characters in their "highly-cultivated" gardens. For the most part, Brontë's own green settings function more as proving grounds than as objective correlatives for character. They are places that force inner change, especially changes in attitude toward the opposite sex. In the four Charlotte Brontë novels, Emily Brontë's vision of wilder nature, most probably the prototype for Shirley's, becomes too difficult for the protagonists and functions like the "counterforce" that Leo Marx discusses in *The Machine in the Garden* (25)—the point of demarcation which signifies the end of idyllic, pastoral space. Most cultivated gardens and all walled gardens, on the other hand, are too confining. As a result, Charlotte Brontë's protagonists are made to test out and in turn are tested by a variety of human-made landscapes. These alter and readjust their perceptions of what might be fitting places to reside in in adult life with a partner of the opposite sex. Crimsworth needs to be a master of his own space and his own family and must leave the Continent and its dangerous female-possessed gardens in order to set up such a home in England. Jane Eyre must win freedom from naïve visions of Edenic love in a garden with Rochester and recreate Ferndean and its environs first in her own mind, then in her own autobiographical words. Caroline Helstone has the same dream as Jane Eyre but lacks Jane's artistic powers and ultimately surrenders her female

vision of Hollow's End to Robert's more destructive vision. Shirley Keeldar must—in industrial, nineteenth-century England—give up her longing for and verbalizing about an archetypal, female space along with her right to manage her own estate. Brontë's Austen-like double-marriage ending to her third novel seems a painfully ironic commentary on her own more usual conclusion: some suitable living space as reward for a life lived psychologically earning that space. In the world of *Shirley*, Austenian privilege, property, and even sensitivity lend no guarantee of happy endings so far as human ecology is concerned. Privileged men cannot appreciate beautiful spaces, and privileged women cannot keep or preserve them. In contrast to the women of *Shirley*, Brontë's last protagonist, Lucy Snowe, having braved the secrets and terms of the Rue Fossette and the park, and having chosen a sympathetic partner who has listened to her dreams, loses that partner but can keep both her tiny landscape and her adult sense of herself.

The treatment of female space in the four novels raises the question of authority in the Brontë novels. In the two narratives where women protagonists tell the story, the protagonists achieve green spaces appropriate to their self-imagining at the novel's closure and write stories reflecting their own spatial satisfaction. In *Shirley*, however, where the industrial vision and its male adherents come to dominate, the authorial voice removes all hope of a suitable landscape for female heroes, even for Shirley, who is possessed of a patrimony. One lonely voice representing motherwit and female folkloric memory is all that remains to authenticate the women's vision of the natural hollow. And in *The Professor*, Crimsworth leaves behind Mdlle. Reuter and her garden, and silences Frances by speaking for her. Brontë seems to be saying that women's words provide them with a source of power over natural space. Naming affords a kind of stabilizing for women who first gain control of nature by internalizing it in their minds. Such women mediate their own natural borders in male-defined cultures. On the other hand, women who are or who become speechless by allowing men to speak for them, lose entry into the green worlds of their choosing. Jane Eyre and Lucy Snowe, like Martha in *Shirley*, eventually gain the power of participant observers who situate their meanings in natural contexts and voice them to encode their importance.

Works Cited

- Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. Ed. Richard J. Dunn. 2nd ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 1987.
- _____. *The Professor*. Ed. Margaret Smith and Herbert Rosengarten. Oxford: Clarendon, 1987.
- _____. *Shirley*. Ed. Herbert Rosengarten and Margaret Smith. Oxford: Clarendon, 1979.
- _____. *Villette*. Ed. Herbert Rosengarten and Margaret Smith. Oxford: Clarendon, 1984.
- Carter, Tom. *The Victorian Garden*. London: Bell & Hyman, 1974.
- Casteras, Susan. "John Everett Millais' 'Secret-Looking Garden Wall' and the Courtship Barrier in Victorian Art." *Browning Institute Studies* 13 (1985): 71-98.
- Gaskell, Elizabeth. *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. Intro. Alan Shelston. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975.

- Griffin, Andrew. "The Interior Garden of John Stuart Mill." *Nature and the Victorian Imagination*. Ed. U. C. Knoepflemacher and G. B. Tennyson. Berkeley: U of California P, 1977: 171-86.
- Marx, Leo. *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. New York: Oxford UP, 1964.
- Pratt, Annis. *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1981.

- Ruskin, John. "Of Queens' Gardens." *The Complete Works of John Ruskin*. Ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn. Vol. 18. London: George Allen, 1905.
- Schorer, Mark. Intro. *Jane Eyre*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959.
- Showalter, Elaine., ed. *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory*. New York: Pantheon, 1985.

University of Delaware

Tennyson and the "Spirit of the Age"

Judith Kennedy

Shelley had observed that contemporary authors "deriv[e] from the new springs of thought and feeling, which the great events of [an] age exposed to view, a similar tone of sentiment, imagery, and expression." He concluded that there is "a certain similarity all the best writers of any particular age inevitably are marked with, from the spirit of that age acting on all" (2: 104).

Two contemporaries of Tennyson's era, George Henry Lewes and John Stuart Mill perceived similar dominant philosophical elements in the spirit of their age. In his *A Biographical History of Philosophy* of 1845-46, Lewes discussed the evolution and impact of German Idealism and mused over how, during his "modern" age, "one class of minds is led to Idealism or Mysticism," in opposition to Skepticism (203). And Mill similarly wrote, in his essay on Coleridge in 1840, that "the Germano-Coleridgean doctrine" was the dominant reaction and challenge to the indigenous Empirical tradition" (266).¹

Indeed, many German Idealist positions were accepted, adapted, advanced, and finally integrated into the philosophical viewpoints reflected in the broader English culture—in the journalism and literature of Coleridge, Julius Hare, Carlyle, Maurice, and other important voices of the era. From his formative years at Cambridge and continuously throughout his later years when for instance, Edmund Lushington, Tennyson's brother-in-law and close friend, in 1866 edited a work on Hegel by the British Idealist, Ferrier, Tennyson was exposed to the broad "cultural press"—to the diffused yet persistent and prevalent filtering down into the British culture of German thought. German philosophical ideas became, in effect, part of the "Spirit of the Age" that the works of many Victorian artists, including Tennyson, were to portray or foster.

In German Idealist thought, especially in the popular works of Fichte and Hegel, either in their English translations or the works of their English interpreters, Tennyson may have found the concepts and terms that would reinforce his inherent philosophical inclinations and inspire his creative, poetic

nature. As for some of the Romantics before him, the German Idealists offered an interpretation of the nature and meaning of existence that countered the materialistic, mechanistic, deterministic, and for many Victorians, atheistic implications of the Empirical-Utilitarian tradition which was still flourishing in mainstream British culture.

Broadly speaking, Empiricist and Idealist concepts were almost diametrically antithetical. The mind of man which was ultimately reduced by Empiricists to a passive entity, a mere receptacle of impressions caused by externally-initiated sensations (Locke had used the reductive analogies of an unfurnished room and an empty container to describe the human mind), was exalted in most Idealist writings as a finite manifestation of the Divine Idea, and therefore, part of the active, creative, divine spiritual force of all existence. Nature also, which Empiricists had reduced to an abstract system of interacting material particles, was for the Idealists a manifestation or reflection of the self-conscious activity of the transcendent power that was variably designated the Divine Idea, the Absolute Ego, the Eternal Will, or God. The Empiricist-Utilitarians, such as Bentham, had tried to systematically categorize or find scientific or logical explanations for all experience. For the Idealists, however, the sense experience was not the sole means of knowledge; in fact knowledge itself was considered limited and inferior to faith, which was given a vital role in interpreting experience. For the Empiricist, inconsistent or contradictory qualities could not exist simultaneously; for an Idealist such as Hegel, opposition was the moving principle of the world. Furthermore, in German Idealist philosophy man was given free will; a form of immortality by his ultimate reabsorption into the Infinite at death; the potential for heroic action for the general good of mankind through his ability to intuit the moral law that underlies all reality; and a vision of a final perfectibility in the self-fulfillment of the Infinite Idea. It is not surprising then that such an affirmative and hopeful philosophical perspective could be appealing to a young poet such as Tennyson, who had trance experiences in which he sensed the unreality of his

¹Mill analyzes the philosophical movements of his era in several works, including his series of articles which appeared in *The Examiner* from 6 January to 29 May 1831 on "The Spirit of the Age"; his *Autobiography*; and

his famous essays on "Bentham" and "Coleridge." The quotation is from the Stillinger edition.

material existence and who suffered the early shock of the untimely death of a beloved friend, Hallam, which intensified Tennyson's absorption with questions concerning man's immortality.

More specifically, there are a few central ideas that are repeated throughout Fichte's and Hegel's works which have parallels in *In Memoriam*.² Two important concepts I will explore in this study are the ultimate monism of all existence and the recognition of the simultaneity of opposites. Central to Fichte's system, for instance, is the concept of the Divine Idea, which he also calls the Eternal or Living Will, the Infinite, the Great Soul, the Ego, or God. This is the intelligent force, the ultimate, self-existent, permanent and changeless sole reality of the universe—a living thought. Since there can be no knowing without an object, this infinite intellect or Ego creates an object of its activity—the Non-Ego. It posits itself as its object, its sphere of activity. In its perpetual activity, the Divine Idea limits itself, sets bounds, creates finite parts of its infinite self, which are the changing shapes of its self-expression. So finite egos (individual human minds), the world of physical nature, and all experience are essentially all parts of the Divine Idea. In German Idealist theory, Time is generally seen as a form through which the Divine Idea sets bounds and limitations on itself, for although it moves towards its perfect self-realization, the Divine Idea is always "one and entire."

It is most probable that Tennyson came into contact with these ideas relatively early, perhaps during his Cambridge days, when John Sterling and F. D. Maurice were translating the German Idealists and publishing excerpts in *The Athenaeum*. In an 1829 number, the same issue in which Tennyson's "Timbuctoo" was first published, F. D. Maurice translated from the German the following excerpt on the Divine Idea:

Then does the idea wind along the stream of time always one and entire, incessantly reproducing itself under some new form. . . . perpetually striving to promote the development of itself in its perfect totality. . . . Nothing in this system is ever lost, worlds bring forth worlds, and ages bring forth new ages, which latter stand above the former. . . . [Death is not an ultimate end for finite beings, for] when the grave opens, . . . in the new light they [will] behold the completion of that which they commenced, the entire manifestation of that which they discerned only in part. . . . (241-42)

Man may not always fully understand the Infinite Will's Plan, for man is "but a link in its chain, and can no more judge the whole, than a single tone of music can judge of the entire harmony of which it forms a part." While man may not understand the meaning of events in the progressive development of the Divine Idea, good is the ultimate outcome of evil. Even "Death in Nature is Birth" into a fuller, "more living

Life." In a similar strain, Fichte was to close *The Vocation of Man* with the following assertion:

The universe is to me no longer that ever-recurring circle, that eternally-repeated play, that monster swallowing itself up only to bring itself forth again as it was before;—it has become transfigured before me, and now bears the one stamp of spiritual life—a constant progress towards higher perfection in a line that runs out into the infinite. (551-52)

Fichte uses similar imagery as is used in *In Memoriam* as he becomes lyrical in the expression of his faith:

The sun rises and sets, the stars sink and reappear, the spheres hold their circle-dance; . . . [The world] is yet but the curtain by which a world infinitely more perfect is concealed from me, and the germ from which that other world shall develop itself. My FAITH looks behind this veil. (552-53)

Similar ideas are voiced, often in the same language, in *In Memoriam*. There is a persistent expression of an ultimate unity—that man, Nature, and all existence are part of one infinite spiritual reality. Even in the Introductory Stanzas (d. 1849), which were added to the poem shortly before its first publication, perhaps to assure Emily Sellwood of Tennyson's faith and which are in the estimate of some critics "apologetic and Christian," there is an indication of this perspective in these lines: "Our little systems have their day; / They have their day and cease to be; / They are but broken lights of thee" (17-19), which suggest the ultimate monism of existence. There are several sections of *In Memoriam* which express this concept more fully. In Canto 47, the speaker contemplates and protests against the "re-mergence" of Hallam into the Infinite:

That each, who seems a separate whole,
Should move his rounds, and fusing all
The skirts of self again, should fall
Remerging in the general Soul, (1-4)

The speaker hopes to see Hallam before their "spirits fade away" to "clasp and say, / Farewell: We lose ourselves in light" (47. 15-16). Allingham recorded relevant statements by Tennyson; for instance, "'Time is nothing,' said Tennyson, 'are we not all part of Deity?'" (127).

However, the idea of the loss of individuality in this ultimate reabsorption perplexed and concerned Tennyson, who feared losing reunion with Hallam in the form of the particular personality Tennyson had known and loved. Tennyson struggled with this theory: "The individuality lasts after death, and we are not utterly absorbed into the God Head. If we are to be finally merged in the Universal Soul, Love asks to have at least one more parting before we lose ourselves" (qtd. in Shatto and Shaw edition 211). He again anxiously contended

with this concept about the fate of the personal consciousness after death: "If the absorption into the divine³ in the after-life be the creed of some, let them at all events allow us many existences of individuality before this absorption; since this short-lived individuality seems to be but too short a preparation for so mighty a union" (*Memoir* 2: 319). Similarly, Tennyson reflected his reluctant acceptance and his wish to qualify this philosophical concept by explaining line 14 of Canto 47: "Before the spirits fade away." He wrote in the margin of Knowles's copy of the poem: "Into the Universal Spirit—but at least one last parting! and always would want it again—of course" (183).

In the climactic Canto 95, the speaker reads his friend's letter and experiences a brief joyous vision—a glimpse into the Infinite reminiscent of the one in Fichte. In his trance the speaker is "wound and whirl'd / About empyreal heights of thought," and comes upon "that which is, and caught / The deep pulsations of the world," as he hears "Aeonian music measur[ed] out." Tennyson had personally experienced such trances, and described one in this way: "the individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being . . . where death was an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction but the only true life" (Eversley 3: 217). Again in 1869 Tennyson stated his belief in an ultimate spiritual reality: "Yes, it is true that there are moments when the flesh is nothing to me, when I feel and know the flesh to be the vision, God and the Spiritual the only real and true. Depend upon it, the Spiritual is the real" (*Memoir* 2: 90).

Tennyson explained to Knowles his motivation for changing line 36 of Canto 95, which now reads: "The living soul was flash'd on mine." Tennyson apparently was not referring to Hallam but an infinite Spirit, as he wrote in his note: "The Living Soul, perchance the Deity—the first reading was His living Soul was flash'd on mine—but my conscience was troubled by 'his.' I've often had a strange feeling of being wound and wrapped in the Great Soul." Hallam Tennyson added, "In reference to the later reading, my father would say: 'Of course the greater Soul may include the less'" (qtd. in Shatto and Shaw 255), which again suggests the Idealist concept of the ultimate unity of all finite beings in the Infinite.

Although the trance of Canto 95 is momentary and canceled, the breeze becomes a voice which says, "'The dawn, the dawn,'" and then the speaker sees the unity of the experience before his eyes:

And East and West, without a breath,
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,
To broaden into boundless day. (62-64)

This conviction of an ultimate unity becomes stronger in the final cantos of the poem. The speaker states at the end of Canto 129: "Behold I dream a dream of good, / And mingle all the world with thee" (11-12). A voice emerges once again, as Hallam is merged with the Infinite:

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair. (130. 1-4)

The speaker has no sure knowledge of what has happened to Hallam, but "feels" that Hallam's state is a greater one in which nothing, including the speaker's love for him, is lost, but rather is made "vaster" in a higher state of being. He continues:

What art thou then: I cannot guess;
But tho' I seem in star and flower
To feel thee some diffusive power,
I do not therefore love thee less:

My love involves the love before;
My love is vaster passion now;
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more. (130. 5-12)

The speaker no longer suffers from his sense of loss for his friend, but states, "I rejoice; / I prosper, circled with thy voice; / I shall not lose thee tho' I die" (130. 14-16). Both Hallam and the speaker have passed to a higher state, Hallam by his merging with the Infinite, the speaker by his growth in awareness of the ultimate reality and by his determination to work towards the eternal.

Again, the last lines of Canto 131 refer to the ultimate unity of all mankind which will occur when "we close with all we loved, / And all we flow from, soul in soul" (11-12). And the last stanza of the Epilogue also ends with the vision of an ultimate unity. The speaker finishes speaking of "that friend of mine who lives in God," and then states in the closing stanza of the poem:

That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves. (141-44)

And next, the idea that everything contains its opposite, even the seeds of its own destruction, was an Idealist concept that became familiar to the nineteenth-century English in Hegel's famous dialectical method of the processes of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. While these processes were open-ended (non-closing and continually developing), each new stage contained all previous elements and functions of those before it. "The truth is the whole"—the ultimate, all-inclusive unity. As we heard in the important Canto 95, the speaker had seen that "East and West, without a breath, / Mixt their dim lights, like life and death, / To broaden into boundless day" (62-64). The juxtaposing or mixing of East and West, and life and death, illustrates a stylistic device that Tennyson uses throughout *In Memoriam* to underscore the idea of unity in all experience. Two passages in which this juxtaposing of oppo-

²I am using Susan Shatto and Marion Shaw's system of notating cantos and lines, as well as their datings of the composition of various sections of the poem. This study is also indebted to the work of F. E. L. Priestley and W.

David Shaw, who independently suggested that Tennyson's poetry be viewed in the context of Western Idealist thought.

³Fichte also suggests that an individual will have many existences before "absorption into the divine." The speaker in *The Vocation of Man* states "How Thou art, and seemest to Thine own being, I can never know, any more

than I can assume Thy nature. After thousands upon thousands of spirit-lives, I shall comprehend Thee as little as I do now in this earthly house" (536, Fichte's emphasis).

sites is most apparent appear in Cantos 121 and 124:

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
For what is one, the first, the last,
Thou, like my present and my past,
Thy place is changed; thou art the same.
(121. 17-20, d. 1850A)

and

That which we dare invoke to bless;
Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;
He, They, One, All: within, without,
The Power in darkness whom we guess.
(124. 1-4, d. 1850A)

The contrasts in the following stanzas of Canto 129 are somewhat less stark, but still obvious. Tennyson's personal motivation for linking these antinomies (to retain his relationship with Hallam through their mutual immortality in the Infinite) is reflected in lines 7, 8 and 12.

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
So far, so near in woe and weal;
O loved the most, when most I feel
There is a lower and a higher. 4

Known and unknown; human, divine;
Sweet human hand and lip and eye;
Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,
Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine; 8

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
Loved deeper, darker understood;
Behold I dream a dream of good,
And mingle all the world with thee. 12
(129. 1-12, d. 1850 Trial)

Similarly, Canto 54 contains a preponderance of assembled opposites: "good" and "ill"; "sins of will" [Reason] and "taints of blood" [Passion]; "nothing" and "anything"; "be destroy'd" and "made . . . complete"; "know" and "doubt"; "know" and "trust" [faith]; "winter" and "spring"; and "night" and "light."

Many subtler instances of the merging of opposites in individual lines inform the texture of *In Memoriam*, such as in "A night-long Present of the Past" (71.3), and, "The touch of change in calm and storm" (16. 6).

More significant than the semantic oppositions within individual lines or cantos in *In Memoriam* as noted above are the contrasts between early and late treatments of various subjects, including the yew tree, spring, and the speaker's recognitions standing before Hallam's house; the speaker's experiences are particularly antithetical in the pairs of poems on the latter two subjects.

In the broader context of *In Memoriam* as a poetic sequence, such early and late treatments of the subjects in the paired poems may be seen as reflections of the development of the speaker. By the end of the poem, he passes from doubt, introspection, and despair to faith, a new commitment to

action, and an opening awareness, appreciation, and participation in the joys of life. Each of the paired poems, then, would be a objective correlative of the speaker's mind or emotional state at a particular stage in his development, and the changes in later poems reflect those in the speaker. Yet, while growth and "progress" are important themes on both a personal and universal level in the poem and are important concepts in an Idealist perspective of experience, Idealists also see all movement as only the apparent "change in the changelessness" of a larger reality. The Divine Idea, the infinite reality, is always one and entire despite its progressive movement along the "stream of time." In this sense such paired poems illustrate another relationship of opposites, that within the consciousness of the speaker. Although a later experience reflects development, elements of the earlier one are "conserved" in it. And the new experience along with the memory of the former one comprises the total "truth" of the speaker's reality to this point in time, for each experience offers only a partial perspective. As indicated by all the merging and linking in *In Memoriam*, the speaker seems to recognize that all particular states or views are only partial; a full understanding of the whole reality would be beyond his conceptual grasp. Similarly, reality for the Idealist is always interpreted from one's point-of-view and therefore is an incomplete perception, as Hegel argues in the Introduction to *The Philosophy of History* and Fichte in *The Nature of the Scholar*.

Works Cited

- Allingham, William. *William Allingham's Diary*. Fontwell, Sussex: Centaur, 1967.
- Fichte, Johann Gottlieb. "Characteristics of the Present Age." Trans. F. D. Maurice. *Athenaeum* 78 (1829): 241-43.
- _____. *The Popular Works of Johann Gottlieb Fichte*. Trans. William Smith. 2 vols. London: Chapman, 1847-48.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *The Philosophy of History*. Trans. J. Sibree. New York: Dover, 1956.
- Knowles, James. "Aspects of Tennyson." *The Nineteenth Century* 33 (1893): 164-88.
- Lewes, G. H. *A Biographical History of Philosophy*. 2 vols. London: Charles Knight, 1845-46.
- Mill, John Stuart. *Autobiography and Other Writings*. Ed. Jack Stilinger. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969.
- _____. *The Spirit of the Age*. Ed. Frederick A. von Hayek. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1942.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe. Preface" to *Laon and Cythna*. *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. Ed. Neville Rogers. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1975.
- Tennyson, Alfred. *In Memoriam*. Eds. Susan Shatto and Marion Shaw. London: Clarendon, 1982. All quotations in the text are from this edition.
- _____. *Works* (Eversley Edition). Ed. Hallam Tennyson. 9 vols. London: Macmillan, 1907-08.
- Tennyson, Hallam. *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir by his Son*. 2 vols. London: Macmillan, 1897.

Kutztown University

Books Received

- Approaches to Teaching the Arthurian Tradition*. Eds. Maureen Fries and Jeanie Watson. *Approaches to Teaching World Literature*. New York: Modern Language Assoc., 1992. Pp. xi + 195. \$34.00 cloth, \$19.00 paper. Includes "Texts for Teaching," "Readings for Students and Instructors," "Introduction," "Teaching the Backgrounds," "Teaching the 'Hoole' Tradition," "Teaching Major Authors," "Teaching Students at Various Levels," "Specific Approaches." 25 essays.
- Bayer, Valerie Townsend. *City of Childhood*. New York: St. Martin's, 1992. Pp. 320. \$19.95. An "historically accurate" novel, the first of a projected tetralogy, which follows the reconstruction by two scholars of the lives of the family of Emma Forster, Victorian novelist.
- Bock, Carol. *Charlotte Brontë and the Storyteller's Audience*. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 1992. Pp. 188. \$34.95. "[Brontë's] deliberate use of metalepsis and other self-reflexive narrative elements in her juvenilia should warn us against dismissing similar features in her later writing as peripheral to her mode of storytelling, which is not primarily confessional or self-expressive. The narrative project of her novels is, rather, to consider how storytelling encompasses truth by temporarily merging the worlds of fiction and reality" (49).
- Browning, Elizabeth Barrett. *Aurora Leigh*. Ed. Margaret Reynolds. Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 1992. Pp. xiv + 692. \$69.95. ". . . Barrett Browning had a clear notion of the limitations of perfection which it was possible to achieve for her work under the conditions for publication which then obtained. Within those limitations, she used all the methods available to her to correct, proofread, revise, correct, and proof again, supervising every stage of this poem's textual progression with minute particularity. As far as concerns the later stages of that process, all the relevant documents seem to be still extant, so that it is possible to assess with unusual accuracy the authoritative character of the readings which appear in the revised edition. For the purposes of the present edition, only the choice of the revised edition as copy-text allows for the clearest policies for emendation and the simplest and most accessible arrangement of variants" (125-26). Includes 156 pp. of Introduction, an 80 pp. "Explanatory Annotation," and a 15 pp. "Bibliography."
- Carroll, David. *George Eliot and the Conflict of Interpretations: A Reading of the Novels*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. Pp. xii + 333. \$59.95 "The central character [in Eliot's novels], usually the heroine, experiences a moment of extreme oscillation, contradiction, or vertigo. It is a privileged moment towards which the whole narrative has been moving and it announces that the search for a coherent view of the world has finally broken down. Every possible scheme of meaning within the novel has been found partial and inadequate. Such episodes indicate the limits of intelligibility. . . . The main purpose of this study is to examine the crisis of interpretation which these moments epitomise and upon which George Eliot's career as a novelist was based" (1-2).

- Chitham, Edward. *A Life of Anne Brontë*. Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1991. Pp. vii + 216. \$29.95. "My aim is to produce a live portrait of Anne Brontë, and in the absence of almost all personal records other than her poems, every avenue must be scoured for data to help build up our portrait. . . . At a time when the importance and influence of women writers as women is being much stressed, I have tried to give full weight to this aspect of Anne Brontë's work. . . ." (13-14).
- Garson, Marjorie. *Hardy's Fables of Integrity: Woman, Body, Text*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1991. Pp. viii + 198. \$52.00. "What I am interested in is how private myth and private obsessions get themselves expressed within narratives which have been read as more or less decorous, more or less controlled—novels which defer sufficiently even to the expectations of 'realistic' readers to be seen as 'central' or 'great.' Texts which are less canny in masking their concerns do not invite an exploration of how the masking takes place. It is that exploration which is the purpose of the analyses which follow" (5). Treats *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *The Return of the Native*, *The Woodlanders*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess* and *Jude*.
- Gissing, George. *The Collected Letters of George Gissing*. Vol. 3, 1886-1888. Eds. Paul F. Mattheisen, Arthur C. Young, and Pierre Coustillas. Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 1992. Pp. xxxiv + 352. \$55.00. The third of a projected nine volumes contains more than 240 letters, the bulk to his brother Algernon and sister Ellen, though included are some to Gissing, from Morley Roberts, Frederic Harrison and Thomas Hardy, for example. Includes a chronology of Gissing's life, an intro. and indexes.
- Hapke, Laura. *Tales of the Working Girl: Wage-Earning Women in American Literature, 1890-1925*. Twayne's Literature and Society Series, No. 2. New York: Twayne; Toronto: Macmillan Maxwell Canada, 1992. Pp. xvii + 167. \$26.95 cloth, \$13.95 paper. Includes chapters on "The Debate on Women's Labor," "Masculine Tenement Fiction," "Feminine Cross-Class Fiction," "O. Henry and Dreiser," "Female Militance in Strike Decade Fiction," "Fictions of Feminine Mobility."
- Ingham, Patricia. *Dickens, Women and Language*. Toronto & Buffalo: U of Toronto P, 1992. Pp. [viii] + 152. \$50.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper. "Dickens' depiction of female characters is not usually seen as self-contradictory but the critical method employed in what follows releases such a reading" (1). Chapters include "Representation and Language," "Nubile Girls," "Fallen Girls," "Excessive Females," "Passionate Women," "True Mothers," "Postscript: Rewriting Experience."
- Joseph, Gerhard. *Tennyson and the Text*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. Pp. xvi + 274. \$54.95. "It is at any rate against the 'disinterested,' Arnoldian conception of the Tennyson I attribute to [Christopher] Ricks that I offer my more self-imputing Paternian 'Tennyson' as perpetually weaving, woven, and rewoven by post-Saussurean words of the ever fluctuating reader" (6).

- Kramer, Dale. *Thomas Hardy: Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Landmarks of World Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991. Pp. [xviii] + 109. \$27.95 cloth, \$10.95 paper. Includes a chronology, "Backgrounds," "Some Literary Influences," "The Shaping of Character in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*," "Plot," "Tragedy," "The Influence of *Tess*," and "Further Reading."
- Merrill, Linda. *A Pot of Paint: Aesthetics on Trial in "Whistler v Ruskin."* Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992. Pp. xv + 419. \$35.00. A reconstruction of the circumstances of the defamation trial brought by Whistler against Ruskin, the transcript of the trial having been destroyed, as well as a review of the pre- and post-trial commentary. Merrill concludes that "Whistler v. Ruskin, a story of trial and error, marks a critical hour in the evolution of modern art" (6).
- Morgan, Nicholas H. *Secret Journeys: Theory and Practice in Reading Dickens*. Rutherford etc: Fairleigh Dickinson UP; London & Toronto: Associated UPs, 1992. Pp. 148. \$29.50. "I follow primarily three aspects of the canon through several novels [*The Old Curiosity Shop*, *David Copperfield*, *Little Dorrit*, and *Great Expectations*]: the dialectic between 'fancy' and 'authority,' the psychology of symbol and memory, and the relationship between narrator and reader" (10).
- Nath, Santosh. *Treatment of Greek Mythology in The Poems of Tennyson*. Aligarh, India: Printwell, 1992. Pp. iii + 220. \$20.00. "This study is an endeavor to evaluate Tennyson's poems on Greek myths and show how the poet vitalizes these hoary tales of the past with a new life. These poems have been analysed in the context of his other works and major contemporary issues: . . . (a) social responsibility of the artist, (b) the problem of love and marriage, especially with relation to women . . . (c) the growing vista of knowledge, the theory of evolution and its impact on society, and (d) the age-old conflict between Hellenism and Hebraism . . . (6).
- Orel, Harold, ed. *Critical Essays on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*. New York: G. K. Hall, 1992. Pp. xiii + 290. \$40.00. Includes 10 essays on "Sherlock Holmes," 20 on "Other Writings," and 4 on "Spiritualism."
- Propas, Sharon W. *Victorian Studies: A Research Guide*. New York & London: Garland, 1992. Pp. xxi + 334. \$50.00. Includes "Using the Library," "The Tools of Research," "Multidisciplinary Reference Sources," "Reference Sources for Various Disciplines," "Lists and Names of Biographical Sources," "Microform Sources," "Electronic Formats," and an index.
- Rose, Anne C. *Victorian America and the Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. Pp. xiv + 304. \$29.95. "From a social perspective, [I center] on the lives of [75] men and women who were born between the end of the War of 1812 in 1815 and the beginning of the first major American depression in 1837. . . . [I offer] the collected biographies of these [75] individuals as a window on the struggles of middle-class Victorians to define satisfying values in times of both peace and war" (3-4).

- The Slaughter-House of Mammon: An Anthology of Victorian Social Protest Literature*. Eds. Sharon A. Winn and Lynn M. Alexander. Foreword Joseph A. Kestner. West Cornwall, CT: Locust Hill P, 1992. Pp. xxv + 344. \$32.00. Includes John Brown's "A Memoir of Robert Blincoe" (1828), Harriet Martineau's "The Turn-Out" (1829), John Galt's "The Seamstress" (1833), John Fielden's "The Curse of the Factory System" (1836), Camilla Toulmin's "The Orphan Milliners" (1844), G. W. M. Reynolds's "The Mysteries of London" (1850) including "The Rattlesnake's History" and "Cranky Jem's History," Eliza Meteyard's "Lucy Dean; the Noble Needlewoman" (1850), Ernest Jones's "Woman's Wrongs" (1852), James Greenwood's "A Night in a Workhouse" (1866), Rudyard Kipling's "The Record of Badalia Herodsfoot" (1890), and a short bibliography.
- Stephens, John Russell. *The Profession of the Playwright: British Theatre 1800-1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. Pp. xix + 254. \$54.95. "External pressures on dramatists of all classes were enormous, by virtue of the often conflicting demands of managers, actors, actor-managers, stage-crew, box-office, audience, critics, and the sometimes suffocating limitations imposed by official censorship. Yet for the professional playwright it was expedient [and] pragmatic to acquire a respected, independent, functional identity, or as much of one as was possible in whatever theatrical niche he found himself placed. This book is an outline of that process" (xiv).
- Trollope, Anthony. *Phineas Redux*. Intro. Robin Gilmour. London: The Trollope Society, 1990. Pp. xxii + 628. \$52.50. "This edition is based on the text as it appeared in the *Graphic* [19 July 1873 to 10 January 1874], with minor emendations, and the illustrations by Francis Montague Hall are reproduced from the 1874 Routledge edition using the original plates." To order vols. in the projected complete set of Trollope's novels, individuals contact The Trollope Society, 9a North Street, London SW4 0HN, UK; libraries and institutions contact Pickering & Chatto, 17 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5NB, UK.
- _____. *Rachel Ray*. Intro. John Letts. London: The Trollope Society, 1990. Pp. xx + 332. \$42.50. "This edition is based on the text of the first edition [Chapman & Hall, 1863] with minor emendations." For ordering information see the first Trollope entry above.
- _____. *The Three Clerks*. Intro. N. John Hall. London: The Trollope Society, 1992. Pp. xvii + 539. £24.95. "The text of the first edition [Richard Bentley, 1858] has been followed here, with minor emendations." For ordering information see the first Trollope entry above.
- _____. *The Way We Live Now*. Intro. Noel Annan. London: The Trollope Society, 1992. Pp. xviii + 844. £29.95. "This edition is based on the text as it appeared in the first edition [Chapman & Hall, 1875] with minor emendations." For ordering information see the first Trollope entry above.

Victorian Group News

Announcements

Announcement of Conference: *Victorian Mystery* 5-8 August 1993, University of California, Santa Cruz. Write John O. Jordan, Director, The Dickens Project, 354 Kresge College, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA 95064. 408-459-2103.

Nineteenth Century Prose wants mss for "Victorian Biography," a special issue devoted to the practice and nature of biography in the nineteenth century—genre studies, theoretical analyses, and treatments of individual biographies or biographers. MSS should conform to MLA style and be submitted in both hard copy (two copies) and on 5 1/4" or 3 1/2" disk to John Powell, History Dept., Behrend College, Pennsylvania State University, Station Road, Erie, PA 16563, no later than 1 March 1993.

The Carolina Symposium on British Studies will be held at West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV on 30-31 October 1993. The Symposium provides is a forum for studies in history, literature, art and architecture, government, dance and music. The theme of the conference is *Revisions and Retrospectives in British Studies*. Submit proposals for individual papers, full sessions, and panel discussions. A \$250 prize for the best paper at the symposium, the winning essay to be submitted to the evaluation committee by May, with possible publication in *Albion*. Submissions for the student session from graduate and undergraduate students are eligible for a prize in each category. Proposals by 15 April 1993 to Jon Crawford, History Dept., Mars Hill College, Mars Hill, NC 28754.

Revivals and Revisions will be the topic of the Southeastern Nineteenth Century Studies Assoc. meeting in Atlanta, GA, 15-17 April 1993 under the sponsorship of Emory Univ. "Revivals and Revision" may apply to any influences, borrowings, appropriations, movements, and explorations in literature, drama, art and architecture, material culture, music, history, religion, philosophy, and social discourse.

The William T. Stead Memorial Society promotes knowledge of Stead's life and works. The Society hosts a conference every two years—the next to be held at Hayling Island, England, 2-4 July 1993. Dues \$13 sent to Grace Eckley, 744 Chimney Creek Drive, Golden, CO 80401; or checks £7 payable to Joseph O. Baylen sent to Victor G. Pierce Jones, "Rosamund," 7A Seagrove Avenue, (Hants), Hayling Island, England PO11 9EU. Members will receive a biannual Newsletter.

The Art of Seeing: John Ruskin and the Victorian Eye 6 March-23 May 1993. World Premier of the most extensive exhibition of John Ruskin ever organized. Includes many paintings never before available in the U. S. Features artworks "selected" by Ruskin 93 years after his death. Phoenix Art Museum, 1625 N. Central Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85004. Exhibit closed Monday; Tues.-Sat. 10-5; Wed. 10-9; Sun. 12-5.

Notice

The number on your address label is the number of the last issue covered by your subscription. Renewals should be made at the rate of \$5/yr. or \$9/2yrs.—\$6/yr. foreign and Canada.

Back issues of VN, at \$4 per copy (\$5 for Index) are available for the following numbers: 8, 20, 23, 30, 31, 32, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, Index.