

The Victorian Newsletter

Editor

Ward Hellstrom

Number 109

Managing Editor

Louise R. Hellstrom

Spring 2006

Contents

Page

Scandalous Sensations: <i>The Woman in White</i> on the Victorian Stage by Maria K. Bachman	1	21	Kate Field and Anthony Trollope: The Gaps in the Record by Gary Scharnhorst
Nostalgia to Amnesia: Charles Dickens, Marcus Clarke and Narratives of Australia's Convict Origins by Beth A. Boehm	9	24	Metaphoric Mules: Dickens's Tom Gradgrind and Dante's Vanni Fucci by Ernest Fontana
The Epigraph to Henley's <i>In Hospital</i> by Edward H. Cohen	14	25	A Husband's Tragedy: The Relationship between Art and Life in Oscar Wilde's <i>An Ideal Husband</i> By Carol Schnitzer
Emily Brontë's Pedagogy of Desire in <i>Wuthering Heights</i> by Amy Carol Reeves	16	29	Coming In <i>Victorian Newsletter</i>
		30	Books Received

Cover: Mr Toots from *Dombey and Son*

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; e-mail ward.hellstrom@wku.edu. 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*.

Scandalous Sensations: *The Woman in White* on the Victorian Stage

Maria K. Bachman

Though Wilkie Collins continued his prodigious output of sensation fiction during the 1870s, biographer Kenneth Robinson notes that Collins was "far more interested in the theatre" (252). In fact, between 1871-73 no fewer than three Collins plays were produced in the West End of London with his two greatest stage successes—*The New Magdalen* and *Man and Wife*—running concurrently. Drama had always been one of Collins's passions, and early in his career in the letter of Dedication to his novel *Basil* (1852), he described the "novel" and the "play" as being

twin-sisters in the family of Fiction . . . the one is a drama narrated, as the other is a drama acted; and . . . all the strong and deep emotions which the Play-writer is privileged to excite, the Novel-writer is privileged to excite also. (*Basil* xxxvii)¹

Despite the success of a number of Collins's dramas, we can question whether the privilege Collins imagined the novelist and playwright sharing as being necessarily equal. Collins's best-selling sensation novel, *The Woman in White*, for example, had to be extensively rewritten for the stage.²

It was a project on which Collins had "lavished exceptional pains" and yet he was never "entirely satisfied with the stage version" (Robinson 252), despite the fact that the play was a commercial success during its run at the Olympic Theatre between August 1871 and February 1872 (Peters 334, Page 104).³ To an extent, Collins's choices regarding which aspects of the novel he would include and adapt to the stage and which aspects he would exclude or seriously reduce were necessitated by dramatic abridgement and compression. However, the play's reduction or erasure of the novel's more "dangerous" elements cannot be explained simply in terms of

staging concerns and therefore offers insight into the stark differences between writing for private and public audiences in the Victorian period.

Nothing whetted the Victorian appetite for vicarious thrills in the 1860s and 1870s as well as a cultural product known as sensation. Sensational crime trials, novels, dramas, performers, exhibitions that focused on the lurid and shocking—the Victorians both craved and devoured sensation in all its myriad forms. While the primary meaning of sensation was personal and physiological—an "electrical stimulus": something that jolted one's nerves—there was also a secondary, broader socio-cultural meaning that referred to crimes and scandals in the news (adultery, bigamy, poisoning, divorce, incarceration). And, as Matthew Sweet points out, an intense public sensation was a condition that "implied a wide and swift circulation" throughout society (7). In every sense of the word, Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1859-60) was a true sensation,⁴ a novel to be "devoured" in one sitting (Fitzgerald 222). Despite its unprecedented and overwhelming popularity, the best-selling novel met with mixed-reviews. A reviewer for the *Critic* complained that "[t]his is not a novel which evokes the better feelings of human nature; it does not go home to you; you acknowledge its artistic construction but you feel the want of nature. . . . We were more struck by the general tendency of the book to sacrifice everything to intensity of excitement" (Page 82). In another unsigned review, *Dublin University Magazine* attacked Collins for a failed "attempt to combine newness of form and substance with reality of treatment. . . . Throughout the book circumstances grotesque or improbable meet you at every turn"(Page 104). A similar complaint of improbability was made by a *Times* critic who pointed out the inconsistencies in the chronology of narrative events: "[These errors] render the last volume a mockery, a delusion, and a snare; and all the incidents in it are not merely

¹Apart from this early preface to *Basil*, Collins does not discuss his views of drama in detail, but he does seem to have been an enormous admirer of French theatre with its stress on naturalism and dramatic unity, which would suggest that there is a close relationship between aesthetic and ideological considerations, as well as a tension between them.

²Soon after *The Woman in White* was published, an unauthorized stage production began at the Surrey Theatre in Lambeth, a play that caused Collins to threaten, but not instigate, a lawsuit. Collins's own dramatic adaptation of *The Woman in White* was published privately in 1871.

³After closing in London on 24 February 1872, the play toured England for a year, and eventually played at the Broadway Theatre in New York in December 1873. The original cast featured Wybert Reeve as Walter, George Vining as Fosco, Ada Dyas in the dual role of Laura Fairlie and Anne Catherick, and Mrs. Charles Viner as Marian Halcombe. George Vining's Fosco was the subject of some controversy, and Collins took it upon himself to write a letter to the press defending the actor's performance. Vining was subsequently replaced by Reeve, who was apparently able to make the move from hero to villain quite easily, and played the role for the next eight years.

⁴John Sutherland notes *The Woman in White* significantly raised the circulation of Dickens's *All the Year Round*, the weekly newspaper in which it was first serialized. Moreover,

Sampson Low's first printing of 1,000 copies of the expensive three-volume edition (31s., 6d.) sold out on publication day, and 1,350 further copies were sold during the following week. Less than a month after publication, Collins recorded having made 1,400 pounds from *The Woman in White*. . . . An initial print-run of 10,000 copies was scheduled for the 'cheap edition' (in one volume, at 6s.) in April 1861, with an expectation of 50,000 sales before the even cheaper editions at 2s. (and less) were put into production (654).

The "White Woman rage" (a superb example of Marx's "commodity fetish") that ensued attests further to the unprecedented popularity of the novel. According to S. M. Ellis,

There never was such a success as *The Woman in White*. . . . There were numerous publicity triumphs too, all through 1860, for every possible commodity was labelled 'Woman in White.' There were 'Woman in White' cloaks and bonnets, 'Woman in White' perfumes and all manner of toilet requisites, 'Woman in White' Waltzes and quadrilles (29-30).

improbable—they are absolutely impossible" (Page 103).⁵ However, when the novel was brought to the stage ten years later, theatre critics were unanimous in their praise for Collins's dramatic adaptation. One critic noted that the play "excited . . . an enthusiasm which we have never seen surpassed. . . . No drama has been produced for many years so full of intense and absorbing scenes as this," while another reviewer summed up the pervasive sentiment, "Amongst all the adaptations we have had of late this appears to us quite the best."⁶

What is immediately most striking in Collins's attempt to reduce a 700-page novel into an 88-page play is his apparent disregard for his own apocryphal maxim, "Make 'em laugh, make 'em cry, make 'em wait." Given the novel's popularity (and its status as a veritable commodity), Collins could assume that theatre audiences would have been all too familiar with the basic story and its sensational secrets. A reviewer from *The Standard* pointed out, "And so, folks who have read the book—and who has not?—will find additional attraction in watching the remarkably clever and artistic manner in which the story is now presented," while *The Daily Telegraph* reported that "knowing every line of the book as we all do, we are actually able to be as excited—if not more—over the play than over the novel" ("Specimens"). The fact that there would have been no mysteries for the audience may very well have prompted Collins to return to a narrative strategy he had experimented with in his earlier novel, *The Dead Secret* (1857)—divulging all secrets at the outset. In the *Preface* to that novel, Collins explains that he "lets the effect of the story depend on expectation rather than surprise; believing that the reader would be all the more interested in watching the progress. . . [of the characters] towards the discovery of the secret" (5-6). In the dramatic adaptation of *The Woman in White*, Sir Percival Glyde's motives for incarcerating Anne Catherick in the lunatic asylum are revealed in the Prologue: Anne observes Sir Percival in the church vestry forging marriage records in an attempt to cover up his illegitimate status and subsequent claim to Limmeridge House. Moreover, the relationship between Laura Fairlie and Anne Catherick—a relationship upon which "the whole plot of the story hinges," according to Mrs. Oliphant⁷ also is revealed at the outset (Page 118). In short, there are no mysteries in the play, yet reviewers were unanimous in their approval of Collins's "free

manipulation of the original work" and agreed that "dismiss[ing] the whole element of mystery" was a "bold" and "well advised" move.⁸ Mystery and its attendant surprise, however, are not all that is sacrificed in this adaptation for the content of the novel—its various sensations—is self-censored in interesting ways in the dramatization.

For Mrs. Oliphant, the "distinguishing characteristic of the the book, [*The Woman in White*], is the power and delicacy of its sensation incidents . . . the extremely effective manner in which the critical moment and event strike into the tale, giving it a precision and distinctness which no other expedient could supply so well" (Page 117). In particular, Mrs. Oliphant calls attention to the "startling force" of two scenes in the novel, scenes which, in her opinion, were "more notable than anything that comes after." The first scene to which she refers occurs late one evening in the middle of Hampstead Heath: as Walter Hartright is walking home, a mysterious woman dressed in white suddenly appears out of the shadows and lays her hand on his shoulder. Walter recounts how "in one moment, every drop of blood in my body was brought to a stop by the touch of a hand laid lightly and suddenly on my shoulder from behind me" (*The Woman in White* 63). According to Mrs. Oliphant, "[T]he shock is as sudden, as startling, as unexpected and incomprehensible to [the reader] as it is to the hero of the tale" (Page 118). Charles Dickens, in fact, considered this encounter to be one of the most dramatic scenes in literature (Peters 208). The second scene in the novel where the "reader's nerves are affected like the hero's," occurs when Walter observes Laura Fairlie passing back and forth outside a window and suddenly realizes the uncanny resemblance between her and the woman in white, the fugitive from the asylum he encountered days earlier on the moonlit road to London (Page 118-19). In the dramatization, however, Collins collapses these two pivotal sensation incidents in the middle of Act I in the Swiss Chalet at Limmeridge, achieving what is indisputably a "no thrills" effect:

Wal. (alone. The glow of the sunset grows gradually deeper whilst he speaks) . . . He is to win her; and I am to lose her—and what makes the difference between us? An accident of birth! Are all the rights in this world to be for ever on the side of the few? Has nature no claim? Has love no privilege? Oh, life! What have you left to

higher degree than any of his brethren, the brilliant dramatic power in which stage writers are singularly deficient—takes to writing for the stage, the stage is sincerely to be congratulated." *The Standard* was just as effusive: "Mr. Collins has produced a play of intense interest and great ingenuity, which, simply upon its intrinsic merits as a dramatic work, is worthy of the highest and most unqualified praise" (qtd. in Olympic Theatre, "Specimens of Criticism Extracted from Notices of 'The Woman in White' in the Press." Hereafter cited in the text as "Specimens").

⁷Mrs. Margaret Oliphant was one of the most prolific Victorian novelists—she was Queen Victoria's favorite—as well as one of the leading critics of the day

⁸See *The Daily News*. Similarly, *The Pall Mall Gazette* pointed out that "for the audience there is at no time any mystery; a series of complications is submitted to them, but a clue to the maze of incidents is always in their hands" ("Specimens").

offer me? Oh, death! should I feel the terror of you if you came to me now?

(He drops on a chair by the table, and hides his face in his hands. At the same moment, the figure of Anne Catherick, dressed all in white, appears in the red glow of the sunset at the open window on the right. She pauses for a moment—looks off on the right—looks back at Walter; and, entering the room, lays her hand on his shoulder.)

Wal. (starting up) Who are you?

Anne. A friendless woman. (She advances nearer to Walter, and looks at him attentively.) Strange! I have seen your face before. Where? where?

Wal. (staggered by her likeness to Laura Fairlie). Am I dreaming? Am I mad? The living image of Laura Fairlie!

Anne. Do you know Laura Fairlie?

Wal. Yes. (22-23)⁹

Certainly the flatness and timing of this scene could not possibly have had for theatre audiences the same emotive effect or *frisson* of the original two "shock scenes." To begin to account for these disappearing acts (among others), we might consider Mrs. Oliphant's acknowledgement of the narrative's powerful physical effects on the reader—"the momentary thrill of the touch"¹⁰—and the ways in which those responses resonate with contemporary psychological studies in "reflexive mechanisms." William Carpenter, a leading nineteenth-century psychologist with whose work Collins would have been familiar,¹¹ attempted to explain in scientific terms the notion of mental reflexes—how acts of sustained attention could effect an involuntary and unconscious (or semi-conscious) physical response:

[A]ctions, being dependent upon the prompting of sensations, are 'sensori-motor' or 'consensual.'—But further, here is evidence that even the Cerebrum may respond (as it were) automatically to impressions fitted to excite it to 'reflex' action, when from any cause the Will is in abeyance . . . and ideas which take possession of the mind, and from which it cannot free itself, may excite respondent movements. (672)

⁹Maria K. Bachman and Don Richard Cox are currently collecting and editing the complete dramatic works of Wilkie Collins, none of which have been published since the nineteenth century. A recent edition of *The Woman in White* edited by Matthew Sweet (Penguin, 1999) does, however, contain a detailed synopsis of the theatrical production, one "specimen" scene, as well as an overview of the play's production and reception history.

¹⁰Mrs. Oliphant was not the only reader who was held in rapt attention by the novel. In an 1860 review of the novel, the *Saturday Review* described how Wilkie Collins allow[ed] nothing to distract [readers'] attention from the narrative" (Page 83). A reviewer for the *Spectator* proclaimed that "to keep the reader's attention fairly and equably on the alert throughout a continuous story that fills three volumes of the ordinary novel form, is no common feat" (Page 92). A reviewer for the *Guardian* echoed this experience of reading by describing the novel's plot as "an elaborate work of art . . . [and] all the while the [reader's] attention is kept alert by suggestive hints" (Page 89).

¹¹Indeed, in her provocative and influential study, *In the Secret Theatre of Home: Wilkie Collins, Sensation Narrative, and Nineteenth-Century*

Carpenter's conceptualization of mental reflexes, particularly his theory of "consensual" phenomena, provides a useful framework for understanding the collective effects of a stimulus or sensation on the individual body as well as on the larger and more public social body.¹²

In considering the social implications of this physiological process, we can also turn to Hans Robert Jauss's hermeneutic approach to literary production, particularly his notion of the public as an "an energy formative of history" and his theorizing of the "horizon of expectation" that individuals bring to a text. For Jauss, "[t]he historical life of a literary work is unthinkable without the active participation of its addressees" and the reception of a text relies on expectations that arise "from a pre-understanding of the genre, from the form and themes of already familiar works" (19). Spectatorship, then, is hardly a passive activity: spectators not only respond to and interpret a performance, but as their unfathomable desires are unleashed by the performances they witness, they may also inadvertently create their own spectacles which carry any number of "extraneous and ancillary meanings."¹³ Indeed, the complex relationship among author, text, and audience—the synthesis at work between the private inception and the public perception of a literary work—is crucial for understanding the transformation of *The Woman in White* from page to stage. It will also help us better understand some of Collins's excisions and confluences of plot material. In a note printed in the theatre program, Collins briefly attempted to explain his own "horizon of expectations." In altering his novel for the stage, he had

endeavoured to produce a work which shall appeal to the audience purely on its own merits as a play . . . [and] he has not hesitated, while preserving the original in substance, materially to alter it in form. Scenes developed, when writing as a dramatist, into situations which more than once occupy an entire act. On the other hand, passages carefully elaborated in the book have been in some cases abridged and in others omitted altogether, as unsuitable to the play. The method of treatment has necessarily resulted in much that is entirely new in the invention of incident and in the development of character; the object contemplated, in either case, being the presentation of the story of the novel in a purely dramatic form. ("Specimens")

Psychology, Jenny Bourne Taylor has demonstrated how Collins's fiction not only reflects but engages in a variety of emerging psychological theories and practices.

¹²D. A. Miller's seminal essay, "Cage aux folles: Sensation and Gender in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*," has of course provided a rich and provocative framework for considering the novel's corporeal impulses. Following Mrs. Oliphant, Miller explains how the sensation genre "offers us one of the first instances of modern literature to address itself primarily to the sympathetic nervous system, where it grounds its characteristic adrenaline effects: accelerated heart rate and respiration, increased blood pressure, the pallor resulting from vasoconstriction, and so on" (146). More specifically, Miller interrogates the ways in which *The Woman in White*'s "nervous" impulses give rise to a "homosexual panic" which ultimately works, he argues, to reinstate a normative vision of masculinity and femininity.

¹³As Jim Davis points out, spectatorship has the potential to transgress certain boundaries or rules of propriety: "In effect the audience becomes significant not merely for their response to what is performed, but also for their own ancillary performances" (63).

⁵Other critics took issue with the novel's narrative technique. An early review of the novel by a writer for the *Saturday Review* declared that "Mr. Wilkie Collins is an admirable story-teller, though he is not a great novelist. His plots are framed with artistic ingenuity—he unfolds them bit by bit, clearly, and with great care—and each chapter is a most skilful sequel to the chapter before. He does not attempt to paint character or passion. He is not in the least imaginative. He is not by any means a master of pathos" (Page 83).

The contemporary reviews of *The Woman in White* cited here (unless noted otherwise) are collected in *Wilkie Collins: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Norman Page (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974).

⁶*The Era* and *Land and Water*, respectively. The reviewer for *The Illustrated Times* claimed that "such a skilful adaptation from a novel has never been seen." Predicting that Collins's play would "outrun all the modern successful dramas," *The Daily Telegraph* reviewer remarked that "when one of our very first novelists—and a novelist who possesses, in a

Collins did not venture further to explain why certain details from the original were "unsuitable" for the stage, though a reviewer's comments published in *The Pall Mall Gazette* provide some insight:

No doubt certain fables are better suited for publication in a book than for representation on the stage; but the novelist and the dramatist both deal in fiction, and the main distinction between their occupations consists in regard for the requirements of the reader on the one hand and of the spectator on the other. The story of a novel may be also told upon the stage, only it is indispensable that it should be told upon a different plan. ("Specimens")

A "different plan" indeed. A reviewer for *The Times* observed that the play was "anything but an 'adaptation' in the 'ordinary' sense." Certainly, the complexity of perspective, plot, and characterization and "the delicate succession of sensations" (Page 117) that are achieved in the novel through Collins's "evidentiary technique"—specifically his use of multiple perspectives—are all drastically compromised by a stage adaptation that relies on banal dialogue, one-dimensional characters, and an overly-simplified, unsensational plot. And the dramatization by no means evokes "the 'creepy effect,' as of pounded ice dropped down the back" (145) that Collins's friend Edmund Yates attributed to the novel. There is no "momentary thrill of the touch" nor are the spectator's nerves affected "like the hero's" because the sensation incidents and the "shock effects" they produced on readers' bodies have all but been erased. It is puzzling though as to why Collins, a radical who was infamous for challenging the "clap-trap morality" of the day in his fiction and in his life (he never married, yet lived openly with two mistresses), would exert such self-censorship and bring such an impotent version of his most famous novel to the stage. While it is beyond the scope of this essay to account for and scrutinize line by line every emendation, deletion, and addition, I wish instead to focus particularly on what appears to be the voluntary bowdlerizing of the original text as regards the representation of sex and sexuality.

Transgression is one of the hallmarks of Collins's fiction, and throughout his novels he explores the boundaries and margins of his culture's taboos.¹⁴ Yet the ambiguities and confusion on which so much of *The Woman in White* depends, as well as its implicit and explicit interrogation of conventional morality, are noticeably absent in the stage adaptation. While Collins takes great delight in the novel in

deliberately blurring and sometimes scandalously reversing traditional binary oppositions such as masculine/feminine, heterosexual/homosexual, sanity/insanity, and legitimate/illegitimate, these dichotomies are, as convention would dictate, upheld and unquestioned on the stage.¹⁵ Certainly part of the unspoken allure of sensation fiction was its contempt for propriety, and it was the details of plot and character, ranging from indecent and obscene to deviant and perverse, that had the power to produce ambiguous, if not dangerous, sensations or anxieties. For the thrill-seeking reader, these sensations would have had a private, titillating effect, but for the spectator, the public expression and experience of them might have been offensive or even shameful.¹⁶ As Jauss argues, a "new" text does not emerge "in an informational vacuum, but predisposes its audience to a very specific kind of reception by announcements, overt and covert signals, familiar characteristics, or implicit allusions":

The psychic process in the reception of a text . . . is by no means an arbitrary series of merely subjective impressions, but rather the carrying out of specific instructions in a process of directed perception. (Jauss 23, emphasis added)

If, in the private act of reading, certain shocking or surprising incidents could induce a reflex reaction as Mrs. Oliphant acknowledged, it is entirely possible that focused attention on such scenes in the public theatre could very well induce similar physical responses. As Carpenter observed, "a visual perception is not a mere transfer of the sensorial impression, but it is a mental state excited by it" (711, 5th ed).

The fact that all drama came under the censorious eye of William Bodham Donne, the Lord Chamberlain's Examiner of Plays in the 1860s and 1870s, may very well account for the strikingly conservative rendition of Collins's novel.¹⁷

Donne reviewed plays with an eye to inflammatory content, such as "profanity," "indecent," and "offensive personalities or representations of living persons," as noted in the licensing form. Donne did not provide detailed guidelines for what kind of content he considered politically, morally, personally, or religiously objectionable; rather, the general theory behind his practice of censorship was that "a play was potentially a more dangerous work of art than a novel" because "a story enacted on the stage by real people appealed 'much more strongly' to the senses than did the same story in the pages of a novel" (Stottlar 256-57). Here, Donne points toward what he perceived to be the enormous (and even dangerous) influence of a public, aesthetic spec-

because of his "tendency" to be "unnecessarily offensive to the middle class."

¹⁷The Act for Regulating Theatres of 1843 granted the Lord Chamberlain the power and authority to license and censor plays. Section 14 of the statute explains, "And be it enacted, That it shall be lawful for the Lord Chamberlain for the Time being, whenever he shall be of opinion that it is fitting for the Preservation of good Manners, Decorum, or of the public Peace so to do, to forbid the acting or presenting any Stage Play, or any Act, Scene, or Part thereof, of any Prologue or Epilogue, or any Part thereof, anywhere in Great Britain, or in such Time as he shall think fit" (Stottlar 253-82).

tacle—its productive and seductive capacity—suggesting that the theatre is more than simply a place for entertainment, but a simulation of lived experience, a site for the staging of the social self. Indeed, as Marvin Carlson points out in *Theatre Semiotics*,

The social organization of theatre as created and experienced makes its institutional structure more apparent than that of the book; its communities, by the active choice of assembling to attend plays, are more apparent as groups to themselves and to others than are the more dispersed literary communities. (13)

While Collins left no statements as to whether he endorsed or opposed Donne's views, his longtime friend and physician, Frank Carr Beard, who had served as professional adviser to Donne, may have exerted some pressure, if only peripherally. The opinion, though, of another intimate friend, fellow sensation writer Charles Reade, who also "upset contemporary morality in [his] writing and [his] life,"¹⁸ provides more specific insight. Strangely enough, on the issue of dramatic censorship, Reade concurred with Donne's theory and thus challenged Collins's notion, mentioned earlier, that the novel and play are inextricably linked, even "twins":

I cannot agree with those gentlemen who put a play on the very same footing as a book. I draw two main distinctions: a play reproduces a story in flesh and blood; it realises the thing in a different way to a book entirely. I do not find it very easy to make that clear; but things might be described in a book which could not be presented in a play, and which could not even be indicated without doing perhaps very considerable harm. Then another thing is, that a play does not creep gradually before the public as a book does. The theatre is thrown open to 2,000 people at once, and it is a pity that 20,000 or 30,000 people, who might happen to see the play, should hear or see the piece before we began to do anything to stop what was seditious or wrong.¹⁹

Collins's plays never received an official modification, but it is likely that many of his revisions may have been done with the censor's standard of morality in mind. Donne's mission was to ensure "that no character by word, deed, or gesture, contaminated the British stage with [any hint of] 'indecent'" (Stottlar 270), and Collins may have followed Reade's lead in excoriating that which might "do considerable harm." Beyond the obvious constraints of the Lord Chamberlain's office, Collins was also well aware of the enormous influence

¹⁸Like Collins, Reade also lived openly with his mistress (Peters 281).

¹⁹Quoted in Stottlar 257 (emphasis added). In 1866, Reade was one of many witnesses—along with other playwrights, theatre managers, actors, critics, etc.—who testified before a joint Parliamentary Committee on "The Workings of the Acts of Parliament for Licensing and Regulating Theatres and Places of Public Entertainment in Great Britain."

²⁰Theatre historians have noted that the British Theatre experienced a kind of renaissance in the 1860s as middle- and upper-class spectators began patronizing the theatre which was previously regarded as a low and

the Press held over the drama. According to John Hollingshead, a theatre manager and dramatic critic for a number of periodicals during the 1860s and 1870s, while Donne was "never in advance of the average decency of the audience," the press was "always in advance of the censorship of the Examiner" (qtd. in Stottlar 278). That theatre reviewers saw in the "The Woman in White" "ground for hope of improvement in the dramatic literature of the day" ("Specimens") was a positive affirmation of Collins's participation in the middle-class drive to make the theatre more respectable and legitimate during the mid-nineteenth century. This was a drive shared by Collins's friends, Squire and Effie Bancroft, joint actor-managers of the Prince of Wales Theatre (who directed the dramatic version of *Man and Wife* in 1873) and director-actor Charles Kean, who was a pivotal force in the Victorian Shakespeare revival.²⁰

One particular scene in the novel that may have titillated private readers, but would have been too scandalous for public audiences, is when Walter Hartright first arrives at Limeridge House to serve as drawing master to the two half-sisters, Laura Fairlie and Marian Halcombe. Walter enters the room and, undetected by Marian, whose back is turned toward the door, "allows [him]self the luxury of" feasting his eyes on her well-formed backside:

I looked from the table to the window, farthest from me, and saw a lady standing at it, with her back turned towards me. The instant my eyes rested on her, I was struck by the rare beauty of her form . . . Her figure was tall, yet not too tall; comely and well-developed, yet not fat; her head set on her shoulders with an easy, pliant firmness; her waist, perfection in the eyes of man, for it occupied its natural place, it filled out its natural circle, it was visibly and delightfully undeformed by stays.

(73-74)²¹

For a number of reasons, to enact this scene on stage may have pushed the limits of decency too far. With regard to moral censorship, maintaining propriety on the stage was, according to Donne, "not necessarily a matter of the decorousness of the text but of the decorousness of the representation of the text" (Stephens 27). Such a lascivious gaze within the confines of the written page would have been both titillating and safe for the private reader, and voyeurism's thrills necessarily depend upon the spectator remaining anonymous with the object of his gaze at a safe distance.²² This perspective or "panoptic immunity" is complicated in the theatre where members of the audience can see, of course, but they are also seen as well.²³

working-class form of entertainment.

²¹Collins himself confessed, "I think the back view of a finely formed woman the loveliest view" (Clarke 64).

²²Indeed, as Miller points out, "[While] novel reading takes for granted the existence of a space in which the reading subject remains safe from the surveillance, suspicion, reading, and rape of others," the sensation novel and its concomitant shock effects destabilize such "panoptic immunity" (116).

²³Theatre auditoriums, it should be noted, remained lighted up through the 1870s.

¹⁴In what has come to be regarded as the classic essay on the "counterworld" of Victorian fiction, U. C. Knoepfelmacher valorizes the "anarchic and asocial impulses" of Collins's novels as a welcome antidote to the stifling conventions of Victorian fiction (351-69).

¹⁵While Miller's Foucauldian analysis of *The Woman in White* casts Collins as a social disciplinarian, it is my contention that such a reading, while provocative and groundbreaking, is ultimately limiting in that it neglects to acknowledge and explore the complexities of Collins's professional and personal status.

¹⁶Though it is important to point out that Dickens, who often serialized Collins's work in his weekly journals, attempted to censor Collins's writing

The safe distance and invisibility of the voyeur thus disappear as spectators (a generally heterogeneous audience in terms of class and gender) are scandalously, shamefully "caught in the act." The spontaneous physical effects, even those barely discernible—moistened lips, glistening eyes, a gasp, a shudder, a twitch, a leer—produced by a shock or surprise on stage could be perceived as dangerous not only because they destabilized the judgment and the will of the spectator, but because such visible bodily responses were also a natural, consensual assault on the strictures of propriety. Thus, to invite a collective gaze upon Marian's backside might have been looked upon as endorsing sexual looseness thus jeopardizing the Victorian theatre's growing (but still tenuous) acceptance as respectable entertainment. As Jauss points out, the new form of art

"make[s] possible a new perception of things by preforming the content of a new experience first brought to light in the form of literature. The relationships between literature and reader can actualize itself in the sensorial realm as an incitement to aesthetic perception as well as in the ethical realm as a summons to moral reflections." (41)

Indeed, throughout his career, Donne had been concerned over the future of British drama and its legitimacy as a national institution. In his essay, "The Drama," Donne wrote,

We cannot regard with apathy or aversion a branch of art which delineates and appeals directly to some of the most earnest and ennobling impulses of humanity; which, in its graver forms, is auxiliary to moral refinement. . . . We do not find that the nations which have been devoid of theatrical representations have surpassed, either in dignity or thought or decorum of manners, the far greater number which have cherished and developed a national stage. (qtd. in Stottlar 282)

Perhaps even more shocking in Collins's novel than Walter's voyeurism is the kind of *Crying Game* horror he experiences when Marian turns her fleshy figure around and reveals a swarthy complexion and mustache above her upper lip. If the actress playing Marian had, in fact, displayed such an incongruous physical appearance, the articulation of Walter's response "The Lady is ugly!" (*The Woman in White* 74) on stage would not only have been gratuitous, but would have proved indecorous and ungentlemanly on Walter's part (since this is clearly not a comedy), and thus may have jeopardized his status as conquering hero much later in the play. And, of course, a drama performed on the Victorian stage,

unlike a novel, was not particularly well-suited to representing inner psychological dialogue. While Collins may have cut this scene in an effort to compress the action of the novel, the erasure of Marian's sensual yet ambiguous physicality still leaves us wondering just how Victorian audiences might have reacted to a woman "in the flesh" who so clearly defied conventional femininity.²⁴ Perhaps Collins was hesitant to evoke in theatre audiences the same kind of unsettling "discomfort"²⁵ that Walter experiences in the novel, a sensation that could have proved detracting from Marian's sympathetic appeal.

In addition to erasing Marian's ambivalent sexuality in the drama, Collins renders invisible Laura's guardian and uncle, the weak and effeminate bachelor, Frederick Fairlie, who is afflicted with a perpetual case of "nerves." While one could argue that the hyperbolic passivity of his character does not significantly further the plot, and thus his physical disappearance into the wings would have been a logical move for Collins's pragmatic reductions of content,²⁶ we might consider his minimally covert signification as homosexual in the text and the implications of his possible "indecent" representation in the visual arena. In the novel, Walter provides the reader with the following description of Fairlie:

His feet were effeminately small, and were clad in buff-coloured silk stockings, and little womanish bronze-leather slippers. Two rings adorned his white delicate hands. . . . Upon the whole, he had a frail, languidly-fretful, over-refined look—something singularly and unpleasantly delicate in its association with a man, and, at the same time, something which could by no possibility have looked natural and appropriate if it had been transferred to the personal appearance of a woman. (*The Woman in White* 81)

The fact that "marrying and leaving an heir" are "the two very last things in the world that Frederick Fairlie is likely to do *The Woman in White* (179), along with the fact that he keeps company only with his valet, Louis—(Marian describes how he was "unutterably relieved by having the house clear of us women" [224])—clearly underscores his homosexuality.²⁷

In addition to censoring "indecencies," Donne prohibited playwrights from dealing with specific topical events, including elections, trials, riots, etc. (Stottlar 273). The fact that 1870 witnessed one of the century's more infamous homosexual scandals—the Boulton and Park transvestism case—a scandal which ironically occurred in the theatre—may have given Collins pause when considering Frederick Fairlie's role in the dramatization. Ernest Boulton

contradictions of a dream" (*The Woman in White* 75).

²⁶Though certainly it is significant to point out that in the novel Frederick Fairlie's refusal to act helps facilitate Laura's wrongful confinement.

²⁷The term "homosexual" was not introduced into the English vocabulary until the 1890s with the translation of Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1868); prior to this time, same-sex lovers in England were referred to as "Uranians, Satodists, Inverts, Urnings, and persons of 'contrary sexual instinct'" (Sweet 197).

and Frederick William Park were homosexual lovers with a penchant for dressing up as women (as "Stella" and "Jane," respectively) and attending the London theatres. In April 1870, they were arrested for indecent behavior and then examined by authorities for "evidence of sodomy" after attending, in drag, a performance at the Strand Theatre. This sensational case gave credence to the public's association of effeminacy with homosexuality, and Collins, perhaps concerned that the depiction of an apparent "invert" would be seen as an implicit allusion to the scandal, relegated Frederick Fairlie to the theatre closet.

Apparently, Collins also took care to neutralize polymorphous desires between characters that could be construed as sexually licentious. For example, throughout the novel the countless outbursts of passionate emotion that occur between Laura and Marian, along with repeated declarations that they must live together after Laura's marriage (which they do), and that Marian shall never marry (which she doesn't), are clear markers of an erotic and incestuous relationship between the two half-sisters. In one scene, in the company of Fosco, Madame Fosco, and Sir Percival, Marian grabs Laura and kisses her "as if that night was to part [them] forever" while the rest of the party simply gazes in "astonishment." The erotic charge of their relationship is not simply toned down for the stage; it has been completely effaced. In the play, Marian's anxieties about Laura's impending nuptials stem only from Sir Percival's preoccupation with *the* marriage settlement, not *from* the fact articulated in the novel that "she will be *his* Laura instead of [*hers*]!" Moreover, in the play, one month after the marriage Marian goes to visit (but not live with) Laura at Blackwater Park and here we see a curious change of heart. While in the novel Laura had pleaded desperately with her attorney to "make it law that Marian is to live with [her]" (*The Woman in White* 307, 211, 173), in the play Laura declares that she cannot bear to live without Walter Hartright:

Mar. Laura! Laura! you must *not* think of Walter now!
Laura (passionately). Say I must not live! Say I must have a stone in the place of a heart! Don't say I mustn't think of him. You are a woman—you know I must. (34)

Furthermore, in both the novel and the play, Fosco's elaborate conspiracy to fake Laura's death involves luring her away from Blackwater Park and having her "re-committed" to the lunatic asylum as Anne Catherick (Laura's look-alike who has died of heart disease). In the novel, she agrees to a supposed journey to Limeridge House only after being led to believe that Marian has recovered from her illness and has gone on ahead of her to stay with her uncle, Frederick Fairlie. Panic-stricken, Laura declares, "I must follow Marian! . . . I must go where she has gone" (*The Woman in White* 394). In the play, however, the deceit is far more one-dimensional and Laura does not display any overtones or

undertones of anxiety about her separation from her beloved Marian. Fosco and Sir Percival make arrangements for Laura to travel to Limeridge House on the pretense that she can consult with her uncle on signing her fortune over to Sir Percival. Laura readily agrees to the visit without the least bit of anxiety over leaving Marian:

Laura. (eagerly to Fosco). What have you said to Mr. Fairlie?

Fosco. I have asked him to exert his influence, in the interests of peace. While the matter is in progress, I have proposed—with Percival's free consent—that you shall pay a little visit to Limeridge House.

Laura. Oh, I shall be so glad to do that! (56)

Other polymorphous desires appear during the entire third epoch of the novel when Walter Hartright, Laura, and Marian appear in a "changed aspect," an aspect that is scandalous precisely because of its ambiguity. Walter has finally returned from Central America and the three of them, determined to expose the conspiracy, live together under assumed names in obscure and humble lodgings "in the house-forest of London" (*The Woman in White* 421). Given the complex triangulation of desire that exists among Walter, Laura, and Marian in the novel, such an unconventional cohabitation, suggestive of a *menage à trois*, has been completely excised in the play as has the final scene of the novel where the three of them, settled quite comfortably at Limeridge House, are clearly living happily ever after . . . together. As Laura says, "My heart and my happiness, Walter, are with Marian and you" (*The Woman in White* 612). Collins knew firsthand from his own domestic arrangements that one man living openly with two women was scandalous. To have his threesome emerge from the obscurity (and safety) of the page to the bright lights of the stage may have unhappily invited too much public scrutiny, if not indignation. Moreover, Collins may have wanted to protect himself from the possible critical outrage over his "intent" to undermine the traditional and sacred domestic sphere.²⁸ Instead, the play ends abruptly (and well before the novel's transgressive domestic conclusion) with Walter forcing from an unrepentant Fosco the evidence necessary to prove Laura's identity, followed by Fosco's murder, presumably at the hands of the Italian Brotherhood he has betrayed.

In addition to the play's marked retreat from any hint of sexual deviance, Collins also took care to soft-pedal suggestions of outright perversion, particularly with regard to Fosco's fetishism. While Fosco's essential villainy is maintained throughout the play, Collins switched Fosco's peculiar fetish from mice to birds, a choice which must have been dictated by concerns of both practicality—(live mice would have been difficult to see from the audience's vantage point, not to mention the fact that white mice trained to scamper up and down an actor's body may have been difficult to come

²⁸Though of course the home—the sinister stage upon which so many family dramas are played out in Collins's fiction—is anything but the respect-

able and safe haven of Victorian society.

by)—and by the concerns of moral propriety. In the novel, Fosco's peculiar fondness for a "whole family of white mice" hints at something more than a harmless hobby. Fosco is constantly kissing and fondling them and the fact that the mice are described as being "surprisingly fond of him, and familiar with him" (*The Woman in White* 242, emphasis added) is suggestively aberrant and sexual. Moreover, Marian's reaction to the spectacle of Fosco's mice "crawl[ing] all over him, popping in and out of his waistcoat" registers the type of visceral sensation that might offend the presumed respectable sensibilities of Victorian theatre-goers:

He put the pagoda-cage on his lap, and let out the mice to crawl over him as usual. They are pretty, innocent-looking little creatures; but the sight of them, creeping about a man's body is, for some reason, not pleasant to me. It excites a strange, responsive creeping in my own nerves. (*The Woman in White* 254)

While Collins thought it was important to retain pets for Fosco, presumably to highlight his villain's eccentric and contradictory nature (in fact, the last words spoken in the play are those of Fosco offering bon-bons to his pet canaries, the "pret-pret-pretties" that he has cooed and doted on throughout), in selecting a pet typical to many Victorian households, he obviously felt it was necessary to downplay the visualization of the perverse side of Fosco's character,

* * * * *

While Collins's novels were set and read in "the secret theatre of home," and thus could satisfy safely and privately the middle-class reader's secret cravings for sex and the sensationally perverse, to reproduce the novel's polymorphous "sensations" on stage might have risked undermining the normative narrative and vision of Victorian respectability. While the disappearing acts of the theatrical adaptation of *The Woman in White* provide further insight into Wilkie Collins's complex (and sometimes simultaneous) stance as dissident Victorian moralist and cultural hegemonist, they also invite us to think about how the Victorian theatre served as a liminal space in which artist and audience both explored the limits of what was socially permissible while also self-regulating (even suppressing) their collective desire for sensation.

Works Cited

- Carlson, Marvin. *Theatre Semiotics: Signs of Life*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990.
- Carpenter, William B. *Principles of Human Physiology*. 3rd ed. London: John Churchill, 1853.
- _____. *Principles of Human Physiology*. 5th ed. London: John Churchill, 1855.
- Clarke, William M. *The Secret Life of Wilkie Collins*. London: Alison and Bushy, 1988.

- Collins, Wilkie. *Basil*. Ed. Dorothy Goldman. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.
- _____. *The Dead Secret*. Ed. Ira Nadel. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.
- _____. *The Woman in White*. Ed. Maria K. Bachman and Don Richard Cox. Peterborough, ON: Broadview P, 2006.
- _____. "The Woman in White." A Drama, in a Prologue and Four Acts (Altered from the Novel for Performance on the Stage). London: Published by the Author, 1871.
- Davis, Jim. "Androgynous Cliques and Epicene Colleges: Gender Transgression On and Off the Victorian Stage." *Nineteenth-Century Theatre* 26 (1998): 50-69.
- Ellis, S. M. *Wilkie Collins, LeFanu and Others*. London: Constable, 1931.
- Fitzgerald, Percy. *Memories of Charles Dickens*. Bristol: Arrowsmith, 1913.
- Jauss, Hans Robert. *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1982.
- Knoepfmacher, U. C. "The Counterworld of Victorian Fiction and *The Woman in White*." *The Worlds of Victorian Fiction*. Ed. J. H. Buckley. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1975.
- Miller, D. A. "Cage Aux Folles: Sensation and Gender in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*." *The Novel and the Police*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1988: 146-91.
- Olympic Theatre, "Specimens of Criticism Extracted from Notices of 'The Woman in White' in the Press." London: s.n., 1871.
- Page, Norman. *Wilkie Collins: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974.
- Peters, Catherine. *The King of Inventors: A Life of Wilkie Collins*. London: Secker and Warburg, 1991.
- Robinson, Kenneth. *Wilkie Collins: A Biography*. New York: Macmillan, 1952.
- Stephens, J. Russell. "William Bodham Donne: Some Aspects of His Late Career as Examiner of Plays." *Theatre Notebook* 25 (1971): 25-32.
- Stottlar, James F. "A Victorian Stage Censor: The Theory and Practice of William Bodham Donne." *Victorian Studies* (March 1970): 253-82.
- Sweet, Matthew. *Inventing the Victorians*. New York: St. Martin's P, 2002.
- Taylor, Jenny Bourne. *In the Secret Theatre of Home: Wilkie Collins, Sensation Narrative, and Nineteenth-Century Psychology*. London and New York: Routledge, 1988.
- Unsigned Review. "The Woman in White." *The Daily Standard*. 11 October 1871. Reprinted in "Specimens of Criticism."
- Unsigned Review. "The Woman in White." *The Daily Telegraph*. 11 October 1871. Reprinted in "Specimens of Criticism."
- Unsigned Review. "The Woman in White." *The Era*. 14 October 1871. Reprinted in "Specimens of Criticism."
- Unsigned Review. "The Woman in White." *The Illustrated Times*. 14 October 1871. Reprinted in "Specimens of Criticism."
- Unsigned Review. "The Woman in White." *Land and Water*. 14 October 1871. Reprinted in "Specimens of Criticism"
- Unsigned Review. "The Woman in White." *The Orchestra*. 14 October 1871. Reprinted in "Specimens of Criticism."
- Unsigned Review. "The Woman in White." *The Pall Mall Gazette*. 11 October 1871. Reprinted in "Specimens of Criticism."

- Unsigned Review. "The Woman in White." *The Standard*. 11 October 1871. Reprinted in "Specimens of Criticism."
- Unsigned Review. "The Woman in White." *The Times*. 11 October 1871. Reprinted in "Specimens of Criticism."
- Yates, Edmund. "Celebrities at Home, no 81: Mr. Wilkie Collins

in Gloucester Place." *The World*. (26 December 1877): 4-6.

Coastal Carolina University

I wish to express my gratitude to Jenny Bourne Taylor for her gracious and insightful suggestions on an earlier version of this paper.

Nostalgia to Amnesia: Charles Dickens, Marcus Clarke and Narratives of Australia's Convict Origins

Beth A. Boehm

In *The Fatal Shore*, his history of Australia's penal colonies, Robert Hughes asks, "Would Australians have done anything differently if their country had not been settled as the jail of infinite space? Certainly they would. They would have remembered more of their own history. The obsessive cultural enterprise of Australians a hundred years ago was to forget [their convict history] entirely, to sublimate it, to drive it down into unconsulted recesses" (596). In this essay, I'll demonstrate how two nineteenth-century novels, one British and one Australian, contribute to and work against this cultural enterprise of "forgetting" the role of the British system of convict transportation in Australia's history: Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (published serially in England in 1860-61) and Marcus Clarke's *For the Term of His Natural Life* (published serially in Australia in 1871-72). Interestingly, both novels are "historical" in that they are set in the early part of the nineteenth century, before the practice of transporting British criminals to the Australian colony was, for all practical purposes, suspended in the 1840s. In an introduction to the drastically edited book version of *Natural Life* published in 1874, Clarke suggested that his purpose in writing about the "tragic and terrible" events of transportation was to prevent such events from occurring again. But it seems necessary to ask of Clarke the question Janet Carlisle asks of Dickens: "Why was [he] writing about a convict in Australia even as transportation to its penal colonies was being ended? Does Australia serve merely as a convenience of the plot or does it identify Dickens as a 'participant' in the history of colonialism?" (517-518). To ask this question of both Clarke and Dickens is to discover, of course, that both are participants, not only in the history of colonialism, but also in the **narration** of this history. Both employ nostalgic and/or amnesiac characters that illustrate narrative strategies that suppress not only Australia's troubling convict origins but also the implications of Victorian England's participation in these origins.

Nicholas Dames, in his recent book *Amnesiac Selves: Nostalgia, Forgetting, and British Fiction 1810-1870*, provides a useful framework for thinking about the role of nostalgic remembrance in Victorian fiction. Dames explores the ways in which the work of the nineteenth-century British novel is the "transformation of memories into useful acts

(3). Arguing that pure memories—of undifferentiated, random, and incoherent details—are perceived as threatening to both the self and society in the Victorian period, he suggests that the Victorian novel is a "narrative form struggling to transform the chaos of personal recollection into what is useful, meaningful, able to be applied to the future—into what works" (3-4). While nostalgia might seem to be a form of excessive remembering, of excessive yearning for a return to some past period, Dames suggests that nostalgia is as much about forgetting as it is about remembering, since nostalgia is a form of retrospect "that remembers only what is pleasant, and only what the self can employ in the present" (4). Paradoxically, nostalgia is a "socially binding form of memory, a memory for society, that nevertheless only can be produced by the spontaneous remembrances of individuals" (15). Dames further suggests that "more familiar collective forms of remembrance, such as rituals, memorials, and historical traumas, yield in importance in Victorian narrative to recollections of a personal past, but those recollections take place through a form of memory—nostalgia—whose origin, justification, and orientation is the collective" (15). In the Victorian novel, then, nostalgia is often presented as a "healthy" mode of remembering—or, perhaps, a healthy form of forgetfulness (a non-pathological form of amnesia, in other words), since nostalgia works both to leave behind what is defective in the past and to maintain a coherent self and a coherent social world. But as I argue here, Dickens and particularly Clarke, while depicting characters who employ nostalgic remembrance in the way outlined by Dames, nevertheless also critique this mode of selective memory, showing it to be harmful to both the self who desires to remember only what is pleasant and useful, and to the society that would forget its vexed relation to, in these novels, a "criminal" past.

Readers have often commented upon Dickens's reliance upon a kind of sentimental longing for childhood that has come to be known as "Dickensian nostalgia," which consists of "pristine, idealizing, mnemonic interludes relating to a lost childhood, hearth and home, the rural retreat, the mother's gaze, and the protective goodness of the yeomanry" (Hulsman, 14). In *Great Expectations*, of course, such nostalgia is most apparent in Pip's longing to return to the

forge and an idealized, maternal Joe Gargery. When Pip is recovering from the illness brought about by Magwitch's death, it appears that, indeed, one can go home again:

... Joe stayed with me, and I fancied I was little Pip again.

For the tenderness of Joe was so beautifully proportioned to my need, that I was like a child in his hands. He would sit and talk to me in the old confidence, and with the old simplicity, and in the old unassertive protecting way, so that I would half believe that all my life since the days of the old kitchen was one of the mental troubles of the fever that was gone. . . . We looked forward to the day when I should go out for a ride, as we had once looked forward to the day of my apprenticeship. And when the day came, and an open carriage was got into the Lane, Joe wrapped me up, took me in his arms, carried me down to it, and put me in, as if I were still the small helpless creature to whom he had so abundantly given of the wealth of his great nature. (424)

This return to childhood requires the erasure of Pip's painful young adulthood, with its unpleasant memories and indeed painful recollection that "it was for the convict, guilty of I knew not what crimes . . . that I had deserted Joe" (301); in this nostalgic interlude, the recent past is imagined as a "mental trouble" caused by his fever, but of course, it is precisely his illness which makes this forgetfulness and the nostalgic return possible—but for a short time only. As Pip regains his health and is no longer helpless, Joe becomes "less easy" with him, falling out of the "old tone" and the "old ways" (427). Pip's desire to forget the part of his past in which he was "inconstant" toward Joe—to erase from memory those recollections of behavior which render the "old Pip" incoherent—is thwarted, and Pip cannot go home again to an unchanged forge to marry an unaltered Biddy. To be healthy, Dickens seems to suggest, one must remember not only the pleasant aspects of the past, but also those painful memories of one's own failings; one must, in other words, remember the past in order to seek forgiveness for it. The self-serving nostalgic remembrance of Pip's illness fails as a means of transforming the chaos of memory into a coherent life; such "selective" memory also fails Pip as a narrative strategy, Dickens seems to suggest, for the adult Pip who records the narrative of his great expectations records it all, the painful as well as the pleasant memories, and through his narrative he seeks—and finds—a kind of redemption.

Indeed, it is Joe who models for Pip this redeeming nostalgic memory. When Pip seeks to tell Joe the truth of his great expectations and his meeting in the graveyard with Magwitch, Joe dismisses the subject:

"Lookee here, old chap," said Joe, bending over me. "Ever the best of friends; ain't us, Pip?"

I was ashamed to answer him.

"Wery good, then," said Joe, as if I had answered; "that's all right; that's agreed upon. Then why go into

subjects, old chap, which as betwixt two sech must be for ever onnecessary? There's subjects enough as betwixt two sech, without onnecessary ones. Lord! To think of your poor sister and her Rampages! And don't you remember Tickler?" (426)

Joe then interprets the story of Pip's theft of food and a file from the forge for the convict—and of Pip's failure to tell Joe about the theft—not as the result of Pip's disloyalty to Joe, but as the result of Joe's inability to stop Mrs. Joe's use of the Tickler, for whenever "I put myself in opposition to her . . . she dropped into you always heavier for it" (426). Thus, Joe concludes generously, "Supposing ever you kep any little matter to yourself, when you was a little child, you kep it mostly because you know'd as J. Gargery's power to part you and Tickler in sunders, were not fully equal to his intentions" (426). Joe's dismissal of "onnecessary subjects" is not a matter of self-serving nostalgia; indeed, his self-conscious dismissal of some painful memories enables him to seek a kind of forgiveness for his own failings at the same time that he clearly forgives Pip's, and he thus provides a narrative strategy that proves useful to Pip as he tries to come to terms with his own past in *Great Expectations*.

For the purposes of a discussion of Australia's convict origins, the more significant nostalgic longing in *Great Expectations* is Magwitch's, whose desire to see the gentleman he has made compels him to risk his life to return to the Motherland. The only detail Magwitch recollects about his life as a convict in Australia is one of the extreme loneliness of sheepherding, which sends him into frequent nostalgic reveries focused on Pip:

"I'd half forgot wot men's and women's faces was like, [but] I see yourn. I drops my knife many a time in that hut when I was a eating my dinner or my supper, and I says, 'Here's the boy again, a looking at me whiles I eats and drinks!' I see you there a many times, as plain as ever I see you on them misty marshes. 'Lord strike me dead!' I says each time . . . ' but wot, if I gets liberty and money, I'll make that boy a gentleman!' And I have done it." (298)

On the one hand, like many of Dickens's émigrés to the colonies, Magwitch is a capitalist success story and Australia a land of opportunity: having inherited a small sum and his liberty from his master, Magwitch strikes out on his own, "spec'lates," and despite being raised to be a "warmint" in his native England, becomes incredibly wealthy. In keeping with the logic of nostalgic narrative, we never learn the specific details of his experience in Australia, since they matter only as a means to the end of his nostalgic plot to make Pip a gentleman. On the other hand, Magwitch is driven to succeed primarily by an obsessive and monomaniacal desire for revenge upon both the England that unfairly transported him for life while the "gentlemanly" Compeyson's "punishment was light" (325), and the Australia that has replicated the British class system and now looks down upon him as an

ex-convict and an "ignorant common fellow" (299): "'The blood horses of them colonists might fling up the dust over me as I was walking; what do I say? I says to myself, 'I'm making a better gentleman nor ever you'll be!' . . . I says to myself, 'If I ain't a gentleman, nor yet ain't got no learning, I'm the owner of such. All on you owns stock and land; which on you owns a brought-up London gentleman?'" (299). As is also suggested by the example of Miss Havisham, whose apparently anti-nostalgic desire to recall the unpleasant past compels her to lay to ruin her home and stop all the clocks at the minute of her jilting, the desire for revenge depends upon an "unhealthy" excessive remembering, a failure not only to forgive but to forget a past crime against the self. This is nostalgia with a vengeance, but ironically, a vengeance that merely visits upon Pip and Estella the social crimes committed against Magwitch and Miss Havisham. In other words, these private, obsessive revenge plots do nothing to alter the social systems they are aimed against, and indeed merely perpetuate them.

In this novel that is in so many ways about the problems of nostalgic longing, what is the role of nostalgia in narrating the convict origins of Australia? The Australia of *Great Expectations* is not the idealized, redemptive Australia in which even Mr. Micawber succeeds. Rather, it "is a harsh, unfeeling world in which [Magwitch] is spurned, even after earning his freedom . . . ; his money is made there, just as it would be in England, by his having (as Magwitch terms it) 'spec'lated.' He forms no attachments there, either to the people or the land . . . , and he no more enjoys the fruits of his speculation than do English financiers" (Hollington, 29). Colonial nostalgia has simply reinscribed English values onto Australia without questioning those values, and Dickens makes it clear that the class system which brutalized Magwitch in England has continued to ostracize him in Australia. For Magwitch, who tells the story of his childhood "not like a song or a story book," but in a "mouthful of English. In jail and out of jail, in jail and out of jail, in jail and out of jail" (319), life in the penal colony is little different from life in England, even after he has paid for his crimes. When Pip wonders why Magwitch would risk the liberty he had won for the sake of a "mastering idea," Magwitch's explanation perfectly illustrates colonial nostalgia: "You see, dear boy, when I was over yonder, t'other side the world, I was always a looking to this side; and it come flat to be there, for all I was a growing rich'" (398). Unable to be recognized as a gentleman—or even a human being—in England or Australia, the best he can do is to use his wealth to make a gentleman of Pip, to transform his nostalgic memory of Pip's kindness toward him into a tool for an ineffective revenge.

Hulsman suggests that for Dickens, colonial nostalgia enables failed capitalists to be transformed into humane capitalists, who are able to "purify capitalism of its alienating behavior" (16). Certainly, this seems true for Pip and Herbert, who succeed in their Eastern outpost by purging themselves of their foolish pretensions to class, living frugally, paying their debts, working for their profits, and protecting their "good name" (436), all qualities nostalgically connected to the rural life represented by Joe and the forge. By the

time Dickens wrote *Great Expectations*, Australia was no longer primarily a penal colony, and British citizens down on their luck, including not only several of Dickens's characters but also several of his own sons, emigrated from London to start new lives in this land of opportunity. Most saw Australia as a version of "home," albeit a temporary one that would allow them to be financially rehabilitated so that they might eventually return to the real "home," London, as does Pip (if only for a visit) after eleven years in Cairo. But the kind of redemption Pip finds in the East is denied to Australian convicts, for as Hughes explains, even those who were not sent for the term of their lives, "could succeed, but they could hardly, in the real sense, return. They could expiate their crimes in a technical, legal sense, but what they suffered there warped them into permanent outsiders" (586). In *Great Expectations*, "there is no sentimentalizing or picturesque aestheticising of the figure of the convict" (Hollington, 29). While Dickens does command sympathy for Magwitch, that sympathy is not focused toward Magwitch's experience in the penal colony, but toward the way in which his experience as a cast-off child, in jail and out of jail in England, had already warped him into a permanent outsider, and toward the way in which the Australian colony merely replicates the ostracizing social system Pip seems to escape in his flight to the east. Thus, Dickens both participates in and critiques the kind of nostalgic narration of colonial history that rehabilitates failed capitalists but not convicts. By focusing on Magwitch's nostalgic return and the private redemption he seeks through Pip, Dickens ironically participates in the erasure of the role of convicts in the history of the Australian colony.

Marcus Clarke's *For the Term of His Natural Life* can be read as a response to Dickens's erasure of this convict history. Often called the "best and most famous" Australian novel of the nineteenth century, *For the Term of His Natural Life* is as well-known to Australian readers as *Great Expectations* is to British and American readers. Clarke, whose novel was serialized ten years after *Great Expectations*, was forced to emigrate to Australia at the age of 17, when his father, a successful London attorney who was expected to leave a large inheritance to his only child, lost all his money before being committed to an asylum for the insane, where he soon died, leaving Clarke a penniless orphan. Clarke earned his living in Australia by working as a reporter and essayist, and like Dickens, his essays focused on his adopted home's social problems. Although transportation as a practice had been abolished long before the publication of *Natural Life*, Clarke didactically argues against the system which requires convicts to "be submitted to a discipline which must necessarily depend for its just administration upon the personal character and temper of their gaolers" (Preface, 19). He explores the way the brutality of the system reforms no one, and indeed only brutalizes both the jailed and the jailers, by following the career of one convict, a "gentleman" wrongfully convicted, from the moment he flees his parents' country estate to his death in a hurricane as he tries for the final time to escape from his Australian prison. By focusing on the "dismal condition of a felon during his term of

transportation" (Preface, 1), Clarke non-nostalgically narrates the role of the "English system of transportation" in the establishment of the Australian colony.

The hero of Clarke's novel is Richard Devine, son of an aristocratic mother and her brutish husband, Sir Richard Devine, who, despite his title, is a wealthy businessman, having risen from the ranks of ship carpenter to naval contractor and millionaire. The novel opens with Sir Richard's discovery that his son is really the illegitimate child of his wife's philandering cousin; Richard, to protect his noble mother, leaves, promising to forsake his name and inheritance, to "earn a name—a name that I need not blush to bear nor you to hear" (5-6). A complicated series of events, which include the murder and robbery of his biological father, a crime for which Richard is eventually transported despite his innocence, causes Richard to change his name to Rufus Dawes so his mother will not learn of his transportation and so he will not bring shame to her name. The rest of the novel is devoted to Dawes's and other convicts' experiences of "discipline." While Clarke does not minimize the atrocities committed by the convicts, who do not all begin as innocently as Dawes, his focus is on the crimes committed in the name of the system: in excruciating detail, we are shown suicides of twelve-year-old child-prisoners, fatal floggings, homosexual rapes, murder-suicide pacts (wherein one prisoner agrees to kill another to put him out of his misery because he knows he too will be put to death for committing "murder"), sadistic jailers and cannibalistic escapees. And just so readers cannot dismiss Clarke's depiction of these horrors as sensational, he includes footnotes referencing actual prison reports, reports commissioned by the House of Commons and the House of Lords, as well as news accounts of prison mutinies and interviews with convicts, indicating the degree to which his narrative is based on "historical fact." This insistence on meticulous research and the historical accuracy of these details is in clear contrast to the workings of nostalgic remembrance; Clarke's project explicitly reflects an anti-nostalgic desire to recover and reproduce the horrific convict history Victorian nostalgia typically represses.

Unlike Magwitch, who recalls Pip's face again and again, Clarke's convict protagonist has only one true moment of nostalgic reverie—in the sense of his longing for his English home—after learning that his mother's husband died before disinheriting him:

Rufus Dawes was lost in reverie. . . . He pictured himself escaped from this present peril, and freed from the sordid thralldom which so long had held him. He saw himself returning, with some plausible story of his wanderings, to take possession of the wealth which was his—saw himself living once more, rich, free and respected, in the world from which he had been so long an exile. He saw his mother's sweet pale face, the light of a happy home circle. (198-99)

Lost in this vision of freedom, hearth and home, and basking in the image of his mother's gaze, Dawes forgetfully kisses the prison commandant's eleven-year-old daughter, Sylvia Vickers, with whom he has been marooned (along with her mother and Maurice Frere, the lieutenant who had been left in charge of Hell's Gate [an abandoned penal colony] at the time of a mutiny). Told to "keep his place" by Frere, Dawes recalls himself to the reality of his convict present, forcing these pleasant memories of his motherland and his mother's face out of his mind because he is unable to employ them to useful ends. Indeed, earlier, when Frere, noting the convict's intelligence, asks Dawes what he had been, Dawes's response is "I am a convict. Never mind what I have been. A sailor, shipbuilder, prodigal, vagabond—what does it matter? It won't alter my fate, will it?" (184). Dawes self-consciously refuses to recall his own personal past, since all memories of that past force him into a lying nostalgia, one that mocks his present circumstances as a convict who has been transported for the "term of his natural life" and thus can never return home.

Yet Dawes is not entirely free of nostalgic longing, for he replaces the yearning for mother and motherland with a potentially useful memory of Sylvia Vickers, daughter of the prison commandant, who like the young Pip, compassionately offered Dawes food when he was about to starve. The novel illustrates the ways in which the system brutalizes and degrades Dawes, who begins as a gentleman who disdains his coarser fellow convicts but ends as the "notorious" leader of the Ring in Norfolk Island, the prison settlement for the most hardened of convicts. As with Magwitch, however, what keeps Dawes from becoming entirely brutal—from being "low"—is his desire to be reunited with Sylvia in order that she might recognize once again his humanity. As a child, Sylvia recognized his essential goodness, and in turn, he worked to save her when all were marooned at Hell's Gate, even forgoing an opportunity to escape by himself in order to help her survive. But as a result of the traumatic experience of being marooned, an experience which results in her mother's death, Sylvia suffers from amnesia and cannot recall what happened at Hell's Gate. The sadistic Frere is thus able to take credit for Dawes's unselfish and heroic actions and eventually to persuade Sylvia, who has an innate repugnance to Frere, to nevertheless marry him as a repayment for having saved her life. An idealized vision of Sylvia replaces his mother in Dawes's nostalgic memory, and much of his psychic life for the next ten years is focused on his desire that Sylvia remember that she wrote "Good Mr. Dawes" in the sand and thereby return to him his good name. Just as the feverish Pip fancies that he is little Pip again, Dawes fancies that he is "Good Mr. Dawes" again. Near the novel's end, as Dawes waits for news of Sylvia's redemptive forgiveness via the prison chaplain (a forgiveness that cannot come since she has no memory of their past connection, and the chaplain, for his own selfish reasons, has refused to tell her the truth), Dawes has a rare nostalgic dream:

Alone, amid the gathering gloom, his fancy had recalled the past, and peopled it with memories. He thought that he was once more upon that barren stand where he had first met with the sweet child he loved. He lived again his life of usefulness and honour. He saw himself working at the boat, embarking, and putting out to sea. The fair head of the innocent girl was again pillowed on his breast; her young lips again murmured words of affection in his greedy ear. (514)

Like Pip, who yearns to return to the coherent vision of an innocent child uncorrupted by "expectations," Dawes yearns to return to a place where he was useful, honorable, and selfless. Dawes's nostalgia is for his own goodness, which has been corrupted not by his desire for wealth or status or a woman but, rather, by his experience as a convict in the penal colony. Dawes needs Sylvia's spontaneously uttered "words of affection"—"Good Mr. Dawes"—in order to prove that it is the system that has shattered his potential for goodness.

Sylvia's amnesia thus serves as an important narrative device in Clarke's convict history. Her inability to recall "Good Mr. Dawes," an amnesia fueled and perpetuated by her husband's lies about the mutiny, enables her to believe that the system is just, that the jailed are brutal and deserving of punishment, and that the jailors are working in the best interests of society. Her amnesia, in other words, enables her to leave behind what is anomalous in her past (the very idea of a "good" convict) and to maintain a coherent self and a coherent social world. When, seven years after the events at Hell's Gate, Sylvia (engaged to Frere) hears Dawes's voice and asks who he is, she is disappointed to learn that he is the hardened convict who had been marooned with her: "I thought it was a good man. It sounded like a good voice" (252). Frere, "having comfortably forgotten the past" (238) and having risen socially in the world as a result of his (although actually Dawes's) heroic actions, is afraid of Sylvia's "gush of recollection" (253). But, importantly, so is Sylvia, who intuitively feels that she is "on the verge of remembering a story of some great wrong, just about to hear some dreadful revelation that should make me turn from all the people whom I ought most to love" (259). For her to recollect the truth of her experience would not simply validate Dawes's need to have another human being remember his capacity for goodness, but more importantly, it would reveal to her the falsity of her entire experience since the mutiny and the falsity of the cultural beliefs she has made her own. In other words, to remember Dawes's humanity—and to see the extent to which the system has made him less than human—would make apparent the injustices of the transportation system and the colonial enterprise which developed alongside it, systems which have hardened her father, who also began as a kind man, and rewarded (though further degraded) her fiancé—who clearly is an ignorant, coarse sadist. Sylvia's amnesia, then, protects her not only from the personal trauma of the mutiny and the loss of her mother, but also from the traumatic cultural knowledge that her beloved Australia began with a system that brutalized

everyone involved in it and that all colonial institutions, including her own marriage and family, are tainted by convict blood.

Clarke employs both dense historical detail and Sylvia's amnesia as narrative devices to combat the kind of nostalgia Dames finds everywhere in the nineteenth-century novel, the kind of retrospect that "remembers only what is pleasant and only what the self can employ in the present" (4). Sylvia's amnesia is a pathological nostalgia, and it thus calls our attention to the pathology behind the cultural enterprise of "forgetting" Australia's convict origins. *For the Term of His Natural Life* ends not with the convict's nostalgic return to the motherland, but with the "unnatural" deaths of Dawes and Sylvia in a hurricane as both attempt to escape their Australian prisons. Dawes boards a ship departing from Norfolk Island, impersonating the chaplain, a man with whom Sylvia had intended to leave her brutal husband (and Dawes thus saves her from the "sin and despair" of infidelity that crushed his mother); and Sylvia, in the terror of the hurricane and through the shock of recognizing Dawes in the chaplain's cloak, regains her memory:

She remembered the terrible experience of Macquarie Harbour. She recalled the evening of the boat-building, when, swung into the air by stalwart arms, she had promised the rescuing prisoner to plead for him with her kindred. Regaining her memory thus, all the agony and shame of the man's long life of misery became at once apparent to her. She understood how her husband had deceived her, and with what base injustice and falsehood he had bought her young love. . . . She only considered, in her sudden awakening, the story of [Dawes's] wrongs, remembered only his marvelous fortitude and love, knew only, in this last instant of her pure, ill-fated life, that as he had saved her once from starvation and death, so had he come again to save her from sin and from despair. Whoever has known a deadly peril will remember how swiftly thought then travelled back through scenes clean forgotten, and will understand how Sylvia's retrospective vision merged the past into the actual before her, how the shock of recovered memory subsided in the grateful utterance of other days—"Good Mr. Dawes!" (536)

But Sylvia's recovered memory—her recollection of her personal past—is too late to be truly redemptive, and the self-knowledge that she gains in her final moments reveals the great waste of her amnesiac life. As the mother explains when

we are suspended gasping over the great emptiness of death, we become conscious that the Self which we think we knew so well has strange and unthought-of capacities. . . . Amid the fury of such a tempest, a thousand memories, each bearing in its breast the corpse of some dead deed, whose influence haunts us yet, are driven like feathers before the blast, as unsubstantial and as unregarded. The mists which shroud our self-knowledge, become transparent, and we are smitten with sudden

lightning-like comprehension of our own misused power over our fate. (537)

Clarke refuses Dawes and Sylvia the type of nostalgic return Dickens provides for Magwitch and Pip, a return that provides a kind of private redemption but erases the historical trauma of Australia's convict history. Instead, their final self-recollection, far from nostalgic or redemptive, is painful, forcing the once amnesiac self to recognize its own past failings, its own "misused power" over its fate. Indeed, *For the Term of His Natural Life* finally rejects the Victorian notion—expressed in novels like *Expectations*—that the recollection of a personal past is redemptive in its final depiction of Sylvia and Dawes, their corpses lost at sea, in the embrace the convict had nostalgically dreamt about: "The arms of the man were clasped round the body of the woman, and her head lay on his breast" (538). But the Prison Island hovers in the background, continuing its cultural work, refusing to be forgotten or erased. Clarke's novel, when read as an anti-nostalgic response to *Great Expectations*, shows how nostalgia and amnesia are both pathological forms of forgetting a past that must not be forgotten.

The Epigraph to Henley's *In Hospital*

"On ne saurait dire à quel heure un homme, seul dans son lit et malade, devient personnel."

Edward H. Cohen

W. E. Henley's hospital sequence, published in 1888, has been recognized as "one of the starting points of the English poetry of the modern crisis" (De Sola Pinto 28). An early critical reading argued that the epigraph from Balzac reveals "a dialectic of denial and assent" at work in the poems (Buckley 45-46). And a celebrated life of the poet asserted that the epigraph reflects the "determinedly stoical" philosophy distilled from Henley's "suffering and endurance" (Connell 42). To this day, however, no one has identified either the source of the inscription or the circumstances of Henley's selection.

Henley, a bookseller's son, was born in Gloucester in 1849. He was respectably educated, and in 1867 he passed the Oxford Local Schools Examination. But in his youth he had contracted tuberculosis of the bones in his hands and feet, and his early life was a sad chronicle of medical mistreatment and literary misadventure. Instead of going up to Oxford, he spent ten months at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London, where he suffered the amputation of his left leg; three years in East End lodgings and taverns, where he

Works Cited:

- Carlisle, Janice. Introduction. *Great Expectations*. By Charles Dickens; ed. Janice Carlisle. Boston: Bedford Books, 1996.
- Clarke, Marcus. *For the Term of His Natural Life*. London: Collins, 1953.
- Dames, Nicholas. *Amnesiac Selves: Nostalgia, Forgetting, and British Fiction 1810-1870*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001.
- Dickens, Charles. *Great Expectations*. Ed. Janice Carlisle. Boston: Bedford Books, 1996.
- Hollington, Michael. "Dickens and Australia" *Cahiers Victorien et Edouardiens: Revue du Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Victorien et Edouardiens de l'Université, Paul Valéry, Montpellier* 33 (1991 Apr): 15-32.
- Hughes, Robert. *The Fatal Shore*. New York: Knopf, 1987.
- Hulsman, John. "Pristine Nostalgia in the Novels of Charles Dickens." *The Victorian Newsletter* (Fall 2001): 14-17.

University of Louisville

pursued the bohemian way and penned poor imitations of Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads*; and a year at the Royal Sea Bathing Infirmary at Margate, where the physicians were unable to arrest his infection. In August 1873 he was admitted to the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, to be treated by Joseph Lister as a test case for antiseptic surgery, and survived two tedious but successful operations on his right foot. It was in the wards, where he lay for twenty months, that Henley transformed his hospital experience into poetry.¹

At first, Henley was fascinated by infirmary life, and his poems were intensely objective. He selected singular elements—the nurse's "sly gray eyes" and the surgeon's "rare, wise smile"—to capture the members of the hospital cast. He chose grim details—"corridors and stairs of stone and iron"—to signify the reality of hospital life. Although some of the poems included first-person references—"I limp," "I gasp and choke," "I storm / The thick sweet mystery of chloroform"—his subject in these early pieces was not so much himself as the hospital and the hospital experience. As his convalescence lengthened, however, Hen-

¹third, a conflation of the 1875 and 1887 texts, was the "In Hospital" sequence of twenty-eight dramatic lyrics included in Henley's first collected poems, *A Book of Verses*, 1888.

ley wearied of invalid life. His days passed slowly and he became increasingly self-absorbed. In "Vigil" he situated himself in the ward at night when "An inevitable atom of light / Haunts me, and stertorous sleepers / Snore me to madness." Even in the etchings of fellow patients—a casualty, a failed suicide, and a withering ploughman—he inserted dramatic exchanges with his subjects and participated in the conditions of their distress. In these later lyrics the focus was on the poet's personal experience.

When he was not working on his hospital sequence, palavering with the nurses, or playing euchre with other sufferers, Henley was reading. On 16 December 1873 he wrote to his friend Harry Nichols, a London coffeehouse keeper: "I am well enough off for books: especially French books" ("Letters" HM 30921). And in the months that followed, they corresponded passionately about Heine's *Lazarus*, Hugo's *Châtiments*, Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, Eliot's *Middlemarch*, Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal*, Taine's *Voyage aux Pyrénées*, Gautier's *Émaux et camées*, and Laclos's *Liaisons dangereuses*. But on 17 May 1874 Henley wrote again to Nichols: "I have no will to read, & less to write: the songs & sonnets I vent occasionally are almost Baudelairean in their bitter fixity of ennui" ("Letters" HM 30922).

Eventually, Henley recovered his "will to read." And by a stroke of good fortune we now know the works to which he turned during his last months in hospital. Recently acquired by the Beinecke Library, at Yale University, are eight notebooks in which Henley recorded excerpts from his reading between 1872 and 1899. In the volume dated from 20 March 1874 to 15 January 1875, he copied lines from Petrarch, passages from Macchiavelli and quotations from the works of Balzac. He was reading Balzac's historical fiction *Sur Catherine de Médicis*, and on 3 January—his five hundredth day in hospital—he transcribed a single sentence: "On ne saurait croire à quel point un homme, seul dans son lit et malade, devient personnel" ("Notebooks" 3 : 128).²

Published in 1836, Balzac's novel parallels the public life of Catherine de Medici, whose successful reign as queen regent has been attributed to her talent for oscillating between competing religious factions and weathering political intrigues. In his narrative, Balzac constructs an extended episode which centers upon Christophe Lecamus, son of the court furrier and an ardent supporter of the Reformation, who is recruited to communicate to Catherine the news of a proposed treaty of alliance among Luther in Germany, Knox in Scotland, and Calvin in France. By his wits, Christophe journeys from Paris to Blois and gains admission to the court; as he attempts to convey the treaty to Catherine, however, he is caught in the act by her daughter-in-law, the young queen. He acknowledges under questioning that he follows the Reformed religion, but refuses to implicate Catherine de Medici as a participant in the movement. And Catherine, to save herself, sacrifices Christophe. The poor lad is conducted to the dungeon, strapped into a dreadful

apparatus, and tortured mercilessly. But throughout the interrogation he maintains his innocence, and eventually the enemies of Catherine and of the Reformation dispatch him to prison at Orleans. For months he is held in the notorious tower of Saint-Aignan. Locked in one of the lower rooms, with a view of the prison yard, he lies on his pallet, alone and unable to move his legs.

As political events unfold, Catherine de Medici is restored to power. And at length Christophe is returned to his father's house. But as he lies in his little brown room, day after day, recalling the ordeal of his martyrdom, Christophe is often depressed. It is difficult to believe, the narrator observes, how self-absorbed a man can become when he lies alone and ill in his bed. Although Catherine rewards Christophe, by permitting him to purchase a parliamentary office, the gesture is small compensation for his physical and psychological suffering.

One can understand why *Sur Catherine de Medicis* would appeal so directly to Henley. Confined to his bed and constrained by a cast iron splint, he easily discerned the similarities between Christophe's incarceration and his own. He was convalescing in a "dim, dull, double-bedded room" with a view of the hospital quad. And like Christophe he was overcome by ennui. The epigraph from Balzac situates *In Hospital* in the tradition of classic realism, but it anticipates as well the modernist temper of the sequence by negotiating between objective and subjective modes of discourse. Indeed, the inscription establishes Henley's authorial voice and prefigures his position as both patient and poet.

Henley always wrote his best poems, Bernard Shaw remarked, "when he had an experience like the hospital experience to go upon."³ The hospital ordeal was the crisis that defined Henley's life. He constructed his sequence—from "Enter Patient" to "Discharged"—in the nineteenth-century paradigm of crisis and recovery, but he assured several correspondents, including J. M. Barrie, that the poems were drawn from "true and authentic" moments (*Selected Letters* 176). Now we know that, in addition to these incidents, Henley drew upon his rich reading experience during the months of his confinement. Balzac's narrative corroborated Henley's psychological inertia. And Henley's selection of the epigraph—"On ne saurait dire à quel heure un homme, seul dans son lit et malade, devient personnel"—engages the interplay between two individualized accounts, one fictional and one true, of the *taedium vitae* peculiar to the patient in his sickbed.

Works Cited

- Balzac, Honoré de. *La Comédie Humaine*, 11: *Études philosophiques: Sur Catherine de Médicis*. Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. Paris: Gallimard, 1980.
- Buckley, Jerome Hamilton. *William Ernest Henley: A Study of the "Counter-Decadence" of the 'Nineties*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1945.

original *croire*.

³Quoted in Williamson 199-200.

Connell, John. *W. E. Henley*. London: Constable, 1949.

De Sola Pinto, Vivian. *Crisis in English Poetry 1880-1940*. 1951; New York: Harper, 1966.

Henley, William Ernest. "Letters of William Ernest Henley to Harry Nichols." Henry E. Huntington Library, HM 30912-29.

_____. "Notebooks: Holographs . . . of Excerpts from His Reading." 8 vols. Beinecke Library, Yale University, Uncat.MS Vault.642.

_____. *The Selected Letters of W. E. Henley*. Ed. Damian Atkinson. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000.

Williamson, Kennedy. *W. E. Henley: A Memoir*. London: Shaylor, 1930.

Rollins College

Emily Brontë's Pedagogy of Desire in *Wuthering Heights*

Amy Carol Reeves

Too often, critics of *Wuthering Heights* focus on the erotic relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine, while subordinating the eroticism between the characters in the outer frame of the novel. Specifically, the romance between Catherine and Hareton and the seduction fantasy occurring between the narrators, Nelly Dean and Lockwood, have been largely overlooked. In this outer constellation of erotic relationships, Brontë positions the woman as teacher—both in intellectual and sexual matters. Knowledge, literacy, and sexual potency become merged in these relationships, made radical and subversive in the gender reversal in which the female becomes the agent of penetration.

In the course of this essay, we will examine the connections between actual literacy and "reading" others through a discussion of Jessica Benjamin's concept of the *dialectic of control*. Applying her ideas to the relationships in *Wuthering Heights*, we see how the fate of the relationships depends largely on the man's efforts to attain knowledge, literal knowledge (i.e. increased literacy) which becomes equated with "knowledge," or recognition and respect for his lover. Heathcliff and Catherine's relationship fails because he stops "learning" her. Consequently, she "haunts" the external narrative through her efforts to "teach" or penetrate the ignorant Lockwood—who continuously misreads both situations and texts. However, Nelly Dean, through telling Lockwood the tale behind the living persons at *Wuthering Heights*, tries to teach him to "read" the texts before him and thus to recognize and identify with female agency. Nelly's efforts to make him literate are quasi-erotic, working as a sort of narrative seduction, a seduction which becomes paralleled by the young Catherine's efforts to bring Hareton from a dim illiterate world into an enlightened one in which he can both "read" texts and pay attention to her. These female teacher seductions of the male pupil which we see in the frame tale, try to make right the textual/sexual ignorance promoted by Heathcliff during his relationship with Catherine in the internal tale. Finally, as Lockwood proves resistant to his "lessons," he is "exiled" from the Heights upon the engagement

of Hareton and Catherine. We see, in their promised union, restoration of mutuality between male and female at the Heights—and Brontë's ideal vision for the marital relationship.

Benjamin's *Bonds of Love* presents us with a clear feminist psychoanalytical representation of power and understanding of the other in relationships. Utilizing the Master-Slave pattern of Hegel and Freud's Oedipal Complex, Benjamin claims that all healthy relationships are maintained by an inherent interplay between the self and the other in which there is both mutual recognition and self assertion. The self, according to Benjamin, must be "aware of its distinctiveness from others" and yet it must be recognized by others. She states: "Recognition is that response from the other which makes meaningful the feelings, intentions, and actions of the self. It allows the self to realize its agency and authorship in a tangible way. But such recognition can only come from an other whom we, in turn, recognize as a person in his own right" (12). Benjamin goes on to claim that, "This struggle to be recognized by an other, and thus confirm our selves, was shown by Hegel to form the core of relationships of domination" (12). Failure to recognize the other denies agency and overthrows the balance of what Benjamin terms the *dialectic of control*: "If I completely control the other, then the other ceases to exist, and if the other completely controls me, then I cease to exist. . . . True independence means sustaining the essential tension of these contradictory impulses; that is, both asserting the self and recognizing the other. Domination is the consequence of refusing this condition" (53).

Unhealthy relationships, according to Benjamin's theory, emerge from a breakdown of mutual recognition. When one partner in an erotic relationship refuses to assert self or to recognize the other as a separate being, erotic domination results.

The problem with Catherine and Heathcliff's relationship is that there is no mutual recognition. If, as Benjamin states, "recognition makes meaningful the feelings, inten-

tions, and actions of the self," we see Heathcliff refuse to recognize Catherine as a separate being. She becomes, to him, an extension of self, and rather than allow her to realize her "agency and authority in a tangible way," he tries to possess her. Catherine's decision to marry Linton as opposed to Heathcliff, might be interpreted as a move to establish separation from Heathcliff—to force him to recognize her as a separate being. We see this most clearly in Catherine's statement to Nelly, "I am Heathcliff—he's always, always in my mind—not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but, as my own being" (64). Her statement here reflects the idea that Heathcliff does not recognize her in her own right; he does not try to make her aware of her "distinctiveness from others"; rather he merges his being with hers and makes her feel that she is Heathcliff. Later, when Catherine is dying, we see how he cannot recognize her otherness: "misery, and degradation, and death, and nothing that God or Satan could inflict would have parted us" (126). It is beyond his comprehension that any power, earthly or divine, could part them. Even after Catherine dies, Heathcliff tears apart her coffin, anticipating that after death they will merge together as one being. Heathcliff's refusal to affirm her as a separate self robs Catherine of her agency and overthrows the dialectic of control in their relationship. Heathcliff's failure to recognize the self of the other eventually extends into all of his relationships, as demonstrated in his tyrannies towards Isabella, Hindley, Hareton II, and Catherine II.

The cause of this brutality is directly linked to his deliberate choice to remain in a state of ignorance. We are told that by sixteen, Heathcliff had lost:

any curiosity he once possessed in pursuit of knowledge and any love for books or learning. . . . He struggled long to keep up an equality with Catherine in her studies and yielded with poignant though silent regret: but he yielded completely; . . . Then personal appearance sympathized with mental deterioration; he acquired a slouching gait, and ignoble look; his naturally reserved disposition was exaggerated into an almost idiotic excess of unsociable moroseness; and he took a grim pleasure, apparently, in exciting the aversion rather than the esteem of his few acquaintances. (53)

This passage demonstrates how Catherine continued in her studies while Heathcliff "yielded completely." Becoming unlearned leaves Heathcliff not just ignorant of scholarly matters but also of human relationships. When Heathcliff discontinues his "pursuit of knowledge," he becomes ostracized from his "few acquaintances." The fact that knowledge of academic matters here is equated with knowledge of others supports the idea that this might be the

moment when Heathcliff ceases to learn, to *recognize*, Catherine's separate self.

Like Heathcliff, Lockwood lives in a state of ignorance.¹ As Caroline Jacobs observes, we cannot take Lockwood "at his word" because he is a poor "reader" of his surroundings; we should not rely on him to provide us with an accurate interpretation of the Heights. We see the truth of Jacob's insight in the opening paragraph of the novel through Lockwood's initial remarks about Heathcliff. Lockwood's first impressions, in which he describes Heathcliff as a "capital fellow" and expresses his hope for happiness at *Wuthering Heights*, reveal how illiterate he is of his new environment. After meeting Heathcliff, Lockwood returns to the Grange optimistic and cheerful in spirit:

This is certainly a beautiful country! In all England, I do not believe that I could have fixed on a situation so completely removed from the stir of society. A perfect misanthropist's heaven—and Mr. Heathcliff and I are such a suitable pair to divide the desolation between us. A capital fellow! He little imagined how my heart warmed towards him when I beheld his black eyes withdraw so suspiciously under their brows, as I rode up, and when his fingers sheltered themselves, with a jealous resolution, still further in his waistcoat, as I announced my name. (3)

Lockwood's opinion of Heathcliff as a "capital fellow," and as an endearing eccentric misanthropist is quickly proved to be entirely wrong during his next visit to the Heights.

Besides misreading Heathcliff, when Lockwood enters the Heights, he also completely misunderstands the domestic scene of the place. First, he attempts to pet the "canine mother" who approaches him after leaving her puppies on the hearth. After the dog growls at him, Heathcliff fiercely warns him that the dog is "not kept for a pet" (5). Later, Lockwood asks the younger Catherine if she has a particular favorite kitten among the pile lying on a cushion. She promptly taunts him: "A strange choice of favourites" (8), at which moment Lockwood realizes that what he believed to be sleeping kittens are actually a pile of dead rabbits. Lockwood also believes Catherine to be Heathcliff's wife until he is corrected at the table during tea, at which point, Lockwood perceives himself "in a blunder" (10) and goes on to assume that Catherine is married to Hareton, who must also be Heathcliff's son:

The clown at my elbow, who is drinking his tea out of a basin and eating his bread with unwashed hands, may be her husband. Heathcliff, junior, of course. Here is the consequence of being buried alive: she has thrown herself away upon that boor from sheer ignorance that better individuals existed! (11)

¹His grave ignorance has been recognized by many critics. Writing in 1957, George J. Worth cites Lockwood as unreliable in judging character—both the character of himself and of others. Though Lockwood calls himself a misanthropist (3), Worth claims that "had Lockwood been the misanthropist he claimed to be, he would have shunned all intercourse with

Heathcliff and Nelly and there could have been no novel, at least not in its present form" (43). More recently, Caroline Jacobs has described Lockwood's inability to penetrate or understand the Heights, "The outsider, conventional in language as well as understanding, makes repeated efforts to force his way into the penetralium" (Jacobs 353).

Lockwood here is indeed "in a blunder," because Catherine is not only *not* married to Heathcliff, but she is also *not* the wife of Hareton.

Because Lockwood cannot "read" the situations around him, he stands essentially "illiterate" of the surrounding narrative. But, like Heathcliff, he is ignorant of more than just the "texts" before him; he is ignorant of sexual matters as well. We see his passivity and complete lack of sexual agency in his memory of a romantic experience where instead of confessing his love to "a most fascinating creature" (15), he "shrunk icily into [himself] like a snail; at every glance retired colder and farther; till, finally, the poor innocent was led to doubt her own senses, and, overwhelmed with confusion at her supposed mistake, persuaded her mamma to decamp" (5). Rather than expressing the pure insouciance of the rake bachelor, Lockwood here reveals his frigidity, his inability to have a romantic relationship because of sheer fear—because he will inevitably shrink "icily" within himself. The enormous significance of Lockwood's name, with the obvious phallic pun on wood, comes into play here as he stands in a "locked" state, one of profound ignorance and persistent frigidity.

We see Lockwood's extreme sexual and intellectual ignorance also while he examines Catherine's writings when lying in her bedroom. He embodies the nineteenth-century female invalid—bedridden, sexually and intellectually ignorant, and yet curious, feeling "an immediate interest" kindling "for the unknown." Later, after returning to Thrushcross Grange, Lockwood calls himself a "weak wretch" (26) and even seems to exhibit signs of female hysteria: "I was excited, almost to a pitch of foolishness, through my nerves and brain. This caused me to feel, not uncomfortable, but rather fearful" (28).²

However, Lockwood is curious about attaining increased knowledge and erotic awakening. Sexual and intellectual matters are, once again, merged during the disturbing night Lockwood experiences at the Heights. Upon entering Catherine's bedroom, he is confronted with the names *Catherine Earnshaw*, *Catherine Heathcliff*, and *Catherine Linton* scratched into the paint of the window sill. Though unaware of the significance of these names, Lockwood leaned his "head against the window and continued spelling over Catherine Earnshaw-Heathcliff-Linton" (16). After attempting to spell these names, Lockwood tries to read Catherine's writings which cover all the margins of her books:

Some were detached sentences; other parts took the form of a regular diary, scrawled in an unformed, childish hand. At the top of an extra page . . . I was greatly amused to behold an excellent caricature of my friend Joseph, rudely yet powerfully sketched.

An immediate interest kindled within me for the unknown Catherine, and I began, forthwith, to decypher her faded hieroglyphics. (16)

Deciphering these "faded hieroglyphics" becomes equated with deciphering Catherine. Good reading and attaining knowledge are inseparable from understanding and recognizing the other, in this case, the dead Catherine.

Lockwood, however, soon loses interest in Catherine's writings as his "eyes wandered from manuscript to print" (18); eventually, he falls asleep. Because he ceases to learn her, because he ceases to "decipher" Catherine, his actions mimic the crime of Heathcliff towards Catherine in the inner tale—in which he refuses to recognize her otherness. Lockwood thus unwittingly revives the ghost of Catherine. When she comes to his window that night, she is there to "teach" him what he has not learned; she is there to force him to recognize her. She seizes Lockwood pleading, "Let me in—let me in!" in an attempt at penetration, the violent assertion of her sexual agency which she never fully asserted in life.

Catherine's attempt at penetration foreshadows Nelly Dean's attempts to penetrate Lockwood. It is Nelly Dean who unfolds to Lockwood the story of *Wuthering Heights*. She attempts to make him literate, to teach him to "read" his surroundings and, in the process, learn to "read," or understand a lover. What unfolds is a sexual fantasy, a narrative seduction in which Nelly, as penetrator, attempts to seduce the virginal, the locked, Lockwood.

The narrative seduction begins when Lockwood returns to the Grange in his weak and feverish state and begs Nelly Dean to tell him the entire story of *Wuthering Heights*. Promising that the intricacies of her narrative would not bore him, he states:

I perceive that people in these regions acquire over people in towns the value that a spider in a dungeon does over a spider in a cottage, to their various occupants; and yet the deepened attraction is not entirely owing to the situation of the looker-on. They *do* live more in earnest, more in themselves, and less in surface change, and frivolous external things. I could fancy a love for life here almost possible; and I was a fixed unbeliever in any love of a year's standing. (49)

Lockwood's explication of his interest in Nelly Dean's story reveals how he is looking for more than just *information* regarding the domestic atrocities he witnessed at the Heights. He is looking for awakening, sexual as well as intellectual. He confesses to a grave lack of self-awareness, admitting that he has lived his whole life in the world of commodification, "surface change, and frivolous external things" (49). Also, Lockwood's statement: "I could fancy a love for life here almost possible; and I was a fixed unbeliever in any love of a year's standing" is a shockingly blunt revelation to Nelly Dean. Here he admits to both his lack of "love for life," and his inability to embark in a romantic relationship, to experience, "any love of a year's standing"—quite literally, he admits his frigidity to Nelly.

The quasi-erotic nature of this rhetoric is blatant. Lock-

wood continues to describe his state of ignorance as one void of sensuality, appetite, sensory delight, and enjoyment. He confesses his wish to go beyond the famished man devouring "a single dish on which he may concentrate his entire appetite"; he desires "a table laid out by French cooks" where he could "perhaps extract as much enjoyment from the whole, but each part is a mere atom in his regard and remembrance" (49). The latter form of consumption involves transformation, a release from his locked state.

Lockwood goes on to recognize Nelly Dean as one who can make him knowledgeable when he observes her "reflective faculties" (49). She immediately confirms his compliment, defending her literacy:

I have undergone sharp discipline which has taught me wisdom; and then, I have read more than you would fancy, Mr. Lockwood. You could not open a book in this library that I have not looked into, and got something out of also, unless it be that range of Greek and Latin, and that of French—and those I know one from another. (49)

In response to this statement, Nelly addresses him as "Mr. Lockwood," emphasizing his "locked" state before putting forth her blatant image of "opening." She claims that she has penetrated, "looked into," every book he will try to open. Nelly thus confirms to Lockwood both her powers of literacy and penetration. Literacy and sexual potency are thus merged in this narrative seduction scene in which the female works as the agent of penetration.

From this point on, Nelly Dean is Lockwood's Beatrice in the labyrinths of the Heights. Educating him about the tales behind the Heights becomes Nelly's means of teaching him about female agency. Her efforts to revive Lockwood both mentally and physically, telling him not to "lie till ten" (48), and giving him "bitter herbs" to strengthen him symbolize how she is helping him emerge from his weak, ignorant, feminized state as an invalid, into one who is able to read "texts" before him—both the "texts" of the Heights and the "texts" of a female other. By positioning herself as the female seducer/teacher, she is simultaneously teaching him not only to read the "texts" around him, but to recognize her agency as a woman.

Nelly's "lessons" utilize the inner tale of Catherine and Heathcliff as a textual fulcrum to reassert female agency at *Wuthering Heights* where Heathcliff is still brutalizing Hareton and Catherine II. He has made Hareton as ignorant and unsociable as himself, telling Nelly when Hareton was still a boy that he wanted to "see if one tree won't grow as crooked as another, with the same wind to twist it!" (145). Because Hareton is living in a state of gross ignorance and illiteracy, there seems to be little promise of any romantic relationship between him and the young Catherine. Rather, we can only anticipate a repeat of the atrocities which had already occurred between Catherine and Heathcliff; we can only anticipate a relationship in which Hareton's profound ignorance would not permit him to recognize Catherine as a separate self. He would fail to acknowledge, as Heathcliff

had failed to acknowledge years earlier, the agency of his lover. Nelly thus sends her pupil, Lockwood, now more literate of the tumultuous story of Heathcliff and Catherine, to the Heights in an effort to restore the young Catherine's agency and catalyze a promising relationship between the girl and Hareton.

Nelly, banned by Heathcliff from entering *Wuthering Heights*, sends Lockwood to Catherine with a note. Lockwood, to whom Nelly has just taught the importance of pursuing knowledge, encourages Catherine to educate Hareton. What we see unfold is an erotic teacher/pupil relationship which, in many ways, parallels Nelly Dean's relationship with Lockwood. Catherine becomes the agent of penetration as she "penetrates" Hareton's ignorance and teaches him how to read both texts and her self.

The scene begins with Catherine lamenting her lack of agency—complaining about mental and physical boredom. To Hareton she yells. "I should like to be riding Minny down there! I should like to be climbing up there—Oh! I'm tired—I'm *stalled*, Hareton!" (229). She continues by accusing Hareton of trying to make her as ignorant as he is, of persuading Heathcliff to burn many of her books, and then of stealing some away for himself. She tells him that he will never make her as ignorant as he is shouting, "I've most of [the books] written on my brain and printed in my heart, and you cannot deprive me of those!" (229).

We see how Nelly Dean's pupil, Lockwood, opens the doors for communication, for Hareton's education. He tells Catherine, "Mr. Hareton is desirous of increasing his amount of knowledge . . . He is not *envious* but *emulous* of your attainments. He'll be a clever scholar in a few years!" Lockwood's response here shows us how Hareton desires to read, to become more knowledgeable; he is, "desirous of increasing his amount of knowledge" (229). We also see evidence of Hareton's attempts to educate himself through Catherine's mockery, in which she claims that she has heard him trying to read while making "pretty blunders":

I hear him trying to spell and read to himself, and pretty blunders he makes! I wish you would repeat Chevy Chase, as you did yesterday; it was extremely funny! I heard you—and I heard you turning over the dictionary, to seek out the hard words, and then cursing, because you couldn't read their explanations! (230)

Perhaps reflecting on his own experiences with Nelly Dean, Lockwood goes on to suggest that she might be the one to educate Hareton. He tells her that, "we have each had a commencement, and each stumbled and tottered on the threshold, and had our teachers scorned, instead of aiding us, we should stumble and totter yet" (230).

Furthermore, as Lockwood encourages Catherine to teach Hareton, he knows that Hareton's pursuit of knowledge is as much an attempt to gain sexual access to Catherine as it is to become literate:

I read in his countenance what anguish it was to offer that sacrifice to spleen. I fancied that as they consumed, he

²Diane Price Herndl, states that the nineteenth-century female invalid is

"one who is subject to the whims of her body or mind" (4).

recalled the pleasure they had already imparted, and the triumph and ever increasing pleasure he had anticipated from them; and, I fancied, I guessed the incitement to his secret studies, also. He had been content with daily labour and rough animal enjoyments, till Catherine crossed his path. Shame at her scorn, and hope of her approval were his first prompters to higher pursuits; (231)

Lockwood, more literate than before his relationship with Nelly Dean, is able to "read" the anguish in Hareton's face and to recognize the pleasure that the young man felt during his studies. Lockwood emphasizes here the sensuous nature of Hareton's studies by using the word "pleasure" twice, reminding us of the pleasurable nature of his own studies with Nelly Dean. However, because Catherine is not positioned as his teacher, Hareton is not learning to read his texts or how to "read" her. Therefore, he is met with only "shame" and "scorn."

Only when Nelly Dean is allowed to visit the Heights, is she able to do what Lockwood could not—convince Catherine to "teach" Hareton. Catherine, who finally agrees to teach Hareton to read, gives Nelly a book to give to Hareton, telling her, "I'll come up and teach him to read it right" (240). Encouraging Catherine to take this role as teacher is Nelly Dean's means of giving her agency. And through allowing Catherine to "penetrate" his ignorance, Hareton is both accepting her agency and recognizing her as a separate other. His pursuit of knowledge, which Heathcliff has tried to thwart for years, here flourishes under Catherine's guidance.

Hareton's lessons from Catherine encompass sexual as well as intellectual matters. While observing their first lesson Nelly states, "I perceived two such radiant countenances bent over the page of the accepted book, that I did not doubt the treaty had been ratified on both sides, and the enemies were, thenceforth, sworn allies" (240). Furthermore, when Lockwood returns to Wuthering Heights, in the fall of 1802, he also observes the eroticism ignited during Catherine's lessons. He tells us that:

[Hareton's reading] was done, not free from further blunders, but the pupil claimed a reward, and received at least five kisses, which, however, he generously returned. Then, they came to the door, and from their conversation, I judged they were about to issue out and have a walk on the moors. (235)

Through Lockwood and Nelly Dean's comments, we see Hareton awakening from a dark, frigid world of ignorance into one in which he is more enlightened and sexually aroused, one in which he is demanding "kisses" from his lover/teacher.

While these lessons are successful in Hareton, Lockwood eventually proves resistant to this erotic "unlocking" process, and by the end of the book, literally flees from the moors, symbolically escaping a world in which female sexual

agency is established. Throughout Nelly's narrative, Lockwood persists in his weepy state of invalidism. During one particular break in her narrative, he complains, "Four weeks' torture, tossing and sickness! Oh, these bleak winds, and bitter, northern skies, and impassable roads, and dilatory country surgeons! And, oh, this dearth of human physiognomy, and, worse than all, the terrible intimation of Kenneth that I need not expect to be out of doors till spring!" (71). He also comes to desire the young Catherine, dreaming of her "brilliant eyes," (121) and then begrudges his inability to pursue her, feeling that he had "thrown away the chance [he] might have had of doing something besides staring at [her] smiting beauty" (235). Lockwood's failure, and his stubborn resistance to Nelly's penetration, his resistance to transformation, make him the exile of Wuthering Heights—fleeing back to his world of "surface change and external things."

But on the moors, by the end of the novel with the promised marriage of Catherine and Hareton, we see the full assertion of female sexual agency—a union which Nelly foresees in one of her "lessons" to Lockwood: "The crown of all my wishes will be the union of those two; I shall envy no one on their wedding-day—there won't be a happier woman than myself in England!" (241). Nelly's optimism emerges from her knowledge that Hareton's recognition of Catherine, to a certain extent, rights the wrongs Heathcliff had committed against Catherine's mother. Hareton is released from his state of ignorance, and Catherine's agency as teacher and lover is finally recognized. Their successful union displaces the tyrannies of male ignorance. Their wedding symbolizes a transformation in which the death of patriarchy marks the beginning of a new, radical era, an era in which the equality and mutuality can exist between male and female lovers.

The pedagogical structure which Brontë establishes through *Wuthering Heights*, in which the woman is given power to "penetrate" male ignorance, permits what was forbidden in most nineteenth-century marriages—female agency. Through Hareton and Catherine's relationship based on equality, we see Brontë's ideal vision for marriage—a relationship encompassing self-assertion, and mutual love through mutual recognition.

Works Cited

- Benjamin, Jessica. *The Bonds of Love*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1988.
- Brontë, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. Ed. Richard J. Dunn. 4th ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 2003.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*. Ed. Philip Rieff. New York: Collier, 1963.
- _____. *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*. London: Penguin Group, 2003.
- Herndl, Diane Price. *Invalid Women*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1993.
- Jacobs, Carol. "At the Threshold of Interpretation." *Wuthering Heights*. Ed. William M. Sale, Jr. and Richard J. Dunn. 3rd ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 1990. 353-365.

Miller, J. Hillis. "Wuthering Heights: Repetition and the 'Uncanny.'" *Wuthering Heights*. Ed. Richard J. Dunn. 4th ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 2003. 361-379.

Worth, George J. "Mr. Lockwood." *Readings on Wuthering Heights*. Ed. Bruno Leone. San Diego: Greenhaven P, 1999. 41-45.

University of South Carolina

Kate Field and Anthony Trollope: The Gaps in the Record

Gary Scharnhorst

I assure you my aim is not the chronicling of "celebrities." It has so happened that fate has thrust them upon me. There is but one Landor, one Mrs. Browning, one Ristori, one Dickens and one Kemble.
Kate Field to Miss [Olive?] Logan, 19 March 1868.¹

Virtually everything known about Kate Field and Anthony Trollope's relationship depends upon only four sources: 1) Trollope's twenty-four letters to Field in the Boston Public Library, one of which concludes with "a kiss that shall be semi-paternal—one-third brotherly, and as regards the small remainder, as loving as you please" (*Letters 2: 438 passim*). 2) Field's unsigned review of *North America* in the *Continental Monthly* for September 1862. 3) Trollope's enigmatic, seven-sentence tribute to her in his posthumously-published autobiography, in which he refers to her as his "most chosen friend" (262). 4) The only biography of Field published to date, Lilian Whiting's *Kate Field: A Record* (1899), which cites several diaries and private letters that have since been lost.

This paucity of sources has permitted scholars over the years to speculate about the exact nature of their relationship, in effect to fill the gaps in the record with conjecture. "He never made love to her," Michael Sadleir insists, though "in love with her he certainly was" (210). James Pope-Hennessy asserts that "Anthony Trollope's love for Kate Field did not wane. . . . Over the speeding years they met whenever they could" (219). C. P. Snow adds to the guesswork: "The concrete facts are obvious enough. He loved her. He never went to bed with her." However, "Trollope would certainly have wanted to marry her" had Rose Trollope died. Nevertheless, they "can't have been alone together more than maybe a couple of dozen times" (117, 127, 118). In contrast to Snow, R. H. Super contends that because "Kate's lodgings were on New Cavendish Street, Portland Place, not far from Montagu Square," no doubt Trollope "saw her frequently" (355). Similarly, N. John Hall attributes to him a "romantic attachment that lasted until his death" (211) and Victoria Glendinning surmises that "Rose knew about her husband's infatuation, and was upset, then had her ample say about it in the privacy of the bedroom."

¹Kate Field to Miss [Olive?] Logan, 19 March 1868 (Houghton Library, Harvard).

She adds, "I cannot prove that he told her, nor that she reacted as I say, but I am sure of it" (316). Most recently, Pamela Neville-Sington echoes the consensus view: "the middle-aged Anthony Trollope fell madly and innocently in love with her" (339).

I challenge none of these assertions because, quite simply, there is insufficient evidence to do so. My questions about the relationship lead me in a slightly different direction. Simply put, I wonder how Field regarded Trollope—and I admit in advance there are virtually no clues to the mystery. Like the narrator of Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome*, however, I have "the sense that the deeper meaning of the story" is "in the gaps" (7). While it is impossible to prove a point by the absence of evidence, surely the absence of evidence in this case means something. More to the point, I believe Field deliberately concealed the precise nature of her relationship with Trollope even after his death.

A pioneering American woman journalist and lecturer, she did not scruple to protect the privacy of other famous people in her circle of friends. Over the years Field reminisced at length about her early friendships with Walter Savage Landor, George Eliot, and the Brownings, all of whom she had known (along with Trollope) in Florence. She often mentioned them, in fact, in the ninety essays she wrote on the scene as the Italian correspondent of the *Boston Courier*, the *New Orleans Picayune*, and the *Boston Transcript* between March 1859 and June 1861. But she mentioned Anthony Trollope only once in all of these essays—written on 28 April 1859, before she met him, as the "son of the lady who Trolloped America" ("Letter from Straws, Jr," *Boston Courier*, 30 May 1859, 1). After her return to the U. S., she contributed a long reminiscence of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and a three-part essay entitled "The Last Days of Walter Savage Landor" to the *Atlantic Monthly*²—and failed to mention Trollope in either of these pieces. She made only glancing references to him as "a noble specimen of a thoroughly frank and loyal Englishman" and an occasional visitor to Italy in "English Authors in Florence," also published in the *Atlantic* (666, 671), while devoting whole paragraphs each to the Brownings, Landor, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Frances Power Cobbe, George Eliot,

²"Elizabeth Barrett Browning," *Atlantic Monthly*, 8 (September 1861), 368-76; "Last Days of Walter Savage Landor," *Atlantic Monthly*, 17 (April-June 1866), 385-95, 540-51, 684-705.

and even Frances Trollope and Thomas Trollope. She publicly and repeatedly reminisced in later life about her friendship with Eliot, whose weekly salon in London she frequented in the 1870s, as in her obituary of Eliot in the *New York Tribune* in December 1880. Ironically, Field cannibalized her *Atlantic* article in this obituary, again referring to Trollope as "an admirable specimen of a frank and loyal English letterman."³ These are the only references to him in articles she signed with her own name during his life. Between January 1890 and April 1895, Field wrote for her sixteen-page weekly paper *Kate Field's Washington* literally hundreds of articles with such titles as "Charles Dickens: A Characteristic Memory," "Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh," "George Eliot," "Memories of Lawrence Barrett," "Robert Browning: A Few Unpublished Letters," "Recollections of Walter Savage Landor," "Leaves from My Diary: Sir Charles Dilke," and "Ruskin to Mrs. Browning." By 1893 she was literally emptying her files in search of material to fill the pages of the paper. Yet she mentioned Trollope only once and never published any of his twenty-plus letters to her. He was somehow off-limits, a special case. Despite repeated opportunities to write or reminisce about Trollope, she never did so. In the epigraph at the beginning of this essay, indeed, she remarked on the number of celebrities she had met before she was thirty—and she again omits the name of Anthony Trollope.

So far as I can tell, apart from her unsigned review of *North America* in the *Continental Monthly* in 1862, Kate Field referred to Trollope in print exactly seven times in the thousands of articles she published during her career. All of these comments are brief and innocuous, like her allusions to him in a Florence letter for the *Boston Courier*, in "English Authors in Florence," and in the obituary of Eliot. In a pseudonymous piece for the *Springfield Republican* in December 1864, she mentioned that "the Messrs. Harper, contrary to a promise made to the author, surreptitiously obtained a copy of the advance sheets, and issued a cheap edition of [*North America*] previous to Lippincott, the authorized publisher" (Straws, Jr. "Rival" 1-2). Presumably Trollope had written her to this effect in one of his letters to her—none of which survive.⁴ Nine years later, in her popular travel book *Hap-Hazard*, she observed that "Anthony Trollope . . . writes novels at sea" (98). In 1876, in an anonymous gossip column from London for the *New York Herald*, she noted that "The title of Anthony Trollope's new novel is 'The American Senator,' though I am told that it has very distant reference to the domestic life of so distinguished a personage" ("London" 3: 6)—once more presumably an item of information given her by the author. This short list seems to exhaust the body of Field's references during his life to the man who famously called her his "most chosen friend."

Field's sole comment about Trollope after his death, in *Kate Field's Washington* in October 1891, is no more revealing. She cited his opinion in *North America* that the beauty of the Upper Mississippi exceeds that of the Rhine.

Such is the judgment of Anthony Trollope on visiting America thirty years ago, and Anthony Trollope was no mean critic. He had traveled over Europe and knew its great cities by heart. What would he say now could he gaze upon the St. Paul of to-day, which then had but fourteen thousand inhabitants and straggled along the bluff? The English author then thought its site "pretty, almost romantic," but never dreamed of that Summit Avenue which places St. Paul in the front rank of towns for beauty of situation.

If my dear old friend Anthony Trollope were alive and had driven with the charming woman who introduced me to Summit Avenue and Merriam Hill, he would write a new chapter full of wonder and exclamation points!

("Nature as Art in St. Paul" 229)

In this passage Kate Field for the first and only time publicly acknowledged she had ever known Trollope. Only Carolyn J. Moss has commented on this lacuna: "The subject was too personal for public disclosure. She contented herself by simply referring to him on one occasion, almost a decade after his death, as 'my dear old friend Anthony Trollope'" (Moss 51).

The gaps in the record invite more nuanced analysis than Moss offers, even if I reach a similar conclusion. Field rarely mentioned Trollope even in her private letters. In addition to the passing comments recorded in Whiting's biography, I have found only three references to him in the hundreds of extant letters from her hand.⁵ Let me add that Field was also a veritable packrat. The Kate Field Collection at the Boston Public Library contains many hundreds of letters sent to her, and at her death she still owned a letter that Edgar Allan Poe sent her father in 1846 (Whiting 23). Yet not all of Trollope's letters to her survive. According to Zoltán Haraszti, "some important ones have been lost or destroyed," (132) and Hall echoes the point (211). As Pope-Hennessy adds, moreover, Field "snipped out passages" from five of the letters that do survive (217). I have seen no other letters to Field mutilated in this manner. The reason Field is so often identified with young women in Trollope stories, fairly or not, is that few scholars have a clear impression of her character. Nominees for figures he modeled on her include both Wallachia Petrie and Caroline Spaulding in *He Knew He Was Right*, Olivia Q. Fleabody in *Is He Popenjay?*, Rachel O'Mahony in *The Landleaguers*, Isabel Boncasen in *The Duke's Children*, the title character of "Mary

Gresley," Lily Dale in *The Small House at Allington*, and Mary Lawrie in *An Old Man's Love*. (For the record, I believe that O'Mahony is certainly inspired by Field, Fleabody is certainly not, and the others are debatable.) Critics often describe Field as an ardent feminist or a women's rights activist, which is true only to a very limited extent. She was a headstrong and independent woman, to be sure, but she repeatedly insisted she was an artist, not a reformer.⁶ She also refused to hew the orthodox feminist line at two key points: rather than universal suffrage she advocated suffrage limited to literate men and women, and instead of prohibition she endorsed "true temperance."

So too do I believe the nature of Field's relationship with Trollope has been liable to misrepresentation. For example, Snow's insistence that they could not have been alone more than "couple of dozen times" over a period of fifteen years contradicts Pope-Hennessy's claim that "they met whenever they could." Similarly, Moss notes that they were both in Washington in April 1868 because "Trollope's commissions had taken him" there, and Field was there "to cover President Andrew Johnson's impeachment trial for the *New York Tribune*."⁷ Trouble is, while both Trollope and Field were undeniably in Washington at the same time, they were not together there by coincidence. Field was not assigned to cover Johnson's impeachment by any newspaper. She was in Washington apparently to visit Trollope.

Which is not to claim that they were lovers, resorting to subterfuge in order to meet, but merely to suggest that she reciprocated his intense affection. Their intimacy was sacrosanct and confidential, never to be publicized or even divulged. Trollope ended his tribute to her in his autobiography, written in 1876 but not published until after his death, by expressing the hope that his "most chosen friend" may "live to read the words I have now written, and to wipe away a tear as she thinks of my feeling while I write them" (262). There is, of course, no evidence Kate Field read the words or how she reacted if she did. But neither is the lack of evidence surprising. The veil over the nature of their relationship is so heavy it cannot be lifted even a century later.

Works Cited

- Field, Kate. "English Authors in Florence." *Atlantic Monthly* 14 December 1864.
 _____. *Hap-Hazard*. Boston: Osgood, 1873.
 _____. "Kate Field's Appeal." *Washington Post*. 17 August 1895: 5.
 _____. *Kate Field's Washington*. 7 October 1891.
 _____. "London Literary Gossip." *New York Herald*. 17 April 1876.
 _____. "The Woman's Hour." *Boston Daily Globe*. 23 November 1884: 13.
 Glendinning, Victoria. *Anthony Trollope*. New York: Knopf, 1992.
 Hall, N. John. *Trollope: A Biography*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1991.
 Haraszti, Zoltán. "Kate Field and the Trollope Brothers." *More Books: Being the Bulletin of the Boston Public Library*. 2 (July 1927): 132.
 Moss, Carolyn J. "Anthony Trollope and Kate Field: The Story of a Friendship." in *Dickens, Trollope, Jefferson: Three Anglo-American Encounters*. Ed. Sidney P. Moss. Albany: Whitson, 2000.
 Neville-Sington, Pamela. *Fanny Trollope: The Life and Adventures of a Clever Woman*. New York: Viking, 1997.
 Pope-Hennessy, James. *Anthony Trollope*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1971.
 Sadleir, Michael. *Anthony Trollope: A Commentary*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1927.
 Snow, C. P. *Trollope*. London: Macmillan, 1975.
 Straws, Jr. "Letter from Straws, Jr." *Boston Courier*, 30 May 1859.
 _____. "The Rival Editions of Enoch Arden." *Springfield Republican*, 12 December, 1864. 2: 1-2.
 Super, R. H. *The Chronicler of Barsestshire*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1988.
 Trollope, Anthony. *An Autobiography*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1947.
 _____. *Letters of Anthony Trollope*. Ed. N. John Hall. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1983.
 Wharton, Edith. *Ethan Frome*. New York: Scribner's, 1939.
 Whiting, Lilian. *Kate Field: A Record*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1899.

University of New Mexico

³"English Authors in Florence," *Atlantic Monthly* 14 (December 1864), 666, 671

⁴Not only are her letters to him lost, Trollope in the manuscript of his *Autobiography* referred to Field as "an American woman," then struck out "American"—a clear attempt at obfuscation.

⁵Field to E. C. Stedman, 15 December 76 (Butler Library, Columbia): "Christmas I dine with Anthony Trollope"; Field to Laurence Hutton, 2 January 1877 (Princeton); "On Christmas I dined with Anthony Trollope"; Field to Stedman, 3 February 1877 (Butler Library, Columbia): "Anthony Trollope has an essay of mine."

⁶"The Woman's Hour," *Boston Daily Globe*, 23 November 1884, p. 13; "Kate Field's Appeal," *Washington Post*, 17 August 1895, p. 5.

⁷Moss, "Anthony Trollope and Kate Field," 44. Moss makes the same erroneous assertion in "Charles Dickens and Kate Field," *Dickensian*, 99 (Spring 2003), 8.

Metaphoric Mules: Dickens's Tom Gradgrind and Dante's Vanni Fucci

Ernest Fontana

The one explicit reference to Dante in Dickens's writing is found near the conclusion of *Pictures from Italy* (1846). Here he refers to "a small untrodden square in the pavement" of the Piazza del Duomo in Florence, known as the "Stone of Dante," "where (so runs the story) he was used to bring his stool, and sit in contemplation." Dickens then imagines the bitterness and anger of Dante remembering the stone during his exile. I wonder was he ever, in his bitter exile, withheld from cursing the very stones in the streets of Florence the ungrateful, by any kind remembrance of this old-musing-place, and its association with gentle thoughts of little Beatrice!" (Dickens *American Notes* 515). In fact, Dickens would have been reminded of Dante's exile, during his visit, in April 1846, to Santa Croce, where he beheld the tombs of "those illustrious men of history," "Poets, Historians, Philosophers" (516). Although Dante was buried in Ravenna, he would have seen in the right aisle of Santa Croce, a monument to Dante "with the inscription 'Onorate l'altissimo Poeta' by Stephano Ricci, erected in 1829" (Baedeker 419). It should also be observed that Carlyle, to whom *Hard Times* (1854) is dedicated, selected both Dante and Shakespeare as preeminent examples of the poet as hero in his *Heroes and Hero-Worship* (1840). For Carlyle, Dante's *Divine Comedy* is characterized by "Infinite pity, yet also in infinite rigour of law" (Carlyle 94).

It is surprising, therefore, that the telling correspondence in language and context between Dante's presentation of the thief Vanni Fucci in *Inferno* 24, as translated by Henry Francis Cary in the standard Victorian version of the *Commedia* entitled *The Vision* and Dickens's presentation of Tom Gradgrind, also a thief, in *Hard Times* 1.8, has not been acknowledged.¹ Vanni Fucci has robbed a church sacristy in Pistoia of sacred ornaments; Tom will rob the bank of Bounderby, his brother-in-law. In these quotations Vanni Fucci is addressing Dante the pilgrim, Tom, his sister Louisa.

"Vani Fucci am I called,
Not long since rained down from Tuscany
To this dire gullet. Me the bestial life
And not the human pleased, *mule* that I was,
Who in Pistoia found my worthy den." (italics mine)
(84)

... "I am a *Mule* too, which you're not. If father was determined to make me either a Prig or a *Mule*, and I am not a Prig, why it stands to reason, I must be a *Mule*, and so I am," said Tom desperately. (italics mine) (55)

Both characters are filled with self-hatred, spite, and repressed violence. At the beginning of Canto 25, after his speech to Dante the pilgrim, Vanni Fucci makes an obscene digital gesture to God, what Cary designates as "making the fig" (407); Tom "spitefully setting his teeth" wishes he could "put a thousand barrels of gunpowder under them [Bounderby and his father], and blow them all up together" (55).

The specificity of the mule references and the shared context of thievery suggest that Dickens is echoing, perhaps unconsciously, Cary's 1806 translation of Dante. In a novel whose three books refer ironically to agricultural fertility—*Sowing, Reaping, and Garnering*—the mule, the sterile "hybrid offspring of a male donkey and female horse," is a suggestive symbol of the sterility of the Utilitarian system of education that has been imposed on Tom and which has deprived him of humane moral sentiments.

Furthermore, Dickens seems to appropriate Dante-Cary's representation of Vanni Fucci's tortured movements as his body and substance are bound and then devoured by serpents, after his blasphemous and obscene gesture of the fig.

From that day forth
The serpents were my friends; for round his neck
One of them, rolling and twisted, as it said,
"Be silent, tongue!" Another, to his arms
Up gliding, tied them, riveting itself
So close, it took from them the power to move. (85)

In *Hard Times* 2.8, Tom Gradgrind, after being interrogated by his suspicious sister in regard to the robbery of Bounderby's bank, for which Stephen Blackpool has been falsely accused, returns to his bed and is presented as wracked with guilt and self-torment, his violent physical gestures not only evoking the snakes that torment and devour Vanni Fucci, but also, perhaps, after his very amorous kiss of his sister, an act of sterile onanism.²

Then the wretched boy looked cautiously up and found her gone, crept out of bed, fastened his door, and threw himself upon his pillow again: tearing his hair, morosely crying, grudgingly loving her, hatefully but impenitently spurning himself, and no less hatefully and unprofitably spurning all the good in the world. (186)

Dickens's apparent echo of Dante's representation of the thief Vanni Fucci in his representation of the tormented

and self-hating Tom Gradgrind gives to these two scenes, cited above, from *Hard Times*, a novel in which theft—both monetary and sexual—is a primary theme,³ additional depth and, through the association of Tom with the sterility of a mule, heightened evocative power.

Works Cited

- Baedeker, Karl. *Italy: Handbook for Travelers*. Leipsic: Karl Baedeker, 1889.
Carlyle, Thomas. *Heroes and Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*. New York: Charles Scribners, 1903.

A Husband's Tragedy: The Relationship Between Art and Life in Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband*

Carol Schnitzer

After Oscar Wilde completed *An Ideal Husband*, his third drawing-room comedy, he said of it to a friend, the artist Charles Ricketts, "It was written for ridiculous puppets to play, and the critics will say, 'Ah, here is Oscar unlike himself!'—though in reality I became engrossed in writing it, and it contains a great deal of the real Oscar" (Ellmann 410). A careful reading of *An Ideal Husband* confirms this remark. It is a truism that every writer puts something of himself into everything he writes, but frequently it can be risky to try to determine which elements of a literary work come from the writer's psychology and personal experience and which elements are created mostly from his imagination. In the case of Oscar Wilde, though imagination certainly plays a large role in his work, it is sometimes possible to link elements in it to his personal conflicts. Of all his drawing-room comedies, *An Ideal Husband* seems to have the most obvious link to the events of his life at the time of its creation, so much so that Rodney Shewan has described the plight of the Chilterns, the political couple who are the play's central characters, as identical to "the plight of the Wildes of Tite Street" (178).

The similarity remarked on by Shewan is at first glance not apparent to the casual reader or playgoer. Like other literary works that reflect events in their creators' lives, the central situation in *An Ideal Husband*—the husband's fear that an old political misdeed that he had committed will be revealed—is only a transposition into more acceptable terms of Wilde's own trepidation about his secret homosexual life. Such transpositions in a writer's work of personal issues into something similar but less personal usually allow the writer to examine those issues more objectively, often finding discoveries and insights that he might otherwise not have. In the case of *An Ideal Husband*, the appropriation of what was

Cary, Henry Francis, trans. *The Vision of Dante Alighieri*. London: Oxford UP, 1913.

Dickens, Charles. *American Notes and Pictures from Italy*. New York: Charles Scribners, 1911.

_____. *Hard Times*. Ed. Kate Flint. London: Penguin, 2003.

Humphreys, Anne. "Louisa Gradgrind's Secret: Marriage and Divorce in *Hard Times*." *Dickens Studies Annual* 25 (1996): 177-195.

Milbank, Alison. *Dante and the Victorians*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1998.

Xavier University

then a popular dramatic theme—the theme of the politician facing disgrace—allowed Wilde to deal with his guilt concerning his neglect of his wife, Constance, in favor of his young lover, Lord Alfred Douglas, and the rentboys both frequented. Most plays on the same subject had the politician appease public morality by resigning at the end; that Wilde does not have his main character, Sir Robert Chiltern, do the same shows, in my opinion, both his desire to continue with his double life and to retain the love of his wife in spite of it.

Kerry Powell in his book *Oscar Wilde and the theatre of the 1890s* notes that political plays of the time such as Arthur Wing Pinero's *The Cabinet Minister* (1890) reflected an ongoing debate about the different standards of conduct for the sexes and whether this ought to be resolved by eliminating notions of womanly "virtue," or by applying the same restrictive standards to men. The advocates of doing the latter were not concerned only with male sexual conduct, but also with more general issues, in particular what they saw as the male misuse of power, both personal and political. Plays on the subject like Pinero's typically presented a husband who, while being idolized by his wife for his supposed virtue and honesty, is in fact hiding a past or present misdeed from her. The dramatic tension resulting from the danger that he will be found out is typically resolved, as noted above, by the husband's withdrawal from public life, masculine waywardness thus coming under the control of the feminine virtue symbolized by the wife. In some of those plays, such as Sydney Grundy's *A Bunch of Violets* (1894) the husband pays for his misdeeds even more dearly by committing suicide, a device ironically reflecting traditional notions of what should befall an erring woman.

The motif of the erring husband can be seen as an

¹Alison Milbank identifies no allusion to Dante in the work of Dickens.
²Anne Humphreys notes Louisa's "repressed feelings about her father"

(179), but ignores the more salient suggestions of strong feeling between Tom and his sister Louisa.

³Humphreys observes the robbery motif in the novel: Tom robs Bounderby;

Harthouse attempts to rob Bounderby of Louisa.

attempt by the mostly male playwrights of the time to resolve the debate about male virtue in a way that accommodated those asking for a single standard while not displeasing more traditional playgoers. As Powell points out, Wilde's originality in adapting the same theme is to subvert the audience's expectations by having his erring husband consider retirement only to reject the idea, choosing instead to remain in public life and take the Cabinet post which has been offered to him. In doing so, Wilde was not only making an ironic comment on public morality but also offering a psychologically astute observation on the necessity of moral compromise from the standpoint of a man who had long had to perform a similar balancing act in his own life. In this context even the play's title carries ironic implications, for the perfection Lady Chiltern expects from her husband is not humanly possible. Wilde extends the note of irony to the name of his main character: traditionally, the term "taking the Chiltern Hundreds" meant a politician had decided to resign. (Since British Parliament members technically cannot resign, certain Crown lands, called the "Chiltern Hundreds" are reserved for the nominal stewardship of members who are compelled to leave; after their release the lands are returned to the Crown for the next disgraced member to make use of).

The circumstances of his life during the time he composed *An Ideal Husband* suggested that Wilde was well aware of those ironies. He was into the second year of his affair with Douglas and was beginning to feel the strain of both Douglas's emotional instability and financial extravagance and of the ongoing quarrel between Douglas and his father, the Marquess of Queensberry, a quarrel in which Wilde found himself increasingly embroiled and which eventually would prove to be his undoing. An anecdote from the summer of 1893, when Wilde was beginning the play, illustrates the sense of unease he felt. At the time he was staying with Douglas at a summer house in Goring-on-Thames and entertaining a number of visitors, one of them being the young poet Theodore Wratishaw, who later recorded Wilde's words when, during a walk in the woods, the two men came to a blind turn in the path they were following. Wilde stopped and said, "There! That is as far as I ever wish to see in life. Let me be satisfied with what I can see. I do not want to know what lies beyond the turning a few paces ahead" (qtd. in Ellmann 401). The anxiety Wilde clearly felt undoubtedly worked its way into the play, and despite the stogy conventions and stock situations on which the play is based, gives it much of its emotional force.

An analysis of the play, its events and structure, will illustrate both its relevance to the events in its creator's life and the differences between those events and those in the play, which are also telling. Sir Robert Chiltern, a wealthy, up-and-coming politician who has already attained the position of Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, finds this position threatened when Mrs. Cheveley, a notorious adventuress, uses her knowledge that Chiltern once sold a state secret to compel him to support a fraudulent canal scheme in which she has invested. Chiltern knows that if the

truth is revealed he risks losing the love of his wife, Gertrude (like Wilde's own wife, an active feminist), since it is based on her idea of him as the "ideal husband" of the title. Curiously, the Chilterns are described as being childless, unlike the Wildes, who in real life had two sons. The plight of the fictional couple is thus freed from the complications that would ensue when scandal overtook Wilde and his family, and his wife and children, along with Wilde himself, were made to suffer for his sins. The absence of children is of course not the only difference between the Wildes and the Chilterns; the difference between Chiltern's public misdeed and the private homosexual transgressions of Wilde, which according to Victorian morality were literally unspeakable, has already been noted. Also notable is the fact that Chiltern's secret involves a single act that took place well in the past, before he married; except for that he really is the upstanding husband and public figure he appears to be. Wilde, on the other hand, had to deal with an ongoing secret life that he could not reveal to his wife, but that had corroded the fabric of what had once seemed a happy marriage, to the extent that the two had become largely estranged even before the scandal that would destroy it. The problems the Chilterns face are thus a simplified and stylized version of the real-life dilemma Wilde was grappling with—a theoretical model, so to speak, which allowed Wilde to express his feelings and attitudes concerning trust in marriage.

The action of the play is compressed into twenty-four hours, during which time Chiltern is threatened by Mrs. Cheveley, is rejected by his wife when she discovers his secret, and finally is accepted by her again after she is persuaded to do so by Chiltern's friend, Lord Goring. The introductory description of Chiltern in the stage directions in the published version of the play, revised by Wilde after his release from prison, revealingly alludes to the "almost complete separation of passion and intellect" in his face (485). It is tempting to connect this apparent proof of Chiltern's repression of his less socialized self to Wilde's belated realization of the similar split between his respectable roles as paterfamilias and literary lion and his secret sexual life. During the conversation later on in the first act between Chiltern and Mrs. Cheveley, who has accompanied another character, Lady Markby, to a party at the former's house, she reveals the fact that she and Chiltern have a common acquaintance, Baron Arhneim. Baron Arhneim, it turns out, is the person to whom Chiltern, at the beginning of his career, sold information about the government's involvement in the Suez Canal project; his profit from this single dishonest act allowed Chiltern to set himself up in Parliament and established his later success. Mrs. Cheveley informs Chiltern that she has learned of this act and tells him she will expose him if he does not back her own scheme. During her argument, she makes an astute comment about the standards of public morality of the time: "Remember to what a point your Puritanism in England has brought you . . . Scandals used to lend charm, or at least interest, to a man—now they crush him. And yours is a very nasty scandal. You couldn't survive it. . . . Sooner or later we have all to pay for what

we do" (495-496). She goes on to predict what might happen if Chiltern's misdeed were leaked to the press in terms eerily prescient of what would in fact befall the playwright:

. . . Suppose that when I leave this house I drive down to some newspaper office, and give them this scandal and the proofs of it. Think of their loathsome joy, of the delight they would have in dragging you down, of the mud and mire they would plunge you in. Think of the hypocrite with his greasy smile penning his leading article, and arranging the foulness of the public placard. (496)

Chiltern, understandably horrified by this picture, agrees to Mrs. Cheveley's terms. Later, in Act Two, he tells Lord Goring (who has warned him that "no man should, have a secret from his own wife. She invariably finds it out" [503]) about the circumstances surrounding his misdeed and the forces that had compelled him to commit it. He describes his meeting with Baron Arhneim at the latter's house in terms that seem curiously emotionally charged:

I remember so well how, with a strange smile on his pale, curved lips, he led me through his wonderful picture gallery, showed me his tapestries, his enamels, his jewels, his carved ivories, made me wonder at the strange loveliness of the luxury in which he lived; and then told me that luxury was nothing but a background, a painted scene in a play, and that power, power over other men, power over the world, was the one thing worth having, the one supreme pleasure worth knowing, the one joy one never tired of, and that in our century only the rich possessed it. (505)

Chiltern's account, phrased in the exotic language of Wilde's novel *Dorian Gray*, sounds more like a seduction than anything else; like Dorian Gray, the young, naive Chiltern, was initiated into forbidden pleasures by the older, more knowledgeable one, a process that made his eventual capitulation to the Baron's request for information inevitable. It is perhaps relevant at this point to note that in late-Victorian England the word *strange*, used twice by Wilde in the foregoing passage to describe the Baron and his way of life, often had homosexual overtones. Thus initiated by the Baron, Chiltern in his turn can enjoy the privileges that only money and rank can buy, privileges that Wilde in his own private life tried to buy with the literary fame and success he had craved—as he bought boys with silver watches and cigarette cases—learning too late that immunity from public judgment was reserved only for those born to privilege. Through Chiltern, Wilde unconsciously anticipates experience, and he also acknowledges in another speech of Chiltern's to Lord Goring his hidden conflicts in deciding to follow his desires:

I tell you that there are terrible temptations that it requires strength, strength and courage, to yield to. To stake all

one's life on a single moment, to risk everything on one throw, whether the stake be power or pleasure, I care not—there is no weakness in that. There is a horrible, a terrible courage. (506)

Immediately after he counsels Chiltern to tell his secret to his wife, Lord Goring remarks, "Women have a wonderful instinct about things. They can discover everything except the obvious." (503). Especially after he became involved with Lord Alfred Douglas, Wilde's conduct was increasingly reckless and obvious, but it is uncertain how much of the truth his wife suspected before the trials. As noted earlier, husband and wife, who had been close and loving in the marriage's first years, had become increasingly estranged to the extent that Wilde had virtually moved out of the house living instead in a succession of hotel rooms and rented lodgings, ostensibly for privacy in his work, but really so that he could entertain Douglas and his other young companions. By 1893, the year in which Wilde began *An Ideal Husband*, he and Constance had grown so far apart that one day when she arrived at the hotel where he was staying with Douglas (in a room with one double bed) to give him his mail and to ask him when he was coming home, he pretended to have forgotten the house number (Ellmann 394). This uncharacteristically cruel behavior on his part might have been inspired by guilt at his neglect of Constance. After Sir Robert Chiltern upbraids his wife for rejecting him when she finds out the truth about him, he admits to Lord Goring, "I was brutal to her this evening. But I suppose when sinners talk to saints they are brutal always" (529). Constance's own high morality, as well as her loyalty to her husband—which lasted until after his release from prison—must have made Wilde feel extremely guilty at times, causing him to attack her in much the same way that Chiltern attacks Gertrude.

What he could not admit in private, though, he put in his play, the observations of which about honesty in marriage were evidently very important to him. When asked in an interview which point in the play he thought the critics had missed, he identified it as "the difference in the way in which a man loves a woman from that in which a woman loves a man"—that is, the ideal a wife has of her husband contrasted with "the weakness of a man who dares not show his imperfections to the thing he loves" (Mikhail 241). He described this point as comprising the "entire psychology" of the play (Burgess 241). Chiltern's speech to Gertrude at the end of the second act is a plea for understanding, written by a man who knew he could not expect that from his own wife if she knew the truth about him: "Why can't you women love us, faults and all? . . . We have all feet of clay, women as well as men . . . It is not the perfect, but the imperfect, who have need of love" (521). He goes on to say, "You made your false idol of me, and I had not the courage to come down, show you my wounds, tell you my weaknesses" (521). Chiltern's speech is as much about Wilde's "inner torment," as E. H. Mikhail puts it (180), as it is about the now long-forgotten debate about male virtue. It is here that the irony of the play's title is underlined: like Chiltern,

Wilde had to play the role in his public and family life of a person who in fact did not really exist, hiding his true self.

Up to a point Chiltern's dilemma closely resembles that of his creator. Wilde, however, is able to achieve in fiction what he could not in real life, allowing his politician at the end of the play to keep both his family and his career, after he has come perilously close to losing them. The incriminating letter that Mrs. Cheveley has in her possession, which forms the basis of her threat to expose Chiltern, is destroyed by Lord Goring—luckily for Chiltern, who has gone ahead and condemned her financial scheme in Parliament in defiance of her threat. Though he considers resigning anyway, in the play's final scene he is dissuaded by his wife, who has been persuaded by Lord Goring that to do so would be playing into the hands of the moralists, and that Chiltern should be allowed to fulfill his ambitions. The speech in which he does so has attracted a fair deal of comment—much of it negative, since in it Wilde, in contradiction to the feminist statements he had made earlier in his career, has Goring make assertions about the roles of the sexes that were retrograde even in the 1890s:

Women are not meant to judge us, but to forgive us when we need forgiveness. Pardon, not punishment, is their mission. Why should you scourge him with rods for a sin done in his youth, before he knew you, before he knew himself? A man's life is of more value than a woman's. It has larger issues, wider scope, greater ambitions. A woman's life revolves in curves of emotion. It is upon lines of intellect that a man's life progresses. Don't make any terrible mistake, Lady Chiltern. A woman who can keep a man's love, and love him in return, has done all the world wants of women, or should want of them.

(548)

Kerry Powell has suggested that this speech reflects Wilde's desire to oppose feminist demands that men reform to suit them with a "new masculinism" (107) even if it meant having to assert old Victorian ideas about the separate spheres of the sexes. I believe that the impetus behind Goring's statement goes even deeper and is rooted in Wilde's experience as a homosexual man in the late nineteenth century, participating in both the visible heterosexual world and a secret, all-male world where women could not go and therefore could never fully understand. In this context, the political world in which Chiltern operates, also all-male in that time, may be a transposition into licit terms of Wilde's illicit homosexual world. Interpreted in this way, Goring's speech becomes a caution to Gertrude not to condemn or meddle in things she cannot understand as a woman; she can only accept them—and her husband—as they are. Gertrude's subsequent speech to her husband, though it is rendered not as convincingly as it might have been by her rote repetition of Goring's words, shows she has absorbed this lesson. In doing so, she shows considerable courage, more than her husband has shown in fearing to expose himself to his wife. The new relationship between the spouses, based on a honest

awareness of each other's faults and virtues, rather than false ideas, is illustrated in the play's last few lines:

LADY CHILTERN (leaning over the back of the chair):
Aren't you coming in, Robert?

SIR ROBERT CHILTERN (taking her hand): Gertrude, is it love you feel for me, or is it pity merely?

LADY CHILTERN (kisses him): It is love, Robert. Love; and only love. For both of us a new life is beginning.

It is instructive to compare the Chiltern's fictional reconciliation with the estrangement in the Wilde's marriage, where such a "new life" was evidently not possible. Constance would not fully learn the truth about her husband until public scandal forced it on her. To her credit, she displayed remarkable loyalty toward Wilde, who may have felt he did not deserve it. Even after family advisers had finally persuaded her to break with him emotionally if not legally, she forgave him. Constance's plight resembled that of the wife in another play Wilde planned and started to write but never finished, which also showed his understanding of their marriage. It is not clear when Wilde wrote the manuscript which he entitled "A Wife's Tragedy"; it might have been any time from the mid-eighties to the early nineties, the period when he wrote most of his plays. The play—what there is of it—portrays the disintegration of the marriage of Gerald and Nellie Lovel, a young couple living in Venice. Gerald, a self-centered poet, is carrying on an affair with a European countess; when a visiting friend, Lord Mertoun, reproaches him for his neglect of Nellie, he retorts that he loves her. When Mertoun says, "You don't show it," Gerald replies, "It's very vulgar to show one's love for one's wife" (Mikhail 99). During a later scene between Nellie and Mertoun, she remarks in words that might have been Constance's, ". . . my husband has lost all love for me. We stand apart. But I cannot leave him. It is my duty to remain" (123). Despite this sense of duty, she finally decides to leave with Mertoun, who has declared his love for her, and lashes out at Gerald: "Why should I wreck my life for you? You always think only of yourself" (127). The fragment ends with Gerald, by now abandoned by both Nellie and the Countess, longing for the wife whom he has lost.

The two plays, *An Ideal Husband* and the "Wife's Tragedy" fragment, thus illustrate the two contrasting scenarios in Wilde's mind when he imagined telling Constance the truth: either acceptance and reconciliation, or complete rejection. "Ah, that is the great thing, to live the truth" (510), Chiltern declares to Lord Goring after his confession to him, but the risks of "living the truth" were too great in Wilde's case for him to be able to consider it. Nevertheless, he was conscious of a regret that this was so, a regret that was connected to his understanding of the rift between him and Constance and the disadvantage her loyalty to him gave her in the face of his comparative indifference. "Loveless marriages are horrible," he has Chiltern say toward the end of *An Ideal Husband*:

But there is one thing worse than an absolutely loveless marriage. A marriage in which there is love, but on one side only; faith, but on one side only; devotion, but on one side only and in which of the two hearts one is sure to be broken. (549)

Constance's heart may have been broken by her marriage to a man no longer able to give her the love she needed, but in her continuing affection for him, Oscar Wilde was perhaps luckier than he knew.

Works Cited

- Amor, Anne Clark. *Mrs. Oscar Wilde: A Woman of Some Importance*. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1983.
- Burgess, Gilbert. "An Ideal Husband at the Haymarket Theatre: A Talk with Mr. Oscar Wilde," in Mikhail, E. H. ed., *Oscar Wilde: Interviews and Recollections*, vol. 1. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1979.
- Ellmann, Richard. *Oscar Wilde*. New York: Knopf, 1988.
- Holland, Vyvyan. *Son of Oscar Wilde*. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954.

- Mikhail, E. H. "Self-Revelation in *An Ideal Husband*." *Modern Drama*, 2 (1968): 180-186.
- Nassaaar, Christopher S. *Into the Demon Universe: A Literary Exploration of Oscar Wilde*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1974.
- Powell, Kerry. *Oscar Wilde and the theatre of the 1890s*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990.
- Schmidgall, Gary. *The Stranger Wilde: Interpreting Oscar*. New York: Dutton, 1994.
- Shewan, Rodney. *Oscar Wilde: Art and Egotism*. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1977.
- _____. "'A Wife's Tragedy': An unpublished sketch for a play by Oscar Wilde." *Theatre Research International*, 7:2 (Spring 1982): 75-131.
- Wilde, Oscar. *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde*. Ed. Merlin Holland and Rupert Hart-Davis. New York: Henry Holt, 2000.
- _____. *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*. New York: Harper and Row, 1989.

Indiana State University

Books Received

- Alexander, Christine and Juliet McMaster, eds. *The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005. Pp. xv + 312, \$90.00. Contents: Christine Alexander and Juliet McMaster, "Introduction"; Christine Alexander, "Nineteenth-Century Juvenilia: A Survey"; Christine Alexander, "Play and Apprenticeship: the Culture of Family Magazines"; Juliet McMaster, "What Daisy Knew: The Epistemology of the Child Writer"; Christine Alexander, "Defining and Representing Literary Juvenilia"; Margaret Anne Doody, "Jane Austen, That Disconcerting 'child'"; Rachel M. Brownstein, "Endless Imitation: Austen's and Byron's Juvenilia"; Beverly Taylor, "Childhood Writings of Elizabeth Barrett Browning: 'At four I first encountered Pegasus'"; Christine Alexander, "Autobiography and Juvenilia: The Fractured Self in Charlotte Brontë's Early Manuscripts"; Victor A. Newfeldt, "The Child Is Parent to the Author: Branwell Brontë"; Juliet McMaster, "Choosing a Model: George Eliot's 'Prentice Hand'"; David C. Hanson, "Precocity and the Economy of the Evangelical Self in John Ruskin's Juvenilia"; Daniel Shealy, "Louisa May Alcott's Juvenilia"; Gillian E. Boughton, "Dr Arnold's Granddaughter: Mary Augusta Ward"; Naomi Hetherington, "New Woman, 'New Boots': Amy Levy as Child Journalist"; Lesley Peterson and Leslie Robertson, "An Annotated Bibliography of Nineteenth-Century Juvenilia."
- Bell, Matthew. *The German Tradition of Psychology in Literature and Thought, 1700-1840*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005. Pp. xiv + 300. \$80.00 "During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Germany, psychology grew from a minor branch of philosophical doctrine into one of the central pillars of intellectual culture. In the process psychology's edidential basis, theoretical structure, forms of articulation, and status both as a scientific discipline and as a cultural phenomenon took on a recognisably modern form. It became a fixture in the curricula of German universities, a subject in public and academic debate, and a popular publishing phenomenon, with collections of case histories, journals, and factual and fictionalised life-histories appearing in ever increasing numbers. By the middle of the nineteenth century psychology was—if the pun can be forgiven—institutionalized." My argument is that the rise of psychology had a significant impact on German literature and thought of the period. Indeed it is hard to form a historically faithful picture of German intellectual and cultural life without an understanding of psychology's role in it" (1).
- Bristow, Joseph, ed. *The Fin-de-Siècle Poem: English Culture and the 1890s*. Athens: Ohio UP, 2005. Pp. xxi + 352. \$55.00 (cloth); 24:95 (paper). Contents:

Joseph Bristow, "Introduction"; Jerusha McCormack, "Engendering Tragedy: Toward a Definition of 1890s Poetry"; Holly Laird, "The Death of the Author by Suicide: Fin-de-Siècle Poets and the Construction of Identity"; Linda K. Hughes, "A Woman on the Wilde Side: Masks, Perversity, and Print Culture's Role in Poems by 'Graham R. Tomson'/Rosamund Marriott Watson"; Nicholas Frankel, "'A Wreath for the Brows of Time': The Books of the Rhymers' Club as Material Texts"; Jerome McCann, "Herbert Horne's *Diverse Colores* (1891): Incarnating the Religion of Beauty"; Julia F. Saville, "The Poetic Imaging of Michael Field"; Linda Hunt Beckman, "Amy Levy: Urban Poetry, Poetic Innovation, and the Fin-de-Siècle Woman Poet"; Ana Parejo Vadillo, "Immaterial Poetics: A. Mary F. Robinson and the Fin-de-Siècle Poem"; Yopie Prins, "Patmore's Law, Meynell's Rhythm"; Tricia Lootens, "Alien Homelands: Rudyard Kipling, Toru Dutt, and the Poetry of Empire"; Marion Thain, "'Damnable Aestheticism' and the Turn to Rome: John Gray, Michael Field, and a Poetics of Conversion."

Christensen, Allan Conrad. *Nineteenth-Century Narratives of Contagion: "Our feverish contact."* Routledge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature. London & New York: Routledge, 2005. Pp. [x] + 350. \$75.00. "In the debate that I shall trace especially in the next chapter [2], the providential aesthetic seems generally to give way in our novels to this grimmer historical perspective. Or to state the development in equivalent terms, the same plagues that have at first manifested the hand of God now reveal the contaminating, all-permeating, inescapable action of human history. There emerges, possibly, the vision of a metaphysical power struggle in which God as First Cause succumbs to history as absent cause. Yet the novels prefer a less abstract conception of the power struggle and naturally embody it in more concrete situations—in terms, that is, of local causes and effects. Ineffable contagion and counter-contagion struggle, reverse their positions, and unite as a single master metaphor within human activities that manifest history in its fairly ordinary effects. The conflicts employ, as subsequent chapters demonstrate, the weapons of military force, the female needle and distaff, the lancet and medicines, and the pen and other linguistic tools. With such instruments, men and women attempt in their microcosms to protect what Jameson considers their precarious realms of freedom or to reduce those of others. The strategies associated with love operate with particularly interesting ambiguity both to transmit contagion and, whenever in part possible, to heal" (36).

Gordon, David J. *Imagining the End of Life in Post-Enlightenment Poetry*. Gainesville: UP of Florida,

2005. Pp. 169. \$59.95. "Until the emergence in early nineteenth-century Europe of what we would now call an existential view of death, the end of an individual life was an event whose significance was bound up inextricably with the interests and beliefs of a community. We now tend to think of a life as framed by birth and death, and judge its success in terms of self-fulfillment. But during most of human history people understood their own lives as links in an ongoing chain, and thought of the work they did as tasks assigned rather than independently chosen. Individual death was thus a part of a greater order of things of some purpose that extended beyond the span of a single existence. Although sorrowful and solemn, it could not be reduced to an abrupt cessation of consciousness, a mere void. Rather, it was imagined as a change from a more definite to a less definite state of being, from 'life' to some version of an 'afterlife.'" ([1]).

Kreilkamp, Ivan. *Voice and the Victorian Storyteller*. Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005. Pp. viii + 252. \$85.00. "Contemporary attention to vocal culture, despite ground-breaking recent work, still lags far behind attention to print culture—and a failure to attend to the complexities and nuances of vocal culture must inevitably mean an impoverished understanding of print culture as well, given the inextricability of the two. The Victorian novel begins to look quite different when it is understood to have been produced and consumed within a public sphere in which newspaper and periodical journalism, for example was no more important or influential than political oratory or fireside readings. Secondly, once we ourselves gain some critical perspective on what I've called the myth of the storyteller and the Victorian idealization of voice, we can begin to understand how that developed in the nineteenth century and how twentieth-century criticism in turn inherited it. That is, we can better understand not only the historical reality of specific voices and vocal effects but the effects of imaginary constructions of voice and orality: in particular the ways invocations of a storyteller's demise have become so central to jeremiads regarding the decline of intellectual autonomy or charisma. The voice of an endangered or wounded speaker became, in the Victorian period, a fetish and a myth—the nostalgically recalled sign of what we lost in the turn to an information culture. In this book I aim neither to release voice from its bounds nor to imprison it yet again, but rather to demonstrate the inadequacy of any such starkly melodramatic modes of conceptualizing orality" (34).

O'Rourke, James. *Sex, Lies, & Autobiography: The Ethics of Confession*. Charlottesville and London: University

of Virginia P, 2006. Pp. xii + 215. \$35.00. "... I argue that the most compelling ethical work that literary texts can do is counterintuitive. Literary works are uniquely capable of challenging the narratives that give our lives a sense of ethical coherence when their polysemic qualities—their ironies, ambiguities, and indeterminacies—falsify the central premise of moral philosophy, the presumption of a discernible continuity from ethical principle to practice in everyday life. Furthermore, I contend that the genre that best exemplifies this discontinuity is the confessional autobiography. In the modern form of the confession initiated by Rousseau, the controlling ethical principle of the dominant narrative is either directly stated or clearly implied: It is the claim that the autobiographer is a good person. This story of the good self is a narrative of interiority that centers on the feelings and intentions of the autobiographer. In the more literary instances of autobiography, this narrative of the good self is shadowed by an account of acts and consequences in which the autobiographer profits from the misfortunes of others and plays some role in the production of those misfortunes. The principle of indeterminacy in the confessional autobiography rests on the impossibility of reconciling these two narratives" (1-2).

Reide, David G. *Allegories of One's Own Mind: Melancholy in Victorian Poetry*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2005. Pp. ix + 226. "In many respects the transition from the Romantic to the Victorian poetic tradition is nearly seamless: the early poetry of Tennyson, Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning so closely apprentices them to the second generation of Romantic poets that this first generation of Victorian poets, who began to publish well before Victoria's ascension, can reasonably be regarded as a third generation of Romantics. Similarly, the clear apprenticeship of Arnold to Wordsworth suggests a smooth continuation of early Romanticism into the mid-Victorian period. In one highly significant respect, however, the Romantic and Victorian periods are sharply divided, at least to the extent that Victorians continued to identify Romanticism with Wordsworthian formulations of the poetic character and with Coleridge's theological/philosophical poetics of 'joy,' the healthy mind's imaginative echo of the 'eternal I AM,' both God's creative Word and 'Mature's holy plan.' The Victorians, yet more eager for poetry to supply the need for an authoritative cultural discourse, were much less confident about the sources of poetic authority and tended to see their age as suffering a disabling post-Wordsworthian melancholy akin to the mood Coleridge had already described in 'Dejection: An Ode' at a time when the creative power of 'joy' was denied to him ... (1).

Harriet Martineau

Writings on British History and Military Reform

The Pickering Masters ~ 6 Volume Set

Editor: Deborah Logan

Advisory Editor: Kathryn Sklar

This reset edition of Harriet Martineau's historical writings consists primarily of the *History of the Peace: Being a History of England from 1816 to 1854*, as well as the introductory *History of England, AD 1800 to 1815*. Martineau's account of British history from the turn of the nineteenth century to the Crimean War is expertly supplemented by previously unpublished correspondence between Martineau and Florence Nightingale, and by Martineau's *England and Her Soldiers* (1859). Martineau's leaders on health issues for the *Daily News*, the *Atlantic Monthly* and *Once a Week* round up the edition.

The edition is strongly interdisciplinary in character, appealing to areas such as Victorian studies, nineteenth-century British and international history, women's studies, Empire studies, nineteenth-century reform movements, as well as nineteenth-century social and medical history. Moreover, the unpublished Martineau-Nightingale correspondence is of significance to anyone interested in the study of Florence Nightingale and her impact on nineteenth-century British history.

- Comprehensive scholarly introduction discussing Martineau's role as a historian, her pioneering contributions to the emerging discipline of historiography as well as the work's reception history
- Reset edition using the Walker and Wise 1864 edition as the original copy text for the *History*, which is the only edition that incorporates the introductory volume (1800–1815) and takes Martineau's history up to 1854 including her preface and many footnotes
- Includes previously unpublished correspondence between Harriet Martineau and Florence Nightingale addressing social and health issues as well as wider themes such as nationalism



Frontispiece to *History of England during the thirty years' peace: 1816-1846* (1849-50)

- Includes additional annotation supplying updated information that has become available subsequent to the publication of the *History*
- First modern scholarly edition of *England and her Soldiers*



UK: 21 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2TH, UK
Tel: +44 (0)20 7405 1005 Fax: +44 (0)20 7405 6216 Email: info@pickeringchatto.co.uk
US: Ashgate Publishing Company, PO Box 2225, Williston, VT 05495-2225, USA
Phone Toll-Free (US and Canada): (800) 535 9544 Email: ash.orders@aidcvt.com

Pickering & Chatto Publishers

The Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau

General Editor: Deborah Logan

Advisory Editor: Valerie Sanders

The Pickering Masters

1 85196 804 0: 5 Volume Set: April 2007

c.2000pp: 234x156mm: £450/\$750

From 2007 all ISBNs will have 13 digits.

The new ISBN will be 978 1 85196 804 6.

Throughout her fifty-year career, Harriet Martineau's prolific literary output was matched only by her exchanges with a range of high-profile British, American and European correspondents. *The Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau* provides a long-awaited, timely and scholarly edition of the extant letters of this prolific Victorian writer.

Scattered throughout the United States and United Kingdom, almost all of the 2,000 letters reproduced in this collection have never before been published. Newly transcribed in five volumes, the set focuses on the letters Martineau wrote herself, contextualizing the correspondence through annotation of the highest standard.

As in her literary work, in her correspondence Martineau comments freely on such topics as the Reform Bill controversy, the Poor Law reform, The American Civil War, American abolitionism and slavery. Besides giving a unique insight into Martineau's domestic relationships, Martineau's correspondence with Florence Nightingale on issues such as health reform uniquely blends personal and professional matters. Throughout her life, as this edition shows, Martineau managed to exert her influence on political and social circles, even from her distant Lake District home.

This is essential reading for every scholar of Victorian biography. Yet given the broad content of Martineau's correspondence, it is also relevant to research in the wider disciplines of nineteenth-century studies, women's studies, literature, empire studies, slavery and cultural studies.

Editorial board

Deborah Logan is at Western Kentucky University

Valerie Sanders is at the University of Hull



Portrait of Harriet Martineau, from Evert Augustus Duyckinck, *Portrait Gallery of eminent Men and Women of Europe and America* (1872-74)

- The material draws on source material held in the USA, UK and Australia, including the University of Birmingham (UK), University of California at Berkeley, the British Library, National Library of Scotland, the Women's Library (Guildhall, London), and Harris-Manchester College, Oxford
- Most of this newly transcribed material has never been published before
- Extensive annotation provides biographical, social, political, and historical context, including a biographical directory in Volume 1
- General introduction
- Consolidated index

The Pickering Masters