

The Victorian Newsletter

Editor

Ward Hellstrom

Number 99

Managing Editor

Louise R. Hellstrom

Contents

Spring 2001

Page

The Travels of RLS as a Young Man by Gordon Hirsch	1	16	Domesticity Betrayed: <i>The Keepsake Literary Annual</i> by Kathryn Ledbetter
Marginalized Maisie: Social Purity and <i>What Maisie Knew</i> by Christine DeVine	7	24	The Unmanned Fertility Figure in Hardy's <i>The Woodlanders</i> (1887) By Andrew Radford
A Note on "Swallow" in Swinburne's "Itylus" by Nathan Cervo	15	32	Coming in <i>The Victorian Newsletter</i>
		[33]	Group News

Cover: Beadle Bumble

The Victorian Newsletter is sponsored for the Victorian Group of the 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* 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 out to *The Victorian Newsletter*.

The Travels of RLS as a Young Man

Gordon Hirsch

It is not surprising that Robert Louis Stevenson embarked on his career as an author in the genre of travel writing. In his early twenties, Stevenson traveled extensively in Scotland, England, and France, undertaking walking tours wherever he went. Stevenson's cousin and official biographer, Graham Balfour, cites a "pencil list of towns in which he had slept, compiled about 1886," including 46 in England, 50 in Scotland, 74 in France, and 40 in the rest of Europe. Balfour notes that "between 1871 and 1876 no less than nine of [Stevenson's essays] deal with travel or the external appearance of places known to him" (1:126). Stevenson's wanderlust was evident early, as was his desire to turn his journeys to use in his writing. At a time when the young Stevenson's character was still in the process of being formed, travel served as a mode of self-discovery as well as providing material for his developing craft.

In September 1876, Stevenson and a friend, Walter Simpson, set off on a canoe trip on the rivers and canals of Belgium and northern France. Intending from the first to write about these travels, Stevenson kept a journal, which he rewrote a year later and which became his first book, *An Inland Voyage*. Except for the "incessant, pitiless, beating rain" (117), Stevenson's journey itself, as described in the book, is relatively unremarkable. He encounters various individuals, towns, and difficulties along the way (including an overturned canoe), but the most unusual experience—Stevenson's brief detention by the police in France as a suspected German spy—was not fully detailed until ten years after the book was originally published (Swearingen 124). What is striking and remarkable, however, is the way Stevenson presents himself and the issues which concern his personality.¹

At the outset Stevenson notes that he has "never been in a canoe under sail in my life" (3). His voyage is perceived as an adventure and experiment, and it is compared grandiloquently to a major life change: "I suppose it was almost as trying a venture into the regions of the unknown as to publish a first book, or marry" (4). Nonetheless, he is aware that he looks odd to the people he meets—a young, spindly-legged, long-haired bohemian wanderer, wearing "a smoking-cap of Indian work, the gold lace pitifully frayed and tarnished" (159). Furthermore, Stevenson frequently turns up in towns rain-drenched and bedraggled. Mistaken by those he encounters for a rag-and-bone man, vagrant, spy, peddler, servant, or purveyor of pornographic photographs, Stevenson paints a wry portrait of his own apparent lack of defined social rank and respectability. He is shocked that the people he meets respond to his clothes and physical appearance, rather than his more complicated, subjective

sense of who he is. One of the most striking passages in the book describes his expulsion from a highly praised inn at La Fere. The brisk, bustling landlady not only refuses Stevenson and his traveling companion a room, but also denies them dinner in her establishment, virtually throwing them out the door. A similar response is elicited in another town where one landlady or landlord after another wonders aloud whether the two wanderers are peddlers—"Ces messieurs sont des marchands?" (38)—before turning them away as wholly unsuitable guests, which leads Stevenson to muse, "I never knew a population with so narrow a range of conjecture as the innkeepers of Pont-sur-Sambre" (40). If Stevenson seems somewhat uncertain about who he is, the townspeople and innkeepers do not hesitate in locating him at the margins of society.

In fact, Stevenson has undertaken his inland voyage partly to explore deracination and marginality, and he consciously identifies with the people who share his sense of wanderlust or bohemianism whom he meets along the way. He praises, for example, the canal barge operators: "I would rather be a bargee than occupy any position under Heaven that required attendance at an office" (11). A bargeman proudly contrasts himself (and the two travelers) with "a man . . . who sticks to his own village like a bear . . . very well, he sees nothing. And then death is the end of all. And he has seen nothing" (67). Stevenson also records the envy of the travelers expressed by the omnibus driver for the Hotel *Grand Cerf* in Maubeuge: "How he longed to travel! he told me. How he longed to be somewhere else, and see the round world before he went into the grave! 'Here I am!' said he, 'I drive to the station. Well. And then I drive back to the hotel. And so on every day and all the week round. My God, is that life?' . . . It is an evil age for the gypsily inclined among men" (27). Driving a hotel's omnibus may be respectable, but why should one who finds his respectability an insufficient reward be required to cling to it? "Better a thousand times that he should be a tramp, and mend pots and pans by the wayside, and sleep under trees, and see the dawn and the sunset every day above a new horizon," Stevenson believes (28). It is worth recalling that earlier in the decade Stevenson had completed his legal studies, and was none too eager himself to settle down to become a legal drudge. No wonder, then, that he sees the omnibus driver as a "poor cage-bird! Do I not remember the time when I myself haunted the station, to watch train after train carry its complement of freemen into the night, and read the names of distant places on the time-bills with indescribable longings?" (29). Stevenson's wanderlust took hold at an early age, when every distant town in the railroad timetables seemed a

¹After this was written, I came upon the recent discussion by Alex Clunas of the two early travel books which are also the subject of this essay. Although we both discuss the sense of estrangement and the fluid identity which permeates *An Inland Voyage*, Clunas is primarily concerned with Stevenson's grappling with aesthetic problems, his invention of himself as

an author, whereas my essay looks at Stevenson's struggle with developmental issues. Clunas emphasizes aesthetic choices, whereas I am mostly concerned with matters of personality. Furthermore, although Clunas essentially sees these two travel books as identical in technique, I believe the focus on Modestine in the later text makes them significantly different.

putative "El Dorado."

Stevenson had turned his back on the law and in 1875 gone to stay in an artists' colony near Fontainebleau, where earlier the Barbizon school of French painting had congregated. Thus on his inland voyage he feels a special kinship with those he encounters who are "outsiders of art" (147). He spends a long time staring at one man dining in a large party at an inn, because his face stood out from the rest of the company for its "living, expressive air, and you could see that his eyes took things in." Later Stevenson finds the man "busy fiddling for the peasants to caper to" and the riddle of his identity is solved: "He was a wandering violinist" (147). Stevenson also records in loving detail his encounter with an old strolling player, who vigorously rejects the idea that he regrets his choice of a career: "Do you think I would rather be a fat burgher, like a calf? . . . I have known what pleasure was, what it was to do a thing well, what it was to be an artist. And to know what art is, is to have an interest forever, such as no burgher can find in his petty concerns" (152).

Not only does he choose to identify with the discontented and bohemian, but the young Stevenson also becomes aware of social class and some of the politics of class. He records with interest the strongly felt political convictions of a professed "Communist" (88-94). He is staggered when, because his traveling companion has a mackintosh and he himself does not, he is taken for his friend's servant. Being repeatedly shut out by innkeepers and townspeople because he doesn't look quite respectable leads Stevenson to a series of meditations on class. On the one hand, even the lower classes like to find points of superiority to somebody else, but, on the other hand, a poor individual is likely to offer charity, whereas "at a certain level of prosperity, as in a balloon ascent, the fortunate person passes through a zone of clouds, and sublunary matters [i.e. the less prosperous and less elevated individuals below] are thenceforward hidden from his view" (42).

Stevenson's responses to women in *An Inland Voyage* are also revealing. On the one hand, the category of woman he most frequently encounters seems to be the "red-handed and loud-voiced" washerwomen he frequently glimpses along the waterways (137; cf. 119, 125, 155, etc.). Yet he also occasionally notices women like the "bevy of girls in Parisian costumes playing croquet. . . . The look of these slim figures, all corseted and ribboned, produced an answerable disturbance in our hearts. We were within sniff of Paris, it seemed. And here were females of our own species playing croquet" (142). It is tempting to inquire as to what other species Stevenson thinks women might belong, and indeed the answer is not far to seek: "For, to be frank, the peasant woman is scarcely to be counted as a woman at all"—he has already "passed by such a succession of people in petticoats digging, and hoeing, and making dinner" (143). When Stevenson and his friend pass a "bevy" of bourgeois girls, it is often with a "disturbance in our hearts," as occurs again when they pass by young women in the garden of a boarding school. These girls wave handkerchiefs at the canoeists, and Stevenson responds with a wave and "a stir in my heart. . . . This is a fashion I love: to kiss the hand or wave a handkerchief to people I shall never see again, to play with pos-

sibility, and knock a peg for fancy to hang upon" (137). Even at a distance, such young women are fit subjects for fantasy, belonging as they do to the same "species" as the author. But they are also attractive precisely because they are ephemeral figures of fantasy, and thus not threatening.

The young Stevenson's identity clearly is protean and uncertain in *An Inland Voyage*. A chapter is devoted, for instance, to an encounter with the members of a Belgian boating club, and although the Belgian enthusiasts are intrigued to know all about their British counterparts, in conversation Stevenson feels somewhat distant from the "Royal Nautical Sportsmen." He can identify with their lack of interest in "dull" and "nasty" business affairs: "They were all employed over the frivolous mercantile concerns of Belgium during the day; but in the evening they found some hours for the serious concerns of life"—namely, "their spontaneous, long-suffering affection for nautical sports" (18-19). Still, Stevenson is soon left behind by their passionate enthusiasm for rowing, and he flees to avoid the arrival of a champion canoeist. These enthusiasts evidently take their pastime entirely too seriously, cling to it with an escapism that is perhaps a bit too readily apparent.

Throughout the book, then, Stevenson's bourgeois roots are evident, yet he is most interested in people who have not fully adapted to bourgeois life, whether they be Royal Nautical Sportsmen, barge families, wandering actors and musicians, or omnibus drivers longing to travel somewhere other than back and forth between station and hotel. On the other hand, Stevenson also feels somewhat shocked by his not fitting in—at being taken for a peddler or vagabond or worse. He clearly feels envious of his traveling companion's superior respectability: "He had more aplomb altogether than I; and a dull, positive way of approaching a landlady that carried off the india-rubber bags" in which their belongings were stowed (117). Simpson's appearance and manners are somehow less likely to provoke the canoeists' immediate expulsion from an inn.

Throughout the voyage, Stevenson explicitly resists the pull of the conventional life and home. He declares that "the receipt of letters is the death of all holiday feeling" on a trip: "I have paid all this money, look you, and paddled all these strokes, for no other purpose than to be abroad; and yet you keep me at home with your perpetual communications. You tug the string, and I feel that I am a tethered bird. You pursue me all over Europe with the little vexations that I came away to avoid" (124). It is not always clear who the Stevenson-persona in the book is, but it is clear what he is resisting, what he wishes *not* to become.

In the course of the book, some of the most interesting moments occur when Stevenson momentarily surrenders control and loses himself entirely, hypnagogically, to canoeing. Continuing to count his individual oar strokes, he loses track of the hundreds (133). He slips into a state of Nirvana, where he cannot distinguish *me* from *not-me* and it seems that "somebody else" is managing the paddling (131). The canoe-trip as a whole is a willed, temporary separation from ordinary life: "I wish to take a dive among new conditions for a while, as into another element. I have nothing to do with my friends or my affections for the time" (124). There is a strong sense of emotional detachment and dissociation,

and the Nirvana-state is clearly the journey's high-point: "Thoughts presented themselves unbidden; they were not my thoughts, they were someone else's. . . . This frame of mind was the great exploit of our voyage, take it all in all. It was the farthest piece of travel accomplished" (132). At this moment Stevenson and his fellow-voyager, Simpson, virtually become the two boats by whose names they have referred to one another, the *Arethusa* and the *Cigarette*, respectively, and the "inland" of the title becomes what in important respects it always was—the interior of Robert Louis Stevenson. The fluidity of the author's character comes to resemble the water that has borne him along, and fundamentally he is alone.

For many of Stevenson's admirers, *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes* contains his most perfect and picturesque travel writing. It is an elaboration of the journal he kept while roaming this mountainous region in the south of France for twelve days during September and October 1878. (The journal itself was first published one hundred years afterwards under the title *The Cevennes Journal*.) Unlike the *Inland Voyage* canoe-trip, Stevenson made this tour alone and on foot, with knapsack and pack. He purchased a mule, however, which he named Modestine, to carry his pack. If the earlier book depicts an attempt at defining a very fluid personality, with Stevenson adopting various *personae* along his voyage and trying to reconcile his self-perceptions with others' perceptions of him, *Travels with a Donkey* is the story of a relationship, the relationship of Stevenson with his donkey.

Of course, a number of themes weave their way through *Travels with a Donkey*, and one of the more prominent of these concerns religion. Stevenson is conscious that he has been raised in a strong tradition of Scottish Presbyterianism, though he is now something of an agnostic traveling in largely Catholic France. He devotes a section of the book—reminiscent of Matthew Arnold's ambivalent response to the monastery of the Grande Chartreuse—to his stay in a Trappist monastery, where he encounters some pressure from his fellow-boarders to convert to Catholicism. Stevenson delights in resisting. His travels also take him to the region of the Camisards, French Protestants who were in armed revolt against the government in the early years of the eighteenth century, following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which had granted them religious toleration. Stevenson's treatment of the whole topic of religion in *Travels* amounts to an extended meditation on religious differences and a plea for mutual toleration and respect. As such, it constitutes part of the extended dialogue on religious faith that Stevenson conducted with his Calvinist father.

A second motif that one can trace through the book concerns the presence, or perhaps one should say the absence, of the married American woman who had come into Stevenson's life and was later to become his own wife, Fanny Osbourne. Stevenson met Fanny in July 1876 at

²In the *Cevennes Journal* the passage goes on to describe "a sort of fellowship more quiet than even solitude, and which, rightly understood, is solitude made perfect. The woman. . . whom a man has learned to love

Greze, where both had gone to study art. Their relationship developed over the next two years, but Fanny sailed back to the U. S. in August 1878 at the insistence of her husband, Sam. Occasionally Stevenson's "strange lack" of Fanny rises to the surface of his text, particularly in his feeling of solitude under the stars: "I wished a companion to lie near me in the starlight, silent and not moving, but ever within touch. . . . To live out of doors with a woman a man loves is of all lives the most complete and free" (297-98).² The importance of Fanny's presence/absence in *Travels with a Donkey* is alluded to in Stevenson's declaration to his cousin Bob Stevenson that "lots of it is mere protestations to F., most of which I think you will understand. That is to me the main thread of interest" (*Letters* 2:313); and the book's dedication to Sidney Colvin, though a more general elaboration on the theme that "we are all travelers in what John Bunyan calls the wilderness of this world" in search of "an honest friend," also hints at the *roman a clef*: "Every book is, in an intimate sense, a circular letter to the friends of him who writes it. They alone take his meaning; they find private messages, assurances of love, and expressions of gratitude dropped for them in every corner" (187).

The argument of this section of the paper will be to show, a bit more substantially and systematically, what other readers have suspected (see, for example Mackay 88, Holmes 38, and McLynn 131) that the donkey Modestine is a surrogate for Fanny, a female "other" in a relationship with Stevenson that the book is focused on developing. This thesis is an elaboration of a remark that Stevenson himself included in his *Cevennes Journal*, but chose not to publish in *Travels with a Donkey*, that "a voyage is a piece of autobiography at best" (68).

Although most modern editions of *Travels with a Donkey* follow the Tusitala edition of Stevenson's *Works* by placing the fragment "A Mountain Town in France" at the beginning of the book, as Stevenson seems to have originally intended, all versions of *Travels with a Donkey* published during his own lifetime actually begin with the section on Velay and the chapter on "The Donkey, the Pack, and the Pack-Saddle" (Swearingen 33-34). The Velay section starts with two epigraphs which immediately call attention to the donkey Modestine in some of her symbolic complexity. One is an excerpt from a well-known passage in Sophocles's *Antigone*, in which the chorus marvels at the might of man, who "masters by his devices the tenant of the fields," though the passage in *Antigone* goes on to complicate this sense of triumph by noting that such human cleverness may produce either good or evil and by denouncing the person who chooses evil. Stevenson's second epigraph—"Who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?" (*Job* 39:5) expresses the claim of the deity, speaking as the voice from the whirlwind, to the kind of infinite power and wisdom that Job cannot hope to understand or regulate. Both epigraphs, in other words, ironically suggest the limits of humankind's power over even those creatures and things which it believes are

wholly . . . is no longer another person in the troubling sense" (81). This double-edged sense that the beloved might be a troubling "other" or might ideally represent perfect harmony and understanding is significant.

under control or at least within its power of understanding.

The first chapter of the original book, as noted, plunges the reader immediately into the topic of "The Donkey, the Pack, and the Pack-Saddle." Stevenson determines that he will require an animal of some sort to help transport his sleeping-sack—a sort of long roll or sausage, green waterproof cart cloth without and blue sheep's fur within" (209)—along with his cooking utensils, some food, a lantern and candles, a jack-knife and a revolver, and other necessities. Stevenson's preconceptions about the animal he will purchase in order to help him are interesting. He first contemplates a horse as his preferred "beast of burden," but he concludes with a curiously volatile sense of the animal's gender:

A horse is a fine lady among animals, flighty, timid, delicate of eating, of tender health; he is too valuable and too restive to be left alone, so you are chained to your brute as to a fellow galley-slave; a dangerous road puts him out of his wits; in short, he's an uncertain and exacting ally, and adds thirty-fold to the troubles of the voyager. What I required was something cheap and small and hardy, and of a stolid and peaceful temper; and all these requisites pointed to a donkey. (209-10)

From Father Adam, a peddler, he purchases Modestine, "a diminutive she-ass, not much bigger than a dog, the color of a mouse, with a kindly eye and a determined under jaw" (210), supposing her to be merely "an appurtenance of my mattress, or self-acting bedstead on four castors" (211). Modestine's clear gender-markings are striking from the very first, and she continues to be gender-marked throughout the text—as "a female" (216), "my lady" and "my lady-friend" (247, 261, 361), "my she-ass" (255, 347, etc.). Descriptively, too, Modestine is "prim" (*Cevennes Journal* 50), moves with a "sober daintiness of gait" and is "docility itself" (215). Her very name suggests female modesty, and when Modestine meets a male donkey on the road Stevenson is forced to separate the pair, noting that "the incident saddened me, as did everything that spoke of my donkey's sex" (220). Imagining her at first to be a tractable helpmate, a self-acting bedstead, Stevenson writes of his affection for Modestine, and his belief that he is rescuing her from Father Adam, who "had a name in the village for brutally misusing the ass," though Adam visibly sheds a tear upon parting from Modestine (211).

Stevenson soon encounters his own problems with Modestine, and, in fact, the editors of the *Cevennes Journal* suggest that one of the reasons for these problems is that Modestine probably had been used previously to draw the peddler's cart, not to carry a loaded pack-saddle (138). In any event, Stevenson almost immediately experiences a great

deal of difficulty fitting both a pad and the pack-saddle upon Modestine, especially when he tries to add "a monstrous deck-cargo" of clothing, food, and bottles (213). A disaster is brewing.³ The load requires constant readjustment, and at various times the pack intended for Modestine's back falls below her belly, spilling Stevenson's possessions onto the roadway. Early in their travels, particularly, Stevenson and his donkey provoke amusement in the people they encounter—so he imagines that, encouraged by these onlookers, Modestine herself "seemed to smile" (220). He is at last forced to jettison a goodly portion of his belongings, calling this "a sacrifice to the gods of shipwreck" (222).

The first great test of wills occurs as Stevenson attempts to use a cane to get Modestine to move. He is able to speed her up a bit by applying his staff, but she immediately reverts to her slowest pace when he stops. Stevenson knows himself to be a "green," and believes himself to be a "reluctant" donkey-driver (215), and he has qualms about his brutality toward his female donkey as he goes along: "I am worthy the name of an Englishman, and it goes against my conscience to lay my hand rudely on a female" (215-16); or, "The sound of my own blows sickened me. Once, when I looked at her, she had a faint resemblance to a lady of my acquaintance who formerly loaded me with kindness, and thus increased my horror of my cruelty" (220).

At the same time Stevenson is suspicious about the trustworthiness of Modestine's responses. At one point he responds sympathetically to her apparent difficulty: "The poor brute's knees were trembling and her breathing was distressed; it was plain that she could go no faster on a hill. God forbid, thought I, that I should brutalise this innocent creature; let her go at her own pace, and let me patiently follow" (216). Yet when a "peasant" passing by replaces Stevenson's cane with a switch plucked from a thicket and begins to lace Modestine "about the sternworks, uttering a cry," Stevenson notes that Modestine "broke into a good round pace, which she kept up without flagging, and without exhibiting the least symptom of distress, as long as the peasant kept beside us. Her former panting and shaking had been, I regret to say, a piece of comedy" (217). In a later chapter, as recorded in the *Cevennes Journal*, Stevenson takes a longer route "in honor of real or feigned fatigues upon the part of my loathly donkey" (53). Stevenson again humorously projects his doubts about the donkey's integrity onto her when he reports her taking and munching the black bread he offers "with a contrite, hypocritical air" (222).

Modestine's resistance to Stevenson and his beatings of her continue.⁴ Stevenson keeps "one arm free to thrash Modestine, and cruelly I chastised her" (213). He complains that "my arm ached like toothache from perpetual beating" (226). At times Modestine's vagaries are represented as stereotypically female, as when she leaves the main road for

a by-path, and Stevenson's responses are stereotypically male: "A little out of the village, Modestine, filled with the demon, set her heart upon a by-road and positively refused to leave it. I dropped all my bundles, and, I am ashamed to say, struck the poor sinner across the face" (222). Modestine, Stevenson complains, is always domestically inclined, preferring any open gate or doorway she encounters along the way to the open road. When by-standers laugh at him, Stevenson uncomfortably recalls "having laughed myself when I had seen good men struggling with adversity in the person of a jackass, and the recollection filled me with penitence" (222).

The landlord of an inn at which Stevenson stays makes his progress easier by preparing a goad for Stevenson to use—a wand with 1/8 inch of pin at the end to prick Modestine into progress:

Thenceforward Modestine was my slave [Stevenson adds in the *Cevennes Journal* "my chattel, my most obedient, humble servant" (39)]. . . . And what although now and then a drop of blood should appear on Modestine's mouse-colored wedge-like rump? I should have preferred it otherwise, indeed; but yesterday's exploits had purged my heart of all humanity. The perverse little devil, since she would not be taken with kindness, must even go with pricking. (231-32)

Still, Modestine's top speed is only two and a half miles per hour, and Stevenson continues to employ his goad. Modestine suffers from the blows and goading, the rubbing of the sack and saddle, and also probably, as the *Cevennes Journal* editor has suggested, from being in heat throughout the first part of the journey (153).

Alas, there were her two forelegs no better than raw beef on the inside, and blood was running from under her tail. They told me when I left, and I was ready to believe it, that before a few days I should come to love Modestine like a dog. Three days had passed, we had shared some misadventures, and my heart was still as cold as a potato towards my beast of burden. She was pretty enough to look at; but then she had given proof of dead stupidity, redeemed indeed by patience, but aggravated by flashes of sorry and ill-judged light-heartedness. [*Cevennes Journal* adds: "I could have seen her led to the gelatine factory without a pang" (53).] And I own this new discovery seemed another point against her. What the devil was the good of a she-ass if she could not carry a sleeping bag, and a few necessities? I saw the end of the fable rapidly approaching, when I should have to carry Modestine. Aesop was the man to know the world! (255-56)

The "raw beef" and trickle of blood "from the poop" become a recurrent motif, especially in the unedited *Cevennes Journal* (53, 58, 95-96). Still, the struggles with Modestine continue, as, backing, rearing, and braying, she rejects a short cut up a hillside. "I plied the goad" and Modestine is forced up the steep ascent: "Half a dozen times she [the 'vile brute' in *Cevennes Journal* (77)] was nearly over backwards

on top of me; half a dozen times, from sheer weariness of spirit, I was nearly giving it up, and leading her down again to follow the road. But I took the thing as a wager, and fought it through" (292). Coping with "Modestine's laggard humour," Stevenson reports that he "goaded and kicked the reluctant Modestine" to a place of rest (321). Modestine can be forced up a path, "but once on the turf or among heather . . . the brute became demented, "traveling in circles (241). Trusting Modestine's instinct to choose the correct path when the road forks is also a mistake; Modestine turns out to have "the instinct of an ass" (243).

Stevenson is not entirely uncaring and unsollicitous toward Modestine, however. He repeatedly tries to readjust and lighten the pack, even discarding some of its contents and shifting some of the rest to his own knapsack. His sleeping-sack is at first folded in half and slung on one side of the donkey; Stevenson eventually learns to hang it full length across the saddle on both sides to ensure the donkey's stability, even though in a drizzle this is more likely to produce wet wool inside the sleeping-sack. It is clear that at certain moments he can humorously empathize with Modestine, as when she is seen as "a haggard, drenched, desponding donkey" (247) or when, before dawn, Modestine is discovered "tied to a beech, and standing half across the path in an attitude of inimitable patience" (250). At moments he clearly enjoys sharing his black bread with her (early on he reduces the two classes of bread, black and brown, to an egalitarian one), and there are a number of affectionate glimpses of Modestine "munching at the sward" (296), or "munching heather" (347), or recuperating at an inn with "stable and kitchen in a suite, so that Modestine and I could hear each other dining" (227). There are even moments of (relatively) high compliment: "It grew darker and darker. Modestine, suddenly beginning to smell mischief, bettered the pace of her own accord, and from that time forward gave me no trouble. It was the first sign of intelligence I had occasion to remark in her" (242). As the journey progresses, Modestine herself develops "high spirits, and broke of her own accord, for the first time in my experience, into a jolting trot" (303). A while later, "even Modestine was inspired by this purified nocturnal sunshine [the moonlight on the road], and bestirred her little hoofs as to a livelier measure" (351). At times Stevenson can be quite solicitous of Modestine, making her "a pile of chestnut-leaves, of which I found her greedy" (321).

Although Stevenson's frustrations with Modestine continue through the latter parts of the journey and the text, many times here his irritation is restrained or checked. For example, "I had hurried to the topmost powers of Modestine, for I dearly desired to see the view upon the other side [of the summit of St. Pierre] before the day had faded. But it was night when I reached the summit" (358). Rhetorically, the blame is deflected somewhat from Modestine: she performed at her "topmost powers," but "I" failed to reach the summit in daylight. At another point, "I fed Modestine with all the haste I could" (324), and the rest of the sentence, found in the *Cevennes Journal*, is suppressed: "but it took me longer than usual, for the minx, smelling hurry, refused to eat except from my hand" (99). Stevenson's ambivalence toward Modestine comes through most clearly in summary

³In her preface to *Travels with a Donkey* Fanny Stevenson observes that "the management of Modestine's pack must have been a source of exasperation and perplexity to her master, for my husband was, like his father before him, what the Scotch call a 'handless man.' Neither could tie a knot that would hold . . . and [Stevenson's father] would find himself helpless before the problem of cording a trunk, or even buttoning his own cuffs" (184).

⁴Contemporary reviews attacked this aspect of the book. The *Fortnightly Review* noted that "most Englishmen will perhaps feel pained rather than amused by the description of Modestine's many stripes" (Maixner 66); and the *Spectator* complained about "the vivid description [Stevenson] gives of each blow, as it descended on the creature's back. . . . It is strange how he can dwell with such placid content on the sufferings that he owns to have inflicted on his companion" (Maixner 72).

assessments like this:

To Modestine, although I could never find it in my heart to be generous, I believe I was rigorously just. On the march, I hit upon a mean between the honest stride-legged pace of a man walking, and the pitiful, mincing gait that seemed to suit my she-ass next best after standing still; and to this mean, I sought honestly to keep the pair of us faithful. (*Cevennes Journal* 58; passage not included in *Travels with a Donkey*)

Modestine and Fanny are not the only females who figure in *Travels with a Donkey*. As in the *Inland Voyage*, but more prominently in this later book, there is a minor motif of Stevenson's encounters with various women along the way.⁵

A number of these women are teasing, taunting, or otherwise unappealing. Stevenson frequently has difficulty with the young girls he encounters: there is the seven- or eight-year-old "lassie" who clearly expects respect from the wanderer, but whose mood turns to "silent dudgeon" when he laughs at her imperiousness (235); and there are two girls of whom he asks directions, "a pair of impudent sly sluts, with not a thought but mischief," one of whom sticks out her tongue while the other instructs him that to reach his destination he need only follow the cows (241).

There are also quite a few attractive and appealing women in the book, such as the pretty and engaging young innkeeper in a hamlet by the Tarn: "he who takes her to his heart will doubtless be a fortunate young man" (330). At another inn, there is a shrewd landlady who runs the operation while ruling her "astonishingly ignorant" husband (228). Stevenson is surprised when he is asked to share a bedroom with a married couple at this inn: "I kept my eyes to myself, and know nothing of the woman except that she had beautiful arms, and seemed no whit abashed by my appearance" (230). The blushing self-consciousness is all his, Stevenson admits, and the couple are not fazed by his presence. When Stevenson crosses into the country of the Camisards, he notes the prettier women there, exemplified by Clarisse, whose "great grey eyes were steeped in amorous languor" (311). But as often appears to be the case with the women he encounters, Clarisse has serious limitations: she is complacent and countrified, needing "training" and contact with superior society in order to achieve real elegance (312). Clearly relationships will not come easily to this writer, and in the company of women almost as much anxiety as attraction is expressed.

At "Our Lady of the Snows," Stevenson muses on the practice of excluding women from male groups, whether at a Trappist monastery or at an artists' colony, such as the one he had come to know in Barbizon:

In the neighborhood of women it is but a touch-and-go association that can be formed among defenseless men; the stronger electricity is sure to triumph; the dreams of boyhood, the schemes of youth, are abandoned after an interview of ten minutes, and the arts and sciences, and professional male jollity, deserted at once for two sweet eyes and a caressing accent. (274)

Yet it is also true, as Stevenson well knows, that the Trappist monks at the monastery sleep nightly in their grave-clothes and appear in more senses than one to be "the dead in life" (277). As he leaves the monastery, a French song about how *Amour* will know how to value the *belles filles* comes to mind, "And I blessed God that I was free to wander, free to hope, and free to love" (277), unlike the monks.

As the traveler approaches the end of his travels, he hears "the voice of a woman singing some sad, old, endless ballad . . . about love and a *bel amoureux*," and Stevenson wishes he "could have taken up the strain and answered her," to tell about "how the world gives and takes away, and brings sweethearts near, only to separate them again into distant and strange lands; but to love is the great amulet which makes the world a garden" (350). Once again, Fanny across the seas is doubtless the subtext of his song.

Travels with a Donkey is, indeed, a book of longing, longing for the absent, desired woman. But it is also, as we have seen, a book about the problems in the relationship with a less than idealized woman. The book is suffused with a sense that relationships involve obstinacy, struggles for mastery, suspicion, contestation, strife. However humorously Stevenson's contests with Modestine are presented—and humor is certainly his aim—there is a serious subtext of irritation and contention, defining both partners in this relationship.

In this respect *Travels with a Donkey* is a difficult book for the modern reader, and perhaps especially for a modern woman, to read. If Stevenson's contemporary, presumably male reviewers found his treatment of an animal hard to take, the book is certainly all the more difficult for a modern reader who reads directly through from donkey to woman. One is probably not justified in reading the text so transparently, however. Donkeys are, after all, notoriously willful and resistant in their own right, and Modestine was very much a real-life donkey. Still, the fact is that Stevenson himself makes much of his donkey's gender, and it is quite within the realm of biographical possibility that the other side of Stevenson's longing for the absent Fanny consisted of powerful feelings of anger and frustration at being left behind when she went off to rejoin her husband. The biographical evidence makes clear, in fact, that Fanny's return to the U. S. initiated a trying period of gloom and self-doubt for Stevenson.⁶

Whatever his exasperation with Modestine, Stevenson, after adding many pages not included in the original *Cevennes Journal* recounting the struggles of the Camisards, the rebellious French Protestants, chooses to end *Travels with a Donkey* by returning to Modestine and describing their parting. "Farewell Modestine!" the book's final chapter, begins with this notation: "On examination, on the morning of October 4th, Modestine was pronounced unfit for travel. She would need at least two days' repose according to the ostler" (361). Unwilling to wait, Stevenson sells Modestine for 35 francs, about half the 65 francs he had originally paid for her, but feeling "I had bought freedom into the bargain" (361). Despite these sentiments, the last chapter is a tribute to Modestine, summarizing their relationship and their parting, with a kind of equal weighing of delight and dole, or, at any rate, a blend of affectionate melancholy and humor: "I became aware of my bereavement. I had lost Modestine. Up to that moment [of parting] I had thought I hated her; but now she was gone." Stevenson sums it all up by quoting from one of Wordsworth's "Lucy" poems: "'And, Oh, / The difference to me!' For twelve days we had been fast companions. . . . She had come to regard me as a god. She loved to eat out of my hand. She was patient, elegant in form, the color of an ideal mouse, and inimitably small. Her faults were those of her race and sex; her virtues were her own" (362-63). Stevenson claims that he wept as his coach pulled away, and this is the note on which this second book of travel ends.

The first travel book, *An Inland Voyage*, is largely about a young person's search for identity. It is concerned with how he will define himself—with what social class, vocation, and group. In it Stevenson tries out a variety of bohemian roles; he expresses disapproval of various groups he encounters, but identifies totally with none. One of the striking aspects of the book is that it describes no true relationship whatsoever, even though Stevenson has a traveling companion. The latter, however, functions in the text entirely as a yardstick for measuring the self. Stevenson presents himself as something of a free spirit, enjoying the random and circumstantial nature of his encounters with people and places. His peak experience is the inner one of Nirvana.

Travels with a Donkey, on the other hand, is primarily a book about relationship—indeed about contestation in a rela-

tionship. Fanny Osbourne is obliquely present in the book, in the few direct allusions to her, but still more in the various women represented, especially Modestine. Just as in real life Fanny was resisting Stevenson by returning to the U. S. without any firm commitment to him, Modestine was resisting too, as donkeys are wont to do. The relationship between Stevenson and Modestine occupies center stage of *Travels with a Donkey*, while the Cevennes, the district traveled in, occupies a subordinate position, even in the volume's title.

Works Cited

- Balfour, Graham. *The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson*. 2 vols. London: Methuen, 1901.
- Clunas, Alex. "'Out of my country and myself I go': Identity and Writing in Stevenson's Early Travel Books." *Nineteenth-Century Prose* 23.1 (1996): 54-73.
- Holmes, Richard. *Footsteps: Adventures of a Romantic Biographer*. New York: Viking, 1985.
- Lapierre, Alexandra. *Fanny Stevenson: A Romance of Destiny*. Trans. Carol Cosman. New York: Carroll & Graf, 1995.
- Mackay, Margaret. *The Violent Friend: The Story of Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968.
- Maixner, Paul, ed. *Robert Louis Stevenson: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981.
- McLynn, Frank. *Robert Louis Stevenson: A Biography*. London: Hutchinson, 1993.
- Stevenson, Robert Louis. *The Cevennes Journal: Notes on a Journey through the French Highlands*. Ed. Gordon Golding, Jacques Blondel, and Jacques Poujol. Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1978.
- _____. *An Inland Voyage, Travels with a Donkey and Edinburgh: Picturesque Notes*. Vol. 1 of *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*. Vailima Edition. 26 vols. New York: Scribner's, 1921-23.
- _____. *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*. ed. Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Mehew. 8 vols. New Haven: Yale UP, 1994-95.
- Swearingen, Roger G. *The Prose Writings of Robert Louis Stevenson: A Guide*. Hamden, CT: Archon, 1980.

University of Minnesota

Marginalized Maisie: Social Purity and *What Maisie Knew*

by Christine DeVine

This article contextualizes Henry James's 1897 novel *What Maisie Knew* within the English socio-political milieu at the turn of the century, and argues that this book exposes the discourse of the social purity movement as class-based and therefore marginalizing of those it purported to help. In *The Other Henry James*, John Carlos Rowe points out that James's "valorization of aesthetic experience . . . and fictional concentration on middle-class manners seems to identify him unmistakably as just another author intent on

justifying the bourgeoisie's right to rule" (9). Rowe notes that Frederic Jameson, in *The Political Unconscious*, sees James "as merely one among many who contributed to the legitimation of bourgeois values" (9). But far from justifying or supporting bourgeois values, James has questioned and challenged them in *What Maisie Knew*. He takes issue with the class othering common in the discourse of social purity, a discourse that strongly inherited in a normative middle-class ideology in the last decades of the nineteenth century. For as Richard Altick points out, "Since the middle class regarded itself as the moral heart of Victorian society, a conviction

⁵Frank McLynn suggests that Stevenson's contemporary readers and reviewers noted "the ubiquity of sexuality" in the book (136).

⁶McLynn 137-48. McLynn is in fact highly critical of Fanny's behavior before her marriage to Stevenson, describing her as a mercenary, "cold, unscrupulous and somewhat coarse coquette" (113). His biography goes on to paint the later Stevenson as "a martyr to the greedy, grasping Osbourne family" (543). It is interesting to compare another recent biographical

work, Alexandra Lapierre's fictionalized study of Fanny Stevenson, which portrays her as a modern, independent, path-breaking proto-feminist. Despite their radically different sympathies, both of these recent books have the virtue of representing the two partners as strong personalities involved in a "conflictual" rather than an "idyllic" relationship (McLynn 147; cf. Lapierre 342-43).

assisted by the shift of the economic center of gravity in its direction, it took the understandable position that what was good for it was *ipso facto* good for the nation" (29). While the most obvious target of James's satire in this novel is the moral hypocrisy of the English middle classes, his allusions to the social purity campaigns of the last decades of the century suggest that James was specifically criticizing the middle-class worldview promulgated by the discourse of the moral reformers, a worldview that stereotyped other classes, projecting onto them what they saw as society's immoralities.

"The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon"

In 1885, as part of an investigation of the so-called white slave trade, William T. Stead, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, purchased thirteen-year-old Eliza Armstrong for five pounds and took her to France, proving that procuring an underage English girl for a French brothel could be accomplished fairly easily. Although the procuress—an ex-prostitute—had told Stead that Eliza's mother had consented to the sale, the mother later went to the police asking them to find her daughter (Walkowitz *City* 106-110). Stead was arrested, along with others who had been involved in the scheme, and sentenced to three months in prison for abduction. When Stead spoke about his abduction of Eliza at a meeting later, he justified his actions by saying that he was taking her away from drunken parents and a home "that was steeped in vice" (Schults 176); in other words, he was doing it for her own good. Apparently Eliza remained a virgin throughout the experience and stayed with a Salvation Army family while in France. Stead called a meeting of supporters in St. James Hall in August of 1885 and set into motion the National Vigilance Association, whose stated purpose was to protect young girls from prostitution (Gorham 361). Despite the fact that he had been imprisoned for the very crime he was denouncing, Stead was to remain an active and respected leader in the social purity movement.¹

Stead's abduction of Eliza Armstrong formed part of his notorious "Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon" campaign in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. The campaign was a desperate attempt by moral reformers to raise public awareness of such outrages as the selling of young English girls into French brothels. It was hoped that passage of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill would—among other moral reforms—help to eradicate this practice, which had become known as the white slave trade.² The fight for passage of this Bill had continued for some years; it had passed in the House of Lords more than once, but for various reasons had always been

defeated in the Commons. In April 1885 another version of the Bill passed the Lords, but again faced the same fate in the Commons. To make sure the Bill was not again defeated, Benjamin Scott, chairman of the London Committee for the Exposure and Suppression of the Traffic in English Girls for the Purposes of Continental Prostitution, turned to Stead asking him to wage a publicity campaign in the pages of *PMG*. In order to publicize the white slave trade issue, Stead spent some weeks investigating London vice under the auspices of what was called the "Special and Secret Commission of Inquiry," and finally launched the "Maiden Tribute" campaign on July 4, 1885, with "A Frank Warning" to his readers. The teaser read:

[A]ll those who are squeamish, and all those who are prudish, and all those who prefer to live in a fool's paradise of imaginary innocence and purity, selfishly oblivious of the horrible realities which torment those whose lives are passed in the London Inferno, will do well not to read the *Pall Mall Gazette* on Monday and on the following days. (qtd. in Schults 132)

Because of the shocking nature of Stead's reports in the *PMG*, W. H. Smith refused to distribute it on book stalls in railway stations. Despite, or perhaps due to, this ban the *PMG* was selling well through other channels; people were unable to resist Stead's sensationalism. The Criminal Law Amendment Bill was passed in August 1885;³ it was a victorious moment for social purity activists. Though the *PMG* campaign had turned into a scandal because of Stead's tactics, it had given momentum to mass rallies and gave a new vigor thereafter to moral reform organizations.

The "Maiden Tribute" campaign represents a confluence of the discourses of social purity and class which were commonly associated during this period. In its reporting on this event, *PMG* set up representations of class groups onto which moral inferiority could be projected. In his reporting on the white slave trade, Stead identified upper-class men and foreign traffickers as the victimizers of poor working-class English girls—girls who themselves were seen as lacking agency and needing protection. Stead merged morality and class issues in his sensational style of journalism, and these issues often merged in the public mind

"My interesting small mortal"

In the years which followed the excitement of the scandals surrounding the "Maiden Tribute" campaign, Henry

James was working on an idea for a story. And as often happened with James, the idea was incubated for some time before it was hatched in a form much larger than his original plan. He first recorded the *donné* for *What Maisie Knew* in his notebook in 1892. The novel was not published, however, until 1897, the year of Queen Victoria's triumphant Diamond Jubilee celebration, which bespoke the prosperity of her now solidly middle-class nation. James's decision to present the middle-class English characters in this novel as morally corrupt—and almost all of them are corrupt except Maisie—is politically provocative in view of the strident rhetoric of the social reformers during the last years of Victoria's reign.⁴ Though written a few years after the furor over Stead's abduction of Eliza Armstrong, James's novel, in which an aristocratic man takes a young girl to France, mirrors the Eliza Armstrong incident and echoes Stead's continued reporting on the sexual exploitation of poor, young girls by upper-class men. I will argue, therefore, that in writing *What Maisie Knew*, James was specifically challenging the discourse of the social purity movement, a discourse that encouraged class-based thinking in order to achieve its own ends.

In *What Maisie Knew*, James does not simply satirize immorality, he exposes the highly developed levels of discourse which allow immorality both to flourish and to be condemned at one and the same time. He portrays a middle-class English society whose members profess a certain standard of moral propriety that they simultaneously undercut by their behavior; they are, in other words, hypocritical. Maisie's parents, Ida and Beale, divorce and they use their young daughter as a weapon against their hated ex-spouse, first by keeping her longer than the agreed six-month term, and later by not collecting her after the agreed time. Each then carries on various sexual liaisons; Beale eventually marries Maisie's governess, who then carries on an affair with Maisie's new stepfather, Sir Claude. While using Maisie for their own ends, and constantly carrying on these nefarious relations, James's characters boost their own sense of moral superiority by displacing their immorality onto someone else.

Maisie is often the depository of these projections of immorality; she becomes the scapegoat for the adults around her, and she is often identified with "lower-class" women. But James makes Maisie—a small, powerless girl, labeled as immoral by those around her—the central consciousness in his novel. He notes in his 1909 "Preface" to the New York Edition:

[To] that then I settled—to the question of giving . . . the whole situation surrounding her [Maisie], but of giving it only through the occasions and connexions of her proximity and her attention; only as it might pass before

her and appeal to her, as it might touch her and affect her, for better or worse. (27)

And yet as James tells us, although he had begun with the idea of giving "the picture restricted . . . to what the child might be conceived to have *understood*—to have been able to interpret and appreciate," he notes that "[f]urther reflexion and experiment showed," that he would "have to stretch the matter to what [his] wondering witness materially and inevitably saw" (27). It is an authorial sleight of hand which convinces the reader she is viewing the world through Maisie's eyes, while at the same time it is the voice of the narrator who describes what Maisie is seeing. And it is no doubt this prestidigitation allows James both to have his cake and eat it too; for while Maisie is marginalized by the adults in her world, she is the central figure in all that passes before us.

Maisie's problem is one of epistemology. Like the reader of the public discourse in late-Victorian society, James's "interesting small mortal" is trying to comprehend the narratives of those around her; each of the adults in her world tells her a different version of the situation. They accuse Maisie of having no moral sense. But to have a moral sense, one must have a fundamental truth, and in Maisie's world, as in the public discourse of late-Victorian society, James suggests, there is no truth; there are only competing voices. Maisie's challenge is to try to make sense of them. Her success comes in the end, when she crosses the Channel, her epistemological Rubicon; what Maisie gains is a moral sense based on a knowledge of sexuality not on the suppression of it. Tony Tanner writes that "for James, knowledge of sex and matters concerning sexual behaviour, is *the* quintessential knowledge" (210), and this is the case for Maisie. Sex is the hidden, underlying agenda of the people surrounding her, and once she knows this, she can more easily understand their games.

"Wicked baronets who preyed on schoolgirls"

Much of the rhetoric of the social-purity movement with which James engages in this novel was focused on the morality of young women of Maisie's age, poor women who were drawn into prostitution, often temporarily, by sheer lack of alternatives for survival. The Criminal Law Amendment Bill was intended to solve the problem of child prostitution and the white slave trade by—among other things—raising the age of consent. The age of consent—the age at which a young woman is considered by law able to consent to sexual intercourse—had been raised in England in 1875 from twelve to thirteen years.⁵ Proponents of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill wanted to raise the age of consent from thir-

¹The Social Reform movement, whose members were drawn from the middle classes, was made up of a variety of reform groups—the National Vigilance Society, the Social Purity Alliance, the Moral Reform Union, the Salvation Army and the White Cross Army among others. These groups wanted to eradicate prostitution and the sexual double standard, and some called for chastity for both men and women (Rasor "Purity" 656).

²Gorham explains: "There were two loopholes in English legal and administrative procedure that made young English women attractive to the procurers who supplied Continental brothels. First, if a girl was over thirteen, it was not illegal to induce her to become a prostitute, and if the act of prostitution took place outside the country, no English law had been broken, even if fraud was employed to persuade her. In addition, the

administrative procedures at Somerset House were so arranged that it was easy to obtain a false birth certificate for a girl who was under twenty-one" in order to fool the French authorities (359). The Criminal Law Amendment Bill was designed to close such loopholes.

³Shults states that the basic provisions of the Bill as passed were: "the age of consent was raised to sixteen; brothels could be searched on the basis of information sworn before a magistrate by any parent, guardian, or person acting in the bona fide interest of a missing girl; young girls could be taken from immoral parents; proceedings could be taken against any person procuring a girl under sixteen or any girl or woman by force; special protection was given to idiot or imbecile females" (168n).

⁴The commercial failure of *The Bostonians* (1886) and *The Princess Casamassima* (1886), and subsequently of *The Tragic Muse* (1890), caused James to embark on a short-lived, unsuccessful career as a playwright. Doggedly returning to his original *métier* after this hiatus, he wrote *What Maisie Knew* (1896), an experiment in that it uses a center-of-consciousness technique. *The Princess Casamassima* and *What Maisie Knew*, unlike many of James's novels, both demonstrate James's concern with the current state of affairs in England, his adopted home. Though the Princess is half

American—we know this from her origins in *Roderick Hudson* (1875)—and the American Countess is a brief but startling presence in Maisie's life, still neither of these books concerns itself with American culture *per se*, nor even with the European scene.

⁵In America, under common law, the age had been 10, but had changed during the nineteenth century under state statutes which variously set it between 13 and 18.

teen to sixteen.⁶ Class issues were an integral part of this debate; those opposing passage of the age-of-consent legislation saw the possibility of young men being victimized by morally reprehensible, underage, working-class women who would seduce them and then bring them up before the law. This view suggests that middle- and upper-class young men were considered not only more valuable, but more moral because of their higher class status. Those reformers wishing to raise the age-of-consent, however, often depicted the working-class girls as passive victims of upper-class male sexual abuse; because of their own middle-class world view, they were unable to see these girls as willing participants in sexual activity (Walkowitz *Prostitution* 246). Judith Walkowitz writes:

for the more repressive moralists, the desire to protect young girls entailed imposing on them a social code that stressed female adolescent dependence. This code was more in keeping with middle-class notions of girlhood than with the lived reality of the exposed and unsupervised daughters of the labouring poor who were on the streets. (*City* 133)

While middle-class reformers projected their own standards in this way onto working-class girls, they projected immorality onto male aristocrats; these men were often blamed for "ruining" young, working-class girls: "If the corruption of our aristocracy were fully known," writes Josephine Butler in the 1880s, "I think it would hasten republicanism among us" (qtd. in Bell 177). But both the sexual passivity of working-class females and the immorality of upper-class males were, to a great extent, illusions created by the middle-class social reformers. Though some girls were taken to brothels in Europe and may have been mistreated when they got there, they were seldom virgins before they left, and often *chose* to cross the Channel (Gorham 376)). Evidence further shows that a large number of prostitutes worked with men of their own class; they were not preyed upon by upper-class men. The lack of class difference in these cases reduced the power differential; working-class prostitutes had more agency in their own sexual practices than was being recognized by those who wished to help them (Walkowitz *Prostitution* 249). This projection of sexual passivity onto prostitutes, and blame onto aristocrats, may have been due to an inability on the part of the middle classes to admit complicity in a system which, though it had been beneficial to them, had left many city-

dwellers living in poor, cramped conditions with unstable employment situations. Some poor women turned to the sex industry as a means of escape from oppressive domestic conditions and even simply for survival. The middle classes were becoming more and more aware of the inequalities in society for much attention was being focused on the poverty of London at this time. Charles Booth in his exhaustive seventeen-volume study of the poor in London found that thirty percent were living under the line of poverty. Working-class girls seem to have become the repository of social anxieties about these inequalities.

In the "Maiden Tribute" campaign, Stead plays on these middle-class anxieties. He gives the example of "Mr. ---. . . [a] wealthy man whose whole life is dedicated to the gratification of lust . . . a striking illustration of the extent to which it is possible for a wealthy man to ruin not merely hundreds, but thousands of poor women. It is actually Mr.---'s boast that he has ruined 2,000 women in his time" (qtd. in Schults 139-40). Even after passage of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, and after the excitement over the "Maiden Tribute" had died down, Stead continued to emphasize sexual crimes in his reporting, and, as Walkowitz points out, "tried to highlight sex exploitation as class exploitation, to expose the iniquity of wicked baronets who preyed on schoolgirls" (125). The social class system, then, was seen as inextricably linked in the middle-class mind with issues of morality.

"The child redeemer and the wayward evil girl"

This "sexual exploitation of the daughter" by the "upper-class male villain" (Walkowitz *City* 86), a familiar scenario in melodrama, and one which was made full use of in the "Maiden Tribute," is one which James reworks in *Maisie*. We know that James was in residence in London⁷ at the time of Stead's campaign⁸ and was therefore likely to be aware of all the excitement surrounding it. And the similarities between the "Maiden Tribute" story and James's novel suggest that James is specifically alluding to the campaign and its aftermath. In the novel, Sir Claude, who has at one point given Mrs. Wix, Maisie's substitute mother, a five-pound note (*Maisie* 79), later takes Maisie over to France, ostensibly in order to get her away from a bad situation at home. This home is described by the narrator as a "domestic labyrinth," perhaps an allusion to the minotaur in the labyrinth metaphor that Stead used in his "Maiden Tribute" campaign. Maisie is perhaps thirteen,⁹ the age of

consent prior to 1885, and the same age as Eliza Armstrong, the young girl *PMG* editor William Stead bought for five pounds from her mother. Sir Claude is the only aristocrat in the novel, and as has been noted, it is upper-class men whom Stead accuses of being behind the perversion of working-class girls. Contextualizing *What Maisie Knew* within the debate engendered by passage of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, if not specifically within the "Maiden Tribute" rhetoric itself, brings an extra dimension to the text that otherwise would not have been apparent, for inasmuch as Maisie can be seen as a counterpart of Eliza Armstrong, she also represents the other young women who were targets of the social reform movement.

Unlike those young women, Maisie in *not* from a working-class family, but she can be described as marginalized. She is, for all intents and purposes, penniless,¹⁰ and she is frequently banished to the shabby schoolroom where, one day, we are told:

[Sir Claude] stood before the fire and looked at the meagre appointments of the room in a way that made her rather ashamed of them. . . . Without Sir Claude's photograph . . . the place would have been, as he said, as dull as a cold dinner. . . . The way Sir Claude looked about the schoolroom had made her feel with humility as if it were not very different from the shabby attic in which she had visited Susan Ash. (*Maisie* 82)

Maisie is not only poor, but she is physically marginalized even within her mother's house, and here identifies herself with Susan Ash, her father's under-housemaid. Later Beale tells Maisie, "Your mother will have no more to do with you than if you were a kitchenmaid she had turned out for going wrong" (152).

In both these instances, Maisie is not only aligned with someone of a lower class, but also with someone whose morals are in question. The hypothetical kitchen maid has "gone wrong," a term certainly connoting moral misdirection. And James hints that Susan Ash might be sexually involved with the amorous Sir Claude when, during the Channel crossing, Sir Claude sits "sociably" with "his step-daughter's head in his lap and that of Mrs. Beale's housemaid fairly pillowed on his breast" (181). Like those women who are marginalized by the social reformers, Maisie, too, is seen as immoral. For even the social purity reformers sought to help the lower-classes by *reforming morals*, assuming thereby a cause and effect relationship between immorality and poverty, even though researchers like Booth were suggesting that an inverse relationship was more likely the case.

Stead, who purported to be helping working-class women, clearly had some ambivalence towards these girls. In a clumsy attempt to dissuade men from seeking such

young women, Stead drew an analogy between girls and game. Under the heading "A Close Time for Girls,"¹¹ he wrote:

Why not let us have a close time for bipeds in petticoats as well as for bipeds with feathers" . . . Fish out of season are not fit to be eaten. Girls who have not reached the age of puberty are unfit even to be seduced. . . . It is also a scientific fact that such children are far more likely to transmit disease than full grown women.¹² Scientifically, therefore, the close time should be extended until the woman has at least completed sixteen years of life.

(qtd. in Schults 139)

However good he claimed his intentions were, Stead really suggests here that he sees some inherent evil in these girls. Class othering almost always included a moral component. For as Jeffrey Weeks points out, "[t]he trend towards a form of social colonisation was accentuated throughout the nineteenth century by the perceived otherness of the working class, condemned, it was believed, to sexual rampancy" (32-33).

And while campaigners like Stead, and his ally Josephine Butler—feminist, social purity activist and leader of the fight against the Contagious Diseases Acts—laid much of the immorality at the door of the aristocracy, they sometimes appeared to lack sympathy for the working-class women they were "rescuing" and used them for their own ends. Stead seems to have assumed, in the case of Eliza Armstrong, for example, that she would be better off away from her family and with a Salvation Army family in France, despite the fact that her adventure entailed two examinations to verify her virginity and a night spent chloroformed in a brothel. Mrs. Jarrett, a "fallen" woman who had been rescued by Butler and who now did rescue work herself, seems to have been ill-used by Butler and Stead during this affair. She was persuaded to be the procuress for the purposes of Stead's campaign; she was willing to go back to her old haunts in search of a young girl to purchase, as long as the eventual goal was to help other women. But she ended up paying dearly; she received a prison term twice as long as Stead's (Walkowitz *City* 115). Butler, apparently, cognizant of the worthwhile symbol she had created in Jarrett when she persuaded her to help Stead, described her during the trial as "that sad, pitiful typical figure—the fallen woman . . . in all her moral rags and tatters" (qtd. in Walkowitz *City* 118)—not much consolation for Mrs. Jarrett while she spent six months at hard labor. And Stead's behavior during the weeks prior to the launch of his newspaper campaign, for example, was apparently indistinguishable from that of other men out at night in London enjoying tobacco, alcohol and women. He "impersonated the upper class libertine," investigating vice through the elite male gaze (120).

⁶Some wished to raise the age of consent as high as twenty-one, and the campaign to do so continued into the 1930s (Weeks 88).

⁷James wrote to Grace Norton on August 23, 1885: "I returned from Bournemouth on July 10th, spent the rest of that month (worrying and panting through the hideous fag-end of the season) in London; escaped hither three weeks ago" (*Edel Letters* 3:97).

⁸People rioted in the streets outside the *Pall Mall Gazette* to get what copies were being distributed by newspaper boys and volunteers because W. H. Smith had refused to carry it (Walkowitz *City* 81). Stead wrote: "London is raging for the news and sends its regiments [to the offices of the *Pall Mall Gazette*] for the supply . . . the surging force grew in numbers and battled at the doors like troops of devils . . . howling vendors were passed in for fresh supplies" (qtd. in Robson).

⁹Rowe says, "James deliberately renders Maisie's age ambiguous but gives hints and clues that make proper chronology possible. Her age in chapter I is specified by the narrator as six . . . By my own calculations of specific references to the passage of time, I can only make Maisie *eleven* or *twelve* by the end of the novel, but I tend to agree with Barbara Everett, 'Henry James's Children,' in *Children and Their Books: A Celebration of the Work of Iona and Peter Opie*, ed. Gillian Avery and Julia Briggs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 318, that on the evidence of 'the child's progression to emotional puberty,' she is 'at the novel's end' 'nearer to fourteen or fifteen than to Edel's 'seven or eight, or perhaps a bit older'" (218 n.8). James writes in his notebook "I must handle freely and handsomely the years . . . be superior I mean, on the question of time" (149).

¹⁰Though Maisie has her own inheritance it has been expropriated by her extravagant parents, whose *affaires de coeur* appear to become increasingly about money. Beale had "only twenty-five hundred. Poor Ida, who had run through everything, had now nothing but her carriage and her paralysed uncle . . . The child was provided for, thanks to a crafty godmother, a defunct aunt of Beale's, who had left her something in such a manner that

the parents could appropriate only the income"(38). But this leaves Maisie, despite her inheritance, without a penny to spend.

¹¹"Close Time" is the phrase used to denote a season during which killing of game is prohibited.

¹²Gorham describes a nineteenth-century superstition that venereal disease could be cured by having intercourse with a virgin (370).

Even though the upper-classes are portrayed in Stead's reporting as the source of the immorality, and despite images in the press of working-class women as innocent children, passive victims who need protection, it is ultimately these women who are punished for the very crimes from which society is trying to protect them. The Criminal Law Amendment Act, in the end, enabled the police to harass one of the very groups the law was designed to save—poor women who had taken to prostitution (Walkowitz *City* 83).¹³ This bias suggests that perhaps the immoral other for middle-class reformers was always, inevitably, the "lower" classes, and especially lower-class women. The poor young women who were targets of the middle-class reformers were seen by society as victims, lacking the power of choice while simultaneously inherently immoral, and as we will see, the adults in Maisie's world see her in the same way.

These complex and ambiguous class problems apparent in the public discourse surrounding morality campaigns like Stead's are reflected in the relationship between Sir Claude and Maisie. It is a relationship which hovers between guilt and innocence, but is always somewhat flirtatious, and as Rowe argues, "Sir Claude's intimate relationship with Maisie often verges on the erotic" (132). We are told by the narrator that Sir Claude "had plainly begun to recognize that if he was to have the credit of perverting the innocent child he might also at least have the amusement" (*Maisie* 94), and although the placement of this passage suggests that this "amusement" takes place in the schoolroom under the supervision of Mrs. Wix, its wording allows for an ambiguous reading. At one point the narrator tells us that Sir Claude "beckoned his young companion to where he sat, and he helped to disengage her from her coverings . . . Having divested the child he kissed her gently and gave her a little pat" (116). Ida, always willing to put blame on her daughter, accuses Maisie of hanging about Sir Claude "in a way that's barely decent." "[H]e can do what he likes with you" (90), she says to Maisie, assigning to her daughter responsibility for any immorality. In France, Mrs. Wix says to Maisie: "Well, if Sir Claude's old enough to know better, upon my word I think it's right to treat you as if you also were" (207). This is, of course, an illogical statement—given the ages and power difference between Maisie and Sir Claude. Mrs. Wix assumes that Maisie is at least equally responsible for any indecency.

Deborah Gorham suggests that there remained a tension in late-Victorian England between the Evangelical view of the child as naturally innocent and the Calvinist view of the child as innately wicked and needing chastisement. The "angel in the house and the fallen woman, have their counterparts in the opposing images of the child redeemer and the wayward evil girl," says Gorham. "The child redeemer is a familiar figure in Victorian fiction . . . child-women serve as the central figures of the novels of which they are a part. Their great power is derived from their moral purity" (370). It is an image that we as readers recognize immediately in Maisie's most obvious role: an innocent child enmeshed in an

evil society. James himself suggests this image in his preface when he calls Maisie "our little wonder-working agent" (25) who acts "by sowing on barren strands, through the mere fact of presence, the seed of the moral life" (26). Yet James is characteristically ambiguous here, and suggests that it is the presence of youth that should encourage the growth of "the moral life" rather than any innate morality in Maisie herself. And while James suggests a moral influence should emanate from the little girl, Maisie is considered by those around her as inherently immoral and the cause of their problem.

This dual view of Maisie is highlighted when she is at her father's house, a house which Ida describes as one "in which no decent women would consent to be seen" (46). There Maisie is "handled" by gentlemen visitors and with "freedom . . . pulled hither and thither and kissed" (40).

Her features had somehow become prominent. They were perpetually nipped by the gentlemen who came to see her father and the smoke of whose cigarettes went into her face. Some of these gentlemen made her strike matches and light their cigarettes, others, holding her on knees violently jolted, pinched the calves of her legs till she shrieked. (40)

And yet, we are told, "she preferred gentlemen . . . in spite of their . . . having their way . . . They pulled and pinched, they teased and tickled her; some of them even, as they termed it, shied things at her" (57). Again the picture of Maisie is an ambiguous one; one could see all this manhandling as physical abuse, even sexual abuse. Yet the act of lighting cigarettes, though one not instigated by Maisie, sheds a certain erotic light on her behavior nonetheless. And the fact that we are told that she "preferred gentlemen" suggests that all of this physical attention somehow pleased her.

Maisie, significantly, also spends some time wandering the streets of London with Susan Ash, the under-housemaid who "moved at a very different level" (69), a procedure which produces in Maisie, "that impression of an excess of the queer something which had seemed to waver so widely between innocence and guilt" (182). Maisie's "peregrinations" with Susan are very different from those with her previous companion, her nurse Moddle. "There had been under Moddle's system no dawdles at shop-windows and no nudges, in Oxford Street, of 'I say, look at 'er'" (69). In her walks with Susan, "[t]he dangers of the town equally with its diversions added to Maisie's sense," we are told by the narrator, "of being untutored and unclaimed" (69). These are not adjectives one might use to describe a proper Victorian middle-class young lady. Maisie wanders the streets of London like a young prostitute, not a protected virgin, giving more weight to the "cloud of shame" with which she crosses the threshold to the drawing room shortly thereafter, significantly to meet Sir Claude, in the flesh, for the very first time, and to find that his "shining presence" makes up for her "fallen state."

Scenes such as this provide an undercurrent in this

novel that hints not only at some sort of sexual relationship developing between Sir Claude and Maisie, but at a complicity on Maisie's part, a willing immorality. As their relationship develops, there begins to emerge a picture of Maisie as gaining sexual knowledge through her necessity to survive and her need to cling to Sir Claude for support; she has very few options. But the reader's desire to see Maisie as an innocent young girl in need of a parent who cares, diverts the reader's attention away from the other possibility. Although we have seen Maisie look at Sir Claude with a "more than filial gaze" (202), her morality mentor, Mrs. Wix, *also* adores Sir Claude, and her young stepfather treats Maisie far more parentally in many ways than any of her other "parents." This is all part of the ambiguity with which James confronts us, and the duality of perception with which Maisie's character must contend. The confusion confronting Maisie reflects that which surrounded young working-class women in the social-purity discourse of late-Victorian London. Maisie resembles those other young girls who had a need to survive, gaining sexual knowledge out of necessity, seen as "poor wandering lambs" (Butler, qtd. in Walkowitz *City* 89), but also as sexual predators waiting to entrap innocent young men.

"A crossing of more spaces than the Channel"

If James is actually aligning Maisie with working-class women, as I am arguing, he does so in order to rescue her in a far more effective way than Stead had done with Eliza. Maisie, too, is rescued by being taken to France, but whereas Eliza was gone for almost three months, Maisie is in France only four days; she tells Mrs. Wix that Sir Claude "didn't steal—he only borrowed me. I knew it wasn't for long" (209). As I have said, although Stead's reporting on the white slave trade described young women as passive victims who were taken to France and virtually imprisoned, the young women who did cross the Channel were far more willing participants in their French adventures, just as Maisie is. But Maisie's trip is not only a rescue; for her it is an empowering experience. Going to France is like crossing an epistemological Rubicon for Maisie; even while she is at Folkestone, on the verge of crossing to the Continent, we are told that "Maisie had known all along a great deal, but never so much as she was to know from this moment on and as she learned in particular during the couple of days that she was to hang in the air, as it were, over the sea which represented. . . a crossing of more spaces than the Channel" (162). Once she is in France, Maisie seems to grow, to become older. The narrator signals us that Maisie "had grown older in five minutes and had by the time they reached the hotel [in Boulogne] recognized in the institutions and manners of France a multitude of affinities and messages. Literally in the course of an hour she found her initiation; a consciousness much quickened" (181). In this novel, France is more a step in Maisie's psychological development than it is a real place; it is where she gains power by gaining knowledge: "On the spot, at Boulogne . . . she recognized, she understood, she adored and took possession; feeling herself attuned to everything and laying her hand, right and left, on what had simply been waiting for her" (182). With her

newly found power, Maisie can now separate herself from her companion, Susan Ash: "She explained to Susan, she laughed at Susan; she towered over Susan; and it was somehow Susan's stupidity, of which she had never yet been so sure, and Susan's bewilderment and ignorance and antagonism, that gave the liveliest rebound to her immediate perceptions" (182). In separating herself from Susan, Maisie separates herself from her own marginalized state. No longer a victim of competing narratives, now she can "read the unspoken into the spoken" (205). Maisie understands and even speaks French: "It was the most extraordinary thing in the world: in the intensity of her excitement she not only by illumination understood . . . French, but fell into it with an active perfection" (254). She doesn't speak French as well as Sir Claude, but he is an adult, and Maisie is on her way to young adulthood; we witness "the death of her childhood," as James tells us in the preface. No longer passive, she is now able to negotiate on her own terms; she offers to give up Mrs. Wix if her stepfather will give up her stepmother. She doesn't get what she wants; she doesn't get Sir Claude to herself in the end, but she has been able to name the stakes.

But does Maisie gain a moral sense in France? This is, after all, what Mrs. Wix is constantly accusing her of not possessing: "Haven't you really and truly *any* moral sense?" she asks Maisie (211), and again later: "Have you absolutely none at all?" (212). The narrator tells us of Maisie's growing awareness of the moral sense; he says, "She began, the poor child, with scarcely knowing what it was; but proved something that . . . she could, before they came back from their drive, strike up a sort of acquaintance with" (211). It is almost tangible, something outside herself this moral sense that Mrs. Wix—along with members of the moral reform movement—prizes so highly. But Maisie's has not been so much a moral problem, as an epistemological one. And once she is in France, the one piece of the puzzle that has been missing—sexuality—finally falls into place. It is this knowledge that allows her to fight for Sir Claude with Mrs. Beale very much as though she were an adult woman, Mrs. Beale's rival. We are told, "Maisie had by this time embraced the implications of a kind of divergence between lovers and little girls" (163). Though it has been suggested throughout *What Maisie Knew* that Maisie might not be "keeping the torch of virtue alive" (26), the presence of the Golden Madonna at the end of the novel seems to symbolize all of Maisie's virtue. She may know about sex, but Maisie's virginity is golden. Paradoxically, by gaining knowledge of the immoral, Maisie has gained a wider moral sense than that clipped, parsimonious version imagined by Mrs. Wix. In her last conversation with her mother we were told that "[t]here was literally an instant in which Maisie saw—saw madness and desolation, saw ruin and darkness and death" (177). Maisie has indeed gained a moral sense by the end of the novel, but at what cost? For she has also gained knowledge.

The French themselves are not really represented as moral or immoral in this novel; in fact, the only France we see is a projection of English society—not a geographical reality. James uses France as a symbolic realm, a place where sexual knowledge is possible. But, unlike the popular English view of the time, James sees this as positive, because whatever moral sense Maisie gains is based on an awareness

¹³Whereas efforts to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts of the 1860s had fought against the exploitation of women, the fight to pass the Criminal

Law Amendment Bill, strongly supported by social purity reformers, ended by increasing police powers to crack down on sex workers.

of sexuality. While the discursive construction of morality which is prevalent in England relies on the suppression of sex, James's version, the one possible in the symbolic realm of France, relies on knowledge.

In France her situation becomes clearer for Maisie. And the reader, too, expects to see more clearly. The narrator tells us: "England, over there in the thickening gloom, looked then just remarkably clear" (183). The novel ends with Maisie in a boat on the Channel and therefore in a liminal space between the two countries. Maisie has seen more clearly, has grown up, and confidently says to Mrs. Wix on the last page of the novel, "Oh I know"; however, the reader is left to "wonder" with Mrs. Wix. James deposits us once again on the shifting sands of ambiguity; we do not know what Maisie knows. It is, then, the problem of epistemology, the problem of knowing, of standing outside the ambiguous, opposing narratives of his time—we could equally say of our own time too—that James is not only pointing to, but reenacting here. While the reader of this novel can see only what Maisie sees, she is under the illusion of knowing *more* than Maisie and thus approximates the condescending stance of middle-class reformers who believed they knew more than those whom they were attempting to protect, just as Stead had justified his actions by claiming that he was abducting Eliza for her own good. But the novel is not called *What Maisie Saw*. What Maisie *knew* must be, therefore, paramount; yet the reader does not know what Maisie knows. Craig Randall claims that "Maisie . . . is at once a reader of her circumstances, a mirror of the contemporary reading public, and a model for all readers of the text" (204). The problem is that although Maisie has appeared to be the window for the reader, we realize by the end of the novel that in fact we have little idea what this young girl knows. Though the center of consciousness, Maisie's mind is ultimately sealed off from our knowledge. James presents the reader with an epistemological question: how can we have knowledge of another's moral sense?

"The blue river of truth"

For much of the twentieth century James was seen by critics as a non-political novelist, a writer concerned with aesthetics: "a technical and formalist emphasis has dominated Jamesian criticism, and problems of social reference have characteristically been converted into problems of textual self-reference" (Seltzer 14). More recent critics have seen James's work as entering into debates on such issues as homosexuality, race and nationalism.¹⁴ As Ken Warren notes, "Jamesian criticism has plucked him from the heavens and planted him somewhat uneasily on the sordid terrain of earth" (18). James has been taken to task by some for his lack of attention to characters other than a rather nebulous, wide-ranging middle class—that is, James seldom depicted the proletariat. Rowe suggests, in *The Other Henry James* (1998), that this objection can be answered by pointing out how James's middle-class women and children, for example,

are often victimized, proving that he *is* concerned with marginalized groups. But I would argue that James engaged with problems of class even more directly. The way in which adults in *What Maisie Knew* are able to project an air of self-righteousness, the way in which they are able to engage the discourse of morality and respectability, is by projecting their own lack of these traits onto the powerless Maisie. "Her father had once called her a heartless little beast" (90), the narrator tells us; she is also called a "horrid little hypocrite," a "little monster," a "dreadful bouncing business," and "a little fright." And Mrs. Wix even disparages her treasured little charge when she says: "I can't make you any worse than you *are*" (80), and later tells Maisie that she is "too unspeakable!" (207). Ida makes it clear to Maisie where all the blame lies: "[it's you] who have caused all the trouble between us" (174). While his most obvious attack in this novel is on the moral hypocrisy of the middle classes as embodied in Ida and Beale, James's experimental use of Maisie as center-of-consciousness character and his aligning her with marginalized "lower-class" women, speaks of his concern with the ways in which the public discourse contributes to class othering such as occurred with the social purity movement. While I am not arguing for a socialist James who is fighting for the working classes, I would suggest that James—an outsider to the English class system—has a different world-view, and can well see the class issues at play in the morality debates.

Maisie, much like the reader of the public discourse in late-Victorian society, has had difficulty in negotiating the differing narratives of those around her. We are told that even Mrs. Wix, the person with whom Maisie spends the most time and from whom she appears to learn much, whose "conversation was practically an endless narrative" (51), "took refuge on the firm ground of *fiction*, through which indeed there curled the blue river of truth" (51, my emphasis). James seems to be laughing and serious in this sentence all at once. He is poking fun at poor Mrs. Wix, who has complete confidence in her own moral compass, even though Maisie could "perfectly see how many subjects she was afraid of" (51), and whose wisdom is all derived from novels. But he is also tweaking the reader's dignity, too, for after all it is we who are relying on *his* fiction to give us the truth. For James truth lies not in the public discourse, yet he surely believes that there is truth in fiction.

Works Cited.

- Altick, Richard. *Victorian People and Ideas*. New York: Norton, 1973.
 Bell, E. Moberly. *Josephine Butler: Flame of Fire*. London: Constable, 1962.
 Edel, Leon and Lyall H. Powers, eds. *The Complete Notebooks of Henry James*. New York: Oxford UP, 1987.
 Gorham, Deborah. "The 'Maiden Tribute to Modern Babylon' Re-examined: Child Prostitution and the Idea of Childhood in

Late-Victorian England." *Victorian Studies* 21 (Spring 1978): 353-79.

James, Henry. *What Maisie Knew*. 1897. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985.

Craig, Randall. "'Read[ing] the unspoken in the spoken': Interpreting *What Maisie Knew*." *The Henry James Review* 2.3 (1981): 204-12.

Razor, Eugene L. "Purity Campaign." *Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia*. Ed. Sally Mitchell. New York: Garland, 1988. 655-6.

Robson, Ann. "The Significance of 'The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon.'" *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*. 11 (?): 51-57.

Rowe, John Carlos. *The Other Henry James*. Durham: Duke UP, 1998.

Schults, Raymond L. *Crusader in Babylon: W. T. Stead and the "Pall Mall Gazette"*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1972.

Seltzer, Mark. *Henry James and the Art of Power*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1984.

Tanner, Tony. "Sex and Narrative." *Symbiosis: A Journal of Anglo-American Literary Relations*. 1.2 (1997): 210-17.

Walkowitz, Judith R. *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*. Women and Culture in Society. Ed. Catharine R. Stimpson. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992.

_____. *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1980.

Warren, Kenneth. *Black and White Strangers: Race and American Literary Realism*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1993.

Weeks, Jeffrey. *Sex, Politics, and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality since 1800*. London: Longman, 1981.

University of Wisconsin—Madison

A Note on "Swallow" in Swinburne's "Itylus"

Nathan Cervo

We do not know for certain which of the several ancient versions of the death of Itylus Swinburne drew upon when he composed "Itylus." The thread common to the stories is that Philomela (Itylus's aunt) and Procne (his mother) cut him to pieces, cooked them, and served the morsels as a meal to Tereus, Procne's husband and Itylus's father. We are told that Tereus was changed into a hoopoe and the two sisters into a swallow and a nightingale, but the stories do not agree on who became the swallow and who became the nightingale.

In "Itylus" Swinburne makes it clear that the speaker of the poem is the nightingale, who chides the swallow for not remembering their horrific deed:

Thy heart is light as a leaf of a tree:
 But mine goes forth among seagulfs hollow
 To the place of the slaying of Itylus,
 The feast of Daulis, the Thracian sea.
 (ll.45-48)

O sister, sister, thy first-begotten! (l.55)

From line 55 it follows that the nightingale is Philomela, since Philomela had no children that we know of and Procne was the mother of the slain, cooked, and eaten Itylus. Also, the poem's speaker identifies herself as "the nightingale" in stanza 4 (l.1).

Why Itylus's aunt and not his mother should be so consumed by remorse depends solely on the nightingale's plaintive "song" (l. 16), which, to Swinburne's ear, "Feed[s] the heart of the night with fire" (l. 18). In effect, Swinburne metamorphoses the nightingale into a third hypostasis, this time into a projection of his own chagrin at what amounts to the devouring of his own children by Chronos (Time) and to

Mother Nature's complicity in the perennial "feast of Daulis" (l. 48).

In this macabre light, although it is true that "Tereus, the rapist, is never mentioned at all" (Louis 457), he is certainly—albeit obliquely—present in the poem as a stand-in for Chronos, who continues to glut himself by "swallowing" his children. The pun on "swallow" is impossible in both Latin and Greek, the languages in which Swinburne's source versions were written, but it is used by Swinburne throughout "Itylus" as a sort of chomping counterpoint to the poem's otherwise delicately emotional tonalities and deep harmonies. The very first word of "Itylus" strikes the poem's dominant sardonic chord: "Swallow." On the surface, the nightingale is addressing the swallow, but at a deeper level it is Time who bids his sororal confederate, Mother Nature, to "Swallow, my sister, O sister swallow" (l. 1). The ostensible noun is simultaneously being used as a verb.

Gradually, as we proceed into the poem, we begin to realize that we are reading a linguistic double-exposure; and, further, that only the outer layer of the poem is sugar-coated (saccharine) or "soft" (l. 9). Within its core, the nightingale-masked poet, "fulfilled of [his] heart's desire" (l. 15), is bitterly consuming the erstwhile naive desires of his heart and is grotesquely "fulfilled" (that is cloyed) by what he savagely devours: "My heart in me is a molten ember" (l. 38).

Not insignificantly, the word "heart" appears eleven times in the poem; the word "swallow," sixteen. When faced with the unadorned reality of time and death, one must learn how to swallow one's heart. Like Philomela (and Swinburne), one must find a "tongueless" alternative to conventional speech patterns through which to disclose one's story.

¹⁴See, for example, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Wendy Graham, Ken Warren and Sara Blair,

Works Cited

Louis, Margot. "Family Secrets, Family Silences: The Language of the Heart in Swinburne's 'Itylus.'" *VP* 37:4 (Winter 1999): 453-64.

Swinburne, Algernon Charles. *The Poems of Algernon Charles*

Swinburne. London: Chatto & Windus, 1904.

Franklin Pierce College

Domesticity Betrayed: *The Keepsake* Literary Annual

Kathryn Ledbetter

The traditional view of the nineteenth-century literary annuals, fashionable illustrated anthologies of poetry and prose published as Christmas gifts during the early Victorian period, treats the genre as a "pretty, glittering book for use in drawing-rooms where parents and children and visitors—prim ladies, clergymen, and evangelical gentlemen—might sit together, read from the Annuals, and discuss their merits without the slightest embarrassment" (Bose 49). Anne Renier, a respected scholar of the annuals, says "young ladies found them much more to their liking than the manuals of conduct, stolidly bound in leather, presenting an ideal of womanly behavior and offering advice on how to achieve it, which had hitherto been regarded as adapted to their needs" (16). These accounts perpetuate the idea that annuals were champions of domestic tranquility, dominated by what A. Bose calls "peripheral sentiments, obvious morals, and philosophy of life in which propriety of conduct is the cardinal element" (48). However, an examination of literary themes in the most successful and longest running of literary annuals, *The Keepsake*, shows that it undermined notions of propriety by suggesting romantic fantasies of escape from restrictive social boundaries for its middle-class women readers.

Lady Blessington summarizes common thematic devices of women writers in her "Stock in Trade of Modern Poetesses" (1833 *Keepsake*). The poem reflects *The Keepsake's* particular attraction to romantic moonlit scenarios, moody Byronic heroes, metaphoric caged birds, and diseased or despairing "Beauties pining in their bowers" sighing and dying from broken hearts, their "Wither'd hopes, and faded flowers" becoming fodder for the yearly production of *The Keepsake* (208-09). Many critics, including nineteenth-century reviewers in *Fraser's* and other publications, devalue these literary tropes as sentimental nonsense; as A. Bose reported in 1953: "Art gives a voice to feeling—that is the emphasis with these poets. No wonder then that the depth and amplitude of the emotional experience of these writers being meagre, the emotional content of their verse should easily turn into frothy sentimentality" (41). Such narrow aesthetic judgments contribute little to a realistic appraisal of *The Keepsake's* appeal.

The driving force of *Keepsake* literature was romance; the lawlessness and enticements of romantic plots and themes excited deviant forms of sexual interest, challenging pros-

criptive social norms of domesticity and propriety. Utilizing a mixture of literary themes familiar to readers since the mid-eighteenth century, such as an interest in Gothic terrors and scenery and a fascination with exotic foreign elements popularized by Byron in many of his works, *Keepsake* literature also reflected many social aberrations hidden in the fabric of moral society.

Keepsake writers explore issues of female victimization, patriarchal imprisonment, social deviance, and tainted domesticity in literature focused by romance, characterizing the *Keepsake* style. Women could read about other women who acted out middle-class fantasies of empowerment, such as the Gothic heroine who escapes a terrifying male presence, and the "bad" woman who angrily avenges social injustice. By reading about the unfortunate bride, the fallen angel, and the victims of family abuse, women sharing those experiences knew they were not alone. *Keepsake* writers bonded with their readers through the imagination, a boundless space of emotion that connects experience with fantasy in a very personal, indefinable way. What Sally Mitchell says about the novel applies to *Keepsake* literature: "[It] gratifies common needs; it provides a mode of distancing which gives repressed emotions a form that is publicly acceptable and that makes them a source of pleasure. It also affords recognition that these needs are common—shared between author and reader, and reader and reader" ("Sentiment" 34). The emotional disturbance of *Keepsake* heroines is symptomatic of a disordered domestic ideology and a dysfunctional society. As Mitchell states, "The heroine—and presumably the novelist and the reader—feels a vague but pressing sense of discontent, which is expressed in a series of scenes of victimization, being alone, taken advantage of, misunderstood, and being the one who is right when everyone else is wrong and not having one's rightness recognized until almost too late" (35). *Keepsake* literature shows that the "unquench'd fires" mentioned in Lady Blessington's "Stock in Trade of Modern Poetesses" represent the longing of women for self-determination, self-sufficiency, and respect from men in society. The separation of spheres made women dependent on men for simple human rights, and *The Keepsake* consistently shows the waste of energy, emotion, and life expended on such an unhealthy dependence. To *Keepsake* writers such as Caroline Norton, Letitia Elizabeth Landon, the Countess of Blessington, and others, domestic ideology is

the cause of social disturbance, rather than the solution.

Yet a deceptively smooth surface of propriety inspires popular views of *The Keepsake*; as a token of respectability, *The Keepsake* appeared to guard domestic values, for most people viewed annuals as a genre suitable for family reading that would portray women in plots that embraced marriage, children, and domestic harmony. In his 1989 study, *Sex, Politics and Society*, Jeffrey Weeks reminds us:

In all social discourse a stable home was seen both as a microcosm of stable society and a sanctuary from an unstable and rapidly changing one. It testified to moral and financial respectability; it secured the legitimacy of children; it offered cheaper and safer pleasures than the outside world and, as an additional boon, it was a source of virtues and emotions that could be found nowhere else, least of all in business or society. (29)

However, at least one nineteenth-century critic did notice the subversive potential in *Keepsake* literature. Complaining about Agar Ellis's 1831 *Keepsake* contribution, "Chesterfield and Fanny," a "namby-pamby gossiping essay upon a liaison," a *Keepsake* reviewer in the *Monthly Review* (January 1831) huffs, "to place it in the front of a volume, which is almost certain to fall into the hands of young ladies, and, indeed, to be read by them, we may say exclusively, we do think, without being very austere in our morality, was not in the best taste" (48). The story provides epistolary anecdotes of the adulterous affair between lady Fanny Shirley and Lord Chesterfield, an article the reviewer correctly observes as shocking for the opening feature of a literary annual; yet, in his 1938 essay, Bradford Booth asserts that annuals were the guardians of domesticity and propriety, claiming that "Even during its heyday the annual was decried vehemently, but not its bitterest critic could say that its moral tone was subversive" (7). *The Keepsake* did not always promote middle-class standards or morality in its literature, often featuring instead the painful aspects of love and marriage, while exploring the outer limits of sensuality.

Caroline Norton's poem "The Favourite Flower," published in the 1836 *Keepsake*, demonstrates the sensual texture inherent in some *Keepsake* verses. The poem's speaker prefers the poppy as her favorite flower over the rose, the symbol of hope, because the poppy, "Whose scarlet petals flung apart" is "Crimson'd with passion, not the shame . . . Flickering and hot, like tongues of flame!" (75). Poems about flowers were common in literature for women, but the vivid detail Norton employs here reaches beyond mere description; the imagery suggests sexual invitation, vividly creating an imaginative picture of female genitalia and portraying sex as a natural outgrowth of passion, countering contemporary medical and scientific assertions that women do not need or respond to sexual desire. The rosebud can only offer hope for the kind of innocent love maidens yearn for in marriage, futile in Norton's world; she urges readers to opt for passion, embracing female sexuality, and rejects the false hopes and frigid self-denial of marriage.

Norton's stories and poems often portray women abused and disillusioned in marriage, with false hopes of romance. Forced by the lack of opportunities for self-discovery and

financial independence, women choose undeserving men who compromise the woman's position in society with selfish, insincere promises of fidelity. The double standard of nineteenth-century morality allows the man to move on to the next conquest while Norton's women suffer the scorn of society as "unchaste" women. Sally Mitchell notes that nineteenth-century writers who dealt realistically with life in their fiction could hardly ignore such women:

The sexual outlaw appears in a variety of guises: the whore, the mistress, the adulteress and the woman practically or legally divorced, as well as the seduced or fallen innocent. Both men and women used her in their novels, but they did not use her in the same ways. Whenever she appears, and for whatever overt moral purpose, her story reveals underlying sexual attitudes.

(Fallen Angel 46)

Women could rarely get a divorce during the years of *The Keepsake*, but many frequently debated the issue, and Norton's public divorce scandal with her husband in 1836 made her a martyr to the cause of failed relationships, forcing readers to consider the plight of social outcasts.

Susan Gorsky shows the stereotypical nineteenth-century "fallen woman" to be unusually "young and innocent, quickly repentant, and thoroughly punished . . . [in the] form of madness, prison, transportation or death" (46-7). According to Elizabeth K. Helsinger, Robin Lauterbach Sheets, and William Veeder, the fallen woman will not be able to escape punishment for her sin until 1850, but "compassion for the fallen woman can shade readily into sympathy for unhallowed moral attitudes" (113); however, early *Keepsake* writers often portray fallen women with redeeming qualities as early as the late 1820s, creating sympathy for the circumstances behind their fate and encouraging an environment of change.

Gorsky also notes the presence of "evil" or "conniving" women in nineteenth-century fiction. These characters usually play "a subordinate role such as the match-making mother, the girl determined to marry, the unfaithful wife, and . . . wicked stepmothers"; other "Bad Women" are "condemned for sexual freedoms or the mere contemplation of such freedoms as committing adultery, running away with another man, having an illegitimate child, or becoming pregnant before marriage" (46). *Keepsake* writers conform to the tradition by punishing such "Bad" women for their deviance, but they also explore their motives for such behavior, giving them potentially more compelling multi-dimensional personalities. Dorothy Mermin suggests that, "Like philanthropists, women writers reached across the iron boundaries of respectability, money, and class to declare sisterhood with sexually disgraced women and arouse maternal and sisterly sympathy in their readers" (58). If readers could not identify with such women, they might think about their misfortunes, an attitude necessary for any change to begin. The working-class or middle-class fallen woman sometimes fends better in *Keepsake* literature than the society coquette or fashion ornament, but writers such as Norton and Blessington hold little hope for traditional notions of domestic harmony for either.

Lady Blessington's 1834 *Keepsake* poem "The Storm" also shows sympathy for a fallen woman who pays a heavy price for her passion when she and her bastard child drown on a convict ship in a storm. The woman, convicted of stealing food, becomes a victim of society's narrow rules of propriety in Blessington's poem. The child's birth "destroy'd for e'er a mother's fame," forcing her to become a thief to provide for her child (189). Because the domestic ideology that requires women to be mothers does not allow them to be providers, women must go outside the law and the domestic sphere to survive; yet Blessington's woman suffers the punishment prescribed for those who resort to such desperate measures.

Two of Norton's *Keepsake* stories, "Lawrence Bayley's Temptation" (1834) and "Count Rodolphe's Heir" (1836), demonstrate her despairing view. Preacher Lawrence Bayley rejects his childhood sweetheart Mary Esdale for the temptations of a "painted lady of fashion" (147). Before Lawrence confesses his love for Lady Delamere, Norton intervenes, becoming a preacher herself, ranting against false hopes of naive, but virtuous, maidens who hope for love:

Shout, little children! . . . from you the angel nature hath not yet departed—in your hearts linger still the emanations from the Creator; perfect love and perfect joy . . . the dark days are coming when ye shall see no light, and the hours of mirth shall be strange to you, and the time when your voices shall grow so sad that they shall mingle with the wailing of the winds, and not be distinguishable from them, because of the exceeding sorrow of their tones! (521)

Lawrence becomes one of Lady Delamere's many lovers and eventually dies from his wasted life as a fashionable lady's toy. While Norton ennobles Mary for her angelic martyrdom, Lady Delamere's outright disregard for middle-class propriety presents an opportunity to consider the immense distance between values of the aristocracy and middle- to working-class social regions. Norton's portrayal of both lifestyles is problematic; Lady Delamere has sexual freedom and privileges of upper-class life, while Mary demonstrates righteous, but lonely, moral conformity. The reader can identify with Mary, justifying her own narrow position in middle-class society, while imagining what the permissive fashionable life of Lady Delamere would be like. As Eric Trudgill explains:

She could revel in highly coloured pictures of fashionable vice, and yet keep in touch with the proprieties through the writers' nominal morality, their frequent diatribes against the immorality they depicted, their genuflections through the virtuous heroines towards the Madonna ideal. (270)

Norton nods to conventionality with Mary (the Madonna), and Lady Delamere is not an attractive model for a fashionable woman, but both women are victims of a social system that depends on male attention and support. In Norton's scheme, neither Lady Delamere nor Mary will find happiness in love.

In one of Norton's finest works of short fiction, "Count Rodolphe's Heir," an Italian mistress jilted by her lover for an English heiress moves into a ruined castle on the Count's property where she can haunt Rudolph's new wife and curse their children. Leona's true enemy is the heir she unsuccessfully attempts to save from a shaky bridge leading to the castle ruins late in the story, for he represents the patriarchal regeneration which required the Count to marry a woman for title and money instead of his inappropriate Italian lover. The mistress Leona goes insane and dies for her immoral obsession with destroying the Count's domestic harmony; but Norton clearly demonstrates the drastic results of woman's emotional or financial dependence upon fickle, disloyal men such as Count Rodolphe. The madwoman Leona is a victim of society and male abuse; therefore, while she receives the punishment of death as a fallen woman, Norton allows her character the dignity of a hero when Leona sacrifices her own life in the attempt to save the Count's son.

An anonymous story in the 1833 *Keepsake*, "The Monument," shows the power of jealousy in destroying domestic harmony. Honoria, jealous of her cousin Clara's attention to her lover Clarence, refuses to save her cousin when she falls into a well. Hearing Clara cry out for help from the well, Honoria confesses "For what should I save her? To see her become the wife of Clarence Melville? . . . To become but their pitied dupe—their laughing-stock?—Never! Never! And resolutely shutting my heart to her cries, I passed on" (61). To make matters worse, Honoria returns and throws rocks into the well to bury Clara alive as she hears Clara groan a death sigh from the depths. Later Honoria remorsefully erects a monument on the well, refusing Clarence's marriage proposal in penance for her sin. Honoria provides an example of an evil woman as a lesson against jealousy, but the author also explores the wrongs of a society that makes marriage so important to a woman's social acceptance that she will murder to preserve her security. Readers of the *Keepsake* could properly ally themselves with Clara and express shock at Honoria, but they might also note that the good girl dies in her martyrdom, while the bad girl lives on, however unhappily, as an unmarried, remorseful woman.

Keepsake heroines such as Leona and Honoria are angry women, plotting intricate plans of cruel revenge and murder. These behavior patterns run sharply against domestic norms prescribed for women in the nineteenth century. According to Deborah Gorham:

The ideal woman was willing to be dependent on men and submissive to them, and she would have preference for a life restricted to the confines of home. She would be innocent, pure, gentle and self-sacrificing. Possessing no ambitious strivings, she would be free of any trace of anger or hostility. More emotional than man, she was also more capable of self-renunciation. (4-5)

The *Keepsake*'s angry heroines go against the rules of propriety, becoming martyred avengers as they seek outright retribution for their abuse. These women are not the models of propriety expected in a book for the domestic circle.

One of the most fascinating stories of female anger,

"The Gored Huntsman," appears anonymously in the *Keepsake*'s debut issue (1828). Here Baron Kochenstein violently demands entry into a woodland cottage after a bolt from his horse leaves him stranded. An elegant lady robed in white silk laughingly invites him to stay the night, as she disappears into a secret door in the wainscoting. The next morning, a note promises they will meet again. Three years later, still searching for the woman, the Baron sees a stag with whom he fights to the death; however, it is the huntsman who dies from a wound inflicted by the stag's horn. He watches, horrified as the stag turns into the mysterious woman in white, singing: "thy rashness' debt is paid. / Sad the fate, and dark the doom, / That led thee to my secret home" (32). The woman, still angry at the brutal male power barging into her private domain, avenges the intrusion by murdering the Baron with a metaphorical phallus, the stag horn; in her gender reversal, the woman beats a man at his own game in his own gendered space. The story suggests a violent wish fulfillment fantasy for women who, denied a room of their own and angry at entrapment by the power of gender (the Baron) and class (his landowning title), might identify with the satanic rage that, in their own lives, must be subdued.

Although women such as Leona and Honoria suffer for their "improper" emotional responses, *Keepsake* writers imply that such human responses are justifiable, and even acceptable, under the circumstances of their character's lives. Women read about misogyny in *Keepsake* literature, where the victimization of women is a common theme among *Keepsake* writers who portray their female characters in a variety of abusive situations that often lead to imprisonment or death.

In "The Royal Marriage; or, Political Expediency," written anonymously for the 1838 *Keepsake*, the author berates the common practice of using marriage as a political bargaining tool. An Electress marries George of Hanover, a harsh man whose "neglect grew out of his utter incapability of appreciating her, and his inconstancy from all that was mean in his nature—he needed low amusement and coarse flattery" (7). The king imprisons her in a castle on trumped-up charges of adultery, denying access to their son. Upon her death many years later, the king dies at the same moment, suggesting that God stands close by the side of the abused woman to avenge her death. The husband pays for his abuse with death and the Princess gains eternal life. The story displays an acute awareness of marital abuse and, in its Gothic setting, places the woman dangerously at the center of the patriarchal enclosure.

One flirtatious woman gets decapitated, her head preserved by her angry lover during the French Revolution in L. E. L.'s "The Head" (1834 *Keepsake*). The Countess Amalie de Boufflers refuses to run away with one of her many illicit lovers just as the Revolution is rounding up aristocrats for the guillotine; her lover's revenge is to denounce her to the Republican authorities who order her beheading. Tormented by his action, the lover, Julian, preserves her head in a closet:

Laid upon a cushion, the long fair hair streaming around, was a female head, preserved by some curious chemical

process; the eyes were closed, but as if in sleep; colour had departed from lip and cheek, and something beyond even the rigidity of stone was in the face. (111)

The head reminds Julian of his own cruelty and lack of sympathy as he shows it to another girl as proof that he will not spare her from the guillotine. "The Head" provides a vivid example of male power over helpless women. Amalie is an adulteress and a coquette, guilty of two sins requiring harsh punishment in nineteenth-century fiction, and Landon bows to propriety here, but Julian's calculating cruelty far outweighs Amalie's sins. Ironically, the misogynistic patriarchal system that objectifies women as toys, producing coy, manipulative women such as Amalie, destroys them for the behavior they display.

A wounded deer becomes a metaphor for the victimized woman in Charlotte Norman's lament, "On a Wounded Deer Found in Whittlebury Forest" (1837 *Keepsake*). The deer is lost and alone, "some fair and fragile thing, / In whom once the world delighted, / Writhing beneath some deadly sting, / With a broken heart, and blighted. . . ." (61). Like woman, the wounded deer is an animal hunted by men but left to die after the chase; Norman's speaker grieves for the deer while she identifies with it, hoping that "in her last lone hour. . . She may find such a shelter'd, peaceful bower, / And one sympathizing tear" (63). The speaker and the deer become united by their common lonely plight as the hunted.

Other women often become the abusers in *Keepsake* literature; Emmeline Stuart Wortley's "I Am Come But Your Spirits to Raise" (1837 *Keepsake*) demonstrates the cruelty of a woman who visits an old friend experiencing hard times. With every stanza of the poem the visitor attacks her friend from a new angle; in the thinly-veiled guise of sympathy, the visitor tells her how ugly she is, that she's missing all the social events, and announces that, for her sake, the visitor has been taking her old lover Lord Arthur everywhere, reminding her that men "forget us at once—'tis still so!" (31). The speaker admits telling Arthur how bad her friend looks with all her gray hair and "like parchment your cheek and your brow" (32), leaving the impression that they have been ridiculing her during the time of grief. As the speaker leaves she asks her friend to loan some jewelry for a night at the opera with Arthur because "You don't want such fine things now you know" (33). The humorous satire on shallow female friendships suggests another reason for the isolation felt by many women who could not trust women in society any more than men. The limitations of domestic ideology create competition between women for men who can provide security, resulting in vacuous coquettes and greedy opportunists.

The female abuser in Norman's "Kellingham House" (1835 *Keepsake*) is Blanche Evelyn's evil stepmother, who ties her up without food in a deserted house in an attempt to force Blanche to sign over her property. The stepmother's husband is a bodysnatcher who stores his booty in Blanche's room, "the freshly exhumed carcasses placed against her door in such a manner, that when she opened it to admit the old woman, who brought her meals, she stumbled over them. or they fell down upon her" (165). The stepmother's husband threatens Blanche with a pistol at her head, but Blanche vows

she will die before she submits. The heroine's determination to face death rather than surrender to male threats exemplifies many *Keepsake* heroines who consistently choose freedom and power over submission, giving readers strong models to demonstrate alternatives to helpless victimization. Threatening situations enclose these women, but they rarely surrender their spirits.

In Mary Shelley's tale of the Napoleonic Wars, "Ferdinando Eboli" (1829 *Keepsake*), an imposter who claims he is the elder brother of her fiancée imprisons a woman in her home while her lover is in the French galleys for his role in the war. The pretender tries to force Adalinda into marriage, but she refuses to bend to his will:

His look of conscious power and unbridled wickedness terrified her; her flashing eyes spoke abhorrence: it would have been far easier for her to have died than have yielded the smallest point to a man who made her feel for one moment his irresistible power, arising from her being an unprotected woman, wholly in his hands. She left him, feeling as if she had just escaped from the impending sword of an assassin. (214)

Adalinda bravely escapes the house disguised as a page and joins banditti who will help bring Count Ferdinando back to his lands. Shelley's female hero is independent, courageous, and resourceful, unafraid of undermining the imposter's male power, in spite of her vulnerability as a woman; although Adalinda lives far away from English mores in Shelley's beloved land of freedom, Italy, she provides a model for English women longing for an escape from their own imaginary Gothic imprisonment.

According to Kate Ferguson Ellis, such Gothic plots "expose the evils of autocratic power" (xiii). The industrialism of nineteenth-century England separated the home from the hectic world but, as Ellis notes, this was not always a safe place for women:

Surrounded by unfamiliar neighbors and underpaid servants, and with the home increasingly viewed as a private place where people could do as they wished without interference, the middle-class woman was not necessarily safe from male anger, and with her resources legally belonging to her husband she was not in a strong bargaining position. (9)

In *Keepsake* stories, women victimized by their dependence on violent men find a way to escape such confinement or they display stoic courage under terrifying conditions. As Ellis notes, "the terror of the Gothic heroine is simply that of being confined and then abandoned, and beyond that, of being, in a unspecified yet absolute way, completely surrounded by superior male power" (46). The unspoken threat of physical torture or rape lies behind such terror; frequently that threat comes from the heroine's father. Finding a way out of the confinement empowers the heroine; Ellis explains:

What is radical in the Gothic solution is that the terms "home" and "world" are inverted: evil is thus enclosed in the home and freedom lies in the world beyond it,

however dangerous. It is the fact that the evil is concealed that gives it the power to 'haunt' over time. Once it is let out, the house becomes pure. Therefore the purification of the house is accomplished not by locking the gates of Eden but by leaving them open. (50)

Hidden family secrets and male obsession with power in the home often cause the sickness that imprisons women in what Ellis names a "contaminated domestic ideology" (51).

The traditional family structure offers little support for *Keepsake* heroines. Fathers are often self-absorbed, using their daughters as property to trade for financial gain, and parental interference is a major source of missed opportunities with true love in *Keepsake* tales such as Agnes Strickland's "The Love Quarrel" (1835), Catherine Gore's "The Mourners" (1833), and Mary Shelley's "The Invisible Girl" (1833). Mothers are curiously absent, and orphaned daughters often must depend on strangers for survival in Mary Boyle's "Orsina Brandini" (1836), Lady Blessington's "Francesca Foscari" (1837), Catherine Gore's "The Champion" (1832), and "The Casket" (1834), by an anonymous writer. If a family member exists, it is usually a brother, whom the heroine loyally protects, often at the expense of her own life in poems and tales such as L. E. L.'s "Fenella's Escape" (1836) and Mary Shelley's "The Brother and Sister" (1833). These familial characteristics suggest a frightening future for a society whose central focus was the family, its ultimate objective for women being marriage. *Keepsake* literature demonstrates the instability of such ideals, showing how the family structure sometimes leaves women defenseless without financial resources for survival. The patriarchal sickness passes from one generation to the next through husbands and fathers who force wives and daughters to submit to the powerful hierarchy of convention.

In Maria Abdy's "The New Prima Donna" (1849 *Keepsake*), a woman's alcoholic father torments her for money until she must give up a promising opera career to travel under an assumed name, performing only in private concerts. A man watches with fascination until he witnesses her lack of social graces and propriety; she is coarse, drinks port behind the scenes at the end of every song, has an "arrogant spirit of independence" (12), and speaks with "a certain shortness and sharpness of address which was very far from being graceful or lady-like" (16). Although Abdy emphasizes these characteristics as unfavorable female behavior, she reveals the singer's personal family history with alcoholism, inviting the reader to sympathize with the woman's misfortune.

Incest, rape, and murder are the secret sins of a spoiled nobleman in Lady Blessington's "A Tale of the Baptistery of St. Marks" (1847 *Keepsake*). A selfish rake, the man "deem'd the world was made / To minister to his voluptuousness, / Nor heeded whether ruin fell on those / O'er whom he triumph'd in his guilty love" (13). He attempts to rape a young woman he sees in prayer, chasing her into the river where she drowns. Pulling the dead woman out of the rushing water, he sees a locket around her neck containing a portrait of himself; he realizes the girl is his own daughter by a woman he abandoned long ago. The locket contains a message from her mother, "Imploring him to guard his helpless child, / As he expected pardon from his God" (15). Rather

than guarding the child he abandoned, the father becomes a power to guard against. Now he prays at St. Mark's for his secret sin "when conscience would be heard," but all the prayers and alms for the poor will not cover the sickness of his sins against the daughter and mother (12). Blessington will not allow the double standard to excuse the nobleman for his "guilty love," and the man's pardon from God seems remote.

Marriage remains the ultimate goal for women in *Keepsake* literature, despite the realization that the family structure sometimes offers little hope for happiness. Susan Gorsky notes that "By describing an unhappy marriage or the difficult adjustment which the child-bride must make, the [women writers] question the validity of that goal for all women and the wisdom of the ideal of absolute innocence" (50). As the last moment of negotiation for a woman's fate, the wedding itself becomes a significant site for anxiety in many *Keepsake* plots. A domestic dream turns into a nightmare for a man who falls in love and proposes to a woman he knows to be a sleepwalker, Adelaide, only to find that she has a ghostly double in the story, "The Silver Lady" (1838 *Keepsake*), authored anonymously. The Silver Lady was a beautiful maiden whose lover abandoned her at the altar; now her specter haunts a nearby castle, dressed in a white embroidered gown with silver stars, "as if to signify that her home was not the earth" (161). Adelaide's lover finds that he has proposed to the Silver Lady, mistaking her for his sleepwalking Adelaide. The notion of a man proposing to a sleeping woman holds special significance for one aware of the submissive, unspeaking role of wife. The dead jilted bride and the living abandoned fiancée symbolize a decaying domesticity, where marriage is anything but eternal bliss, resulting in eternal walking death for one bride and barren celibacy for the other. The wedding signifies an ending to life rather than a beginning for both the Silver Lady and the living bride, whose abandonment leaves them outcast from the social structure, and the groom, who marries a woman without a voice.

A wedding in T. A. K's poem "The Bridal" (1845 *Keepsake*) casts a shadow over a reluctant bride's happiness as she walks to the altar full of "sorrow's silent apathy, and deep resigned despair" (182). Doomed to an unwanted marriage, the bride is a "victim sacrificed at splendour's heartless shrine," as "No pitying eye shed sorrow's tear—no bosom heaved, but mine." The speaker knows but does not tell why the bride is mourning; patterns in *Keepsake* literature suggest parental interference forced her to marry for financial concerns rather than love. The next time the speaker views the bride, it is from her funeral train: "Death's pitying hand, with iron grasp, had broken suffering's chain / The eyes that woke in life to tears would never weep again! / How strange, that friends around should grieve that peace at length was given / To the freed spirit, which had flown to happiness and Heaven" (162). To this bride, false marriage means death of the spirit, soon followed by physical death; only the speaker realizes that death is a happy release from this unhappy bride's chains.

The wedding in Agnes Strickland's "The Bridesmaid" (1833 *Keepsake*) means grief and shame for a bridesmaid who sits alone "To vent, unpitied, agony alone . . . Like

the cold sculptured mourner on a tomb" (82). The groom had been her own love before he jilted her to marry another, and now she is a bridesmaid at their wedding, hiding her "secret agony" (83). The speaker wishes the maid could see her love "as he really is, / Stripped of the veil in which too partial love / Hath dress'd its idol. She would turn away / And marvel that a heart so pure as hers / Had wasted tenderness on one like him" (83). Again we see the infidelity and shallowness of men, and the consequences of misplaced trust, while weddings become a major source of misery for *Keepsake* women.

Although frightened by the prospect of a bad marriage, many preferred it to the slim opportunities for professional or personal fulfillment outside the home. The rejection of a lover, however shallow he might be, often meant a life as a spinster, an outsider, faced with working as a governess or seamstress at minimal wages. More likely, a single woman lived as a dependent in the home of family members, if she had them. The lucky women were those who could write; many of *Keepsake*'s women writers who supported themselves and family members with literature were intimately familiar with the difficulties of life as a single woman.

Later *Keepsakes* examine the working woman's plight in works such as Anna Maria Hall's "The Daily Teacher" (1844 *Keepsake*). After her mother dies in poverty, a woman's pride keeps her from asking friends for help, and her shyness keeps her from going into service as a governess. Meanwhile, the woman (Kate Ellis) does embroidery and "every womanly craft she could devise to earn a scanty subsistence, in a little attic that overlooked the Fulham fields" (44). A temporary job teaching at a charity school offers limited independence, and many long, lonely hours of work for no promise of a secure future. Hall rewards Kate with a fairy tale ending when she inherits money and property from a distant uncle, but her exploration of the lack of opportunities for women shows how bleak a woman's options could be outside of marriage.

Yet some *Keepsake* writers hold little hope for domestic happiness, with or without marriage. L. E. L.'s poem "Remembrance" (1837 *Keepsake*) comments on the tragedies of love that leave women victimized and alone: "Such is a common history, in this our social state, / Where destiny and nature contend in woman's fate; / To waste her best affections, to pine, to be forgot, / To droop beneath an outward smile—such is a woman's lot" (30). To L. E. L. a bride could expect only misery after marriage, no matter how idyllic its beginnings. Her Poem "Do You Remember It?" (1832 *Keepsake*) describes the glorious feelings of innocent hope when "Love first finds utterance" (239). But hope soon proves a delusion, the speaker realizes that her feelings of hope were short-lived, and the relationship deteriorates because "the sneer, if not admitted has yet profaned; / By the world's many busy cares our thoughts have been divided, / And selfishness has harden'd whatever ground it gain'd" (240). Ambition, vanity, and selfish pleasure break the bonds of love and the glowing happiness of young love is all illusion for the speaker now. Marriage is a bitter pill after the promise of joyful love in her youth.

The maiden aunt in "The Bride" (1854 *Keepsake*), by Camilla Toulmin (Mrs. Newton Crosland), discourages mar-

riage for anyone; recounting her experiences as a bridesmaid, the aunt cannot remember a single successful pairing of bride and groom. She tells tales of marriages she has seen. The first bride she remembers serving was "slightly deformed," and the husband soon abandoned her with two children after spending her fortune. In the second marriage a wife ran away from a husband because of physical abuse. The aunt tells her nieces to be glad they have nothing but what she and their father give them because, unlike more wealthy families, "unless you marry perfect paragons, you may depend on it, your husbands shall have small control over your fortunes" (143). She would protect them from men who marry only for money. Another marriage the aunt remembers was comparatively happy, but the couple died of yellow fever in the West Indies soon after the marriage; the aunt wishes the girl had stayed single. Another friend almost marries a man whose secret past includes an Italian lover who died of a broken heart after he abandoned her, and their child, who shows up at the wedding to reveal the groom's secret. The bride, Madeline, breaks with her lover, saying, "I do dread that some women will not see this hideous history in the light I do! When will they universally learn to scorn the profligate, and thus avenge each other?" (150). Toulmin's campaign against marriage becomes quite clear in the spirited aunt's tales. To this single woman, life as an outsider is preferable to life in an emotional prison.

Isabella St. John provides a humorous, but sarcastic, examination of the "Requisites for a Wife," clearly showing the impossibility of fulfilling the marriage requirements demanded of women by men and society. St. John poses expectations that contradict one another, such as "She is to know every body, but not to mix much in society . . . know everything, but not be learned. . . [and . . . never to be dull, though she must like retirement" (194-95). The poem reflects society's demands that women demonstrate perfect propriety in public and private, carefully balancing social etiquette with highly restricted domestic duties. St. John captures the frustration and fatigue that result from trying to be the perfect wife, her sour attitude showing in such comments as "If ill and dejected, she is to be highly pleased her husband takes that opportunity of going from home" (195). St. John's diatribe against marriage provides no alternative to woman's fate as wife, but her complaint also includes the husband's unfortunate role in marriage; apparently, no participants of the marriage scheme are happy in St. John's view.

The coquette's complaints in the Countess of Morley's comic "Epilogue" (1834 *Keepsake*) come dangerously close to sexual revolution. She cries, "And must I then—the fatal knot once tied— / Become the meek, submissive, pattern bride?" (57). The speaker regrets that she can no longer flirt and use her power to dominate when she marries. "There's something in your very smiles would say, / 'We have our safety in the word—obey'" (57). Morley warns that "if you hold us by this legal teacher, / And fancy love and law can go together, / We may contrive such galling chains to loose, / And when you least expect it—slip the noose" (57). Morley coaches her women readers on how to let the man think he has the power by bowing to him on political issues such as "game and corn-laws" but ruling him with a smile: "Your

tyrant thus deceived becomes your tool" (58). She says it will not, as the reader might fear, cause "revolt and civil war—The fearful fruits of our emancipation" (58), but it will "support established institutions." The coquette's statements are so shocking she must back away from them at the end of her poem as if only joking, saying, "Believe me, gentlemen . . . / You know too well—how'er we scorn and flout you, / We all had rather die than live without you" (58). Distancing complaints about the state of marriage by giving them to a coquettish, humorous character dampens the effect of their severity, removing the blatant revolutionary threat inherent in the poem, but comedy allows the reader to consider the balance of power disrupted in the poem.

If women feared anarchy or social ostracism for their unacceptable desires for freedom, they could try to escape reality by reading about far away places that would take them out of their familiar middle-class world. Foreign plots in *Keepsake* literature transported women readers to distant cultures where they could experience imaginative new thrills. Ironically, however exotic the *Keepsake's* foreign flavor might appear, *Keepsake* authors rarely accomplished a complete removal from the rules of propriety. Joan Del Plato discusses the dynamics of foreign women in *Keepsake* literature in an unpublished essay entitled "Exotic Ladies in the Drawing Room: Images of Ethnicized Women in the Early Victorian *Keepsake* Annual," asserting that "images of the exotic Other in the *Keepsake* are not about Turks, Italians, Greeks, or Jamaicans at all but about the formation of Victorian femininity" (12); although stories set in Italy, Greece, India, South America, and Africa offer an imaginative geographical escape, the undercurrent of dissatisfaction with domestic ideology characteristic of much *Keepsake* literature remains firmly a part of the basic plot, demonstrating that the oppressive hierarchal rules would encircle a woman's life, no matter where she might journey.

In "The Star of the Pacific" by James Augustus St. John (1832 *Keepsake*), the jungles of Brazil become a metaphor for Adam and Eve's original paradise when a shipwrecked traveler meets a chieftain's daughter. They perform a ritual that signifies marital union to the woman's native tribe: "We sat during three days upon the same mat, and then, going down, according to the custom of the country, to the seashore, plunged hand in hand into the waves, and arose irrevocably bound to each other" (60). The couple's joy comes to an abrupt end when the woman's father intervenes, tearing the couple apart. Although the father eventually repents, allowing them to live together, he keeps their son as a hostage while they visit England. The story demonstrates that, even in Paradise, home can be a hurtful place.

According to Catherine Hall, evangelical domesticity was "an attempt to reconstruct family life and the relations between the sexes on the basis of 'real' Christianity"; however, the *Keepsake* literature examined in this essay clearly demonstrates that such an attempt failed, producing only social disturbance and a distorted version of love (90). Women would be helpless to find a cure for the domestic illness of their society for many decades, powerless in their restricted position in the domestic scheme. As Peter Gay records:

Until late in the nineteenth century, when feminists managed to break down some of the massive walls of male legal privilege, women remained frustrated in their bids to manage their own property, act as witnesses in court, or control bank accounts of their own. A few scattered, heroic exceptions apart, they were barred from the vote, from higher education, and from the liberal professions. They found every step toward equality furiously contested, and forced their way forward, when they did, only after round upon round of defeats. (299)

Although women such as Caroline Norton were already working toward freedom, most women could only reach for an imaginative escape from their powerlessness through the act of reading.

Works Cited

- Abdy, Maria. "The New Prima Donna." *The Keepsake* for 1849. Ed. The Countess of Blessington. London: Bogue, 1848. 3-16.
- Anonymous. "The Gored Huntsman." *The Keepsake* for 1828. Ed. Frederic Mansel Reynolds. London: Hurst, 1827. 21-32.
- _____. "The Monument." *The Keepsake* for 1833. Ed. Frederic Mansel Reynolds. London: Longman, 1832. 53-64.
- _____. "The Royal Marriage; or, Political Expediency." *The Keepsake* for 1838. London: Longman, 1837. 1-19.
- _____. "The Silver Lady." *The Keepsake* for 1838. London: Longman, 1837. 159-92.
- Blessington, Marguerite. "The Storm." *The Keepsake* for 1834. Ed. Frederic Mansel Reynolds. London: Longman, 1833. 289-90.
- _____. "Stock in Trade of Modern Poetesses." *Keepsake* for 1833. Ed. Frederic Mansel Reynolds. London: Longman, 1832. 208-09.
- _____. "A Tale of the Baptistry of St. Marks." *The Keepsake* for 1847. Ed. The Countess of Blessington. London: Longman, 1846. 13-15.
- Booth, Bradford Allen, ed. *A Cabinet of Gems*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1938.
- Bose, A. "The Verse of the English Annuals." *The Review of English Studies* 4 ns: 13 (Jan. 1953): 38-51.
- Del Plato, Joan. "Exotic Ladies in the Drawing Room: Images of Ethnicized Women in the Early Victorian *Keepsake* Annual." Unpublished essay, 1994.
- Ellis, Kate Ferguson. *The Contested Castle: Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1989.
- Gay, Peter. *The Bourgeois Experience*. 3 vols. New York: Oxford UP, 1984-93. Vol. 3.
- Gorham, Deborah. *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1982.
- Gorsky, Susan. "The Gentle Doubters: Images of Women in Englishwomen's Novels, 1840-1920." *Images of Women in Fiction: Feminist Perspectives*. Ed. Susan Koppelman Cornillon. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1973.
- Hall, Anna Maria. "The Daily Teacher." *The Keepsake* for 1844. Ed. The Countess of Blessington. London: Longman, 1843. 38-49.
- Hall, Catherine. *White, Male and Middle-Class: Exploration in Feminism and History*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Helsing, Elizabeth K., Robin Lauterbach Sheets, and William Veeder. *Society and Literature in Britain and America, 1837-1883*. Vol. 3 of *The Woman Question: Literary Issues, 1837-1883*. 3 vols. New York: Garland, 1983.
- Landon, Letitia Elizabeth. "Do You Remember It?" *The Keepsake* for 1832. Ed. Frederic Mansel Reynolds. London: Longman, 1831. 239.
- _____. "The Head." *The Keepsake* for 1834. Ed. Frederic Mansel Reynolds. London: Longman, 1883. 93-112.
- _____. "Remembrance." *The Keepsake* for 1837. Ed. Lady Emmeline Stuart Wortley. London: Longman, 1836. 28-33.
- Mermin, Dorothy. *Godiva's Ride: Women of Letters in England, 1830-1880*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993.
- Mitchell, Sally. *The Fallen Angel: Chastity, Class and Women's Reading, 1835-1880*. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1981.
- _____. "Sentiment and Suffering: Women's Recreational Reading in the 1860s." *Victorian Studies* 21 (1977): 29-45.
- Morley, Countess of. "Epilogue." *The Keepsake* for 1834. Ed. Frederic Mansel Reynolds. London: Longman, 1833. 57-58.
- Norman, Charlotte. "Kellingham House." *The Keepsake* for 1835. Ed. Frederic Mansel Reynolds. London: Longman, 1834. 143-68.
- _____. "On a Wounded Deer Found In Whittlebury Forest." *The Keepsake* for 1837. Ed. Lady Emmeline Stuart Wortley. London: Longman, 1836. 62-63.
- Norton, Caroline. "Count Rudolph's Heir." *The Keepsake* for 1836. Ed. Caroline Norton. London: Longman, 1835. 97-129.
- _____. "The Favourite Flower." *The Keepsake* for 1836. Ed. Caroline Norton. London: Longman, 1835. 75-76.
- _____. "Lawrence Bayley's Temptation." *The Keepsake* for 1833. Ed. Frederic Mansel Reynolds. London: Longman, 1833. 142-61.
- Renier, Anne. *Friendship's Offering: An Essay on the Annuals and Gift Books of the 19th Century*. London: Private Libraries Assoc., 1964.
- Rev. of the Annuals for 1831. *Monthly Review* 16 (Jan. 1831): 47-62.
- St. John, Isabella. "Requisites for a Wife." *The Keepsake* for 1834. Ed. Frederic Mansel Reynolds. London: Longman, 1833. 194-95.
- St. John, James Augustus. "The Star of the Pacific." *The Keepsake* for 1832. Ed. Frederic Mansel Reynolds. London: Longman, 1831. 41-70.
- Shelley, Mary Wolstonecraft. "Ferdinando Eboli." *The Keepsake* for 1829. Ed. Frederic Mansel Reynolds. London: Hurst, 1828. 195-218.
- Strickland, Agnes. "The Bridesmaid." *The Keepsake* for 1833. Ed. Frederic Mansel Reynolds. London: Longman, 1832. 82-83.
- T. A. K. "The Bridal." *The Keepsake* for 1845. Ed. The Countess of Blessington. London: Longman, 1844. 162.
- Toulmin, Camilla. (Mrs. Newton Crosland). "The Bride." *The Keepsake* for 1854. Ed. Marguerite Power. London: Bogue,

1853. 141-52.

Trudgill, Eric. *Madonnas and Magdalens: The Origins and Development of Victorian Sexual Attitudes*. New York: Holmes, 1976.

Weeks, Jeffrey. *Sex, Politics and Society*. London: Longman, 1989.

Wortley, Lady Emmeline Stuart. "I Am Come But Your Spirits to Raise." *The Keepsake* for 1837. Ed. Emmeline Stuart Wortley. London: Longman, 1836. 30-33.

Southwest Texas State University

The Unmanned Fertility Figure in Hardy's *The Woodlanders* (1887)

Andrew Radford

[Grace Melbury] flew round the fatal bush where the undergrowth narrowed to a gorge. Marty arrived at her heels just in time to see the result. Fitzpiers had quickly stepped forward in front of Winterborne, who, disdainfully shifting his position had turned on his heel; and then the surgeon did what he would not have thought of doing but for Mrs Melbury's encouragement and the sentiment of an eve which effaced conventionality. Stretching out his arms as the white figure burst upon him he captured her in a moment, as if she had been a bird. (112)¹

On midsummer Eve the young women of Little Hintock participate in the pagan survival of sowing hemp-seed under moonlight to cast a spell that will bring forth a reaper (lover) into material form. Grace Melbury's venture into this "low" culture of nature-worship ironically results in capture by a rakish member of "high" society, the physician Edred Fitzpiers.² Giles Winterborne's³ failure to protect Grace from the advances of his more cosmopolitan romantic rival indicates to what extent the ethos of the urban sophisticate has attenuated the vigor of Little Hintock and its traditional forms and agents. Critical orthodoxy, while it has registered this crisis, does not explore fully how these two male figures embody contrasting perceptions of power at play in the dense, all-enclosing forest setting. The native Winterborne paradoxically appears both literally and metaphorically out of touch during this vivid scene because he is enfeebled (and ultimately killed) by the *chivalrous* qualities which, in a stable social structure, should belong to Fitzpiers, whose Arthurian-Norman name implies cultivation and urbanity in its modish antiquity. The chivalry infecting and working through Winterborne—leaving him a sterile asexual force—is

projected against the libertine excesses that drag Fitzpiers back from lofty intellectual pursuits into a crude existence of seduction and abandonment. The latter is a character whose sexual appetite is at odds with his dilettantism; whose infidelities are not just casual but, in the entire pattern of the novel, symptomatic of a grave imbalance in the natural world which relates to Winterborne himself. What at first appears a coarse yet vital fertility unexpectedly lodged in Fitzpiers is really an overwhelming impulse to play the "satyr" figure, and watch himself playing it. Midsummer Eve affords a suitable "stage" on which this predatory interloper might perform. Within minutes of catching Grace in his arms and declaring that he will keep her there forever, he transfers his attention to the hoydenish Suke Damson, whom he chases across the fields.⁴ He reenacts with her the "superstitious sowing" in a hay mead under the full moon. D. H. Lawrence, by labelling Fitzpiers "a weak, pitiable person," (47) fails to acknowledge his impudent daring in a region to which he is utterly foreign. This fickle visitant from the *Beau-monde* betrays a languid unconcern for the consequences of his own desires, which he can realize through swift, decisive action, unlike the resigned stoic Winterborne, who is supposedly "perfectly at home in the woods" (Bullen 170). Although Fitzpiers lacks the charisma to fit his own self-image as a flamboyant bohemian, he is in touch with his sexuality and aggressively fulfills it. His volatile energies are always the stronger and give him victory on a night when the rural community should be celebrating its own wellbeing and affinity with the fecund life of the soil.

That Winterborne, the man most closely involved with the Hintock trade in trees and their by-products (apples, barks, spars), is stymied by civilized constraint and finds his

place usurped on Midsummer Eve by a "town" man, reflects Hardy's tortured perception that few things in this secluded region can be "natural" any more. When Winterborne is sent to Sherton Abbas Market to collect the newly educated Grace (chapters 4-5), whose arrival he awaits with tremulous hope, he carries with him "a specimen apple tree" (26), which serves as his heraldic emblem and suggests Hardy is invoking the "Wild Man" figure of the medieval mummers' play (traditionally shown holding a tree). But Winterborne could not be further removed from the untrammelled aggression and perverse lasciviousness of his medieval counterpart. Ironically, Hardy conceives Fitzpiers as the genuinely wild force: he is neither integrated with nor encumbered by the woodland world, and effortlessly violates its pagan survivals and its women. The Hintocks are there for him merely to act out his need for immediate self-gratification and sexual mastery. Through Fitzpiers's intrusive urban influence the Midsummer Eve festival has lost whatever religious authority it might once have possessed. Instead of affording access to suprahuman potencies, the Midsummer sowing has degenerated into an "ungodly performance" (110)—decadent, injurious and ill-adapted to the conditions of modern living, "a knick-knack . . . or a ridiculous proceeding with no apparent meaning" (McLennan, "Bride-Catching", 1886, 41). The ritual of scattering hemp-seed was originally related to a primitive conception of marriage designed to render the vegetation fertile by a process of "imitative" magic; that is to say, actual sexual union was intended to induce fertility in humans, crops, and animals. James George Frazer explained in *The Golden Bough*, first published in 1891: "If rude man identifies himself, in a manner, with nature; if he fails to distinguish the impulses and processes in himself from the methods which nature adopts to ensure the reproduction of plants and animals . . . he may infer that by yielding to his appetites he will thereby assist in the multiplication of plants and animals" (104).⁵ Fitzpiers yields to his "appetites" but partly out of a malicious boredom which debases the history of this curious survival. Winterborne, as the episode throws in sharp relief, can neither counteract the interference of Fitzpiers nor the artificial values of the culture which has educated him. Winterborne's need to conform to Grace's newly acquired standards of propriety leads on Midsummer Eve to erotic frustration and futility rather than to cathartic release. Ian Gregor's assertion that moribundity in *The Woodlanders* is felt to be "at once personal, communal, and located within nature itself" (145), ignores the deathliness of rapidly encroaching metropolitan manners which is Hardy's central concern. Winterborne's endeavors to improve the quality of his own life and that of others in Little Hintock crumble under the weight of keenly felt social pressures.

The Woodlanders comprises a more harrowing recognition than Hardy's previous fictions of a defeated rural environment in the degree to which its traditional agent Winterborne, the apparent custodian of the forest and its ancient culture, is "unmanned" by a socially constructed consciousness. The idea of Winterborne as a nurturing, potent

fertility figure is further stripped of credibility when Grace Melbury tries to transform him through misperception into an anthropological image of himself. In chapter 28 she accompanies her husband, Fitzpiers, to see him off on what he claims is a strictly professional call, but which she suspects to be a tryst with Mrs. Charmond. Grace watches Fitzpiers moving through the fertile landscape as though it is quite separate from him. At "the supreme moment" of "bounty" in White-Hart Vale, when "the hedges were bowed with haws and blackberries." Fitzpiers is directed by a selfish, destructive passion which can only further blight the traditional life of the woodland. She sees him as engrossed with something in his own imagination, having no rapport whatsoever with his organically abundant environment:

And so the infatuated surgeon went along through the gorgeous autumn landscape of White-Hart Vale, surrounded by orchards lustrous with the reds of apple-crops, berries, and foliage, the whole intensified by the gilding of the declining sun. The earth this year had been prodigally bountiful, and now was the supreme moment of her bounty. In the poorest spots the hedges were bowed with haws and blackberries; acorns cracked underfoot, and the burst husks of chestnuts lay exposing their auburn contents as if arranged by anxious sellers in the fruit-market. In all this proud show some kernels were unsound as her own situation, and she wondered if there were one world in this universe where the fruit had no worm, and marriage no sorrow. (155)

Although the betrayed wife's point of view is foregrounded and made clear by "she wondered," Hardy alerts us to her perceiving consciousness earlier by such clues as "burst husks of chestnuts . . . as if arranged by anxious sellers in the fruit-market": features of an unspoiled natural location remind her of an urban marketplace. While her husband, lacking true instinctual sympathy with the earth, rides obliviously through a landscape of astonishing beauty, Grace notices an unflattering likeness between the unrelieved misery of her marriage and the general decay concealed beneath the autumn splendor.

The "infatuated surgeon" passage deliberately parallels in structure the "Autumn's very brother" description a page later. As Grace dwells on the irony of her husband going off to meet his mistress on the gentle mare given to her by Giles Winterborne, the man himself appears out of the valley. Rays of the declining sun, which reflected on the white coat of Fitzpiers's horse as he vanished into the distance, now shine off the blades of Winterborne's cider-making apparatus. Whereas Grace's image of Fitzpiers suggests a disruptive and incongruous figure amid the "gorgeous" Autumn landscape, the vision of Winterborne mediated through her consciousness embodies the ongoing organic life of the Hintocks. With a violent resurgence of affection for what she thinks are his unsullied country virtues, Grace sees him as *belonging* to the tangible natural world in all its aspects, and achieving his apotheosis as autumnal fertility

¹All references are to Thomas Hardy, *The Woodlanders*, ed. with intro. Dale Kramer (Oxford: World's Classics, 1986).

²Hardy's use of the word *capture* with regard to Grace Melbury may have had a special resonance to readers in 1887 who studied the new anthropological scholars. In 1865 John F. McLennan published *Primitive Marriage: An Inquiry into the Origin and the Form of Capture in Marriage Ceremonies*. Hardy, in an 1895 letter to his friend Edward Clodd, wrote, "the modern views of marriage are a survival from the custom of capture & purchase, propped up by a theological superstition" (*Letters* 2:92).

³*Winterborne* is a common Dorset place-name derived from the phenomenon of streams which dry up in summer, "but whose fountains periodically well-up or break, as it is termed in the winter. The bursting of these springs is, however, always delayed until the occurrence of a gale of wind, however wet the season." (Anon, *Handbook* 101). The late-Victorian antiquary J. J. Foster noted seventeen villages in Dorset whose names are compounds of Winterbourne (115-19).

⁴Satyrs were frequently painted pursuing nymphs, the lesser female fertility deities usually linked with water and vegetation. See Merivale.

⁵On Hardy's knowledge of Frazer see Laird.

figure. But this passage is not an example of "uneducated vision" (Krasner 97). Grace desperately wants to believe that her childhood lover has been transfigured by the season; she celebrates his affinity with, and by implication, magical possession of the vibrant physical world. But this captivating light-enhanced illusion is not sustainable. Winterborne himself is never conscious of reaching a unique harmony with the rhythms governing seasonal change, or that he personifies the earth's thriving abundance.

He looked and smelt like Autumn's very brother, his face being sunburnt to wheat-colour, his eyes blue as corn-flowers, his sleeves and leggings dyed with fruit stains, his hands clammy with the sweet juice of apples, his hat sprinkled with pips, and everywhere about him that atmosphere of cider which at its first return each season has such an indescribable fascination for those who have been born and bred among the orchards. Her heart rose from its late sadness like a released bough; her sense reveled in the sudden lapse back to Nature unadorned. The consciousness of having to be genteel because of her husband's profession, the veneer of artificiality which she had acquired at the fashionable schools, were thrown off, and she became the crude country girl of her latent, early instincts.

Nature was bountiful, she thought. No sooner had she been cast aside by Edred Fitzpiers, than another being, impersonating chivalrous and undiluted manliness, had arisen out of the earth, ready to her hand. This, however, was an excursion of the imagination which she did not wish to encourage, and she said suddenly, to disguise the confused regard which had followed her thoughts, "Did you meet my husband?" (156)

Even before the perspective is explicitly made that of Grace as "Her heart rose from its late sadness," the tone of the passage, whose intoxicating sensuousness is suspiciously Keatsian, implies that Grace is indulging "an excursion of the imagination."⁶ Instead of being filled with a sense of personal failure, brooding over how "some kernels" in White-Hart Vale are "as unsound as her own situation" (155), she thinks that "Nature is bountiful" after the emergence of Winterborne, whom she reinvents in his ritual aspect, coated with pips and flecks of apple flesh; who not only seems to blend with, but assumes the overflowing ripeness of the region. She pictures Autumn's texture, produce, color and smell in loving detail, accentuating the countryman's apparent affiliation with natural processes. Fitzpiers can boast, to Grace's mind, of no such close kinship with this landscape; he is regarded as moving through the lush environment as though it is quite separate from him. Hardy cleverly exploits the irony that if Grace's fanciful identification of Winterborne with the cider-making process is carried to its logical conclusion, then this figure of natural fruition must surely be at risk of John Barleycorn's fate, or of being pressed like his own apples. In the autumn rites harvesting is

associated with death. Hardy implies that we must accept the necessary decline and disappearance of the old year-spirit, and its replacement, achieved by often brutal means, by a formidable new force. Winterborne *should* be dislodged—only, of course, Fitzpiers is grotesquely unfit to be considered Little Hintock's new nature-spirit.

Grace's naive pastoral thought-adventure conjures up an Emersonian "Nature" where "all mean egotism vanishes" and the "greatest delight which the fields and woods minister is the suggestion of an occult relation between man and the vegetable" (1: 140). Yet her rapt vision completely smotheres the fact that the diffident Winterborne possesses an intelligently natural knowledge and culture to which her expensive finishing school and Fitzpiers's sinister dabbling into esoteric lore could never lay claim. The hallucinatory intensity of her "Autumn's very brother" gloss reveals more about her status as an irremediably *split* person, than it does about Winterborne, whose genuine qualities are ignored while she indulges her fantasies of a Hintock tutelary spirit. She is consistently presented as an imperfectly manufactured product of polite culture, "as it were in mid-air between two storeys of society" (164); this "impressionable creature, who combined modern nerves with primitive feelings" (223). Although she feels as if she has returned to a meaningful, living relationship with her surroundings, the newly bourgeois Grace can never revert to being a "crude country girl" like Marty South, who occupies the lowest social and economic level of woodland life. Grace half-heartedly rebels against the "artificiality" paid for by wealth generated from her indulgent father's business of exploiting the forest (cutting down trees for timber). Her nostalgic dream of being restored through Winterborne, whose sunburnt face and cornflower colored eyes she associates with a vegetative deity, to the untutored native she once was is a delusion only equalled by her father's fancy that a recent divorce law will make a "grown" Grace "wholesome" again, erasing the "stain" of her unfortunate entanglement with Fitzpiers. "The encounter," according to David Lodge, "is a kind of epiphany for Grace, a moment of truth" (20). These comments however afford little insight into her motives for weaving around Winterborne vaguely literary generalizations. Geoffrey Thurley remarks that "Giles is a Dioysiac worshipper of the earth and the seasons . . . a pagan" (119). It is difficult to imagine Winterborne as a "Dioysiac worshipper" given his lonely self-absorption; while his "pagan" status is undercut by Grace's view of him rising like a new Adam out of the earth, "impersonating chivalrous and undiluted manliness" (156). His "manliness"⁷ in her eyes is an ever-withering sexless force, in stark contrast to the exploitative sensualism of Fitzpiers. Grace, caught between a frivolous nostalgia for treading the old tracks, and a keen desire for cultural advancement, endows the countryman with a prelapsarian innocence, striving to sublimate her attraction, for she does enjoy Winterborne sexually, but only as a voyeur would enjoy the inaccessible observed object, a psychological enigma always outside her rarefied social sphere. This trait

is shared by her husband, Fitzpiers, who is not only a voyeur of others but also of his own emotions. Lucile Herbert believes that Hardy "could very plausibly be represented as standing beside James as 'a watcher at the window . . . a figure with a pair of eyes, or at least with a field glass.'" (78).⁸ But it is Fitzpiers who is seen "quizzing [Grace] through an eyeglass" (51), always on the lookout from his house on the hillside for the next fleeting frisson.

If Grace's extravagant evocation of "Autumn's very brother" reveals how much she may want to see Winterborne as the epitome of an organic relationship between man and the dynamic potency of nature, his inhibiting self-restraint is still painfully apparent because of the gentility she has imposed on him and with which she secretly feels most comfortable. Winterborne senses that his own "homeliness" offends Grace's "acquired tastes" (166), so he apes a "chivalrous . . . manliness": the very trait she exploits in One-Chimney Hut at the climax of the novel, effectively killing him by her own superfine moral scruple. The unnatural role Winterborne must play when Grace is present ends, as on Midsummer Eve, in dourness and detachment. That he shows his devotion to her during the "Autumn's very brother" scene only by stroking a flower worn "in her bosom" as a pathetic gesture, implying "the abstraction of a somnambulist":

Her abandonment to the seductive hour and scene after her sense of ill-usage, her revolt . . . against social law, her passionate desire for primitive life, may have showed in her face. Winterborne was looking at her, his eyes lingering on a flower that she wore in her bosom. Almost with the abstraction of a somnambulist he stretched out his hand and gently caressed the flower. (157)

Winterborne explains why he caressed the flower: "It would not have occurred to me if I had not seen something like it done elsewhere" (157)—ironically by the urbane Fitzpiers to Mrs. Charmond. The cider-maker's somnambulism foreshadows *Tess* in which Angel Clare, during a moment of sleepwalking, carries the un-intact protagonist and lays her in an empty coffin (ch. 37). Both men feel they must "bury" the sexual instinct so as to obey a spurious "social law" and its rigorous standards of respectability. The consequence of Winterborne is "an abeyant mood" and "taciturn hesitancy" (205) which destroys any chance of happiness he might have, or indeed might confer in the Hintocks. Winterborne's true home should be the Norse "Niflheim" (73), a gloomy fogland where the forlorn spirits of those who have perished of old age or sickness, the unfulfilled, are destined to remain.⁹

Later in the novel, when Grace is recovering from her first illness, Winterborne "rose upon her memory as the fruit-god and the wood-god in alternation . . . sometimes leafy, and smeared with green lichen . . . sometimes cider-stained and starred with apple-pips" (209). However, Winterborne

is a far cry from the regenerative figure of Grace's making because he, like his workmate Marty South, epitomizes a ruined and exploited human nature which cannot develop *naturally* if it is forced to serve the demands of a new bourgeois culture and its false consciousness of refined manners, chivalry, and sexual "correctness." In the bitter recognition that Grace stylizes Winterborne, and that his status as "woodgod" can only be at best a poetic guise. Hardy shows the death of a potent and beneficent nature spirit whose reality can no longer be profoundly entertained in the imagination. To Grace, Winterborne is simply a "screen" on which she might project her fey mythical fantasies, no doubt fuelled by reading sentimental and idealistic forms of Romantic poetry at her fashionable finishing school. Crucially, he has his own naturally intelligent culture which is betrayed by Grace and Old Melbury, who thinks Winterborne is not of sufficiently high caste for his daughter. Grace fails to appreciate the tree-planter's "sort of sympathy between himself and the fir, oak, or beech that he was operating on; so that the roots took hold of the soil in a few days" (49). He and Marty South have an affinity with the forest articulated in terms of their shared intuitive understanding of a secret script peculiar to Little Hintock. But their inherited culture is almost extinct, ousted by the refined arts of which both Grace and Fitzpiers are the dubious beneficiaries:

The casual glimpses which the ordinary population bestowed upon that wondrous world of sap and leaves called the Hintock woods had been with these two, Giles and Marty, a clear gaze. They had been possessed of its finer mysteries as of commonplace knowledge had been able to read its hieroglyphs as ordinary writing; to them the sights and sounds of night . . . amid those dense boughs . . . were simple occurrences whose origin, continuance, and laws they foreknew . . . [T]hey had with the run of years, mentally collected those remoter signs and symbols which seen in few were of runic obscurity, but altogether made an alphabet . . . The artifices of the seasons were seen by them from the conjuror's own point of view. (248-49)

Winterborne, unlike Michael Henchard who is forced to visit a "conjuror" (Wide-Oh Fall) in Hardy's previously published novel *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1885), is himself endowed with "a gentle conjuror's touch in spreading the roots of each little tree, resulting in a sort of *caress*, under which the delicate fibers all laid themselves out in their proper directions for growth" (50, my italics). His caress, quite intuitive and unconscious, is intended to nurture the young trees. Yet when he strokes the flower worn by Grace in the "Autumn's very brother" episode (157), Winterborne's "caress" intimates only stammering inadequacy and sexual repression. The fertile bond supposed to exist between Winterborne and his trees is what the novel creates an almost

⁶See Wotton on this episode (55-57); Miller on readers of nature (1970, 83) and readers of character (108-11) in Hardy.

⁷Grace refers again later to the "manliness" she believes to inhabit "unvarnished" men such as Winterborne (166).

⁸Herbert's quotation is taken from James's "Preface" to *The Portrait of a Lady*, in the New York Edition (1907-17), vol. 3.

⁹Hardy may have had in mind Arnold's "Balder Dead" (1855) in which

"The plains of Niflheim, where dwell the dead" (l. 172) is the region to which Balder is banished.

religious yearning for, even as it repeatedly punishes him for this affinity. When Winterborne descends from the great elm on which John South is fixated in his last illness, it is like a tree-spirit detaching itself: "the tree seemed to shiver, then to heave a sigh: a movement was audible, and Winterborne dropped almost noiselessly to the ground" (73). Although his "gentle conjuror's touch" with the Hintock orchards suggests that he may be best qualified to help cure Old South's obsession, Winterborne is once again superseded by Fitzpiers, whose modern medical training is tested during this memorable episode. Henry Joseph Moule, a respected antiquarian who became curator of the Dorset County Museum, refers to the source of Old South's obsession in a letter to Hardy as the "elm-tree totem" (Hardy, *Personal Writings* 71). The term *totem* is North American, and was first used in an English Text in 1791 by the traveler and interpreter James Long, who requisitioned it from the language of the Ojebway Indians. James George Frazer, whose seminal survey *Totemism* was published the same year as Hardy's *Woodlanders* in 1887, defined it thus: "A totem is a class of material objects which a savage regards with superstitious respect, believing that there exists between him and every member of the class an intimate and altogether special relation" (*Totemism* 1:3). Marty South explains how her ailing father perceives the elm outside their cottage as "an evil spirit." "exactly his own age" sprouting up "when he was born on purpose to rule him, and keep him as its slave" (78).¹⁰ Old South keeps time to the tree's movements—"As the tree waved South waved his head, making it his fogleman with abject obedience," and believes it will fall on him: "'There he stands, threatening my life every minute that the wind do blow'" (70).¹¹

The connection between Old South and his elm is a macabre parody of Winterborne's "sympathy between himself and the fir, oak, or beech": a quasi-mystical correspondence between woodlander and trees has degenerated into superstition and debilitating neurosis. Winterborne, acting on Fitzpiers's advice, fells the elm, but when the old man sees the vacant patch of sky left behind he has a fit and dies of shock.¹² The consequences of felling South's tree, whose seriousness Winterborne cannot as yet fully comprehend, clash with the blackly comic effect of Fitzpiers's callous exclamation: "'Damned if my remedy hasn't killed him!'" (79). The remedial effects of his "advanced" modern science, whose principles fail adequately to account for the ways and agencies of the irrational, hasten the patient's death. In the novel felling the elm becomes a criminal act

(technically a theft), since it is performed without their wealthy neighbor Mrs. Charmond's authorization. The civilized and rational law which safeguards her rights as estate-owner would have the effect of protecting this vestige of tree-worship, which was historically a persistent subversion of Christianity.¹³ Winterborne's destructive operation on the elm, whose lower boughs are lopped off before it is cut down ("shrouding" as they call it at Hintock"), is inextricably bound up with the falling-in of lives which limits his tenure of the cottages where the Souths also live, because old South is the last life in the life-holding.¹⁴ Half this income, and Marty's home, are taken away at a stroke.

Winterborne's "gentle conjuror's touch," if allowed free rein, may have saved John South (and the cottages) whereas Fitzpiers's medical science only precipitated his death. Yet it is difficult to reconcile his "marvellous power of making trees grow" (49), with the horrific accounts of the destructive operation of natural forces within the forest. Winterborne, the whimsical "wood-god" of Grace's fantasies, can do little to revive the creative potential of his birth place. His inability to protect his locale from the ugly decay shows in the numerous descriptions of stunted and mutilated tree-life. It is dangerous, Hardy implies, to set much store by Grace's perceptions of the Hintock plantations and copses for they reflect more her anxieties than the actual condition of the physical world, for instance the "trees close together" she notices when alone at Winterborne's One-Chimney Hut, "wrestling for existence, their branches disfigured with wounds resulting from their mutual rubbings"; and the "dead boughs . . . scattered about like ichthyosauri in a museum" (234). Only Grace could compare features of a natural setting to a familiar urban location, especially one synonymous with intellectual improvement. Also the seasonal cycle and effects of shadow, sunbeams, mist and storm all conspire to evoke a fictional environment constantly and ominously changing. However, the trees presented in terms of the "Unfulfilled Intention" is a portrayal whose sheer starkness cannot be attributed to chiaroscuro or Grace's unreliable observation. We are deliberately enticed into the pastoral prettiness of the opening image, before being exposed to the many disturbing features awaiting those who tread farther into the forest depths:

They went noiselessly over mats of starry moss, rustled through interspersed tracts of leaves, skirted trunks with spreading roots whose mossed rinds made them like hands wearing green gloves, elbowed old elms and ashes

regarded as a conscious personal being, and as such receives adoration" (*Primitive Culture* 2: 215).

¹³In his 1883 *Westminster Review* essay on Hardy's work Havelock Ellis took special notice of Hardy's portrayal of trees and the almost religious power they had for him. "Mr. Hardy is never more reverent, more exact, than when he is speaking of trees." Ellis related this to "lingering echoes of the old tree-worship," and to "Nature-worship" in general. See Cox 103-32.

¹⁴Under the life-hold system, a tenant entered into agreement with the lord of the manor to occupy a dwelling for a period of lives. Farmer Springrove's Three Tranter's Inn and the adjoining cottages in *Desperate Remedies* is also a life-hold.

with great forks in which stood pools of water that overflowed on rainy days and ran down their stems in green cascades. On older trees . . . huge lobes of fungi grew like lungs. Here, as everywhere, the Unfulfilled Intention, which makes life what it is, was as obvious as it could be among the depraved crowds of a city-slum. The leaf was deformed, the curve was crippled, the taper interrupted; the lichen ate the vigour of the stalk, and the ivy slowly strangled to death the promising sapling. (41)

The increasingly grotesque somatic imagery—which Hardy repeats for trees in the "wilder recesses" of Mrs. Charmond's park with its ugly fungoid and parasitic growths¹⁵—is a far cry from *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), whose narrator shows a reverential appreciation for the woods. Hardy draws an analogy, and attributes the state of both Little Hintock and urban civilization to a common cause: the "Unfulfilled Intention." This abstract formulation implies the extreme and unrelenting cruelty that nature imposes upon itself when engaged in a Darwinian struggle for survival. The violence of the disfigurement that Hintock trees inflict on one another is the most unsettling feature of Hardy's rural wasteland. One species seems to devour another; ivy slowly strangles "the promising sapling," indicating the relationship between malformation and exploitation. Little Hintock is no better than the modern metropolis, whose bleak association of crime, infant mortality and "roofs of slated hideousness" are famously described by Tennyson's disenchanting elderly speaker in "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After." The "Unfulfilled Intention" also applies to Winterborne, who is unable to halt the spread of disease in this area. Hardy reveals that individual beings and their plans are as vulnerable to social and psychological forces as saplings are to ivy.

It is fitting that Winterborne should be allied with Autumn because the season owes its distinctive color and profusion to dying vegetation. The cider-maker and tree-planter, who in Grace's eyes rises out of the earth like a new Adam in chapter 28, is eerily consumed by unhusbanded nature in chapters 41 and 42. This time, however, instead of bringing sunshine, "Autumn . . . was coming with the rains" (229). Once associated with the prodigal fecundity of the Hintocks, the delirious Winterborne dissolves into the sylvan surroundings by imperceptible degrees. His enfeeblement and absorption back into the forest is not the true source of tragedy here, for in the full cycle of nature, growth and decay, sowing and reaping, are equally necessary. Hardy's acute sense of crisis stems from the fact that the tree-planter and cider-maker has not been *fertile* in his time: the galling irony is that Winterborne completes the cycle of life without fulfilling his priestly function. His role has been ruthlessly usurped by Fitzpiers, who cannot fulfill it either, as the grim farce involving Old South's elm-tree attests. Winterborne's ritual death is marked by successive steps down the evolu-

¹⁵[S]limy streams of fresh moisture, exuding from decayed holes caused by old amputations, ran down the bark of the oaks and elms" (149); see also the half-dead oak "hollow, and disfigured with white tumours, its roots spreading out like claws grasping the ground" (161).

tionary ladder:

[There] were low mutterings; at first like persons in conversation, but gradually resolving themselves into varieties of one voice. It was an endless monologue, like that we sometimes hear from inanimate nature in deep secret places where water flows, or where ivy leaves flap against stones; but by degrees [Grace] was convinced that the voice was Winterborne's. (234)

Winterborne's cough sounds like "a squirrel or a bird" (230), then his voice floats upon the weather "as though a part of it" (233), and finally indistinguishable, as "an endless monologue, like that we sometimes hear from inanimate nature in deep secret places." He becomes first part of the animal world, then of the inanimate world of water, wind and stone. But the process of dying continues: Hardy describes how Winterborne's final murmurs are "like a comet; erratic, inapprehensible, untraceable" (236). Hardy draws on (with heartfelt sincerity or cutting irony?) the traditions of the pastoral elegy in having all nature perform rites of mourning for the death of a god: "The whole wood seemed to be a house of death, pervaded by loss to its uttermost length and breadth. Winterborne was gone, and the copses seemed to show the want of him; those young trees, so many of which he had planted . . . were . . . sending out their roots in the direction that he had given them with his subtle hand" (245). *The Woodlanders* closes with a shorn Marty South delivering a threnody to the unmanned guardian of the Hintock orchards. Her words are the only recognition we get from within Winterborne's world of his singular capabilities. In its simple lyricism, Marty's tribute is natural elegy, neither self-conscious nor literary:

"Whenever I plant the young larches I'll think that none can plant as you planted; and whenever I turn the cider wring, I'll say none could do it like you. If ever I forget your name let me forget home and heaven! . . . But no, no, my love, I never can forget 'ee; for you was a good man, and did good things!" (276-77)

This tutelary nymph of Little Hintock, whose feminine contours are "so undeveloped as to be scarcely perceptible in her" (276), is a representative like the man she loves, of "Unfulfilled Intentions" and the barren asexual current running through society in the forest.¹⁶

Although Fitzpiers may be ultimately the true destroyer of Winterborne and his farcical substitute as "King of the Wood,"¹⁷ the countryman is also the victim of Grace Melbury, who relies on his "freedom from grosser passions" and enervating impersonations of "scrupulous delicacy" (236). Although Marjorie Garson's standpoint is too severe, observing that Grace reflects Hardy's "instinctive terror of the woman who castrates and kills," (121) the latter's adherence

¹⁶For readings of Marty as an essentially sterile figure see Casagrande 113-17, Schwarz 29, Boumelha 107-08.

¹⁷"The King of the Wood" is the title James George Frazer gives to Book I of his *Golden Bough*.

¹⁰Brooks describes John South's tree as "a kind of Igdrasil" (222); see also Jacobus 124-25, Williams 158, Peck 147.

¹¹This complex scene raises many questions as to whether Hardy deliberately exploited anthropological investigations into the worship of definite external objects. In the mid-1860s E. B. Tylor was developing his theory of animism, observing that a "childlike mind which can so attribute to any lifeless object a personal existence, a share in human life and thought . . . is indeed in the condition to which the religion and philosophy of the lower races for the most part evidently belong" ("Religion" 72). C. F. Keary also focused on "relics . . . of an earlier stratum of thought" such as "river, tree or mountain worship" found in "out-of-the-way spots" (361).

¹²E. B. Tylor was among the first English anthropological scholars seriously to explore that primitive stage of thought "where the individual tree is

to legal and social etiquette causes Winterborne's demise in the gloomy Hintock glade. Grace's stay at One-Chimney Hut in the deepest part of the forest occurs when fleeing her adulterous husband and the unceasing gossip of her neighbors. In the first of a series of bizarrely comic touches showing the two lovers blocked by the Christian marriage contract and the strict moral code it prescribes, whose might neither Winterborne's "strong arms" nor Grace's refined boarding-school education can conquer, she is confronted by exactly the traits from which she has fled: the inhibitions of social protocol. As on Midsummer Eve, Grace's impetuous foray into the forest paradoxically results in a meeting with forms or instruments of civilized culture. Winterborne's homely morality is unyielding as he wishes to make amends for his treachery of kissing her while knowing her to be Fitzpiers's wife—more than six months earlier! In refusing her invitation to an impropriety that might ruin her reputation, Winterborne moves from house to hovel to shelter; specifically a woodcutter's fuel shelter.

The Woodlanders introduces for the first time in Hardy's fiction "legal formalities for dissolving [a] union" (206) and his desire to revise a stale, repressive covenant. The One-Chimney Hut episode's peculiar tonal shifts are rooted in his sardonic manipulation of inherited literary forms, showing each one to be ludicrously inappropriate as a means of expressing or relieving the social malaise infecting Little Hintock. Hardy scornfully invokes the Snow White story during Grace's flight through an enchanted forest, for it is depicted with unearthly "fairy tale" touches:

the plantations were always weird at this hour of eve—more spectral by far than in the leafless season . . . there were strange faces and figures from expiring lights that had somehow wandered into the canopied obscurity. . . . She had walked three or four miles westward . . . that prescriptive comfort and relief to wanderers in the woods—a distant light—broke at last upon her searching eyes. (224, 225)

However, this mysterious dwelling unmagically boasts only one cramped shabby room. Hardy satirizes "the mechanical plot of marriages and intrigues," (Fisher 147) by making Grace sound an oddly comic note of the embarrassed lover: "'This is awkward'" (!) The elaborate measures taken to stop the couple sleeping together (locking the door, securely bolting the shutters, leaving food on a window-sill) are redolent of broad farce or Chaucerian fabliau. In such genres the lover's passions and resourcefulness are gauged by the sturdiness and complexity of the barriers put in their path. But Winterborne hardly qualifies as a fabliau hero ready to employ any ruse so that he may gain access to the object of his desires! Hardy disconcertingly adopts a tone of mock-Romantic sentimentality and pathos when the scene moves to Winterborne's "wretched little shelter" (228). The countryman's noble martyrdom is embellished by poetic

locutions: "damp obscurity," "the frailty that besieged him" and "purity of the affection" (228). Hardy settles on melodrama when Grace finally drags Winterborne's drenched body indoors: "How Grace performed that labour she never could have exactly explained" (235). Her "labour" reminds us that her leisured lady inaction throughout the novel results not from inherent weakness but from the advantages of intellectual and moral refinement purchased by her snobbish father.

Hardy's unnerving oscillations between knockabout farce and tragic pathos to convey Winterborne's unmaning is also highlighted by the wild goose-chase initiated by Old Melbury and his geriatric "search-party" (273) whose anticlimactic upshot is the discovery that Grace has returned to her remorseful husband, Fitzpiers.¹⁸ The rustic ruminations on marriage and Old Melbury's comic mortification over Grace—"I thought you went out to get parsley!"—clash with Marty South's requiem over Winterborne's grave. The cider-maker, whom Grace compares to a resplendent primitive fruit-god in chapter 28, ends his days weak and exhausted, tapping at his own window for scraps of food. The cheerless autumnal wood in which he collapses, with its "brown leaves," "dead boughs" and "perishing woodbine stems" (234), anticipates Frazer's highly charged description of Diana's fertility priest warily circling his tree in the sacred grove at Nemi, at the outset of *The Golden Bough* (1891):

we picture to ourselves the scene as it may have been witnessed by a belated wayfarer on one of those wild autumn nights when the dead leaves are falling thick, and the wind seems to sing the dirge of the dying year. It is a sombre picture, set to melancholy music . . . the sighing of the wind in the branches, the rustle of withered leaves underfoot . . . and in the foreground . . . a dark figure with a glitter of steel at his shoulder. (12)

Frazer's "belated wayfarer"—conjuring up distinctly literary travelers such as Wordsworth's "lonely wanderer," or Byron's "Highland rover"—is similar to Hardy's hypothetical "rambler" at the beginning of *The Woodlanders*. Yet Hardy, with amused savagery, debunks the scholar-gypsy genre by revealing his "rambler" of backlanes and by-ways to be the foppish and hopelessly lost Barber Percomb, who eventually arrives at Little Hintock to purchase Marty South's "chestnut" hair (9). This selfish defoliation of "nature's adornment"—she is "shorn" as if in a sacrificial rite—embodies the destiny of a countryside, an underclass and a gender; as well as anticipating Frazer's account of the belief (a "real article of primitive faith") that human hair was inextricably bound up with physical and sexual potency (*Golden Bough* 768).

While Winterborne "pursues doggedly a downward path to a miserable grave" (Thurley 106), forced by Grace Melbury to adopt the chivalric maxim that counsels repression of sexual appetites, Fitzpiers deliberately indulges his "grosser

passions." He was very much the center of the story Hardy first offered to Macmillan with the possible alternative title *Fitzpiers at Hintock*. This implies that he was originally conceived as a more elusive figure than the "third-rate Shelley" David Lodge calls him (16). Hardy says apparently straightforwardly:

His face was rather soft than stern, charming than grand, pale than flushed; his nose—if a sketch of his features be *de rigueur* for a person of his pretensions—was artistically beautiful enough to have been worth modelling by any sculptor not over busy, and was hence devoid of those knotty irregularities which often mean power; while the classical curve of his mouth was not without a looseness in its close. Either from his readily appreciative mien, or in reflective manner, his presence bespoke the philosopher rather than the dandy. (78)

The "soft . . . charming . . . pale" face hints at the superior birth and schooling on which Fitzpiers so obviously prides himself. Hardy slyly remarks that the nose of this minor aristocrat without land of fortune would be "worth modelling by any sculptor" if he was "not *over busy*." But "the classical curve of his mouth" is "not without a looseness in its close": the fatally magnetic glamour conceals a dilettante humbug. That the narrator has to assure us Fitzpiers's presence indicates "the philosopher rather than the dandy" is strange, because it insists on the reality of his Platonic aspiration while at the same time implying its profound insecurity.

Fitzpiers aims to be an austere follower of Plato's belief in a world of abstract ideas, of which material manifestations on earth are only imperfect copies. But this "philosopher" in spite of his best intentions, devotes more time to the "rank literatures of emotion and passion" than to "the books and *materiel* of science" (94). The contradiction in him of the roles of Platonic idealist and the incurable sensual materialist, who is not only imaginatively unfaithful but physically so, makes him a distinct, less moral variation on the type that includes Angel Clare and *The Well-Beloved's* Jocelyn Pierston (there is a kinship in name). Fitzpiers struggles to release himself from the material grip of the natural world yet is dragged back by sexual imperatives into a satyreal existence. The primitive urge for license of which he is both a reluctant victim and triumphant hierophant, overwhelms his pseudo-scientific ambition to discover by dissection the point at which the ideal touches the real. Hardy perceives the sexual force inhabiting Fitzpiers to be the dominant natural energy at play in human affairs. In a bitterly grotesque finale, Fitzpiers's obstinate persistence is rewarded because he flouts bourgeois morality and still claims Grace, in whom he experiences a renewed interest. Her proclaimed infidelity with Winterborne is ironically the stimulus for his inconstant idealizing desire. Fitzpiers' corrupt attitude reflects the final and irreversible erosion of faith in the capacity of elemental potencies to inform and inspire the human world by a destructive dilettantism which trivializes their traditional mythological representation. In Hardy's next published novel, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Fitzpiers's dual personality splits into antipodal characters.

His satyreal traits appear at their crudest in Alec d'Urberville, while the intellectual pretensions and Platonic idealism are passed onto the asexual Christian, Angel Clare. However, in the conflict of natural potencies, Angel triumphs; Alec and Tess—both sexually charged figures—are sacrificed.

Works Cited

- [Anon.] *A Handbook for Travellers in Wiltshire, Dorsetshire, and Somersetshire*. London: John Murray, 1856.
- Boumelha, Penny. *Thomas Hardy and Women: Sexual Ideology and Narrative Form*. Brighton: Harvester, 1982.
- Brooks, Jean R. *Thomas Hardy: The Poetic Structure*. London: Elek, 1971.
- Bullen, J. B. *The Expressive Eye: Fiction and Perception in the Work of Thomas Hardy*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1986.
- _____. "The Gods of Wessex Exile: Thomas Hardy and Mythology." In *The Sun Is God: Painting, Literature and Mythology in the Nineteenth Century*. Ed. J. B. Bullen. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1989. 181-98.
- Casagrande, Peter J. "The Shifted 'Centre of Altruism' in *The Woodlanders*: Thomas Hardy's Third 'Return of the Native.'" *ELH* 38 (1971): 104-25.
- Cox, R. G., ed.. *Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge, 1970.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. 4 vols. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1971-87.
- Fisher, Joe. *Hidden Hardy*. London: Macmillan, 1992.
- Foster, J. J. "Dorset Folk-Lore," *Folk-Lore Journal* 6 (1888): 115-19.
- Frazer, J. G. *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*. 1891. A new abridgement ed. with intro. Robert Fraser. Oxford: The World's Classics, 1994.
- _____. *Totemism and Exogamy: A Treatise on Certain Early Forms of Superstition and Society*. 4 vols. London: Macmillan, 1910.
- Garson, Marjorie. *Hardy's Fables of Integrity: Woman, Body, Text*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1991.
- Gregor, Ian. *The Great Web: The Form of Hardy's Major Fiction*. London: Faber & Faber, 1974.
- Hardy, Thomas. *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*. Ed. Michael Millgate and Richard Little Purdy. 7 vols. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1978-88.
- _____. *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings: Prefaces, Literary Opinions, Reminiscences*. Ed. Harold Orel. London: Macmillan, 1967.
- _____. *The Woodlanders*. 1887. Ed. with intro. Dale Kramer. Oxford: The World's Classics, 1986.
- _____. *The Woodlanders*. 1887. New Wessex Edition, ed. and intro. David Lodge. London: Macmillan, 1976.
- Herbert, Lucille. "Hardy's Views of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*." *ELH* 37 (1970): 78. Her quotation is taken from the "Preface" to *The Portrait of a Lady*, in the New York Edition (1907-17): vol. 3.
- Jacobus, Mary. "Tree and Machine: *The Woodlanders*." In *Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Thomas Hardy*. ed. Dale Kramer. London: Macmillan, 1979.
- Keary, C. F. "Some Phases of Early Religious Development." *Nineteenth Century* 4 (1878): 361.

¹⁸Hardy was concerned to strengthen the impression that Grace's return to her unfaithful husband was a tragedy for her: see Kramer (1986). Hardy's

1889 revisions to the dramatized version of the novel make her future discontent explicit; see Millgate (1982) 299.

Krasner, James. *The Entangled Eye: Visual Perception and Representation of Nature in Post-Darwinian Narrative*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992.

Laird, John Tudor. "New Light on the Evolution of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*." *Review of English Studies* NS 31 (1980): 414-35.

Lawrence, D. H. *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*. Ed. Bruce Steele. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985.

Lodge, David. "Introduction." *The Woodlanders*. New Wessex Edition, ed. and intro. David Lodge. London: Macmillan, 1976.

McLennan, John F. "Bride-Catching." *Argosy* 2 (1886): 38-46.

_____. *Primitive Marriage: An Inquiry into the Origin of the Form of Capture in Marriage Ceremonies*. Ed. and intro. Peter Riviere. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1970.

Merivale, Patricia. *Pan the Goat God: His Myth in Modern Times*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1969.

Miller, J. Hillis. *Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1970.

Millgate, Michael. *Thomas Hardy: A Biography*. New York: Random House, 1982.

Peck, John. "Hardy's *The Woodlanders*: The Too Transparent Web." *ELT* 24 (1981): 147-54.

Thurley Geoffrey. *The Psychology of Hardy's Novels: The Nervous and the Statuesque*. St. Lucia, Queensland: U of Queensland P, 1975.

Tylor, E. B. *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art and Custom*. 2 vols. 4th ed. London: John Murray, 1903.

_____. "The Religion of Savages." *Fortnightly Review* 4 (1866): 70-82.

Williams, Merryn. *Thomas Hardy and Rural England*. London: Macmillan, 1972.

Wotton, George. *Thomas Hardy: Towards a Materialist Criticism*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1985.

University of York

Victorian Group News

Announcements

Victorian Studies seeks essays for a special issue on Victorian investment. Possible topics include but are not limited to investment and imperial expansion; foreign loans and foreign policy; the geography of investment (e.g. the City of London as financial center; the importance of American and European markets; investment and the notion of the provincial; transnational studies and investments); speculation, including the moral rhetoric surrounding it; forms of investment (joint-stock companies, Consolidated Funds, etc); conceptions of risk; the financing of technological innovation (railways, canals, submarine telegraph cables); the impact of the stock market and the culture investment on gender, and on histories of sexuality and race; bubbles; the advent of financiers, investment bankers and investment magazines; and case studies of individual investors and companies. This special issue will provide a forum for discussion of concerns that have become pressing, particularly in the fields of social and economic history as well as literary and post-colonial studies, and which might include reflections on how changing attitudes to investment in our own time are shaping the questions we ask about the Victorian culture of investment. Deadline for submissions: 1 January 2002. Direct inquiries or electronic submissions to one of the guest editors: Nancy Henry (nancyh@binghampton.edu), Anjali Arondekar (aarondek@sophia.smith.edu), or Cannon Schmitt (cschmitt@duke.edu). Send hard copy submissions to Cannon Schmitt, Dept. of English, Box 90015, Duke University, Durham, NC 27708-0015.

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO A HARRIET MARTINEAU SPECIAL ISSUE. To mark the bicentenary of Harriet Martineau's birth in 2002, *Women's Writing* invites revisionary essays exploring any aspect of Harriet Martineau's work—her journalism, *Autobiography*, popularization of political economy, children's stories, travel writing, feminism—as well as her life, relationship with her contemporaries, and current standing. Completed papers should follow the journal's house style. Deadline for completed submissions—1 July 2001.

Please submit inquiries, abstracts and essays (up to 7,000 words) to the guest editor—Dr. Valerie Sanders, Department of English, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull HU6 7RX, England (Tel: 01482-465315), or Dr. Deborah Logan, English Department, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY 42101; e-mail deborah.logan@wku.edu.

Coming in

The Victorian Newsletter

Richard Dellamora, "Stupid Trollope"

Krista Lysack, "Imperial Addictions: West End Shopping and East End Opium"

Susan E. Schaper, "Victorian Ghostbusting: Gendered Authority in the Middle-Class Home"

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 including 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, 83m 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98.