

The Victorian Newsletter

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The Victorian Newsletter, begun in 1952, features scholarly articles by many of the most prominent Victorian academics of the last half century. As such, the *VN* reflects the genesis and the development of contemporary Victorian literary and cultural studies. Under the editorship of Dr. Ward Hellstrom for nearly thirty years, *VN* is now edited by Deborah Logan, Professor of English at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Kentucky. *The Victorian Newsletter* is a refereed publication which particularly welcomes article-length analyses of Victorian literature and culture.

The editorial aims of *The Victorian Newsletter* include:

- * to provide high quality analyses of topics relevant to Victorian scholars;
- * to participate in broader academic discussions of interest to those in the field; and
- * to contribute useful and innovative insights, through nuanced analyses, to Victorian studies.

The editor welcomes book announcements and book reviews, along with announcements of interest to the Victorian academic community.

Tables of Contents of the *Newsletter* from 1952 through 2007 are available at www.wku.edu/victorian

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Manuscript submissions: MLA formatting and documentation; two hard-copies *and* electronic e-mail attachment (Microsoft Word docs or RTF). Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if return of hard-copy MSS is desired.

Subscription Rates: United States, \$15.00 per year; foreign rates, including Canada, \$17.00 per year. Please address checks to *The Victorian Newsletter*.

The Victorian Newsletter is sponsored for the Victorian Group of the Modern Language Association by Western Kentucky University and is published twice annually.

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Number 113

Spring 2008

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Cover Illustration: *Godey's Ladies' Book*, 1842

Greetings from the Editor

Victorian Newsletter #113 might well be subtitled "Secrets and Lies; or, Knowledge is Power." More serendipitously than by design, the Spring 2008 issue of *VN* traces the theme of topsy-turveydom underpinning Victorian decorum through a variety of texts and theoretical approaches. Beginning with a special section on Victorian Secrets, featuring papers presented at the 2007 Victorians Institute Conference (University of Alabama at Birmingham), historian Chris Hagerman's "Secret Ciphers, Secret Knowledge" analyzes the socio-linguistic origins of British espionage in India. From the early days of the East India Company, civil servants' knowledge of the Classics signified social, economic, and political ascendancy; as the Company grew increasingly militarized and its role shifted from trade to territorial aggrandizement, the Classics were directly implicated in what came to be known as "The Great Game."

Moving from global to domestic imperialism, Kathleen Conway considers gendered mixed messages in two quintessential Victorian novels, *Jane Eyre* and *Middlemarch*. Conway's analysis highlights women characters who transform potentially debilitating circumstances, resulting from deliberate misinformation, into sources of self-empowerment. Extending the theme of secrets to the realm of sexual preference, Audrey Fessler's "The Boy was a Girl" discusses fictions of gender and challenges to separate-spheres ideology through cross-dressing and gender-switching, literally and metaphorically, in Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins*. From international espionage to domestic intrigues to gender-as-performance, Victorian Secrets are revealed to be a fascinating counterpoint to the period's veneer of decorum and propriety.

Far murkier connotations of secrets and deceptions are offered by Stella Pratt-Smith, who illustrates the overturning of the social order in her analysis of Doyle's "The Speckled Band." Intersections shared by British imperialism, a decaying aristocracy, vulnerable young women, and socio-cultural and sexual deviations highlight the "infection" of domestic boundaries, the integrity of which has been cruelly compromised and perverted. Carrol Fry, in his analysis of the influence of Gnosticism in Browning's

“Caliban upon Setebos,” considers the ironic preservation of this “heresy” resulting from the very endeavor to discount and suppress it. Caliban, in his musings about the nature of the divine / the creator, exhibits the primary tenets of Gnosticism which, argues Fry, would have been as recognized by and accessible to well-read Victorians as to the intellectually eccentric poet, Robert Browning.

Kevin Swafford investigates late-Victorian debates about the apparently mutually-exclusive ideologies of aesthetic values and social pragmatism, specifically the impact of scientific technology on art and society. Swafford analyzes H. G. Wells’s attempts to construct a viable Utopian vision that reconciles the requirements of socialism with the aestheticism of Ruskin and Morris. Wells questions the comparative relevance of the “anti-industrial Romanticism” of “poets and decorators” to the crushing social demands of the era.

The issue concludes with Mary Rosner’s discussion of domestic imperialism in what many Victorians regarded one of the final frontiers: the psychology of human behavior, particularly in terms of gender, criminality, normalcy, and insanity. Employing Pratt’s concept of “contact zones” to both sensation fiction and criminal trials, Rosner evaluates the challenges posed to Victorian criminal, judicial, medical, and social institutions through erroneous assumptions and limited comprehension about mental illness. Key among Rosner’s revelations is the difficulty of reconciling core Victorian social values with empirical evidence to the contrary.

Special thanks are due to Lauren Adams and Tina Barnt for the cover illustration.

Deborah A. Logan
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May 2008

Special Section: Victorian Secrets
Selected papers from Victorians Institute, 2007

*Σεχρητ χιπηερσ, σεχρητ κνωωλεδγε:
τηε Χλασσιχσ ιν Βριτιση Ινδια, χα. 1800–1900*

Or

*Secret Ciphers, Secret Knowledge:
The Classics in British India, ca. 1800-1900*

Chris Hagerman

In the dimly lit recesses of the British Library’s Treasures Gallery, there is a tiny scrap of paper densely covered with Greek script, an item easily overlooked in a gallery overflowing with remarkable artifacts. A casual observer might take it for a fragment of some ancient play or philosophical treatise – at least until he or she looked closely enough to discern occasional words of English and French. In fact it is a secret message written by Sir James Outram in 1857, recounting the desperate plight of the outnumbered and encircled defenders of the Lucknow Residency (BL MSS EUR/ A205). It was smuggled through the besieging sepoys to Sir Hope Grant, leader of a relief column. Outram’s agent was a loyal servant, who hid the message in a quill, which was in turn secreted inside his walking stick. The key issue is neither the way the paper was hidden nor the manner of its transport: but, rather, the final layer of security employed by Outram – the use of ancient Greek script. Odd as it may seem to a twenty-first century observer, this device was not at all uncommon during the crisis of 1857. Commenting on communications with his colleagues and countrymen in the summer of 1857, William Hodson, of Hodson’s Horse fame, remarked that “[w]e get none even from Agra, and of

course not below it, except by Kossid [Indian courier], and they but little scraps, written half in Greek characters, to mislead or deceive, if the unfortunate bearer is stopped" (Hodson 250).

On the simplest level, the use to which Outram and his contemporaries put their knowledge of ancient Greek can be seen as a mere expedient. Ancient Greek script provided the military with a ready-made cipher, unintelligible to their enemies, but familiar to any British gentleman. Yet there is a deeper and more profound level on which to consider Outram's use of Greek script as a cipher. In short, there is reason to see the Greek and Roman classics as a body of shared "secret knowledge" that reinforced the collective identity of the imperial elite and in turn supported notions of cultural difference that were central to the subordination and subjection of India.¹ This is not to say that the classics were consciously hidden from Indians. The point is that even when they were part of the public discourse of the imperial elite, the power they commanded remained, like Outram's message, inaccessible to those who lacked the keys to unlock it. The Sanskrit and Persian classics of India offered no equal and opposite "secret knowledge," since they were no secret to the British. From the late eighteenth-century, such British scholars as Nathaniel Halhed and William Jones had begun the process of codifying, translating, and circulating the Indian classics in such a way that they became – from the British perspective at least – part of Britain's intellectual domain. Institutions such as the Royal Asiatic Society and the Asiatic Society of Bengal fostered this belief, as did the presence of Indian subjects in the curriculum of the East India Company's training College at Haileybury and later the Universities. The result was the absorption of the Indian classics into the body of knowledge at the disposal of British civil servants and soldiers in India, whereas the ancient classics of Europe remained a source of knowledge and therefore power accessible only to the British for most of the century. This power eventually made the classics an object of interest to Indian elites eager to accommodate themselves to the imperial establishment – albeit in a way that tended to reinforce the cultural domination of the British.

Surprisingly little has been said about the classics in India or, for that matter, the

¹ For the purposes of this paper, "classics" should be read as a reference to the preserved literature of Greece and Rome, rather than to modern English classics.

empire at large. Donald Reid's "Cromer and the Classics" is one of a very few important exceptions to this rule. He suggests not only that classical learning shaded Cromer's perceptions of the culture he encountered as Controller and Consul-General in Egypt, but also that Egyptians tried to co-opt the classics for their own benefit (Reid 2). The possibilities suggested by Reid's work may be fleshed out by the work of Christopher Stray, who has written at great length about the importance of the classics in nineteenth-century Britain.² He argues quite persuasively that the ability to display classical knowledge was an essential characteristic of the English Gentleman. As a result it was at once a social barrier to the uninitiated and an attractive passport to status among the socially ambitious (Stray 9). With a simple shift of focus, Stray's argument concerning the social function of the classics in Britain provides a useful paradigm for understanding their power as a symbol of elite status and solidarity and, ultimately, as an agent of social and cultural exclusion in colonial situations.³

But first we must see how the classics came to have any role, much less such a significant one, in South Asia. Simply put, where the British went, the classics went. In part this was because so many of the British men who went out to India as civil servants or officers had received a classical education.⁴ Moreover, the classics themselves circulated widely on the subcontinent. They featured prominently in the private collections of Indian civil servants, despite the comparative costliness of books in India (Durand 50). The classics collection of the early nineteenth-century Indian Civil Servant Mountstuart Elphinstone ran from Aeschylus through Virgil, with stops at Anacreon,

² Christopher Stray, "A Parochial Anomaly" in *Classics in 19th and 20th Century Cambridge: Curriculum, Culture and Community*. Ed. C. Stray (Cambridge: Cambridge Philosophical Society, 1999): 31-44. Idem. *Classics Transformed* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998). Idem. "Culture and Discipline: Classics and Society in Victorian England" in *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 3 (1996): 77-85. Idem. "Thucydides or Grote?: Classical Disputes and Disputed Classics in Nineteenth-Century Cambridge" in *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 127 (1997): 363-72.

³ As yet, no one has made this precise connection, though it is perhaps implied by Reid's assertion that certain Egyptians recognized and tried to exploit the social and cultural power of the Classics. See also Emily Greenwood, "'We Speak Latin in Trinidad': uses of the Classics in Caribbean Literature" (65-91) and F. Bundelmann, "Greek Tragedies in West African Adaptations" (118-46), both in *Classics and Colonialism*. Ed. B. Goff (London: Duckworth, 2005).

⁴ Candidates for the Indian Civil Service had to demonstrate basic knowledge of the classics before being admitted to Haileybury College, which provided "classical and liberal learning" and practical instruction in law and Indian languages (see J. Crook, *Haileybury and the Greek Revival* [Leicester, 1964]: 9). The competitive examination system instituted in 1858 continued to privilege those with a classical education. Although the military Seminary at Addiscombe included only basic Latin in its curriculum (BL L/PJ/1/92/28), any "gentleman" entering Addiscombe or civil servant going directly to India would have been classically educated.

Herodotus, Hesiod, Homer, Horace, Phaedrus, Pindar, Suetonius, Sophocles, Theocritus, and Thucydides, to name only the better known. In the next generation, A. C. Lyall's collection was hardly less impressive, even if we dismiss as hyperbole his claim that during the Mutiny a *hecatomb* of classics was destroyed along with his other personal possessions. Happily for him, his father made good the loss with his own collection (BL MSS EUR F132/3 p. 188). Further evidence abounds in the journals, letters, and memoirs of less prominent men, who recorded what they were reading or remarked on books they encountered. One such was the adventurer/spy/antiquarian Charles Mason. He found his first opportunity to consult Quintus Curtius' description of Alexander's campaigns in India and Afghanistan in the personal collection of Wilson, Resident at Bushir in eastern Persia (BL MSS EUR E 168 p. 67). Volumes of the ancient classics even garnered special mention in the advertisements for estate sales in the presidency capitals.⁵

More surprising and ultimately more indicative of just how widely available the classics were in India is the frequency with which volumes of Greek and Latin authors turn up in truly remarkable circumstances. Elphinstone took several on his expedition to the Kingdom of Cabul, which in 1808-09 was considered exceedingly remote and wild. He carried others on campaigns during the Second Maratha and Pindari Wars.⁶ William Hodson was also in the habit of carrying volumes of the classics (and other works) with him on his peregrinations with the Guides Cavalry. Hodson and Elphinstone were anything but unusual. One of Hodson's letters mentions the distress at the absence of books among the officers in a flying column advancing on Peshawar during the Second Anglo-Sikh War. Evidently, under all but the most extreme circumstances, officers were accustomed to traveling with books close at hand (Hodson 93).

It is important to stress that Britons in India were not just carrying the classics about in their saddlebags and travel trunks, or using them as paperweights in offices and libraries. They were reading and discussing the classics on a regular basis. Elphinstone's voluminous journals record in great detail the remarkable extent of his reading in ancient

Greek and Latin texts throughout his career. While the amount of time he was able to devote to such pursuits fluctuated, when circumstances permitted, the classics were a part of his daily routine. Between January of 1801 and March of 1802, Elphinstone's journals show that he read portions of Homer, Horace, Virgil, Hesiod, as well as some of Anacreon, and Herodotus, Museus, Phaedrus, Sappho, Theocritus, and Pindar – the last in translation. The most revealing piece of evidence in this particular journal is not the variety and volume of classical authors he read, but the fact that most of the Horace and Homer and all of the Virgil, Hesiod, Pindar, and Theocritus he studied during this period were read *after* a solemn vow, on April 21st 1801, to read only Persian classics from that point forward. One could go on at length tracing the catalogue of classical reading by Elphinstone throughout his Indian career. For now it is enough to recall his classical reading while on campaign and on his expedition to Afghanistan. Subsequent generations appear to have maintained a similar relationship with the classics, if the records left by Macaulay (Williams 201-02), A. C. Lyall, William Hodson, and R. Temple, are any indication. Though not preoccupied with the classics in the way that Elphinstone was, these men each maintained a steady interaction with the classics throughout the Indian phases of their careers.

If it is now clear that many Britons serving in India maintained a profound intellectual engagement with the classics, the significance of this engagement remains to be seen. Elphinstone again provides a useful point of departure. In addition to relieving boredom and helping him make sense of much that was alien in his physical and cultural surroundings, Elphinstone's classical studies gave him the opportunity for status enhancing self-improvement. He wrote repeatedly about his "plan of acquiring a sound and solid acquaintance with Greek" (qtd. in Colebrooke 1:274-75). In doing so he reveals the power of the prevailing image of the gentleman as master of the classical languages. His ceaseless studies appear to have been an attempt to live up to this image and thus validate himself in his own eyes as well as those of his peers. This in part explains why, while aide-de-camp to Arthur Wellesley in the Second Maratha War, Elphinstone carried on his studies in public, self-consciously displaying his *Selecta Graeca* at his writing table. Such behavior would have trumpeted his gentlemanly intellectual credentials, while simultaneously playing to masculine ideals of cool-headedness and emotional detachment

⁵ See R. Jenkins' letter to his agent G. Stevens, dated January 28, 1811, in which he requests a number of books about to be auctioned from the estate of Mr. Falconar (Jenkins, Letters, BL MSS EUR E111 p. 135).

⁶ Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul* (London, 1815): 80-1. For his reading during the Second Maratha War see Elphinstone Journals, Nov. 28, 1803 and Dec. 1, 1803 (BL MSS EUR F88/360 p. 5-7). He continued reading Polybius after the Pindarees descended in the spring of 1808 (BL MSS EUR F88/361 p. 48).

in the face of physical danger. If that was his goal, he succeeded, for he caught Wellesley's attention and engaged the great man in a discussion of the Latin language (Colebrooke 1:80).

I am inclined to see an attempt at mood-lightening by Alfred Lyall during the Mutiny in the same way. As he stood on a rooftop one evening watching the city of Bulandshahr burn, he light-heartedly suggested that his superior, the local Magistrate, "send for his fiddle, as his Rome was burning" (BL MSS EUR/ F132/ 3). Apparently the jest was not particularly well-received, as Lyall probably would have expected under less surreal circumstances. Clumsy or not, it was no doubt intended to display Lyall's gentlemanly bona fides: his sangfroid, his wit, and his command of the classics. In both these cases the classics appear to be acting as a body of "secret knowledge" possessing the power to confirm one's position among the elite.

But beyond providing a powerful talisman with which individuals could demonstrate their gentlemanly status, I would argue that the classics also offered a sort of intellectual meeting ground where the imperial elites could reaffirm their shared knowledge and experiences in order to hold at bay feelings of cultural alienation and isolation, as was certainly the case with Elphinstone. If anything, the journey from Britain to India seems to have magnified the power of the classics to bolster a very specific elite identity. In this they functioned very much like any other typically elite pastime, whether field sports, or cricket, horse-racing, or whist, transplanted to South Asia.

Like those other pastimes, classical study was not necessarily a solitary affair; it was often social. Again and again throughout his career, the classics helped Elphinstone connect intellectually and culturally with his colleagues. For example, through late 1807 and early 1808, Elphinstone and Jenkins were deeply involved in a cooperative study of Greek. They managed to get through impressive chunks of Hesiod, Homer, Sophocles, Theocritus, and Xenophon before the budding conflict with the "Pindarees," and Elphinstone's subsequent trip to Afghanistan temporarily ended their partnership (BL MSS EUR F88/361 p. 28). It was renewed when circumstances subsequently threw them together in the late summer and fall of 1811. As Elphinstone himself put it, "Jenkins came here [Nagpoor] on the 9th of last month. I have been busily employed on the Colapoor affairs ever since, and now begin to see the land. I have, however, read Greek

with Jenkins instead of riding...We finished the Iliad in fourteen days, and are now reading the Anabasis" (Colebrooke 1:273).

The import of these activities is plain to see. They helped Elphinstone build and maintain personal relationships. Yet they did so in a way that also reinforced his sense of membership in what David Gilmour called "the ruling caste," that relatively small group of British civil servants and soldiers who ruled India, and whose corporate or collective identity was defined by a shared intellectual culture as much as by gambling, hunting, and cricket. Unless Elphinstone and his colleagues constitute a complete anomaly, communion through the classics had a similar effect on other civil servants and soldiers, giving them a vital social and cultural anchor in strange, lonely, and sometimes chaotic surroundings.

In this light, Lyall's brash remark to his peers amid the apocalyptic chaos of the Mutiny takes on new significance. So too does something as simple as the salutation "vale," with which Elphinstone was accustomed to end letters to intimates such as Strachey (BL MSS EUR F88/178) and Colebrooke (BL MSS EUR F88/323/2). Though clearly a reflexive usage carried over from schooldays, where classical salutations and pseudonyms were very popular, it was nevertheless a powerful affirmation of the shared experiences and knowledge that signified their membership in the imperial elite.⁷ Likewise, the classical matter dotting the correspondence between Alfred Lyall and his father, brother, and friend Evelyn Baring, must have reinforced their shared identity.⁸ Even Herbert Edwardes, who was described by his close friend, the Rev. Cowley Powles, as an indifferent student of the classics during his days at King's College in the 1830s, left numerous traces of his classical training and interests in his personal letters, his memoir, *A Year on the Punjab Frontier*, as well as his political diaries. These last contain offhand classical tags in addition to detailed discussions of Alexander's route, the material remains of the Greek/Macedonian presence in the region, and a discussion of

⁷ Such salutations were popular in schoolboy magazines and the popular press. See also *Scrutator* (Hertford, 1821: no. 1 p. 1; no. 2 p. 16; no.4 p. 29; no.19 p. 146; no.23 193; no. 24 p. 209 & 212; no. 25 p. 230 & 232; no. 29 p. 263; no. 34 p. 320; no.39 p. 376; no. 40 p. 395; and no. 42 p. 416).

⁸ See BL MSS EUR F132/39, letters from Baring dated Nov. 6, 1877 and Nov. 17, 1878, pp. 32 and 45. For Lyall's correspondence with his family see BL MSS EUR F132/160, letter from Alfred Lyall dated Nov. 18, 1877.

Quintus Curtius' qualities as an historical source.⁹ The inclusion of such material in documents meant to circulate among his peers must have reinforced their sense of cultural solidarity, just as the Greek ciphers used by Outram and others would have done, though on an even subtler level.

Some of Sir R. C. Temple's speeches to elite audiences provide particularly suggestive examples of the classics' role in maintaining a sense of collective identity among civilians and soldiers in the imperial service. Whether he addressed the membership of the Byculla Club convened in honor the new Viceroy Sir Philip Woodhouse (1872), a gathering of luminaries honoring the Prince of Wales (1875), a meeting of the Volunteer Movement (1877) and of the newly formed Bombay Volunteers later that same year, or the audience at his retirement dinner (1880), Temple was always ready with a classical quotation, quip, anecdote, or analogy (BL MSS EUR F76/210). In truth, he seems rarely to have neglected an opportunity to display his classical learning in a self-conscious way. While this practice no doubt contributed to his desired public image, it also seems to have had a deeper and perhaps unconscious role in sustaining a sense of community with and among his audience.

The first point to note is that each of these occasions marked a gathering of Bombay's imperial ruling elite. As such they were ideal places to trot out the classics. In part this was because such an exclusive audience could be counted on to understand, to relate, and respond to classical allusions. Thus there were cheers when Temple mentioned the Latin motto of Bombay (*Primus in Indus*), cries of approbation when he drew a comparison between the patriotism of Roman citizens and that of his fellow Britons, and laughter when he translated the old saw "*si vis pacem, para bellum*" as, "if you wish for peace, prepare for a row" (BL MSS EUR F76/210). The timing and strength of these reactions – there is no reason to think that the reporters were embroidering much less fabricating – indicate that the audiences took Temple's references in the way he intended. But more than that they appear to have been actively involved in what could almost be called a ritual expression of a body of shared "secret" knowledge that helped define them as a distinct group with a common ethos and mission.

It is important to note that this sense of a special collective identity was often

⁹ See E. Edwardes 1: 15, 28, 62, 104, 180 and H. Edwardes 13, 44, 60, 61, 101, and 127.

reinforced by the content as well as the performance of these classical rituals. The frequency of flattering associations between the British Empire and the Empires of Athens, Alexander, or Rome, or more particularly between the British elites and the Ancients, generally seems to have upheld elite convictions that they were, to borrow Philip Mason's characterization, a class of Platonic Guardians and thus specially suited to the role of imperial overlords. Temple frequently compared the British Empire to the Roman, and British officials, such as the Viceroy Sir Philip Woodhouse – and even himself – to the heroes of Antiquity.

Before a meeting of the Bombay Volunteers in November of 1877, he noted that "[t]he most eloquent of our English historians has told us that our modern empire surpasses even that of Ancient Rome. The Roman Empire was maintained by the strong right arm of a limited body of citizens, always ready to fight for the common wealth whenever called upon; and it is the old Roman sentiment which animates the modern army of Volunteers." He honored the newly arrived Woodhouse in November of 1872 with the following comparison: "[h]e is indeed the type of that class of men who have never failed England in the hour of need; who are the pioneers of English influence everywhere; who are the pillars of that fabric of British power which beneficially overshadows so many portions of the civilized and the uncivilized globe. He is a man, in short, trained and destined, like Aeneas of old – *tot volvere casus, tot adire labores*" (BL MSS EUR F76/210).¹⁰

The inclination to make comparisons of this sort was remarkably widespread among Britons in India, as at home, throughout the nineteenth-century. In virtually every case, they simultaneously supported the collective identity of the elite and the intellectual superstructure of British domination. Thus the first Bishop of Calcutta, William Heber, slyly approved of the Indian corruption of Alexander Skinner's name into "Secunder Sahib." With typical understatement, he labeled the "corruption...not ill-applied" (Heber 224). Heber's tone indicates that he considered even a coincidental connection between Alexander the Great, known in India as "Secunder," and one of his contemporaries particularly gratifying. G. O. Trevelyan, in one of his open letters to *MacMillan's*

¹⁰ Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.9-10: "by so many reverses to undertake such [great] labors." The passage refers to Aeneas' many trials before arriving in Latium to found a new civilization.

Magazine in the guise of the "Competition Wallah," constructed an elaborate set of parallels between the ancient Greeks and British "civilians." He described a conversation with the Maharaja of Kishnagur, who did not deign to conceal his disgust at seeing an English magistrate bathing naked during a shooting expedition. This gave Trevelyan pause. For him and the many other "old-boys" serving in India and Britain, public nudity in homosocial gatherings was entirely acceptable and perfectly consistent with their concept of masculinity. He hastened to note "that the free and hardy customs of the ancient Greeks produced much the same effect upon the effeminate subjects of Darius and Artaxerxes." He continued:

The Persian, whose every action was dictated by a spirit of intense decorum and self-respect, could not appreciate the lordly indifference to appearances displayed by the Spartan, accustomed to box, and run, and wrestle without a shred of clothing, in the presence of myriads of his brother Hellenes. Herodotus tells his countrymen, as a remarkable piece of information, that, "among the Lydians, and speaking loosely, among barbarians in general, it is held to be a great disgrace to be seen naked, even for a man." (Trevelyan 346-47)

Here, the masculine ethos shared by the ancient Greeks – those men, at least, who were free and citizens – provides the parallel for the masculine identity shared by British officials in India. Like the Hellenes, the British are "lordly" in their indifference to homosocial nudity, whereas contemporary Indians are "effeminate" in their conviction that nudity, even in all-male settings, is a disgrace, just like the "barbarians" of antiquity. Such a comparison can only have reinforced the sense of shared experiences and values, and thus of unity among the British in India. Of course it also reinforced their shared sense of superiority over their Indian subjects.

Trevelyan's record of an encounter with a religious procession in Calcutta during the early 1860s underscores this point. It is inimitably drawn and worth quoting at length.

I could not believe my eyes; for I seemed to have been transported in a moment over more than twenty centuries, to the Athens of Cratinus and Aristophanes. If it had not been for the colour of the faces around, I should have believed myself to be on the main road to Eleusis in the full tide of one of the Dionysiac festivals. The spirit of the scene was the same, and at each step some well-known feature reminded one irresistibly that the Bacchic orgies sprung from the mysterious fanaticism of the Far East. (210)

The sheer strangeness of what he saw set his wondering mind in search of something

with which he could make sense of the scene confronting him:

It was no unfounded tradition that pictured Dionysus returning from conquered India, leopards and tigers chained to his triumphal car, escorted from the Hyphasis to the Asopus by bands of votaries dancing in fantastic measure to the clang of cymbals. It was no chance resemblance this, between an Hindoo rite, in the middle of the nineteenth century, and those wild revels that stream along many a Grecian bas-relief, and wind round many an ancient Italian vase; for every detail portrayed in those marvellous works of art was faithfully represented here. (210)

Trevelyan's image of classical antiquity clearly shaped his interpretation and representation of what he saw, in which India appears to be eternal, unchanging, and subordinate to the active, conquering genius of Europe in antiquity as it was at present. This was a sentiment – and an analogy – that would have been immediately understandable to his countrymen, confirming their solidarity and the rectitude of their mission in India.

Quentin Batty, the youthful second in command of the Guides Cavalry during the 1857 siege of Delhi, seems to have struck a particularly powerful note among contemporaries with his dying words: "*dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.*" Several of Batty's comrades made special, and especially admiring, note of his last words in their letters and memoirs.¹¹ Later commentators on the events of 1857-58 appear to have been equally captivated by the story. It was duly picked up and repeated by minor figures such as the civil servant and amateur historian Montgomery Martin (2:118) and more significant figures such as G. A. Henty (108). The story received its widest circulation through the work of Batty's brother-in-law, George Malleon, who completed the exhaustive *History of the Indian Mutiny of 1857-8* begun by Sir John Kaye. Malleon used the story and the quote in his touching dedication of the second volume to Batty's memory. The profound pathos with which these men described Batty's final moments suggests that they saw in him a reflection of their own ideal: the spirit of self-abnegating patriotism eulogized by Horace. What in a later age would be decried by Wilfred Owen as the "old lie" appears to have been a profound truth for Batty and many of his

¹¹ Herbert Edwardes made special note of them in a letter to the former commander of the Guides, H. Lumsden (Lumsden 196). A subsequent commander of the Guides, H. Daly, mentioned them prominently in his memoirs (366). Batty's school chum and former colleague, William Hodson, included the anecdote in a letter to his brother (202).

countrymen.

An earlier episode in Battye's career provides yet another example of the British inclination to deploy the classics in ways that supported their self-image. As a newly minted subaltern in the Guides, Battye had inscribed the same lines under a heroic mural of the unit charging into action. The painting, which he had done himself, was on the wall of the billiards room in the officers' mess at Hoti Mardan (Allen 11). His actions can be read as an attempt to inscribe the private communal space of the officers with a physical symbol of their shared identity – one that would be meaningless to interlopers but instantly comprehensible to other members of the British ruling elite, whether soldiers or civilians.

The tombstone of one William Jenkyns, who was killed on the retreat from Kabul in 1879 and buried in the Punjab, may be the most striking example of this phenomenon (Elsmie 273). The *Latin* inscription composed by his friends self-consciously imitated inscriptions on Roman monuments. The aim seems obvious: to link their friend – and by extension themselves – to the *idea* of Roman heroism, self-sacrifice, and greatness. While the choice of language was central to this particular project, it also created an instant identification and sympathy between those who could read the text and those who had erected the monument. Yet it also made the text, and therefore the meaning of the monument, a sort of secret accessible only to those, like Jenkyns and his memorialists, who belonged to the imperial elite. The tombstone, like Outram's Despatch, was a classical cipher, designed to exclude the uninitiated even as it sent a very clear message – here, of cultural and social solidarity in what they envisioned as a grand imperial project – to those who were privy to the "secret."

Claims that the classics were a significant factor in creating and maintaining cultural difference might seem rather incredible. Anglo-Indians were already clearly distinguished from Indians by color, dress, language, religion, and a host of other factors. Classical learning seems far too subtle a factor to have been a meaningful marker of ruler and ruled. Nonetheless there are good reasons to see it at least as a contributor to the inequalities inherent in the imperial relationship between Britons and Indians. The first point to note is the exclusivity of European "classical" knowledge. Unlike knowledge of India's classics, which were open to both Britons and Indians, the classics tended to

appear in contexts dominated by or readily accessible only to the British, through their studies, clubs, libraries, residencies, messes, English-language newspapers, and associations. Needless to say, the constellations of part-time classical scholars revolving around men like Elphinstone or Lyall included only Britons. And Temple was much less inclined to bring up the classics in circumstances where his audience was less exclusively drawn from the British elite. When he addressed the public meeting on a proposed memorial to the famous philanthropist Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy in August of 1877, or the University of Bombay in February of 1878, Temple avoided the kind of familiar, almost chummy classical references that peppered his contemporary speeches to more exclusive audiences. He did make one allusion to classical antiquity on the latter occasion. It was a rather clumsy and unfortunate link between the members of his audience and the ancient rulers of Persia, who "fell ingloriously before the Greeks" during the Persian Wars. This surely marred his apparently sincere attempts to flatter his audience with reference to Cyrus the Great and other more successful Asian rulers (BL MSS EUR F76/210).

Temple's self-imposed rhetorical limitations in these instances reflect the assumption that classical references would likely be lost on such audiences. Whatever his motives, the end result was the same. From the perspective of the uninitiated outsider, the ancient classics of Europe remained a mystery controlled by the British and imperfectly revealed to the uninitiated only in occasional fleeting glimpses. Even then they might still work to deepen the divide between ruler and ruled. Certainly this must have been the case with Temple's injudicious references to the Persian Wars, which reinforced his mastery of the ancient past in a way that suggested a continuum of European domination over Asia.

Ironically, the ultimate vindication of the argument that the classics constituted a body of powerful secret knowledge seems to come from the actions of those that it most thoroughly excluded for most of the century: Indians. Here it is important to bear in mind the process outlined by both Stray and James Bowen with respect to the extension of classical education to the middle classes in the second half of the nineteenth-century. Both scholars have convincingly linked this phenomenon to the belief among the middle classes that the Public Schools and Universities offered the surest mechanisms whereby their sons could acquire the intellectual, athletic, and cultural qualities, and the social

connections of the English Gentleman, which would win them membership in the socio-economic and thus political elite (Bowen 174-75). Bowen ultimately concluded that classical education, in conjunction with other important elements in Public School and University education, contributed to the successful accommodation between the traditional ruling classes and elements of the increasingly numerous and influential middle and professional classes. In India as in Britain, the very exclusivity of the classics, the aura of mystery surrounding them, and their pervasiveness among the British ruling elite, appears to have made them attractive to certain Indians interested in improving their status vis-à-vis the British.

What must the Indian subordinates of men like Elphinstone or Lyall thought of the sahibs' interest in the Greek and Latin classics? It would certainly have been recognized as something peculiar to the British, although the analogy with Persian and Sanskrit classics may have made it more comprehensible. Nor is there any reason to think that the Indian Princes or the commercial elites in Calcutta or Bombay had any better sense of what the classics meant to the British. Even those who began to clamor for access to a "European Education" in the early nineteenth-century made no explicit mention of classical education. In 1815, the citizens of Calcutta petitioned explicitly for an English School, and established the Vidyalaya or Anglo-Indian Hindu College themselves in 1816 when the government refused to act on their petition (Syed 25). Similarly, "the enlightened citizens of Mumbai" specifically requested English education when agitating for the foundation of Elphinstone College between 1827 and 1835 (Hunter 256). And when Rammohun Roy and others of like-mind protested against the foundation of the Calcutta Sanskrit College in 1823, their hope was that an English school would replace it (Syed 28-9). Macaulay and the "anglicists" who followed him offered little encouragement to the introduction of European classical education to India. Despite his infamous contempt for non-western literature and his desire to bring European education to India for the purpose of training up a sympathetic and useful westernized elite, Macaulay made no arguments in favor of importing classical education as it was practiced in Britain. For him and those who sympathized with his position – and it is important to remember that his famous minute was not universally accepted¹² – English,

¹² For a contrasting view see H. T. Prinsep (Feb. 1835) in *The Great Indian Education Debate: Documents*

not Greek and Latin, was to be the vehicle by which Indians were to be educated. Again, it is not clear that this was the result of any deliberate design to maintain the sanctity of the classics as a British preserve. Nevertheless, that was the almost inevitable consequence – for a time.

As noted already, this very exclusivity ultimately seems to have made the classics an object of interest to some Indians. Certainly by the middle years of the century there is some evidence that those sectors of the Indian commercial and political elites amenable to the forces of anglicization had discovered the potential power of the classics. Samuel Sathianadhan was the scion of one such family. A student at Cambridge in the 1860s, he most certainly understood the classics' connection to elite status. His memoir indicates that he was convinced that the classics were a valuable source of knowledge, particularly well suited to the ruling elite. He remarked that through classical study, "[t]he student becomes acquainted with the thoughts of the greatest intellects of the world, and constantly reads discussions on questions of philosophy, politics, &c., expressed in the most perfect forms of speech" (74). Moreover they imparted "style and polish." But most important was the social advantage they conveyed to those who had been let in on the secret. As Sathianadhan put it, "At Cambridge one often hears the statement made that Mathematical studies, as a rule, do not fit one for society and that only Classical men know how to get on in society." He had penetrated the mystery of the classics and seen to the core of their contribution to elite status in Britain.

Similarly, Vamadeva Shastri demonstrated his intellectual parity with Britain's best-educated sons in the *Fortnightly Review* in 1885. He alluded to his reading of Herodotus and deftly deployed elements of Greek and Roman history in his discussion of Britain's position in India (801-02, 805). In both *Lake of Palms* and *The Civilization of India*, the former civil servant and politician R. C. Dutt likewise used the classics in ways that displayed his intellectual credentials. By the 1870s the classics had even become part of the matriculation standards and curriculum at Indian universities and high-schools (Hunter 217-18, 270). This suggests a widening recognition of the classics' value and their potential as a source of intellectual and cultural status. Sathianadhan's example

Relating the Anglicist-Orientalist Controversy, 1781-1843. Zastoupil and Moir, eds. (London: Routledge, 1999): 174-188.

indicates that some Indians saw intrinsic value in the knowledge embodied in European classics; yet he saw just as clearly the practical advantages of such knowledge. For Shastin and Dutt, practical considerations, particularly the desire to have one's opinions and oneself taken seriously by the British ruling elite, appear to have been paramount.

Not all attempts by Indians to use the Classics were so successful. D. R. Bhandarkar sought to gain authority for his interpretation of ancient Indian History via a reference to the Elder Pliny (9). Unfortunately, he described Pliny as a Greek, which would have undermined his credibility with any classically educated Briton. But that only confirms the seductive conviction that the classics could be used to claim as well as display intellectual and thus cultural status.

The timing of the realization traced in the preceding paragraphs is easy to understand, although it might seem somewhat tardy given the early appearance of the classics in India. The reason these classics did not become a point of interest or contest in the first half of the century was of course the more pressing interest among the urban elites of India to first gain access to English education. Only in the closing decades of the century, when this battle had largely been won thanks to the activities of men like Rammohun Roy in combination with the unapologetic ethnocentricity of figures such as Macaulay, would the true power of the classics as a body of secret knowledge have become widely apparent.¹³ To Indians interested in accommodating themselves to British standards in order to gain economic, social, and or political advantage, the classics must have appeared to be a very important symbol. Indeed it seems that from the 1860s the classics became a meaningful component in the congeries of factors that enabled elements of the Indian elite and the British imperial elite to find a middle ground. This calls to mind the argument presented by David Cannadine in *Ornamentalism*; for it seems to indicate that accommodations between British and Indian elites were possible, based on perceptions of analogous social backgrounds. The key difference is in the level of interpretation. I would suggest that the vital point here is the classics' role in helping to create the sense of social identification and sympathy that made political and economic

¹³ According to the 1891 Census of India, 284,795 Indians knew English, more than half of them identified as members of the professional and commercial classes. While this is a tiny fraction of the overall population of India, it does represent a significant number of India's social and financial elite (qtd. in Syed 208-09).

accommodations possible. Another key point to bear in mind is that the cultural origins of the classics ensured that any accommodation based on them was asymmetrical, inasmuch as it demanded that Indians embrace and adopt a cultural artifact dominated by the British; whereas the British had long before made India's classics part of the body of knowledge that supported their imperial agenda in South Asia.

That said, Indian access to the classics also appears to have worked against easy accommodations of the sort stressed by Cannadine, at least on certain occasions. Indeed, if Dutt's work is any indication, the classics could provide those no longer content with the status quo of British domination a valuable rhetorical weapon. So, while Dutt certainly used the classics to display his intellectual status, he also used them to argue against British policies. In the novel *Lake of Palms*, Satya Charan, an Indian lawyer, confronts the Commissioner of "Burdwan." He begins by claiming that the British "denounce ancient Rome for impoverishing Gaul and Egypt, Sicily and Palestine, to enrich herself" and then points out that "England scarcely perceives that she is following the same practice in India, and that the gold she withdraws will do her no more good than it did ancient Rome" (204). This argument was calculated to resonate with a British audience. Obviously Dutt intended to hoist the British on their own petard by turning one of their favorite rationalizations for empire against them.¹⁴

For Dutt and others, then, the power constituted in the secret knowledge of the classics helped crack the doorway leading to elite status; though inevitably and somewhat ironically, it also provided a way to undermine the very system that made classical acumen so valuable. As interesting and profitable as it would be to pursue Indian receptions and exploitations of the Greek and Roman classics even further, that is a project beyond the scope of this paper. At present it is enough to have suggested the profound connections among classical knowledge, elite status, the imperial ethos, and cultural power symbolized by that scrap of paper in the British Museum's Treasures Gallery.

¹⁴ Hobson deployed a similar strategy. See J. A. Hobson. *Imperialism* (London, 1902): 365-66.

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*The Disclosure of Secrets:
Reflection and Growth
in Jane Eyre and Middlemarch*

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In Victorian novels, the keeping of secrets is often an attempt by the powerful to control the weak, one among many manifestations of an unequal, if shifting, apportionment of authority among groups. Therefore, in writing about the inequality between Jane Eyre and Edward Fairfax Rochester, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar point out that while that inequality stems primarily from differences in status, it also results from differences in knowledge (354-55). The unequal distribution of knowledge reflects the culture in which Victorian women novelists lived. In *A History of Their Own: Women in Europe from Prehistory to the Present*, Bonnie Anderson and Judith P. Zinsser comment about the education of women in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: "The distinction in education which Rousseau had portrayed so vividly in his influential novel *Émile* (1726), in which *Émile* was educated to think and work for himself, while his future wife, Sophie, was restricted to the most traditional female activities, was widely imitated in this period" (144). These restrictions continued to affect women through much of the Victorian era – although, as John Stuart Mill notes, women were increasingly dissatisfied with this inequality: "The claim of women to be educated as solidly, and in the same branches of knowledge as men, is growing in intensity" (485).

The unequal distribution of traditional education and the knowledge it brings seems to the character Dorothea Brooke of *Middlemarch* to limit her participation in public life. Nancy Armstrong would agree. In *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, Armstrong contends that although deprived of power in the public sphere, women characters and their real life counterparts had considerable authority in the private sphere, especially in matters of courtship. So although Dorothea does perform public work in designing improved cottages for Sir James's tenant farmers, the power to do so rests on her authority in the private sphere; Sir James first begins to examine those cottage plans

while he is courting Dorothea. Her public work is possible only as an offshoot of her power in the private sphere. But women's power is limited by lack of knowledge, which interferes with influence in the private sphere as well. Victorian women novelists often show authoritative control of information being used to women characters' disadvantage in their private lives. In fact, limitations placed on women, limitations that narrow their knowledge of what happens outside the drawing room, shrink female characters' power and affect even the primary authority Armstrong sees them exercising, that of choosing a desirable mate. Certainly, in two well-known Victorian texts, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, powerful characters use secrecy to control others, a withholding of information that influences the choices women characters make.

But although secrets restrict women characters in *Jane Eyre* and *Middlemarch*, they do not permanently cripple them. Brontë and Eliot do not strand their heroines in ignorance. If the novels' early sections show the powerful controlling situations by means of withheld information, by the end of the novels Jane Eyre, Dorothea Brooke, and Harriet Bulstrode, having gained the knowledge denied them earlier, display insight and courage as they reflect on the behavior of those around them and determine how to respond. In fact, I contend that the secrets in the two novels lead to experience that enables the female characters to develop into mature, choosing adults. As secrets are divulged, these characters confront the selfish desire that motivated the secret keepers and defeat this negative force, refusing to submit to it in others or to adopt its narrow perspectives themselves.

My reading of the two novels, *Jane Eyre* and *Middlemarch*, emphasizes that secrets can be a source of knowledge leading to growth. The growth does not happen spontaneously; it takes active work in the form of thought and involves deliberate, painful consideration of the new information. In both novels, secrets and their disclosure prompt the heroines' reflection, similar to the reflective thought described by John Dewey in his book *How We Think*. Dewey argues that facility in this methodical, deliberate kind of thinking is so vital to intellectual growth that helping students develop skill in reflection should be the goal of education. According to Dewey, "Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends constitutes reflective thought" (9).

Dewey stresses the purposeful nature of reflection and its role in liberating the individual so he or she can make free, independent choices. In discussing reflection as a necessary step in determining action, he follows John Locke, whose work he draws on to describe the process of reflective thought. Locke argues in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* that humans can think their way to right action:

Confident I am that, if men would in the same method, and with the same indifference, search after moral as they do mathematical truths, they would find them to have a stronger connexion one with another, and a more necessary consequence from our clear and distinct ideas, and to come nearer perfect demonstration than is commonly imagined. (340)

Locke here concludes that reasoning from correct premises can lead one to moral truth. Dewey adds that one must also have knowledge of the situation in order to determine if the conclusion reached is sound. It is this kind of purposeful consideration of situations, informed by newly gained information, which Brontë and Eliot show their heroines pursuing. The emphasis on active thought as a means of determining right action shows the heroines as distinctly different from the pattern conduct-book-trained angels-in-the-house so often portrayed as models in the period.

By claiming that these heroines are independent agents who make informed choices, I argue against those who assert that Jane, Dorothea, and Harriet are chastened or shamed by men or that they sacrifice themselves to conform with the female ideal. Among critics who see *Jane Eyre* as chastened, Sally Shuttleworth contends, "Brontë's novels move reluctantly, defiantly, towards a conventional ending in marriage whose harmony and stasis suggest, to an individual defined by conflict, a form of self-annihilation" (182). Helena Michie sees a similar pattern in *Middlemarch*, maintaining that Dorothea Brooke is "cut down to size" (27) by her interaction with patriarchal forces. Terry Eagleton sees both *Jane Eyre* and *Dorothea Brooke* as enjoying a "martyr-like surrender of the self" (130-31). However, such readings downplay the female characters' increasing ability to reflect and freely determine their actions, signaling their growth. In *Jane Eyre* and *Middlemarch*, the disclosure of secrets brings new information to excluded characters suddenly, revelations causing intense experiences which in turn prompt deliberate searches for truth. Shocked by the information they receive, Jane, Dorothea, and Harriet suffer pain, reflect, and grow, rejecting the selfishness they see around them

and deliberately deciding on alternative courses of action.

In *Jane Eyre*, reflection about right and wrong begins early in the main character's life. In a moment of intense emotion, the young Jane Eyre reflects on her life with her unkind relatives, the Reeds. As a result of her response to an assault by her cousin John, Jane has been locked in the red room, the scarlet-draped, rarely-visited room where her uncle died. Angered by the unjust punishment and frightened at being alone, she begins to question critically. She wonders, "Why was I always suffering, always brow-beaten, always accused, for ever condemned? Why could I never please?" (22). Facing the kind of "perplexed, troubled, or confused situation" (106) that John Dewey identifies as the start of reflective thought, she compares her own behavior to that of her cousins. She wonders *why* the behavior of the children does not have some bearing on the treatment they receive: "Eliza, who was headstrong and selfish, was respected. Georgiana, who had a spoiled temper,...was universally indulged....John no one thwarted, much less punished; though he twisted the necks of the pigeons...and set the dogs at the sheep." In contrast, Jane thinks, "I dared commit no fault: I strove to fulfill every duty; and I was termed naughty and tiresome." Her reflection culminates in a conclusion: "'Unjust! Unjust!' said my reason" (22). Dewey refers to reflection as deliberate inquiry into "the reliability, the worth, of any particular indication" in order to "see what guarantee there is that the existing data really point to the idea that is suggested" (11). Jane's reflection leads her to reject the common opinion of her low value since it is not supported by the "existing data," and she resolves to take action that will end unjust treatment. But having been schooled in humiliation, Jane loses her confidence in the conclusion she has reached: "All said I was wicked, and perhaps I might be so" (23). Jane does not yet have enough information, experience, and skill in reflection to embrace her independent conclusion; she rejects her own judgment and accepts the judgment of others instead.

The additional data Jane needs to confirm her sense of her own innocence and to transcend her anger at being treated unjustly comes years later when she is summoned by Mrs. Reed to hear her deathbed confession. Jane has already learned to temper her indignation and to shift her focus to more positive influences in her life; Miss Temple, Helen Burns, and Mr. Rochester all occupy larger places in her heart and mind than does

the selfish Mrs. Reed. But her aunt's dying admission that she withheld communication from Jane's uncle in order to keep her orphaned and poor allows Jane to reflect on the egoism behind the secret and to act in accordance with the conclusion she reaches. Mrs. Reed explains the sources of her dislike for her niece: jealousy motivated by her husband's love for his sister's child and a self-centered revulsion from the thought of having this child "placed in a state of ease and comfort" (268). During her aunt's sickness, Jane reflects on the continued hostility the older woman displays. This hostility is clear as Mrs. Reed replies to Jane's wish that she forget the past, blaming Jane for the fact that "my last hour is racked by the recollection of a deed, which, but for you, I should never have been tempted to commit." Jane compares her aunt's anger and selfishness with Helen Burns's doctrine of the preciousness of all souls in God's eyes. Jane's reflection frees her from any vestiges of the anger she felt in the red room; she chooses not to react to her aunt's hatred with hostility of her own. She assures her aunt, "you have my full and free forgiveness: ask now for God's and be at peace" (269). The sight of her aunt's anguish allows Jane to choose an alternative path for herself. While contemplating Mrs. Reed's body, she "gazed on it with gloom and pain: nothing soft, nothing sweet, nothing pitying, or hopeful, or subduing did it inspire; only a grating anguish for *her* woes – not *my* loss – and a somber tearless dismay at the fearfulness of death in such a form." The revelation of the secret helps Jane to consider her aunt's life and to evaluate the consequences of behavior motivated by anger. As a result, Jane leaves behind the red room and the Reed family's rejection of her.

Secrets continue to provide impulse and matter for Jane's reflections in other areas of life as well. At Thornfield, Jane is drawn to the third floor corridor where she believes the servant Grace Poole mysteriously laughs and murmurs, although it is really Rochester's insane wife, Bertha, she hears. Reflecting on her own unsatisfied needs, Jane for the first time understands and attributes her longings to restraints placed upon women: "Women feel just as men feel;...they suffer from too rigid a restraint" (125). Jane's proximity to the secret region that houses Bertha suggests that restraints may be limiting women in many ways. If Bertha experiences restraints most extremely in her imprisonment within a loveless marriage, a diseased mind, and a small apartment, Jane too feels deprived. She reports that she desires "more of practical experience...more of

intercourse with my kind, of acquaintance with variety of character."

If the secret regarding the presence on the third floor allows Jane to recognize her unfulfilled desire for a more varied life, it also alerts her to feelings she has repressed and signs of trouble she has ignored as her love for Rochester developed. Hearing the mysterious disturbing laugh outside her bedroom door one night, Jane rescues Rochester from a fire set by the jealous Bertha, who anticipates Rochester's passion for Jane. Rochester's gratitude and love are clear to Jane; she notices the "strange fire in his look" (171) and recognizes the link between her own repressed passion and Rochester's more apparent desire. The fire in his eyes and Bertha's angry presence fuel Jane's agitation and alert her to possibilities and dangers she cannot quite understand. After putting out the fire, she spends a restless night "[t]ossed on a buoyant but unquiet sea, where billows of trouble roiled under surges of joy" (172). She does not yet have the information she needs to determine the source of the danger she feels.

Some time later, as Jane nurses Bertha's brother, who has been wounded by the third floor's resident, she more overtly reviews the secrets of Thornfield, wondering, "What crime was this that lived incarnate in this sequestered mansion, and could neither be expelled nor subdued by its owner?" (237-38). Although Jane still cannot solve the mystery, some affective part of her again recognizes danger in the situation. When Rochester later asks for her approval and help in "leaping an obstacle of custom – a mere conventional impediment" (245), Jane does not respond to his veiled offer of marriage. Having reflected on the "crime...that lived incarnate" in Rochester's home, she obviously regards this secret presence as more than a "mere conventional impediment."

Jane's awareness of her exclusion from Rochester's secret delays her succumbing to his power. Until she penetrates the mystery, she cannot act independently. She admits, for example, that he had become an "idol" (307) to her, clouding her judgment. Under the sway of this idol, she ignores signs of trouble, such as Rochester's asking for God's pardon during his open proposal of marriage and a nighttime visit from Bertha, who tears Jane's wedding veil. In the latter case, Jane does consult Rochester, but she too readily accepts his explanation of the event as partly a visit from Grace Poole and partly a dream fed by imagination. Jane admits, "Satisfied I was not" (319), but deprived of the knowledge of Bertha's existence, she cuts off reflection to please her lover and to fulfill

her own desire. Even Mrs. Fairfax's vague words of warning, although they prompt Jane to exercise caution and to retain her independence by continuing to serve as Adele's governess during the engagement, do not move her to delay the marriage. Jane cannot conceive of Rochester as selfish, nor does she want to see him in that light. And yet, by depriving Jane of the information she needs to make an independent choice about marriage, Rochester behaves much as Mrs. Reed had earlier in concealing her uncle's existence.

When the secret of Rochester's prior marriage is revealed, however, Jane has the information and summons the force of will she needs to judge accurately and to choose independently. Learning of her secret visitor's true identity, Jane reflects with decision and completeness. She reports, "And now I thought: till now I had only heard, seen, moved – followed up and down where I was led or dragged – watched event rush on event, disclosure open beyond disclosure: but *now I thought*" (330). Jane's words obviously refer to the events of her wedding day, but they also provide a key to her behavior during the whole courtship. Without the information she needed to understand Rochester's intentions, she had merely followed his desire and her own; she had not been able to judge accurately what she heard and saw. Although the conclusion she reaches as a result of this informed reflection pains her, she keeps her resolve, follows her own principles, and leaves the married Rochester, despite his argument that she need not do so.

When Jane later sets out to find Rochester without knowing of his wife's death, she does so without hiding the circumstances of her inquiry from herself. Resisting St. John's proposal that she form a loveless marriage with him, she locks herself up, utters a prayer – a kind of reflection that leaves her "enlightened" – and makes a "resolve" (467). She will investigate the situation of Rochester, whose "well-remembered voice," speaking her own need and his, she has heard in the night. Although she does not know what she will find or how she will respond, she decides she is "strong enough to search – inquire – to grope an outlet from this cloud of doubt, and find the open day of certainty" (468). Bertha's death may make the marriage of Jane and Rochester possible, but Jane's decision to search for Rochester despite the strong warning of St. John Rivers, whose "hierophant's touch" (465) holds her in its sway at the time, surely plays a part. Her own

moral sense requires that she resist the pressure the missionary exerts. She considers what her life would be as his wife, "always restrained...forced to keep the fire of my nature continually low" (453). Such restraint of half her nature seems wrong to her. In searching for Rochester, she reasserts her own full selfhood, including her feelings and desires. Her return to Rochester thus shows her exercising independent choice.

In George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, withheld information also threatens to rob characters of the power to choose independently. Dorothea Brooke Casaubon's husband has added a secret codicil to his will that disinherits her if she marries his cousin, Will Ladislaw. Although she does not know of the codicil's existence during her husband's life, on the night before his death, Dorothea becomes aware of some secrecy inherent in the plans he has made for her. Casaubon hopes she will continue his scholarship and asks her to pledge herself to carry out his "wishes" and to "avoid doing what [he] should deprecate" (387) after his death. Because of her marriage vows and her husband's poor health, she has been trying not to upset him, but she wants to understand what the promise constitutes when asked to agree to be guided by his wishes. Therefore, she responds to his request, saying, "I think it is not right – to make a promise when I am ignorant what it will bind me to," and she asks to be permitted to "reflect a little while" before giving an answer. Dorothea quails more at the vagueness of the promise than at the prospect of a future spent working on her husband's worthless book, the *Key to All Mythologies*. Significantly, she detects an ominous note in his request. She considers, "might he not want something more from her than she had been able to imagine, since he wanted her to pledge to carry out his wishes without telling her what they were?" (388); but she rejects this possibility, unable to imagine the intense selfishness of his desire to control her after his death.

Not seeing this littleness in her husband's nature, she intends to be merciful and almost makes a pledge she would feel bound to honor. J. Hillis Miller finds Dorothea's ignorant mercy a problem Eliot does not resolve:

The ability to do good in George Eliot's novels always in one way or another depends on ignorance, while the novels themselves show over and over the terrible dangers of ignorance....While persuading the reader to have sympathy, she gives that knowledge which shows the reader that the sympathy which finds one's neighbors pitiable is...epistemologically groundless. (Hardy et. al. 447).

Miller seems to reject Dorothea's conclusion "that by desiring what is perfectly good...even when we don't quite know what it is...we are part of the divine power against evil" (326). Perhaps Miller is right, at least about the dangers inherent in ignorance. Dorothea herself understands that her husband's failure to tell her what the promise really entails casts a shadow over the "perfect good" she seeks. However, in this case Dorothea comes dangerously close to losing her freedom – not through desiring what is perfectly good without being able to see that good, but through ignoring her own moral insight, her own sense of right and wrong. She intuits that agreeing without knowing the terms of the agreement is cowardly, a surrender of the self that precludes morality. Rather, "too weak" (389) to hold out for what she believes, she prepares herself to submit out of pity and fear. She is saved from this promise entirely by chance, as her husband dies before she gives her word.

When Dorothea finally learns the import of Casaubon's secret, the revelation is the first of three that leads to reflection and growth. The sudden disclosure of the codicil brings about "a violent shock of repulsion from her departed husband" (397). The shock frees her from any vestiges of the old pity for Casaubon's wasted life that might have urged her to continue compiling his research. Including the new data about his selfishness, her critical examination of her duty leads her to renounce all responsibility for continuing his work. Although she had earlier felt ready to bind herself to "a toil which her judgment whispered was vain, [now] her judgment, instead of being controlled by dutiful devotion, was made active by the embittering discovery that in her past union there had lurked the hidden alienation of secrecy and suspicion" (399). She takes action on the conclusion she reaches. She writes a note and inserts it in an envelope containing research left by her husband: "I could not use it. Do you not see now that I could not submit my soul to yours, by working hopelessly at what I have no belief in?" (430). The revelation of the secret helps her to form her own conclusion.

Paradoxically, the disclosure of the codicil also brings to her mind the possibility of the marriage her husband sought to prevent. In the intense moment following the revelation, she experiences "a sudden strange yearning of heart towards Will Ladislav" (397). But if she yearns for Will, she remains paralyzed. The impediments that block any

relationship with him, although clearly imposed by those outside the couple, sway her. As she thinks of Will, she considers "that unfittingness of any closer relation between them which lay in the opinion of every one connected with her." And she believes that she and Will must remain apart: "How could he dream of her defying the barrier that her husband had placed between them?" (500). Dorothea's conclusion shows a failure to reflect. Instead of considering the pertinent data in the case, her own feelings and Will's, she accepts the opinions of others and dwells on "the barrier" her husband erected. Dewey describes how authoritative voices restrict reflection: "[T]hey are among the chief forces that determine the beliefs apart from and even contrary to the operations of intelligent thought. The desire to be in harmony with others is in itself a desirable trait. But it may lead a person too readily to fall in with the prejudices of others and may weaken his independence of judgment" (29). Dorothea's reflection on a future with Will is short-circuited by her dependence on authority.

Dorothea's witnessing of an intimate scene between Ladislav and Rosamond Lydgate (a scene she believes indicates a secret relationship) causes the first of two additional shocks leading to fuller reflection and deliberate choice. At first, she feels "waves of suffering [that] shook her too thoroughly to leave any power of thought" (604). She experiences anger as she questions Will's motives: "Why had he come obtruding his life into hers?...He knew that he was deluding her" (605). But her anger leads to grief and purposeful reflection: "She began now to live through that yesterday morning deliberately again, forcing herself to dwell on every detail and its possible meaning." With concentrated effort, Dorothea considers how this secret relationship will affect Will, Lydgate, and especially, Rosamond: "She forced herself to think of it as bound up with another woman's life" (606). She articulates the choice she is trying to make: "What should I do – how should I act now, this very day, if I could clutch my own personal pain, and compel it to silence and think of those three?" The words Eliot uses, having to do with force, self-compulsion, and activity, show that Dorothea is no passive victim of emotion – she deliberately revisits the scene to determine how she can bring good out of the situation.

Dorothea's reflections lead to a determination to reject selfish anger and act for the good of others. The action on which she decides, "to make as quietly and

unnoticeably as possible her second attempt to see and save Rosamond" (607), involves her walking down the road to Middlemarch. She walks as do Middlemarchers she had glimpsed from her window during her reflection. No longer can she helplessly watch others from the height of her handsome home. In meeting Rosamond again and offering her hand, she crosses class lines, since upper-class women usually do not visit tradesmen's daughters, but she consults no authority before she acts (Ashton 322). Bert Hornback comments, "The help she provides for Lydgate and Rosamond is not the gift of money: what she gives them is herself" (614) and that gift "challenges her to sacrifice herself – her pride, her dreams" (608). But the sacrifice is not submission to the will of others, nor is it an imitation of the selfishness she has seen her husband practice in forbidding to others happiness he cannot enjoy. Her decision is the product of independent reflection. Dorothea makes a free choice sparked by the revelation of a supposed secret and including a reasonable review of her thoughts and feelings.

Dorothea's decision to marry Will Ladislaw continues this independence. Helped by the disclosure of Casaubon's secret action concerning his cousin, she has examined her feelings and has decided that she loves Will. Therefore, as soon as she learns from Rosamond the real secret of Will's affections – that he loves her, not Rosamond – she wishes to see him: "The possibility of seeing him had thrust itself between her and every other object" (618). Her willingness to challenge society appears even before the two speak. Preparing for Will's entrance, she has "a sense that she was doing something daringly defiant for his sake." She considers the "unjust dispraise" others have spread about him, and she questions her earlier conclusion, asking, "How could any duty bind her to hardness?" (619). Although she remains motionless when Will approaches, "some intense, grave yearning was imprisoned within her eyes." Referring to one factor motivating society's objections, she assures him that her mind has not been infected by the community's prejudice about his birth – "a new reason for me to cling to you" (620). On the necessity of their parting, she remains silent only because of a lingering consciousness that society disapproves: "Dorothea's heart was full of something that she wanted to say, and yet the words were too difficult" (622). When she finally says, "Oh, I cannot bear it – my heart will break," she speaks with vigor sparked by emotion, "the flood of her young passion bearing down all the obstructions which had kept her silent."

But if emotion sparks her speech, it has not replaced reason in her decision making. Dorothea's decision to marry Will Ladislaw is inspired by passion that helps her to express a conclusion (her love for Will) about which she has reflected. She needs the energy of emotion to release her from the restraints that have limited her freedom and distorted her conclusions. And the narrator's description of her passion as "bearing down all the obstructions" shows that Dorothea finally acts in accordance with her own will, no longer stopped by obstacles created by others.

When Dorothea communicates her decision to her family, they note the strength of her purpose. After trying to discourage her, Mr. Brooke comments, "Dorothea is quite determined – it is no use opposing" (625). Even Celia's reference to her sister's plans to improve the world, plans that Dorothea had hoped to finance with Casaubon's money, does not sway Dorothea, who responds realistically, "I have never carried out any plan yet...I might have done something better, if I had been better. But this is what I am going to do. I have promised to marry Mr. Ladislaw; and I am going to marry him" (628-29). Dorothea's words reveal she has thought about her choice, including circumstances such as the difficulty of a single woman's carrying out public plans and her own need for love. She has weighed the facts of the case and considered the consequences of various modes of action. Celia understands her sister's determination, hearing in Dorothea's voice the firmness of her decision, "a note that Celia had long learned to recognize."

As another victim of withheld information, Harriet Bulstrode is the last in Middlemarch to find out about her husband's scandalous past and his desperate efforts to conceal that past. Impressed by his religious zeal and ascetic habits, Harriet thinks of her husband as a morally superior individual. Although she suspects his social connections are a level below her own and knows only that he made his fortune conducting "city business," she considers him an "excellent man whose piety carried a peculiar eminence in belonging to a layman" (484). In fact, in this important area of religious worth, the pious Harriet believes herself improved by her marriage. Despite her regret that Bulstrode had attended a dissenters' chapel in London, she considers that "his influence had turned her own mind toward seriousness" and, not lacking a touch of worldliness to temper her piety, she is proud to be the wife of a powerful banker.

Harriet does not know that Bulstrode's wealth was gained by means of his

involvement in a pawn broker's business that accepted goods from questionable sources. In addition, she has no idea that he was guilty of deceiving his first wife, concealing the whereabouts of her runaway daughter to avoid having to share the family wealth. Like Rochester, who deceived Jane Eyre by concealing his marriage to Bertha, Bulstrode assures himself that he keeps his secrets for good reason. He has persuaded himself that the deception was necessary to place wealth in the hands of one who would use it "for God's sake" (487). Bulstrode both engages in philanthropy and enjoys the power money brings; but he also realizes that his wife would not have married him were she aware of his past, and loving her, he believes that "the loss of high consideration from his wife...would be as the beginning of death to him" (485). Because of her husband's selfish desire, Harriet has been deliberately deprived of the information she needs to judge him accurately.

Harriet hears of his duplicity only after his fear of being exposed leads him to murder Raffles by disregarding Lydgate's instructions to keep the alcoholic away from whiskey. Ignorant of her husband's misdeeds during his first marriage and of Raffles's knowledge of those misdeeds, Harriet only senses imminent trouble in the stranger's presence; she does not know what shape the trouble will take. When her husband returns home ill from the meeting where Middlemarch learns of his suspicious conduct during Raffles's illness, she notes his desire to be alone and is convinced "that her husband was not suffering from bodily illness merely, but from something that afflicted his mind" (577). However, she does not learn of the town's suspicions about her husband until she actively pursues the information.

Harriet's determination to understand what has befallen her husband is tested by the community's efforts to keep her in the dark. When she enquires, Lydgate suggests "something poisonous in the air of public rooms" (577) as the source of Bulstrode's malady. Shrinking from the task of revealing his shame, Bulstrode shuts himself away, "alleging nervous susceptibility to sounds and movements" when she offers to sit with him. But Harriet is not content to remain in ignorance: "it was in her nature strongly to object to such concealment." Therefore, after unsuccessful attempts to learn the truth during visits to two of her friends, she finally seeks the details from her brother.

Harriet's reaction to the scandal comes in two stages as the secret is revealed.

When her brother first refers to the trouble in her life, before he actually discloses the town's suspicions about Bulstrode, she intuitively grasps her husband's guilt, his humiliation, and the shame she will experience as the wife of a sinner. But her mind moves quickly; this initial reflection on her husband's guilt ends with her image of herself "at his side in mournful but unrepenting fellowship with shame and isolation" (579). The truth Harriet now understands allows her to consider her own situation and to test and reject one conclusion – a concentration on her own pain – before she decides to concentrate on her husband's pain instead.

That Harriet's choice results from a thoughtful consideration of the circumstances and not from some blind, instinctive adherence to duty becomes clearer after she hears the details of the scandal involving her husband. Returning home to think, she does not rush in to see Bulstrode; nor does she look for consolation from her brother, who would have supported her had she chosen to separate from her disgraced husband. Rather, she shuts herself in her room and ponders what she has heard about Bulstrode's actions. She neither minimizes his crime nor makes excuses for him: "A new searching light had fallen on her husband's character, and she could not judge him leniently" (579). Even more, she faces squarely his dishonesty to her. She realizes their twenty year relationship has involved "an odious deceit." But she also reviews the happiness he brought into her life and his unfeigned love for her, and she resolves "to gather up her strength," so that after saying goodbye to her happiness she can "mourn and not reproach" (580). Even Harriet's change of clothes from finery to simplicity shows her understanding of the difficult course she chooses, to stand by her husband despite his guilt. She is no longer the silly woman who, even in the midst of warning her niece about the dangers of flirtatious behavior, could be distracted by the latter's fashionable clothes. Harriet's decision unselfishly to support her husband is based on reflection informed by the disclosure of her husband's secret and by the examination of her feelings; she displays courage and strength, not self pity. She rejects the kind of assumed angelic behavior that "lies on the same couch with the forsaken soul, withering it the more by unloving proximity." She regards her husband, who now appears "shrunken and withered" by guilt and shame, with compassion and love, and she informs him of her new knowledge, saying simply, "I know." Bulstrode's subsequent decision to arrange the management of

his property in a way she approves shows that her morally superior position is clear to both of them.

Secrets *can* rob people of information they need to perform independent and complete reflection. Deprived of insight into others' selfish motives and narrow concerns, heroines Jane Eyre, Dorothea Brooke, and Harriet Bulstrode at first make faulty judgments. However, when hidden information is revealed, the emotional shocks caused by disclosure lead to reexamination of circumstances and to full reflection in the light of new knowledge. Surprised by the selfish desire that motivated the secret keepers, the female characters examine their own and others' feelings and behavior. Their reflections help them to grow and to reject self pity or continued resentment. And yet, the characters are not the colorless, long suffering angels so detested by modern feminists. By emphasizing the process of reflection, by showing the heroines using reason to consider their circumstances and to decide on action, Brontë and Eliot create autonomous women. If they choose to behave in ways they consider moral, they are no less independent. In *Jane Eyre* and *Middlemarch*, then, secrets become a means to reflection and growth.

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*"The Boy Was a Girl": Reconstructing Gender and Class
to Deconstruct Difference
in Sarah Grand's The Heavenly Twins*

Audrey Fessler

Enfolded into Sarah Grand's bestselling triple-decker novel *The Heavenly Twins* (1893) is a stand-alone novella, *The Tenor and the Boy: An Interlude*, which the pioneering feminist author had sought but failed to publish fourteen years earlier. In response to Norwegian dramatist Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's observation that *The Tenor and the Boy* "might have been deleted as it had no bearing" on the other storylines in the novel, Grand reportedly conceded, "Of course we know that that is so. It is not necessary to the story" (Kersley 262). And yet Grand *did* include it. What is more, she re-published *The Tenor and the Boy* – at long last as a stand-alone novella – in 1899. Evidently she was determined that this tale find an audience.¹

Briefly, the plot of *The Tenor and the Boy* is this. In the Proem, a collier lad is heard singing on a barge by a wealthy man who subsequently adopts and raises him. The main action commences more than a decade later. In the 1899 novella, as in the section of *The Heavenly Twins* designated "Book IV, The Tenor and the Boy: An Interlude," a stranger – the collier lad, now grown up, well dressed, and well educated – comes to a town whose cathedral choir has lost its tenor. He auditions, is hired, and becomes famous for his exquisite performances. Through a chance encounter, he befriends a boy. The Boy visits him only at night, consumes costly food and wine that the Tenor can barely afford, and flirts with the Tenor on the Boy's own behalf as well as on behalf of a woman whom the Boy claims is his sister: Angelica. But the Boy is Angelica herself, cross-dressed.

¹ Carol Senf asserts, "book 4, 'The Tenor and the Boy,' [was] published as a separate work in 1899" (xi). This is incorrect. Rather, Grand's 1899 version of *The Tenor and the Boy*, published by Heinemann, consists of several parts of *The Heavenly Twins*: the Proem; "Book IV: The Tenor and the Boy: An Interlude"; and "Book V: Mrs. Kilroy of Ilverthorpe." According to Anne Buchanan, Local Studies Librarian at Bath Central Library (England), Grand made only slight changes to the text upon republication. Holmes's poem "Truths" does not appear in the 1899 reissue; instead, the novella begins with excerpts from Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poems "Confessions" and "The Soul's Travelling." I am grateful to Ms. Buchanan and to Krista Hebel, graduate research assistant at University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, for helping me track down this rare book.

Because this tale is interjected into *The Heavenly Twins* on page 313, most readers, long familiar with the prankish, gender-bending twins Angelica and Diavolo, assume that the Boy is Diavolo – and so are duped along with the Tenor. To readers under this impression, the interpolated tale seems intensely homoerotic.² Grand's text thereby raises the point that current Western categorizations of sexual identity – lesbian, gay, bisexual, straight – are unstable in themselves, and are predicated on a prior, stable, binary definition of the desiring individual as male or female. Transgender theorists have only recently begun to unpack the implications of this point. In any case, an accident occurs during a romantic evening boat ride. The Boy falls overboard, his wig washes away, and the Tenor recognizes that the Boy is Angelica. He angrily accuses her of "playing with...cheating [and] mocking" him (*HT* 460), and indicates that, as he can no longer respect her, he wishes to sever their contact.

In the 1899 novella, as in Book V of *The Heavenly Twins*, titled "Mrs. Kilroy of Ilverthorpe," the Tenor, who became soaked when fishing the Boy out of the water, develops pneumonia and dies. Angelica is chastened and joins everyone who knew the Tenor in apotheosizing him after his death. Angelica then commits herself to her marriage and begins to perform the conventional roles of "Mrs. Kilroy of Ilverthorpe." But she also writes speeches for her husband to deliver in Parliament and eventually gives stump speeches herself. I will return below to the evident tension between Book IV, in which the Tenor's alignment with mainstream Victorian patriarchal gender ideology renders him willfully ignorant and inadvertently cruel, and Book V, in which he is cast as an ideal man and Angelica is returned to the "proper" role of loyal wife.

Michelle Mouton notes that, as an interpolated tale, "The Tenor and the Boy: An Interlude" disrupts the realism of the surrounding text of *The Heavenly Twins*: "its narrative voice resembles more closely...fairy tales, in its reluctance to give realistic details such as proper names, or references to a specific historical time or setting" (187). Extending Linda Dowling's general discussion of the use of pastoral conventions by New

² Most analyses of the relationship between the Tenor and the Boy identify homoerotic attraction as its defining element. An exception is Linda Dowling's description of this as "a sexually disinterested friendship" (439). See Clare Taylor's *Women, Writing, and Fetishism: 1890-1950* for an overview of homoerotic readings of *The Tenor and the Boy* (27-39); also Demetris Bogiatzis's interpretation, based on Eve Sedgwick's paradigm of "'male-male pedagogic or pederastic relations' [Sedgwick 55]. The Tenor's infatuation with the Boy is informed by both the pedagogic aspiration to initiate a neophyte into the noblest and most refined pleasures of life and by the pederastic yearning to befriend a young, undefiled boy" (48).

Women writers (449-51), John Kucich characterizes "The Tenor and the Boy" as "a kind of stylized pastoral mode" markedly different from the "realist and psychiatric narratives" that compose the rest of the novel ("Curious" 198, 200). Kucich concludes that this "bifurcation of narrative modes" reveals Grand's "perception" of a double-bind "in which the very necessity of formal choice was constructed for women as a trap, since both realist and antirealist writing by women could be stigmatized as forms of intellectual imitation [of men] and inadequacy" ("Curious" 202). I agree; but it also seems to me that the abstract, antirealist nature of the disruptive narrative is more directly a consequence of Grand shifting away, in the Proem and Book IV, from what Janet Beer and Ann Heilmann characterize as her "political purpose" (181), which is achieved elsewhere in *The Heavenly Twins* by mimesis and polemic, toward open-ended philosophic inquiry.

Specifically, I read the Proem and Book IV as explorations of an epistemological question: how do we come to know an Other? Angelica, the cross-dressed "female" protagonist, performs gender, and her look-alike androgynous companion, "the Tenor," performs class, in ways that prompt their audiences to construct particularized identities for them which have no relation to the biological and socioeconomic facts of their existence. In effect, Angelica and the Tenor model the reconstruction of gender and class through transgressive performance. As will become clear below, each confounds binary logic by embodying qualities widely supposed to be mutually exclusive "opposites." Insofar as gender and class are performance-based, the Proem and Book IV show them to be radically unstable and altogether unreliable as identity categories.³ While this may seem an abstract point, Grand shows that class and gender performances have important practical consequences. Each character's performance confers a set of privileges that enable the characters to evade, if only temporarily, the disadvantages that they previously experienced due to gender or class ranking within Victorian patriarchal culture.

Through an epigraph and the Proem, Grand prepares readers at the outset of *The*

³ While Martha Vicinus applauds Marjorie Garber's insights into the cross-dresser as a "third" being who transcends the traditional gender binary (see *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*, 9-11), she cautions: "if we insist on the primacy of the category crisis, then we risk doing an injustice to the complex responses to the cross-dressed figure, and to the wide range of often contradictory readings he/she makes possible" (188). Of *The Heavenly Twins*, Vicinus concludes that "what looks like a form of man-boy love can be read as a groping toward an expression of lesbian love. The Tenor and the Boy have a stereotypical male homosexual relationship which serves to cover the pervasive lesbian eroticism of the situation. At a time when a modern lesbian culture was just beginning to define itself publicly, the well-established contemporary male culture could have been a source of inspiration, however indirectly" (207).

Heavenly Twins for the eventual shift into an exploration of the construction and ascription of gendered and classed identities. The epigraph is a stanza from a poem by Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. The epigraph page omits the title of Holmes's widely-read poem, but many of Grand's readers would have known it: "Truths." This pluralization would have signaled to those of Grand's readers familiar with Holmes's work that in Grand's novel, too, truth would be presented as manifold. Holmes's poem develops an analogy between a newly evolved "truth" and a "new-born" infant who initially looks ugly to all beholders. As time passes, Holmes suggests, the audience *sees* the infant differently: what initially appeared to be "snaky hair" comes to be perceived as "shining locks," and people who had been inclined at first to reject that truth as ugly ultimately accept it as "transfigured into Angel guise."

In other lines from Holmes's poem, which Grand did not include in her epigraph, the poetic speaker notes that truths are of "earth-born lineage." To put this in postmodern terms, meaning and identity are socially constructed and variously construed, not essential and unchanging.⁴ Grand's own Proem immediately follows and significantly extends the argument that meaning is subjectively constituted. The Proem's first line visually reproduces a bar from Mendelssohn's opera *Elijah* and the lyric accompanying it: "He, watching over Israel, slumbers not, nor sleeps" (*HT* xxxix). The idea that all of one's actions are scrutinized by an inscrutable Other, now firmly established, will be echoed dozens of times in Book IV as both the Tenor and the Boy gaze at and try to read the identity of the other. The narrator notes that the cathedral tower tolls this melody hourly, and then observes that the chime will be understood as either "a warning, or a promise, according to the mental state of those whose ears it filled" (*HT* xxxix). Shortly thereafter, Grand extends this point to the reading of people as well: "narrow...small humanity...judges people and things, not on their own merits, but with regard to their effects upon itself" (*HT* xl). The Proem thus indicates not only that knowledge is subjectively constituted, but that the subject construes as "truths" only those notions that

⁴ John Kucich takes a different approach to the notion of 'truth' in *The Heavenly Twins*. Observing that "an obsession with questions of truthfulness...saturate[d] feminist ideology of the 1890s," Kucich offers an illuminating analysis of "Grand's tortured, unsuccessful efforts to reconstruct feminine moral ideals around deeply fragmented conceptions of honesty and dishonesty" (*Power* 241). He concludes that "Angelica's urgent and, in the event, tragic appeals for trust, despite her evident unreliability...define a cultural moment in the breakup of Victorian ethical systems, a breakup that plagues both protomodernist and New Woman fiction" (*Power* 240).

serve his or her own "narrow" interests. This epistemic process requires the egocentric subject to ignore the individuality of the one whom he or she is judging.

Two further points in the Proem are significant. First, the narrator posits that not even religious "truth" is fixed; rather, truth claims made by religions evolve. Specifically, the narrator holds that the most primitive construction of religious "truth" was of "a God essentially masculine" (*HT* xli), but that

in these latter days,...the supremacy of the great masculine idea was at last being seriously threatened, for...a new voice of extraordinary sweetness had already been heard, not *his*, the voice of man; but *theirs*, the collective voice of humanity, which declared that "He, watching," was the all-pervading good, the great moral law, the spirit of pure love, Elohim, mistranslated in the book of Genesis as "He" only, but signifying the union to which all nature testifies, the male and female principles which together created the universe, the infinite father and mother, without whom, in perfect accord and exact equality, the best government of nations has always been crippled and abortive. (*HT* xliii)

Grand is suggesting that the construction of meanings, and even the language into which meanings are "translated," tend toward androgyny. This point favorably anticipates Angelica's cross-dressing. And Grand's provision at the outset of an androgynous model of divine selfhood also prepares readers to resolve Angelica's ostensibly paradoxical claims about her sense of her own gender identity – claims like "I tell you I was a genuine boy. I moved like a boy, I felt like a boy; I was my own brother in very truth" (*HT* 456).

One further implication of the Proem is important to my argument. In the only scene described in the Proem, the young Lancashire collier who will become the Tenor travels up a river on a barge. When the cathedral chime rings, the lad asks the bargeman what the lyrics are. In the ensuing discussion, the Tenor-to-be remarks with unconcern that he has never heard of Christ. In this, he is like many to whom, according to the narrator, the chime "meant nothing"; indeed, the chime "probably conveyed as much, and neither more nor less, to the team" of horses that a "yawning ploughman" drove (*HT* xliv). The narrator says the lad has "no human knowledge" (*HT* xlvi); this suggests that his very selfhood is a blank slate waiting to be inscribed with meaning.⁵

⁵ Below I show how, in Book IV, "narrow...small humanity" inscribes the Tenor's identity through social class attribution.

The bargeman recites the verse; whereupon the lad instantly repeats and beautifully embellishes Mendelssohn's song. As noted earlier, the performance is well rewarded. A wealthy gentleman hears the collier from afar and, instantly convinced of his talent and potential as a musician, adopts him. Although religiosity is not innate or essential to the Tenor, his performance of orthodox piety becomes "naturalized" in Judith Butler's sense. By the time he reaches adulthood, and especially after his death in Book V, other characters read the Tenor, quite simplistically, as an angel.⁶ This creates dramatic irony, since Book IV casts the Tenor as kind and talented but also narrow-minded in his sexism, and as an aesthete able to revel in the beauty of an evening while dismissing as a mere intellectual "puzzle" an obviously suffering prostitute immediately in his path (*HT* 376).

The Tenor's naturalized and performed orthodox piety makes it easy for others to read him as an angel, even as, in Book IV, he confounds the vigorous, sustained efforts of all who encounter him to "read" his class status. From the moment he presents himself to apply for the post of cathedral tenor, the effort to "class" him begins. Interestingly, the higher the class ascribed to the person "reading" the Tenor, the less inclined that person is to see the Tenor as upper-class. "The dean looked doubtful; the precentor, judging by the stranger's appearance and tone that he might be somebody, was inclined to be obsequious; the organist struck a neutral attitude, and stood by ready to agree to anything" (*HT* 358). The dean, on whom the class system has conferred the most power, is correspondingly the most reluctant to see someone else in a way that would empower the Other. Grand highlights here the subjective and self-serving components of class construction and ascription.

As Book IV progresses, the Tenor is often asked directly about his parentage; indeed, for the townspeople, "this question was the Alpha and Omega of all that concerned him" (*HT* 364). A decisive answer would, of course, frame and stabilize the reading of his class. Raised by an aristocrat but not knowing his true parentage, the Tenor cannot answer such questions. Although he presents himself as "Mr. Jones" and labors for little pay, he simultaneously performs aristocracy so convincingly that the

⁶ Grand's own audience may not have read the Tenor as simply as the novel's other characters do. As Vicinus points out, "the beautiful choir boy was a cliché among homosexuals by the 1890s" (205).

townspeople feel impelled to mythologize his origins. It is rumored and then "generally believed" that he is

the illegitimate son of an actress, and some great – in-the-sense-of-having-a-title – man, from whom he inherited his aristocratic appearance and a small income. His mother, it was said, had been an opera singer, which accounted for his voice. (HT 365)

The Tenor's "mixed" class origin ironically parallels Angelica's androgyny. The general public sees the Tenor as embodying both the "low" and the "noble," just as the Tenor will later see the Boy as embodying both the "male" and the "female." Such amalgamations threaten to render the class and gender systems meaningless as categorical identifiers. The general public perceives this threat and responds by reassigning the Tenor to the class it prefers for him, just as the Tenor himself will later attempt to reassign Angelica to unalloyed womanhood.

The townspeople actually erase the name the former collier lad has given himself and inscribe in its place a new name of their own choosing. Through this action the public seeks to reify and perpetuate its preferred reading of his class:

It was agreed that he was a gentleman before everything, and not at all like a "Jones"; and therefore, acting on some instinctive perception of the fitness of things, the citizens dropped the offensive appellation altogether and called him "the Tenor" simply, as they might have called him "the Duke." (HT 364)

The new name functions not only to "class" and categorize, but also, simultaneously, to obscure the individuality of the man's being. Grand is careful to cast such witting acts of erasure and reinscription as ineffective responses to cultural anxiety: privately many of the Tenor's admirers, including Angelica, continue to speculate on his origins.⁷ More broadly, and through the Boy as well, Grand implies in Book IV that the inevitable but necessarily subjective process of constructing knowledge makes it impossible to arrive at a simple, stable truth. Individuals compulsively read and re-read Others whom they can never finally understand.

There is one moment in Book IV in which a remark by the omniscient narrator offers a glimpse of a supra-binary mode of understanding identity. It occurs just as the

⁷ On April 27, 1895, *Punch's* "Angry Old Buffer" gave comic expression to the anxiety that gender, in particular, was losing its utility as a categorical system: "...a new fear my bosom vexes; / To-morrow there may be *no sexes!* / Unless, as end to all the pother, / Each one in fact becomes the other. / E'en *then* perhaps they'll start amain / A-trying to change back again!" (qtd. in Sinfield 78).

Tenor is formulating his response to having discovered that the Boy is Angelica. The narrator observes, "It was only a change of idea, really, the Boy was a girl, that was all" (HT 446). Here the narrator suggests that, like class, gender is not an enduring, essential attribute of a given subject, but rather a malleable creation of the beholder with no necessary, stable, or enduring connection to the embodied subject. This is the novel's moment of most radical challenge to the concept of gender identity and, by extension, to the stultifying norms of femininity that flow from gender binarism in a patriarchal society. If the Tenor could only "change" his "idea" of Angelica's identity – if he could but read her without reference to the social construct of "womanhood" he has assimilated – all might yet be well between them. Indeed, if he could do so, their relationship might come to model a new paradigm of human interaction unconstrained by prejudice.

The hopeful moment passes. As the narrator immediately makes clear, the Tenor is too habituated to Victorian gender norms to alter his thinking or his conduct:

It was curious how the new knowledge [of the Boy's identity] already affected his attitude toward her. In preparing the hot drink he put half the quantity of brandy he would have used five minutes before for the Boy, and when he had to raise her head to make her swallow it, he did so reluctantly. (HT 446)

Angelica wonders aloud, plaintively, "Why aren't you different now you know?" (HT 462). He never responds. Rather, Book IV ends with the Tenor vigorously trying to reinscribe femininity upon Angelica. After making clear that he wishes no further contact with her, he augurs, "you will do some good in the world – you will be a good woman yet, I know – I know you will" (HT 462). These final words serve not only to "re-gender" and re-categorize Angelica, but also, simultaneously, to obscure the individuality of Angelica's being, just as the name "The Tenor" seeks to ascribe and circumscribe the singer's class identity.

Several scholars have explored the symbolic and social functions of Angelica's cross-dressing and androgyny. Although their conclusions vary widely, two distinct patterns of interpretation do emerge. A few analyses, perhaps shaped in accordance with Carol Senf's incorrect assertion that Book IV alone was "published as a separate work in 1899" (xi), focus solely on Book IV's content. These readings tend to see Grand's social critique as radical. For example, Demetris Bogiatzis reads Book IV as "a self-contained episode that harbors a more potent critique of patriarchy" than does the "main plot" of

The Heavenly Twins (46), and argues that Angelica is “a mouthpiece for Grand’s views” (54). In order to maintain this claim, Bogiatzis *must* ignore Book V – which was included in the 1899 novella version – for in it Angelica seems rueful and is ostensibly silenced. Nevertheless, while exploring the Tenor’s homoerotic attraction to the Boy and the collapse of gender stereotypes, Bogiatzis offers the important observation that “the narrative blurs sexual attraction between the sexes in order to illustrate the social constructedness of gender roles” (47).

Most analyses of Angelica’s cross-dressing and androgyny, however, do take the whole of *The Heavenly Twins*, or at least Books IV and V, into account. Often approaching the text as a logically sequenced linear argument, these analyses tend to privilege Book V over Book IV; correspondingly, Angelica-as-“Mrs. Kilroy of Ilverthorpe” is generally regarded as trumping or undercutting Angelica-as-“Boy.” For example, Senf sees Angelica as making a “docile return” to the confines of patriarchal marriage (x), tantamount, perhaps, to a “retreat from all that she has gone through and all that she has learned” (Navarette 46). Within the marriage, according to Heilmann, Angelica becomes a “tame child-wife cajoling her ‘Daddy’-husband for some pin money” (65) – after the perhaps “facetious, open-ended moral experiment” in cross-dressing that results in “manslaughter” (Kucich, *Power* 266, 265). This second type of reading tends to cast Grand’s social critique as moderate or conservative, or simply as theoretically confused, like the feminisms of her day.⁸

Kimberly Van Hoosier-Carey is right to object that

reading the ending as indicative of a return to conventional feminine norms not only erases the ways in which Grand’s characters perform various identities (conventional or not) but also ignores the novel’s struggle with the means by which narratives construct subjectivity. (222)

⁸ Carol Senf argues that Angelica’s marriage to Kilroy of Ilverthorpe and her “docile return to Mr. Kilroy may resemble the happy marriages of earlier Victorian fiction, but Grand’s is open-ended” (X). Susan Navarette registers discomfort with Angelica’s “retreat from all that she has gone through and all that she has learned” (46). Ann Heilmann explains Angelica’s transformation into “tame child-wife” thus: “The Tenor’s death propel[s] Angelica into...resigned acceptance of her subject position as a woman. By the end of her story (Book V) she has internalised the feminine imperative to the point of being ‘grateful for the blessing of a good man’s love’ (*HT* 551)” (65). John Kucich’s characterization of Angelica’s cross-dressing as a “facetious” experiment (*Power* 266) dovetails with Linda Dowling’s contention that “in fact, Angelica’s [cross-dressing] experiment has fatal consequences, sending her young man into a long decline from which he never recovers; he dies...a victim of the curiosity and fey experimentalism of the New Woman” (439). For Kucich, Angelica’s story, “so promising at first,...ends in neurosis and manslaughter,” whereupon “Angelica, the fabricator, lapses into a conventional and extremely limited sincerity” (265).

In fact, Heilmann, Kucich, and others *do* insightfully address Grand’s exploration of gender as performative and as socially constructed. In effect, however, they also “erase” or at least blur these fine insights by privileging Mrs. Kilroy of Ilverthorpe as the “conclusive” Angelica and permitting her ostensible bow to convention to trump or undercut Angelica-as-Boy. Interestingly, Grand suggests, through Angelica, an alternative to the notion of a stable, unified consciousness that develops in a linear direction over time.

Slowly, tentatively, Angelica builds an alternative, syncretic model of a consciousness composed of states of being that binary logic would categorize as mutually exclusive opposites. First, in trying to explain her motives for cross-dressing to the Tenor, as noted above, Angelica asserts: “I tell you I was a genuine boy. I moved like a boy, I felt like a boy; I was my own brother in very truth. Mentally and morally, I was exactly what you thought me” (*HT* 456). Her consciousness contains both maleness and femaleness in some psychologically “true” sense, a notion anticipated from the Proem’s presenting divinity as androgynous. Shortly thereafter, the Tenor angrily asks why Angelica-as-Boy did not inform him that Angelica-as-woman was married. “‘I – I forgot,’ she stammered.... ‘It is a curious fact,’ Angelica remarked upon reflection, and as if speaking to herself, ‘but I really had forgotten’” (*HT* 459). In some psychologically “true” sense she is both married and unmarried. Minutes later, Angelica tries to explain to the Tenor that hers is a syncretic consciousness:

“I see” – she broke off – “I see all the contradictions that are involved in what I have said and am saying, and yet I mean it all. In separate sections of my consciousness each separate clause exists at this moment, however contradictory, and there is no reconciling them; but there they are. I can’t understand it myself, and I don’t want you to try. All I ask you is to believe me – to forgive me.” (*HT* 461)

Here the notion of consciousness is both vastly expanded – to contain “opposites” like married and unmarried, male and female – and radically destabilized. The self Angelica performs in a given moment seems to *determine* her perception of her gender identity at, but not beyond, that moment. Finally, the performative nature of gender emphasized in Book IV implies that, for Grand, all gendered conduct is performed. Thus, as Van Hoosier-Carey points out, “Mrs. Kilroy of Ilverthorpe” is every bit as much a performed

construct as is "the Boy" (235). Tracing Angelica's relationship to clothing will bring this crucial point home.

For Angelica, *any* clothing is a prop for gender performance; simultaneously, *any* clothing obscures the complex gender identity of its wearer. While Angelica may suffer through the "proper," socially conformist performance generally expected of her after she reaches puberty – and especially after she marries – her remarkable ability to conceptualize her androgynous self as always half-disguised both liberates and comforts her. She avails herself of this solace before she cross-dresses in Book IV and also well afterwards, in the role of Mrs. Kilroy of Ilverthorpe. The epistemological implications cross the artificial borders of Book IV to infiltrate and, ideally, inform readings of the surrounding Books.

In Book III, for instance, the twins' father decides, late in their teenage years, that Angelica is "to be presented at Court and otherwise 'brought out' in proper splendour" (HT 320). Her appearance at dinner one night in her first long dress occasions a crisis for her brother Diavolo: he flees from the table, "crying as if his heart would break" (HT 274). Diavolo expects that his twin will essentially change when she dons women's clothing. He assumes some sort of correlation between what he sees and what she is. Angelica reassures him: "If I *do* wear a long [dress], it shall only be a disguise. I promise you, I'll be just as bad as ever in it" (HT 275). She can disguise herself well enough to perform "passingly" whichever gender she wishes or is obliged to; neither socially constructed masculinity nor socially constructed femininity is inherent in or definitive of her. "Boyish" and "womanly" are merely the subjective terms in which others read her. Even Diavolo, her intimate twin and well-loved companion, reads her thus reductively and poorly.

This point is further developed as the narrator describes in Book IV how differently the Tenor reads Angelica depending on her clothing. He perceives the "girl"-Angelica and the Boy-Angelica as essentially and absolutely

different. There was never any devilment in the girl's face; it was always pale and tranquil, almost to sadness, as the Tenor saw it....Her movements were all made, too, with a certain quiet dignity that seemed habitual. In the Boy, on the contrary, there was no trace of that graceful attribute....[I]t seemed as if he must always be at daggers drawn with dignity....In the girl, quiescence was the natural outcome of womanly reserve; in the Boy, it would have been mere

affectation. (HT 384-85)

When the Tenor discovers the Boy-Angelica's ruse, he is forced to abandon what the narrator calls "his foolishly fond way [of] idealizing," of upholding someone he reads as female as "his ideal of purity, his goddess of truth, his angel of pity" (HT 446). The Tenor's definitional constructs collapse around a silenced, inaccessible, complex, and misperceived Other.

As I noted above, most analyses of Angelica's cross-dressing and androgyny read her startling assumption of "wifeness" in Book V as a surrender to socially constructed gender norms after a perhaps noble, perhaps "fey," but certainly failed attempt to overturn them. In contrast, like Clare Taylor and Teresa Mangum, I read Angelica's "wifeness" as another form of costume-wearing. Taylor makes this excellent point as an aside when explaining the stutter in Angelica's notorious final sentence in *The Heavenly Twins*, which closes Book V: "[B]efore taking up her position as dutiful wife to Mr. Kilroy, [Angelica murmurs]: 'Don't let me go again, Daddy, keep me close. I am – I am grateful for the blessing of a good man's love' (HT 551). Angelica's stutter speaks of a form of resistance that then manifests itself linguistically and verbally: her subsequent transvestiture is as a speech-writer for her husband" (36). Taylor does not develop this point; her primary intent is to establish that Angelica derives sexual pleasure from fetishistic cross-dressing.⁹ But I find strong justification for linking this stutter to a strategic resistance to patriarchal domination.

Early in *The Heavenly Twins*, Diavolo relates that Angelica had compared herself to the famous stuttering political orator Demosthenes and had proclaimed that she aimed

to beat [him] hollow...delivering orations with a natural inclination to stammering was nothing to get over compared to the disabilities which being a girl impose[d] upon her; but she mean[t] to get over them all by hook, which she explain[ed] as being the proper development of her muscles and physique generally, and by crook, which she define[d] as circumventing the slave-drivers of her sex, a tack which she seem[ed] to think [could] be easily accomplished by finessing. (HT 73)

Angelica's girlhood proclamation foreshadows her first strategy for overcoming the

⁹ Taylor's thesis is that "the male costume seems to be the source of sexual excitement in itself, and provides Angelica with the means by which to conceive of a glorified female sexual self ('an ideal self') (36).

"disabilities" a Victorian woman faced *quâ* woman – to "develop...her muscles and physique" sufficiently to pass as a male and thus gain access to male privileges. Although this strategy, which is contingent on altering her physical embodiment, fails with the boating accident, Angelica discovers that "mentally and morally" she is able to *be* "a genuine boy" (HT 456). After her relationship with the Tenor collapses and she can no longer avoid being read in terms of the standardized Victorian construct of womanhood, Angelica begins to "finesse" her husband by performing the role of wife "properly." This second strategy, although it limits her autonomy, does "by crook" win her a political voice. However, the stutter that Taylor calls attention to and the other instances of Angelica's "stammering" cited above signify that, because Angelica is being read as a woman, she will face impediments as she tries to speak out for reform. The stutter Taylor highlights may also signify Angelica's change of strategy: the individual whom the Tenor wished to see as a "good woman" now takes on and takes over the class- and gender-enfranchised political voice of "a good man." Mentally and morally, Angelica occupies Mr. Kilroy of Ilverthorpe.

Indeed, Angelica's syncretic theory of consciousness enables readers to consider that the states of "good womanhood" and "good manhood" coexist within a single consciousness. As noted above, the Tenor's intent in his final words to Angelica seems to be to re-contain her within the traditional construction of "woman." But the words resonate differently for her in the days after their rift:

[T]he Tenor's parting words recurred to her, and with them came the recollection of the impression made at the moment by the deep yet diffident tone of earnest conviction in which he had uttered that last assurance: "You will do some good in the world – you will be a good woman yet, I know – I know you will."

Should she? was the question she now asked herself. Were the words prophetic? she wondered. And from that moment her thoughts took a new departure, and she was able, as it were, to stand aloof and look back at herself as she had been, and forward to herself as she might yet become. (HT 496)

The Tenor's words conflate his very conventional sense of what it means to be a "good woman" with the idea of "do[ing] some good in the world" – traditionally the achievement and province of men. In the "new departure" directly inspired by these words, Angelica-as-wife and Angelica-as-Mr. Kilroy-the-Parliamentarian are staged

simultaneously for the benefit of all British women.

The last we hear of the Kilroys of Ilverthorpe in *The Heavenly Twins* is through a letter from a male character who knows the couple well:

Angelica is very well and happy. Her devotion to her husband continues to be exemplary, and he has been good-natured enough to oblige her by delivering some of her speeches in parliament lately, with excellent effect....The one now in preparation... struck me as extremely able, and eminent for refinement as well as for force. (HT 567)

Here we see that Angelica's strategy succeeds. In fact, Angelica has found a way not only to broadcast her ideas nationwide by channeling them through her husband, but also to earn the admiration of intimate friends who recognize that the politically effective voice is "really" her own.¹⁰ The admiration of this particular character, Dr. Galbraith, may have been especially coveted, since the Tenor was one of his closest friends. As Mangum notes, Angelica

spends the rest of the novel (and of Grand's next novel, *The Beth Book*) writing speeches on behalf of women which her husband delivers as a willing mouthpiece. In effect, Angelica once again disguises herself as a man, but this time she becomes, one removed, a nearly invisible spy – a sober, kindly, elder statesman – in Parliament. (81)

While earning approval of social arbiters like Mr. Kilroy and Dr. Galbraith for her performance of "wifeness," Angelica surreptitiously and strategically dons her husband's voice in order to agitate for broad political and social reforms in the service of all women. Certainly this is a less self-interested, far less risky "cross-dressing" than her surreptitious, strategic wearing of "male" clothing in order to experience male privilege personally. But Books IV and V resonate forcefully together. At novel's end, the points Grand emphasized in Book IV stand: readers are obliged to view gender and class differences as social constructs, not as ontological inevitabilities, and we are invited to imagine a single human consciousness as a site where many "opposite" identities coexist.

¹⁰ John Kucich offers a bleaker take on this. Recalling that "one sore spot among 1890s feminists was the stock argument that an ability to manipulate their husbands was the only political power women needed," Kucich sees the fact that "Angelica gains only the small victory of having her husband read some of her speeches in Parliament" as "one of Grand's most bitter echoes of George Eliot" (*Power* 265-66).

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*The Other Serpents: Deviance and Contagion
in "The Speckled Band"*

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According to Dr. Watson, Sherlock Holmes resolved his mysteries through "rapid deductions, as swift as intuitions and yet always founded on a logical basis" (Doyle 558). Yet, for more than a century after its original publication, the deductions made at the end of Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" (1892) still sit uneasily with its exotic allusions and unresolved anomalies, so much so that the tale has continued to provoke questions. Here, the story is investigated from an imperialist perspective, examining how such instability relates to the work's insistent and pervasive associations between colonial influence, deviance, and contagion.

The mystery begins when Holmes is visited by a terrified young woman named Helen Stoner, whose twin sister Julia has died, suddenly and inexplicably, the night before her wedding – but with "no marks of any violence upon her" (Doyle 564). In appealing to Holmes for help, however, Helen first describes the girls' domineering stepfather, Dr. Grimesby Roylott. Roylott is heir to an English country estate but one which has been impoverished over the centuries by a succession of "dissolute and wasteful" profligates (560), leaving only a few acres and a heavily-mortgaged, two-hundred-year old house. Attempting to forge a new path, Roylott trained as a medical doctor and went out to Calcutta, where he established a large practice; however, in a rage after being burgled, he killed his Indian butler and was imprisoned there for several years. Shortly after his return to England, "a morose and disappointed man," he married a young widow, Mrs. Stoner, who died in an unexplained "railway accident" (561). She leaves behind twin girls from her first marriage, who will inherit a substantial annual income from her when they marry. Helen describes how the situation deteriorated after her mother's death:

But a terrible change came over our stepfather about this time. Instead of making friends and exchanging visits with our neighbours, who had at first been overjoyed to see a Roylott of Stoke Moran back in the old family seat, he shut himself up in the house and seldom came out save to indulge in ferocious

quarrels with whoever might cross his path. Violence of temper approaching to mania has been hereditary in the men of the family, and in my stepfather's case it had, I believe, been intensified by his long residence in the tropics. (561)

Roylott's mysteriously erratic behavior means that the family's pastoral Surrey household is far from being an idyllic British home; instead, it is a distorted version of that idyll and one bearing a distinctly colonial character. Dominated by the unpredictable raja-like figure of their stepfather, the estate becomes his personal fiefdom, British-owned yet separated from the British community and its social mores. Helen refers to it as "the plantation," where she and her older sister are isolated from society and only "occasionally allowed to pay short visits" to a maiden aunt (562). Ostensibly, although an English space, it is Orientalized as a place of *Purdah*, where the domestic ideology is effectively taken to extremes and turned in upon itself.¹ At the same time, rather than the estate's external space providing the domestic sanctuary of a safe English garden, it is a disrupted landscape, peopled by bands of gypsies whom Roylott invites to live there. As such, it parallels the wider "landscape of Victorian Britain" that Philippa Levine describes as the era's uniquely "imperial culture," where the culture itself is a space invaded from the outside by various colonial influences (52).

It is particularly significant that those who invade this domestic space are gypsies. Although gypsies are now known to have been present in Europe for some seven centuries (Barth 31), it is their Asian origins that contemporary commentators highlight, pointing out that it was "generally believed that gypsies migrated from India" (Charnock 96).² The darker skin color of the gypsy peoples, their nomadic lifestyle and the linguistic connections between Romany and certain Indian dialects lent credence to such beliefs (Matras 3).³ As Edward Rochester's disguise in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) suggests, being of Eastern European and Asian origin, gypsies symbolized that which was foreign, exotic, and mysterious. The gypsies' tents in the garden enact a reversed and

¹ *Purdah* is "the seclusion of women from the sight of strangers, traditional in Hindu and Muslim communities" (*The Chambers Dictionary* [Edinburgh: Chambers Harrap Publishers Ltd, 1998]).

² For further discussion of the history and origins of gypsies see David M. Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994); also, Diane Tong's *Gypsies: A Multidisciplinary Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995).

³ Yaron Matras points out that August Pott's *Comparative Grammar and Etymological Dictionary of Romani* (published 1844-45) established evidence of the migration history of the Romanis from India to Europe.

specifically Eastern colonization, a contamination by the multiple, uncontrollable, and transient racial and cultural elements of the British Empire. As Helen Stoner tells Holmes and Watson, Roylott

had no friends at all save the wandering gypsies, and he would give these vagabonds leave to encamp upon the few acres of bramble-covered land which represent the family estate, and would accept in return the hospitality of their tents, wandering away with them sometimes for weeks on end. He has a passion also for Indian animals, which are sent over to him by a correspondent, and he has at this moment a cheetah and a baboon, which wander freely over his grounds and are feared by the villagers almost as much as their master. (561)

Roylott's own deviant behavior and criminal past exclude him from conventional Victorian society; if he is to associate with anyone, it can only be those on society's fringes, those rejected as deviants on the basis of their race and lifestyle. It might also be considered that keeping the villagers fearful means that they also stay away from the estate and are, therefore, less likely to investigate or interfere with Roylott's intentions towards his step-daughters.

Helen's anxiety about transience and "wandering" as forms of deviance echoes established perceptions of gypsies as, literally, "outlandish persons," folk whom the Ethnological Society of London described at the time as maintaining "a strange kind of commonwealth among themselves of wandering impostors [sic] and jugglers" (Crawford 25). In this context, movement is essentially a deviation from fixity and security, home and enclosure, so that it becomes a form of "shiftiness," with all its negative connotations of deceitfulness of character, evasiveness, and untrustworthiness. These condemnations of oriental-derived behavior and ways of life are accompanied by moral judgments about sanitation and class that emerged from contemporary reports of gypsies, that "in their own country, they belonged to one of the lowest castes, which resemble them in their appearance, habits, and especially in their fondness for carrion and other unclean food" (Charnock 96). These circumstances serve as a backdrop against which Doyle's gypsies signify not merely that which is different but, more particularly, that which is distasteful and "unclean" about colonial influence.

Seduced by the kinship of these anarchic, oriental influences, Roylott, the representative of the English nobility, is portrayed as having become blind to his patriotic

and class obligations. Instead, he epitomizes the false and twisted nobility of his class, where neglected duty and heritage have made the family home a disordered "picture of a ruin" (Doyle 569). As Levine points out, "English space was the polar opposite of colonial spaces which were invariably too crowded, hopelessly messy, loud and unordered. The image of the chaotic east and a well-regulated harmonious Britain was a potent one" (297). Levine's contrast of Eastern chaos and British harmony reflects contemporary perceptions of the colonial as a threat to the homogeneity of English society and values; it also rejects the picaresque and chaotic as fundamentally foreign by nature while simultaneously fostering a parallel myth of English coherence and unity.

Doyle's targeting of the chaotic Indian gypsies as part of Roylott's moral downfall emerges out of anxiety over other instabilities, particularly in imperial Britain's image as the protector of order and further, corresponding shifts in contemporary concepts of the family. As a step-father, ostensibly Roylott's position is one of family responsibility, requiring the allegiance of "his" daughters; however, it is also a role of dislocated paternity, the enactment of ownership through an inherently artificial "union," which lacks the substance of blood ties. This emulates the instability of the British relationship with colonial India, where the latter is owned and legally incorporated into the imperial "family," although there is an absence of actual blood bonding. This anxiety over disputed family boundaries recurs in the "predatory" and "dysfunctional" fathers and husbands who feature in ten of the twelve stories in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, a dysfunction rooted in the era's social, religious, and legal changes (Barsham 128). Contrary to the assertion by Rosemary Hennessy and Rajeswari Mohan that during the late-nineteenth-century "the formal arrangement of the family remained the same, legalized in the heterosexual monogamous Christian marriage," it seems that concepts of marriage and family were very much in flux, not least because of the period's unprecedented and increasingly rapid secularization of the law (Hodgson 393). As Sybil Wolfram and Mary Jean Corbett have indicated, entirely new arguments were emerging over issues of consanguinity and the boundaries of marriage and family, pressures that revealed a "continuous cultural tension between the claims of birth and the dictates of matrimony" (Corbett 15).⁴ This tension exists at the heart of the "marriage" between

⁴ Marriage to a dead wife's sister was illegal until 1907, despite the issue being debated annually since

Britain and India – an essentially forced and arranged marriage – and, to the same degree, in its literary representation as the specter of incest underlying Roylott's kinship with the Stoner girls.

Adam Kuper points out that the 1890s was a time that was “almost obsessively concerned with the question of the incest taboo. And as it turned out, some of the most difficult issues that arose from the secularization of marriage policy had to do with the regulation of incest and inbreeding” (160). Doyle's rendering of Helen and Julia Stoner's oppression by such a deviant, false father-figure would clearly warrant, therefore, more extensive investigation. As a result, “The Speckled Band” has recently been interpreted as a fantasy of intended “incestuous rape,” a conclusion corresponding to the portrayal of Roylott as a figure of tyrannical, distorted patriarchy, who exists beyond the law and social convention (Kestner 90). Roylott's individual degeneration mirrors that of the aristocratic ranks into which he was born; his moral bankruptcy is cultural and hereditary, his forbears increasingly “dissolute” until “the family's ruin was eventually completed by a gambler in the days of the Regency” (Doyle 560). Considered from an imperialist perspective, the crime of incest mirrors the subjugation, conquest, and fear that increasingly characterized the Anglo-Indian relationship. In this, however, it becomes a convenient justification for such deviance, part of a phenomenon Catherine Wynn describes as Empire being “exploited to allow for corruption and degeneracy at the heart of English civility” (123).

Individually, the story's indicators of domestic violence and incest may not be conclusive; however, reviewed as a whole, they comprise a notably cohesive, alternative sub-narrative. Helen, for example, states how the girls “had no feeling of security unless our doors were locked” (561), ostensibly because of Roylott's animals; yet, while these were permitted to “wander freely over his grounds,” there is no mention of them being allowed inside the house: against whom, then, were the girls locking their doors? Helen describes how, as her sister died, she “stabbed with her finger into the air in the direction of the doctor's room,” an action that strongly suggests an accusation, perhaps of murder,

1842; it constituted “one of the most protracted struggles in British Parliamentary history. It took 65 years, 46 sessions of debate, 18 successful readings in the House of Commons to effect this piece of legislation, and in the meantime there had been annual leaders in *The Times* on the subject, pamphlets in the hundreds, a Marriage Law Defence Association and a Marriage Law Defence Union” (Wolfram 30).

as the story suggests, but quite possibly also of other activities relating to bedrooms and boundaries. When Holmes spots the fingerprint bruises on Helen's wrist, he accuses her of “screening” her stepfather before commenting that she has “been cruelly used,” a phrase redolent with sexual as well as violent connotations. Blushing deeply, Helen excuses Roylott as “a hard man” who “hardly knows his own strength”; immediately afterwards, Watson describes an unexplained “long silence, during which Holmes leaned his chin upon his hands and stared into the crackling fire” (565). Just when Helen seems on the brink of revealing more, Holmes's examination turns away from her to the fire, becoming more meditative than determinedly analytical. The sudden gap in the text suggests that Helen may be suffering from literally “unspeakable” acts, such as violence or incest, which cannot be articulated further either by her or within this text. Later, when Watson and Holmes join Helen in Surrey, she seems to attempt further revelations when she describes Roylott as “so cunning that I never know when I am safe from him” (569); again, Holmes neglects to pursue the thinly-veiled reference to domestic violence by Roylott, perhaps precisely because the girls' and their step-father's different genders and power positions present other sexual and incestuous overtones. Holmes's refusal to explore these aspects further implies more about Doyle's authorial role than his story's character or plot; Holmes's twice turning away from Helen's attempts to reveal possibly crucial clues suggests Doyle's awareness of his readership's limits, their sensibilities and inhibitions about such persistently taboo subjects as incest and venereal disease.

At the center of these various themes of kinship, incest, and sexuality is the story's iconic snake. A conspicuously exotic, colonial import, the serpent is associated with sin, but it is also specifically associated with woman's corruption and transgressive carnal knowledge. The “homely” domesticated order of the girls' bedrooms contrast as sharply with the serpent's sliding, phallic sensuality as does the white, altar-like innocence of Julia's bed and its being brutally nailed to the floor (570). The association between the bed, possession, and violence is emphasized by the dog-leash hung on the corner of Roylott's bed, “curled upon itself and tied so as to make a whipcord” (574).

While invasion from the outside threatens the internal, domestic, English order of the bedroom, it is the two-fold animal aggression of the imported cheetah and baboon that violates the boundaries of Roylott's private Empire. In Roylott's patient, methodical

attempt to kill his step-daughters, he is as calculating, stealthy, and almost silent as the snake and the cheetah; yet, at the same time, he has a “violence of temper approaching to mania” that previously prompted him to beat his Indian butler to death and to attack the local blacksmith (561). In his “seldom [coming] out save to indulge in ferocious quarrels with whoever might cross his path,” Roylott shares the baboon’s vicious volatility, which at one point lunges out of the darkness into Watson and Holmes’s path, like a “hideous and distorted child” (547) – an image reminiscent of the disfigured offspring of incestuous relations.

Alongside these undercurrents of violence and incest, evidence can be found for a concurrent discourse about sexual contagion from the East. In his study of nineteenth-century syphilis in East Asia, Sheldon Watts contends that repressive British sexual values prompted “an increase in extramarital sexual intercourse, especially with prostitutes [which], in turn, magnified the transmission of syphilis and other sexually transmitted diseases” (124). As a medical doctor, Doyle would have been aware not only of efforts to regulate contagious diseases in the colonies but also of the significant advances in microscope technology taking place in the late nineteenth-century (Kaminsky 78).⁵ The snake climbing the bell-pull in the story’s pivotal scene seems to bear more than a coincidental resemblance to the spiral, helical structure of the syphilis bacteria, that allows it to move in an upward-twisting corkscrew motion (see Figure 1 below).

⁵ For further discussion of the development of microscope technology, see S. Bradbury, *The Evolution of the Microscope* (Oxford and London: Pergamon Press Ltd., 1967).

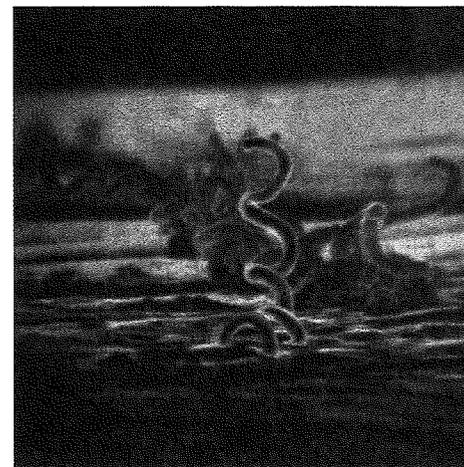


Figure 1. *Treponema pallidum* (Virtual Museum of Bacteria)

At the same time, Roylott’s volatile behavior correlates with symptoms of secondary syphilis, a further key symptom of which is the distinctive “speckled” rash, which has long been associated with the disease.⁶ Indeed, madness, deviant sexuality, and financial problems were often associated; as Linda and Michael Hutcheon point out in relation to the eighteenth century, “pox, debt and insanity were often seen as the logical outcomes of a life of dissolution” (102).

These syphilitic connections add new significance to Helen Stoner’s description of her dying sister’s use of the adjective “speckled” as “strange” (Doyle 561). The word is forefronted in the story’s title and in the fictitious snake’s name; it recurs, too, in the patterning of the “lichen-blotched” stone of the mansion and in the cheetah’s coat, a creature who remains as pointedly covert as a taboo disease, a terrifying, lethal, and

⁶ Rashes associated with secondary syphilis can appear as the chancre is healing or several weeks after the chancre has healed. The characteristic rash of secondary syphilis may appear as rough, red, or reddish brown spots, both on the palms of the hands and the bottoms of the feet (<http://www.bacteriamuseum.org/species/Tpallidum.shtml>). Examples of early literary references to syphilis would include those discussed by Colin Milburn in “Syphilis in Faerie Land: Edmund Spenser and the Syphilography of Elizabethan England” (*Criticism* 46:4 [2004]: 597-632).

roaming presence in the darkness.⁷ Speckling can also be viewed in colonial terms as a diseased, darker skin color appearing against a lighter background, an undesirable invasion of the paler pigment.

Alongside colonial violence, irrationality, and contagion, Roylott's regression away from civilized norms depicts the degeneration of a unified, muscular, and masculine Empire. Helen blames Roylott's worsened character and temper on "his long residence in the tropics" (561) and when, hunter-like, he "traces" his step-daughter to Holmes's residence, his behavior and appearance are bizarre (567). To demonstrate his strength, he bends a poker out of shape, an obviously phallic symbol but also an implement that controls a heat as fiery as that of India, a heat that can fuel British hearth and home but is, at the same time, a potentially destructive force if not properly controlled. Roylott's complexion has come to resemble that of another race, in being "burned yellow with the sun"; his appearance has become "a peculiar mixture of the professional and of the agricultural, having a black top-hat, a long frock-coat, and a pair of high gaiters, with a hunting-crop swinging in his hand" (566). These individual items denote involvement with agriculture but, more specifically, they relate to hunting, a prerogative of privileged classes and a popular colonial pastime. In hunting, there exist juxtaposed elements of violence and pleasure, and – as a method of land management and control – the motivations underlying it correspond closely with that of the broader colonial enterprise. Meanwhile, the fragmented nature of Roylott's outfit reflects his own lost cohesion and meaning, as well as his alienation from the established hierarchy and community. The colonial influences upon him, past and present, have laid bare civilized man's inner confusion, exposing monstrosities of inner turmoil and disorder similar to those portrayed by Robert Louis Stevenson in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1885).

If Roylott personifies a distorted, colonial, British upper class, he also depicts, like the corrupt step-father in Doyle's *The Case of Identity*, the deeper moral bankruptcy of patriarchy and masculinity, whereby men "become perverse fathers and step-fathers through ruthless exploitation of patriarchal dominance" (Kestner 76). Rosemary Jann suggests that "the crimes that Doyle fears are less violations of the official law than challenges to the social and sexual conventions that insured order in his world" (704). As

⁷ The word "cheetah" stems from the Hindi word *cita* meaning variegated or speckled body.

a murderer, Roylott would violate the "official law"; however, as a diseased and incestuous step-father, he violates the very bedrock of social and sexual convention – the family itself. His role is subversive – not simply because he commits murder, or because he operates from the inside but, rather, that his deviance causes outsiders to enter the sanctity of the home; even as he invites gypsies into its environs, his behavior warrants Holmes and Watson's intervention into its bedrooms.

While the detective and the doctor personify social institutions and relatively fixed, predictable British values (in comparison to those of Roylott, at any rate), they are also part of what Suzy Anger describes as the period's "strange pre-eminence of a category of characters who stand on the margins of the family...such as benefactors, mediators, donors, and patrons" (174). Such characters police the family's borders, stepping in when its members stray, preserving and protecting the institution of which – at this stage, at least – neither Holmes nor Watson is a part. It is Roylott's villainy that accentuates and creates the need for Holmes and Watson, as contrasting exemplars of more effective manhood who appear to retain a purity of objectives outside family, sexuality, and gender, even as they uphold its established order. Rob Shields points out that Sherlock Holmes is "an insider who nonetheless maintains an outsider status" and, therefore, violates "the division of near and far" (68). It is exactly this mobility that qualifies him to "fix" the aberrant behavior of others. Dr. Grimesby Roylott, on the other hand, exemplifies the impossibility of unifying the "far" colonial and the "near" English: his misuse of the exotic snake as a weapon and his inability to control it is, ultimately, what causes his death. The extent of his divided personality is evident in the final image of the "speckled band" snake wrapped about his head, hinting again at the colonial infection of his brain in its emulation of an Indian turban.

Rosemary Jann suggests that "behind the almost compulsive insistence on orderliness in the Holmes stories, we can feel the anxious pressure of instability and disorder" (705). In "The Speckled Band," the instability arises from the impossibility of Doyle referring directly to taboo subjects; the story's "insidious double discourse" and its apparently conclusive, swift resolution present a "consistently contradictory pattern" typical of nineteenth-century fiction about controversial topics (Thomas 678). The misalignment between the circumstances presented in the tale and its fictional rendering

resembles that of Doyle's *The Adventure of the Yellow Face*, in which "Holmes does not correctly discern who it is that hides behind what is quite plainly a mask...[He] imagines a tale of illness, deception, and blackmail to take the place of the unimaginable crime, and he gets it all wrong" (676). In this instance, Holmes's conclusions seem based more on what it is possible to articulate, the more easily-presented fictions of meditative fire-gazing, rather than the evidence itself.

Holmes's explanation of Julia Stoner's mysterious death in "The Speckled Band" seems almost determined to ignore several crucial problems: the non-existence of a snake of this type; the implausibility of successfully training a snake to respond to a whistled command, particularly between two rooms; and the difficulty of keeping such an exotic creature alive for over two years in a metal safe (Murphy 59). The mismatch between these inconsistencies and Doyle's famously fastidious approach to research invites interpretation of a more metaphorical nature. As Stephen Knight suggests, "the early Holmes stories realized fears that the respectable audience had about their own weaknesses. Selfishness, greed, sexual tensions...[these] forces are not explored fully, not brought out into an analytic, unmasking light" (64).

The tensions of "The Speckled Band" are so apparent that they demand broader interpretation, effectively to "unmask" the story's real concerns through deeper, more complex analysis. The silences and discrepancies represent the unarticulated yet ever-present horrors of colonial and sexual exploitation, disguised as benevolent paternalism. The loss of freedom and possible sexual colonization of two young Englishwomen read as a metaphor for the era's victimization of colonial nations, where identity and value are stolen by means of rapacious abuse. Doyle portrays the ultimate reciprocal invasion that results from that relationship, whereby the invader is himself invaded by the diseased repercussions of the unnatural paradigm, and the contagion spreads to his property, people, and land. The insidious syphilitic disease, however metaphorical, represents the destruction of the innocence, health, and stability of family, marriage, and home by empire's lustful greed.

Connecting the colonial aspects of "The Speckled Band" establishes within Doyle's literary form a unifying thread between imperialism, patriarchy, and ownership. However, it also highlights the bond between financial motives, such as those Roylott

might have for murdering his step-daughters to gain their inheritances, and issues of family, inheritance, and sexuality. These factors are inseparable from their nineteenth-century colonial context, infecting and undermining the apparently cohesive fabric of its society and character, just as they do the mystery's supposed explanation. Through the transgression of contested, colonial boundaries, Doyle displays the instability of relationships based on protection, ownership, and obligation, and their true nature as distorted, abusive, and tyrannical. In doing so, he provides his fiction with an after-life, leaving the difficult to discern real stories to be unearthed beneath the "rapid deductions" and easily-read fictions.

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Caliban upon the Demiurge: Gnosticism on the Island
in "Caliban upon Setebos"

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In a seminal article on Robert Browning's "Caliban upon Setebos: Natural Theology on the Island," C. R. Tracy summarizes various interpretations of the poem. One is to see it as a play on the argument by design. In *Natural Theology* (1802), William Paley proposed a metaphor that explains this concept. He describes a watch designed by a craftsman to perform its task: "It requires indeed an examination of the instrument, and perhaps some previous knowledge of the subject, to perceive and understand it, but being, as we have said, observed and understood, the evidence, we think is inevitable; the watch must have a maker" (2). So, he asserts, must the universe. Thus, one critical approach to the poem is Browning's playful refutation of Paley's argument through Caliban's theology that is based on flawed human reason.

Another interpretation points out allusions to *Origin of Species*, which had been published in 1859, just five years before "Caliban upon Setebos." This reading suggests that the poem comments on Darwinists' rejection of spiritual revelation and failure to see beyond the random chance of nature, as personified in Caliban's conception of Setebos. Yet a third interpretation holds that Caliban's musings on how he might treat lesser creatures were he Setebos reflects the angry Calvinist God of the dissenters. And finally, the poem offers a perspective on the Higher Criticism from Germany, much discussed in Browning's day, which asserts that humanity created gods in its own image rather than vice versa. The poem's epigraph from Psalms, "Thou thoughtest that I was such a one as thyself" (50:21), can be seen as a prompt to the reader for any of these readings.

Each approach is persuasive, and the poem offers textual support for all of them. But another source for Caliban's speculations and a unifying frame for other interpretations might be the natural theology third-century C. E. writer Hippolytus of Rome refers to at the outset of his *Refutation of All Heresies*, in which he proposes "to furnish an account of the tenets of natural philosophers" (25). The natural philosophy Hippolytus and other Christian apologists for orthodoxy were especially concerned with refuting in the second and third centuries was the ancient Christian heresy of Gnosticism.

The elements of Gnostic myth and cosmogony that were known in Browning's time serve as an excellent framework and background for the poet's satirical commentary on religious issues. But more importantly, the Gnostic concept of the Unknown God supports his own spiritual vision of a remote and ultimately unknowable deity.

Gnosticism posed a real threat to Christian orthodoxy, but the power of Rome won out during the third and fourth centuries. Though the Gnostic fathers were prolific writers, the church succeeded in destroying most of their works. The discovery of the Nag Hammadi gospels in 1945 has provided a treasury of information about and a renewed interest in this ancient heresy. But the essential elements of Gnosticism were well known in the nineteenth century from the writings of church heresiologists, which, unlike Gnostic writings, survived the centuries. In one of the ironies of history, the Gnostics' beliefs lived on in the writings of those who sought most diligently to discredit them. Second-century church fathers such as Irenaeus, Hippolytus of Rome, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian, apologists for Christian orthodoxy, wrote refutations of Gnostic beliefs, thus preserving them. The works of these heresiologists provided the source for knowledge of Gnosticism in nineteenth-century church histories and even a rather extensive article in the 1860 Eighth Edition of *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*.¹

Gnosticism posits a dualistic world view in which the individual must achieve gnosis, which translates as knowledge of the divine spark within and its origin, in order to find the realm of light after death. Irenaeus describes the Gnostic belief that there are three "elements" among humans. The first element is the left handed, or *hylics*, who are limited to the material world and are incapable of gnosis. The second is the ensouled element, the "right handed," called *psychics*, who are capable of working toward salvation in achieving gnosis. The third element is the spiritual, the *pneumatics*, who are an elect sent into this world with gnosis (Haardt 8). Such a belief system seems harmless enough on the surface, but the doctrine of gnosis and other elements of the Gnostic mythos presented very real and practical dangers to the early church's power. Salvation, in the orthodox Christian view, came from faith, good works, and the sacraments, the latter only available from the established Church. Moreover, early Christian doctrine posited the resurrection of the body, which the Gnostics deemed only corrupt matter to be

¹ The nearly three-page entry refers to the works of all the church heresiologists quoted in this article.

left behind at death for those who find the light. We see an early indication of the threat posed by Gnosticism even in St. Paul's warning to "Avoid the godless chatter and contradiction of what is falsely called knowledge, for by professing it, some have missed the mark as regards the faith" (1 Tim. 6.20).²

The early Church quickly developed a rigid organization with authority vested in Rome and demanded orthodoxy. Gnosticism, on the other hand, shows little evidence of a central organization or canon of beliefs in the various approaches, which range from Mandeian, Orphite and Valentinian to Manichean (the end result of Iranian Gnosticism) and many others. Most of these paths involved various magical and occult practices, and Irenaeus identified Simon Magus, the magician from Acts of the Apostles (8.9-24), as the first Gnostic.

The doctrine of gnosis is the common denominator for all Gnostic teachers. A second common belief among Gnostic paths that the Victorians would have known of is the conviction that the material world is fatally flawed, created by an imperfect and selfish god, characteristically equated with the Hebrew Jehovah. Beyond the corruption of this world is a remote Unknown God, who could not have created a material world. "Spirit from above was good; flesh and matter, from below, were bad," writes Robert Grant (17). This view could have come to the Victorians from many ancient writers whose works survived, including the Neo-Platonist Plotinus, who takes issue with the Gnostic view in his *Enneads* when he notes that since they "make of our human discipline a mockery," they find that "of all earthly things nothing is of value for them" (II: 9, 13).

Gnosticism, then, begins with a Judeo-Christian assumption: that the material world is flawed. Gnostics, however, attribute the evils of earthly life not to original sin but to the world's and humanity's initial creation and creator. The true God, the Gnostics believed, is remote and unknowable, beyond all matter. This Unknown God, according to Irenaeus's critique of Gnostic theology, is "incomprehensible and invisible, eternal and ingenerate" (23). The Unknown God created a Pleroma ("fullness") and "emanated" a number of spiritual beings called Aeons, described by Irenaeus as "the thirty Aeons of their erroneous system" (25). Most are named as personified abstractions, such as

² Quotations from The Bible are taken from the Revised Standard Version, Second Edition.

“Silence,” “Thought,” and “Wisdom.” Accounts from the church fathers describe a bewilderingly complicated mythology of emanations from the Unknown God in creating the original Aeons and their emanations to create others. Christ is one of the great Aeons, but is not portrayed as co-equal to the Unknown God. The Gnostic fathers were clearly influenced by Platonic idealism in their conception of the Pleroma, which is portrayed as the source of ideal forms, including an original Adam, or First Man, on whom the earthly one is based.

But central to the Gnostic mythos are the actions of the Aeon Sophia, sometimes called, among other names, Acamoth. She emanated, in error or by accident, depending on the account, the Demiurge, also called the Archon, from the realm of shadow beyond the light of the Pleroma. He created the earth and rules the spheres, similar to those of the Ptolemaic cosmology. He also emanated other Archons for each sphere as well as angels of his own. The Demiurge, then, not the Unknown God, is the creator of the material world. The Gnostics’ rejection of the physical world is rooted in their description of the Demiurge, who in the various systems is seen as ignorant or evil. His creation would of necessity be corrupt. According to Gnostic teachings, writes Ptolemaeus, the Demiurge

believed he made these things by himself, but in reality he made them under the influence of Acamoth. He created a heaven without knowing heaven. He formed a man and did not know man. He produced earth, without knowing earth. He knew nothing of all the ideas of the things he made or of the mother [Acamoth/Sophia]. (133)

The Demiurge created Adam and Eve, but Sophia had implanted the spirit of light in him which he unknowingly transmitted to humanity. Thus, this divine spark, through gnosis, can, by mystical and arcane practices, transcend the material world and reach the realm of light after death.

Caliban’s speculation about Setebos in his “natural theology” has too many parallels with Gnosticism, as described by the Church fathers, to seem accidental. As Caliban reclines in the warm mire under his Pompion plant, seeking enlightenment akin to Siddhartha Gautama under the Bodhi tree and avoiding work assigned by Prospero, he begins his speculation. “Setebos, Setebos, and Setebos!”, he muses, “Thinketh, He dwelleth i’ the cold o’ the moon” (24-5). His musings differ a bit from the Valentinian Gnostic description of the spheres of the material world the Demiurge created, but it is

close. Irenaeus reports that Valentinians believed the Demiurge

became Father and God of all things outside the Fullness [Pleroma], inasmuch as he is the Maker of all the ensouled and material beings. For it was he who distinguished the two substances that were confused and made corporeal out of incorporeal things. He made the heavenly and earthly things, and became the Maker of the material and ensouled beings...He made also seven heavens, above which he himself exists. (33)

All of the Demiurge’s creation lies in the realm of shadow, far from the Pleroma. The moon and sun appear frequently in what we know of Gnostic cosmology, and the Demiurge lived beyond the moon in the sphere of the sun.³ Browning has Caliban place Setebos, like the Gnostics’ Demiurge, well outside the Earth.

Caliban speculates that Setebos “did, in envy, listlessness or sport / Make what Himself would fain, in a manner, be,” the material world (61-2); but not, as he had speculated a few lines earlier, portentously to the development of the poem’s thought, “the stars; the stars came otherwise” (27). Caliban’s creation myth suggests the primitive natural theology from classical paganism, with gods and goddesses behaving and misbehaving in quite human fashion, as well as the concepts of the higher criticism which posits that humanity made even the Judeo-Christian God in its own image. It moreover suggests an ironic play on the attempt to find the designer through examining the design. But Caliban’s Setebos also closely resembles the Demiurge of Gnostic myth, seen especially in the reference to the stars. In the Gnostic cosmology, the stars are indeed beyond the seven spheres that were created by the Demiurge, each with its own Archon and named for the planets.

As to why Setebos created the material world, Caliban muses, “Thinketh, it came of being ill at ease” (31); and as a metaphor he uses the example of the fish that escapes icy sea water to a stream but cannot live there and thus loves and hates warmth. Therefore, “He made all these and more, / Made all we see, and us, in spite: how else?” (55-7). Caliban’s speculation about Setebos’ motivation once again fits the pattern of creation myths from the various Gnostic schools as reported by Church heresiologists, though the various paths differ in detail. Most portray the Demiurge as a jealous god, like Setebos. Irenaeus reports a creation story from the Orphite Gnostics that is suggestive of

³ The concept of multiple heavens is deeply engrained in Jewish and Christian cosmology as well as in Gnosticism. In the Hebrew first century BCE *Book of Enoch*, for instance, Enoch visits ten heavens.

Caliban's Setebos. The Demiurge created angels who rebelled, much like Satan and his minions in the Christian tradition. When the Demiurge had quelled the revolt, he resolved, "I am the father and above me is no one," an assertion which Sophia from above disputed, informing him of his true nature and the Pleroma. Thus, in envy of the Unknown God, the Demiurge declared, "Come, let us make a man to the image" (97-8). His first attempt failed, but Sophia tricked him into revising his creation and breathing into Adam the light she had accidentally imparted to the Demiurge. Thus, this Adam who is created from the material world, "gave thanks to the First Man" (the ideal First Man in the Pleroma),⁴ abandoning his makers and angering the Demiurge.

In another version of the Gnostic creation myth, Irenaeus describes the belief of the Orphite Gnostics that after his angels created a very imperfect man, they brought their failure to the Demiurge (here he's called Jaldabaoth) for assistance. He breathed life into the creation, transmitting the spark of light that Sophia had imparted in his emanation. When the man gave thanks to First Man in the Pleroma, Jaldabaoth "was jealous and wanted to devise a way by which to deprive man [of power] with the creation of a woman," leading to the creation of Eve and eventually expulsion from the garden. In the Gnostic version of the "Genesis" story, Sophia leads Eve to eat of the fruit of the tree and persuade Adam to follow suit, which gives them knowledge, or gnosis. The Demiurge had forbidden them knowledge and expels them from the Garden (Irenaeus 98). The author of the "The Apocryphon of John," a Gnostic work well known and liberally cited by the early church fathers, quotes the Demiurge in words reminiscent of the Jewish Jehovah, with whom the Gnostics identified him: "I am a jealous God and there is no other God beside me" (*Nag Hammadi Library* 112).

Setebos, as Caliban imagines him, reflects the Demiurge's jealousy and anger. Caliban speculates, "Oh, He hath made things worthier than Himself, / And envieth that, so helped, such things do more / Than He who made them" (112-14). He follows with the example of the pipe that calls the jay, thinking it had achieved this feat itself rather than through its maker, and is thus clearly guilty of hubris. "Would not I smash it with my

⁴ This allusion to what seems an ideal form reinforces Tertullian's commentary on Plato's influence on the Gnostics: "This is where they get their distinction between the bodily senses and the intellect which they use in their interpretation of the wise and foolish virgins [Matthew 25: 1-13]. Thus, the five foolish virgins are said to be the senses who are foolish because so easily deceived while the wise virgin typifies the intellect, which can perceive the secret and supernal truth hidden in the fullness of God" (219-20).

foot? So He" (126), says Caliban: so also the Demiurge in Gnostic myth in seeking to deny humankind knowledge.

These textual examples suggest the Gnostics' Demiurge. But the most apparent allusions to the Gnostic mythos are Caliban's thoughts about The Quiet. When he laments of Setebos, "But wherefore rough, why cold and ill at ease?" (127), he begins his speculation about "something over Setebos / That made Him": or as he muses in his fractured syntax, a "something" that he was in conflict with. "There may be something quiet o'er His head," a god that is "Out of His reach, that feels nor joy nor grief, / Since both derive from weakness in some way" (132-34). He reasons that he feels joy when he captures quails, but would not feel such joy could he have quails any time he wished. Thus,

This Quiet, all it hath a mind to, doth.
'Esteemeth stars the outposts of its couch,
But never spends much thought nor care that way. (137-39)

Setebos, then,

Looks up, first, and perceives he cannot soar
To what is quiet and hath happy life;
Next looks down here, and out of very spite
Makes this a bauble-world to ape yon real. (144-47)

The reference to a "bauble-world" again suggests the Gnostics' adaptation of Platonic idealism. Caliban then follows with an analogy between Prospero and himself, with The Quiet equaling the former and Setebos the latter. He might ape Prospero's magical paraphernalia and pretend to do enchantments. "So He" (169).

His comparison of Setebos and The Quiet reflects the same conflict Gnostics saw between the Unknown God in the Pleroma and the Demiurge of the corrupt material world. Caliban received his conception of a higher god from his mother, and his ruminations on her teachings give us a thoroughly Gnostic perspective. "His dam held that the Quiet made all things / Which Setebos vexed only" (170-71). According to Hippolytus, the Valentinian Gnostics believed "the originating cause of the universe is a Monad, unbegotten, imperishable, incomprehensible, inconceivable, productive, and a cause of the generation of all existent things" (Pt. VI: 24). But Caliban disagrees with his mother, reflecting both the Calvinist concept of a jealous and angry god as well as the higher criticism's beliefs about humans creating god in their own image: "holds not so"

(171), he continues, putting himself in Setebos' role, later asserting that "He is the One now: only He doth all" (178).

But because Caliban cannot conceive Setebos as omnipotent, he foresees living in fear:

So long as He lives, keeps His strength: no change,
If He have done His best, make no new world
To please Him more, so leave off watching this, –
If He surprise not even the Quiet's self
Some strange day, – or, suppose, grow into it
As grubs grow butterflies: else, here are we
And there is He, and nowhere help at all. (243-49)

He will have to live with caution in case Setebos is watching, dancing at night when unseen and moaning in the sunshine. While he fears the wrath of Setebos as an all-powerful god, he must go on, hoping, since

...evils sometimes mend,
Warts rot away and sores are cured with slime,
That some strange day, will either the Quiet catch
And conquer Setebos, or likelier He [Setebos]
Decrepit may doze, doze, as good as die. (279-83)

In effect, Caliban imagines the apocalypse, not in the narrow sense of the word from Christianity and the "Revelation of St. John" with the return of Christ and the judgment, but in the broader meaning of a vision of an end time. Such apocalyptic change is part of Gnostic myth and close to Caliban's hopes. Hippolytus reports that according to the Marcosian Gnostics, the Demiurge created the material world in envy of the Pleroma. And because he sought to "imitate its indefiniteness....when Truth eluded his pursuit, that Falsehood followed close upon him; and that on account of this, when the times were fulfilled his work underwent dissolution" (Pt. VI: 263). Valentinian Gnosticism shares the apocalyptic strain, positing a time when the Demiurge will weaken and "the moisture of the light of the Spirit is gathered together and is snatched away into the incorruptible Aeon" (Irenaeus 102). The Mandeans had a saying, "On the day when the light rises up the darkness will return to its place" (cited in Rudolph 199); and the Manicheans wrote of an even more dramatic end time when "a great fire from outside the cosmos" consumes the world until "what Light still remains in the creation is released" (Hegemonius, qtd. in Jonas 234). All of these sources were available in Browning's day, and the placement of

Caliban's thoughts on an end time near the conclusion of his musings seems a logical culmination of the poem's structure. Also, doubts about the possibility of apocalyptic change from an unreliable narrator offer a note of hope at the end.

In his discussion of "Caliban upon Setebos," Ian Jack writes, "There is little point in talking of Manicheism or the Gnostic Demiurge (with whom Caliban's conception of Setebos has a good deal in common)" (266). One wonders why not, considering the convincing parallels. Jack gives little background on Gnosticism and Gnostic creation myths in rejecting them as an influence, but Paul Youngquist makes a strong case for Browning's adaptation of Gnostic dualism in "Pippa Passes," speculating that Gnosticism might also be an influence on "Caliban upon Setebos."

We have no way of knowing just how much or how little Browning actually knew about Gnosticism, but textual evidence in "Caliban upon Setebos" certainly suggests he adapted it as a springboard for his satire of religious issues of his day and juxtaposed them with the Gnostic concept of the Unknown God as a statement of his own spiritual beliefs. All of the approaches to spirituality that he satirizes fail to realize a deity unknowable through flawed human reason but dimly perceived through divine inspiration and revelation, symbolized in "Caliban upon Setebos" by the Unknown God of Gnosticism. As in some of his other works, the poet approaches the topic obliquely through dramatic portrayal that asks the reader to evaluate his speaker's words, both in terms of their error and the truth behind the error. In Book One of *The Ring and the Book*, for example, Browning describes his method as being like that of the artificer who begins with a lump of gold and adds gold's alloy to effect a "manageable mass" (21). In his analogy, Browning writes that the poet begins with fact wherein is contained the "lingot truth" (459) to which he adds "Something of mine" (462); and when the work is ready for the "renovating wash" of the artificer, he writes, "I disappeared" (688).

But the poet never really disappears in *The Ring and the Book*. Rather, in the mass of fact presented through the various voices, he gives the reader cues for finding the poem's lingot of truth. The various characters' references to Molinism, for example, provide a touchstone to reveal their predisposition, and the old heresy becomes a symbol for the revolt of a pure soul against established authority. And so it goes in "Caliban upon Setebos." The poem goes beyond the poet's ironic portrayals of religious trends of his

day through Caliban's musings and asks us to perceive something more. E. R. Tracy writes of *The Quiet* as "the result of Caliban's intuitive search for abstract truth and, like Browning's notion of the Godhead, it is remote from all human concerns" (493). The Gnostics' Unknown God offers a model for such a godhead beyond human anger and jealousy, beyond nature's law of tooth and claw, a God unknowable to frail humans and realizable only through intuition and love.

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Science, Technology, and the Aesthetics of Everyday Life:

H.G. Wells's response to John Ruskin and William Morris in

A Modern Utopia

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In many ways, H. G. Wells's relationship to the work of John Ruskin and William Morris was ambivalent. As a young man, Wells had read, deeply and enthusiastically, Ruskin's powerful socio-cultural, economic critique *Unto This Last* (1864), and he was enthralled and inspired by the brilliance and personality of William Morris. In late 1887, part of Wells's political and aesthetic education was to attend weekly meetings at William Morris's home in Hammersmith. The memory of his enthusiasm for Morris and company was still quite vivid nearly fifty years later, when Wells was writing *Experiment in Autobiography* (1934): "Wearing our red ties to give zest to our frayed and shabby costumes we went great distances through gas-lit winter streets of London and by sulphurous Underground Railway, to hear and criticize and cheer and believe in William Morris" (216). But as Wells began to develop his own ideas concerning economics, politics, science, and culture, he found himself at odds with what he perceived as the limited and limiting visions of Ruskin and Morris and their followers. By the time Wells wrote *A Modern Utopia* (1904), he had concluded that the anti-industrial Romanticism and Utopian thinking of Ruskin and Morris simply reflected the dreams and desires of "poets and decorators," rather than the mature and deep thought of those capable of leading the masses into the millennial world (*Experiment* 192).

And yet, in *A Modern Utopia* Wells takes one of the common concerns of Ruskin and Morris – aesthetics or, more specifically, how to make aesthetics relevant and central to everyday life – and combines it with what he sees as the inherent potential of modern science and technology.¹ For some, this concern with everyday aesthetics may seem rather odd, given Wells's fairly complex position in relation to late-Victorian and

¹ Some read *A Modern Utopia* as an argument for a centralized, non-democratic global government; but Wells's detailed account of everyday life reveals the significance of aesthetics, which illustrates and solidifies the foundational logic of his political model.

Modernist aesthetics. For most of his life as a writer, Wells was viewed as largely indifferent, if not openly hostile, toward aesthetics. Certainly, he had much to say about science, technology, and politics, but the realm of aesthetics seemed to be distant from his primary concerns. The source of this perception and characterization is rooted, in part, in Wells's stated ambivalence toward certain aspects of turn-of-the-century aesthetic discourse. Wells took a decisively oppositional stance in relation to what he perceived as the self-absorbed and performative nature of many of his artistic contemporaries and their aesthetic theories, but he was certainly not indifferent to, or critical of, aesthetic discourse as it related to questions and concerns of the socio-political realities of everyday life. In *Experiment in Autobiography*, Wells claims that, as a writer, he sides with those "opposed to the aesthetic valuation of literature" (532), suggesting perhaps that he did not put much value on aesthetics in general. However, his position concerning aesthetic valuation is in response to what he saw as the posturing and "self-dramatizing" nature of such writers and friends as Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and Ford Maddox Ford, among others. Increasingly, Wells was convinced that writing must communicate a direct social purpose and that its aesthetic qualities must be joined inextricably with it: "What I write goes now....I moved more and more away from conscious artistry and its exaltations and chagrins; I was strengthened against self-dramatization and confirmed in my disposition to social purposiveness" (532-33). The movement away from "conscious artistry" and its "exaltations" toward "social purposiveness" put Wells at odds with much of the *avant garde* aesthetics (especially the idea of art for art's sake) of the late-Victorian period: but this was not a disavowal of writing concerned with the interconnections among beauty, truth, and pleasure (the realm of aesthetics), nor was it an implicit critique of aesthetic sensibilities and their socio-historical significance.

In fact, though he does not put it in exactly these terms, Wells believes that it is the discursive merging of aesthetics with questions of science and technology that differentiates, in large part, his Utopian vision from many of the traditional literary conceptions and representations of Utopia.² Equally important, his concentration on

² Patrick Parrinder reads *A Modern Utopia* as a meta-narrative of the Utopian genre; but the novel also offers a rationale for everyday aesthetics. Contrasting with paradigmatic Utopian texts, which evade daily life – "there are no individualities, but only generalized people" (*Utopia* 9) – Wells offers an aesthetic of modern technology in relation to the beautiful and sublime.

aesthetics, science, and technology allows Wells to make the case for what he considers to be a more substantive Utopian vision than that provided by his influential Victorian precursors. But this begs the question: what is it in the social and aesthetic thought of Ruskin and Morris that Wells considers problematic and in need of revision and critique?

For Ruskin and Morris, beauty and modern technology (and the science that informs and creates such technology) were considered to be inherently at odds with each other. Their critique is rooted in a Romantic ideology concerning human expression, creativity, and the essence of nature.³ According to Ruskin and Morris, industrialization and its attendant technologies and foundational sciences are decisively and aggressively unnatural. This idea is expressed in various ways throughout the entire body of Ruskin's work, and in Morris it appears more directly after his political conversion to socialism in the late 1870s. For both, there is a deep conviction that modern technology and science transform, in damaging ways, humans' relationships to each other and to nature. Modern technology and science often move the psyche and sensibilities away from nature and thus alter what has been deemed as natural to human observation, response, and creation. Early in *Deucalion* (1875), describing the separation between scientists and artists, Ruskin writes:

[T]he separation is every day widening between the man of science and the artists – in that, whether painter, sculptor, or musician, the latter is pre-eminently a person who sees with his Eyes, hears with his Ears, and labours with his Body, as God constructed them....Titian would refuse to quicken his touch by electricity; and Michael Angelo to substitute a steam-hammer for his mallet. Such men not only do not desire, they imperatively and scornfully refuse, either the force, or the information, which are beyond the scope of the flesh and the senses of humanity. (*Selected Writings* 193)

For Ruskin, the gap between the scientist and the true artist in the 19th century is measured in part by their relationship to technology. Presumably, a Titian or a Michael Angelo would refuse the "advances" of modern science and technology precisely because such things mutate the senses and alter the possibility of fully seeing and hearing in ways intended by nature and the divine. In the focused reception and response of the senses, the artist reveals a sensuous and ethical approach to being and nature; truth is ultimately

³ Despite their differences of opinion, Ruskin and Morris both see nature as embodying a metaphoric moral/ethical and aesthetic reality that is vital to humans' well being. That which obscures sensitivity to nature is deemed degenerate.

realized through the body; whereas the scientist becomes increasingly alienated as a result of his tools. Frequently, Ruskin emphasizes the transformative and degrading dimensions of modern science and technology through metaphors of sight and seeing. For example, in the following from *Praeterita* (1885-89), he argues that modern technology, ironically, becomes a hindrance to real perception:

Flowers...are only to be seen rightly with the eyes...neither with microscopes nor spectacles...men should see with their own eyes, hear and speak without trumpets, walk on their feet, not on wheels, and work and war with their arms, not with engine-beams....The use of the great mechanical powers may indeed sometimes be compatible with the due exercise of our own; but the use of instruments for exaggerating the powers of sight necessarily deprives us of the best pleasures of sight. (71)

According to Ruskin and Morris, the cultivation of the senses is ethically foundational to the substantive transformation and improvement of culture and society – and such cultivation cannot occur in the use and processes of technologies that lessen or remove active, sensuous engagement. Following Ruskin's lead, Morris elaborates on and extols the virtues of this idea by championing craftsmanship, which, he argues, encourages a heightened sense of the vital relationship between beauty and nature, form, detail, and design. Famously, Morris wrote: "Everything made by man's hand has a form, which must be either beautiful or ugly; beautiful if it is in accord with Nature...ugly if it is discordant with Nature" ("Lesser Arts" 234).⁴

For Ruskin and Morris and their aesthetically-minded followers, artistic or aesthetic objects and environments are intentional and expressive – they signify conscious acts aimed at aesthetically-pleasing results that embody and communicate both individual and communal values. Aesthetic objects are works rather than products, the value of which is determined by their expressiveness and their ability to transform banal reality by revealing what is essential and true. Added to this is the notion that, as a work, the aesthetic object communicates not only ethical dispositions but also, implicitly, the complex and myriad inter-subjective social relations necessary for the object's emergence and development, appreciation and care. As a result of this influential and pervasive way

⁴ Although Ruskin and Morris believed that what was "made by man's hand" in Industrial society was often "discordant with Nature," there were other concerns problematizing industrial technology: the foundational principles of utility and speed, mixed with the reality of alienated and exploited labor, which override and make irrelevant any potential of beauty in and through modern technology.

of thinking about the nature of aesthetic objects, it was believed and felt among many Victorian aestheticians that mechanization, developed tools, and industrialized objects and spaces (products as opposed to works) could not conjure or facilitate the experience of the beautiful or sublime. Such experiences are only possible as a result of an inherent expressive causality essential to the work itself.

Although he agreed with much to be found in Ruskin and Morris and other "anti-mechanical" art critics and writers, Wells did not share their position on many fundamental points. Concerning Ruskin and Morris's critique of modern technologies, Wells tells us that they "arrived at an anti-mechanical aesthetic socialism in recoil from the early degradation of popular art by crude machine processes" (*Experiment* 200). Here and elsewhere, Wells suggests that the critical conclusions of Ruskin and Morris concerning science, technology, and art are essentially reactionary and emotive in nature (rooted in a patrician pathos as opposed to a clear headed and practical logic) – and thus, they reflect an error of perception and understanding. The notion that Ruskin and Morris begin from a faulty perspective is made even more explicit in Wells's critique of the Utopian aspects of their writing. Concerning the implicit Utopianism of Ruskin's "medievalism," Wells argues that it is mostly a make believe world that has little connection to the actual past and no hope for realization in the future. Although he is slightly more generous toward Morris, Wells nevertheless believes that his Utopian vision is built upon a fundamental misperception of reality, "human nature," social motives, and actions:

Were we free to have our untrammelled desire, I suppose we should follow Morris to his Nowhere, we should change the nature of man and the nature of things together; we should make the whole race wise, tolerant, noble, perfect – wave our hands to a splendid anarchy, every man doing as it pleases him, and none pleased to do evil, in a world as good in its essential nature,...as the world before the Fall. But...the pervading Will to Live sustains for evermore a perpetuity of aggressions. (*Utopia* 7)

Ultimately, Wells rejects the foundational epistemology of Ruskin and Morris: that is, Utopianism based on a Romantic vision of humans and nature. Beyond the belief in the pervasive "will to live," there are few absolutes in Wells's social vision. This fact has enormous implications in regard to his conception of the relationship between art, science, and technology. For Wells, there is no essential meaning to advanced

technologies, and thus there can be no necessary conclusion to their use and development for socio-aesthetic purposes. Thus, Ruskin and Morris's argument that the use and development of science and technology for socio-aesthetic purposes leads necessarily to a qualitative diminution of aesthetic sensibility, thought, and production is utterly refuted. Rather, Wells believes and argues that the significance of advanced technologies and art are largely determined by their socio-historical emergence and reality. Judgments of the nature of objects, technical processes, and scientific and aesthetic ideas are reflective of and relative to people, places, and times; their meaning and significance are not trans-historically fixed but amorphous. According to Wells, given the right socio-historical conditions and relations, science and technology may, and in fact do, produce and facilitate meaningful aesthetic experiences and knowledge. The idea of a largely relativistic, historically-driven approach to aesthetics and modern technology would have been anathema to many high minded Victorian philosophers of the beautiful and the sublime; for Wells, these things have no essential meaning outside of history and inter-subjective use.⁵

To substantiate this idea, we are shown throughout *A Modern Utopia* everyday objects, devices of utility and technological advancement that are intended to be useful and aesthetically pleasing. Moreover, all descriptions of purposefully designed private and public space emphasize an achieved dialectic between use and beauty. The idea that everyday objects and spaces ought to be aesthetically pleasing and interesting (and not just simply useful) is central to the social-aesthetic criticism of Ruskin and Morris; certainly it is not unique to Wells's Utopian narrative. However, what is unique to the novel is the suggestion of an evolutionary or organic socio-aesthetic progression, whereby objects of use and the potentiality of an aesthetic sublime merge in the historical movement toward Utopia:

The tramway, the train road, the culverts and bridges...will all be beautiful things. There is nothing...to oblige them to be ugly. Ugliness is the measure of imperfection; a thing of human making is for the most part ugly in proportion to the poverty of its constructive thought...Everything...grows

⁵ Wells's socio-historical, relativistic conception of aesthetics merges with his evolutionary view of Utopia, which "must differ in one fundamental aspect from the Nowheres and Utopias men planned before Darwin quickened the thought of the world...the Modern Utopia must not be static but kinetic, must shape not as a permanent state but as a hopeful" (5). See also J. Partington's "The Death of the Static: H.G. Wells and the Kinetic Utopia."

beautifully inevitably. Things made by mankind under modern conditions are ugly primarily because our social organization is ugly, because we live in an atmosphere of snatch and uncertainty, and do everything in an underbred strenuous manner. (110-11)

Somewhat ironically, we have echoes of Ruskin and Morris here, particularly in the notion that ugliness is the objective result of an impoverished "constructive thought" and practice. For Ruskin and Morris, such poverty emerges out of the artistic failure to grasp and manifest an object's relation to nature. Wells, however, suggests no central connection between beauty and nature, but rather places the potential for beauty in the governing logic of design, execution, and use. For Wells, the artistic movement towards beauty and perfection in the realm of the everyday is an evolutionary process grounded, in part, in intellection, skill, and commitment. To a large extent, beauty is realized through the concentrated artistic effort to fully grasp and communicate the purpose of an object's being. However, the artist (a term Wells uses to describe a wide range of creative practitioners, from engineers to painters) does not exist and work in isolation – but rather reflects and mediates the realities of history and social organization. To the extent that a culture and society has not progressed or evolved to a more enlightened reality, there will be various levels of imperfection in artistic design and creation. By emphasizing this and the connection between artistic creation and social reality, Wells seemingly shifts the social and aesthetic critique that he finds in Ruskin and Morris away from a concern for process, technique, and tools to that of social organization exclusively. Wells argues that intentional everyday objects and environments, like great works of art, qualitatively reflect the social and historical condition of people. They too are expressive – but of the collective life and not simply of individuals or of privileged classes.⁶ Ugliness in the everyday is the result of a pervasive lack of imagination and the systemic inequities of socio-historical reality.

Where there is beauty in everyday objects like trams, roads, culverts, and bridges there is also a nourishing social process and development, for the two are inextricably linked. Moreover, the capacity to know and realize beauty and aesthetic pleasure in

⁶ Wells does not acknowledge the influence of Ruskin (*The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 1849; *The Stones of Venice*, 1853; and *Traffic*, 1864) or Morris ("Useful Work versus Useless Toil," 1888; "The Hopes of Civilization," 1885, and *News From Nowhere*); but he does challenge their conclusions concerning the aesthetic potentiality of scientific and technological development.

everyday life is rooted (organically, Wells suggests) in a collective ethical and social intelligence:

Art, like some beautiful plant, lives on its atmosphere, and when the atmosphere is good it will grow everywhere, and when it is bad nowhere. If we smashed and buried every machine... [and] ourselves to home industries...we should still do things in the same haste, and achieve nothing but dirtiness, inconvenience, bad air, and another gaunt and gawky reflection of our intellectual and moral disorder. (*Utopia* 111)

Wells, contra Ruskin and Morris, argues that a return to past technologies of production will not generate or restore a thriving artistic culture or a pervasive aesthetic sensibility, for the technologies themselves have no real bearing upon ways of seeing, thinking, and feeling about art and the aesthetics of everyday life. Moreover, without a pervasive and governing ideological and economic transformation, efforts to socially centralize art and aesthetics are futile. Smashing the machines, returning to home industries and hand labor, solve little or nothing, according to Wells. Rather, what is needed is a pervasive intellectual and ethical transformation that begins the process of synthesizing art and science.

But there is more on Wells's mind than just this in his response to the aesthetics of Ruskin and Morris. Deeply mindful of the historical fact of the pervasive social and intellectual exclusivity of aesthetic contemplation and pleasure, Wells seeks to get at and explode the root of this exclusivity by addressing the reality and problem of work in his reflections on technology, everyday objects, and aesthetics. Wells reminds us that much of the work of daily life outside of Utopia is experienced as a form of servitude – enforced by the spur of necessity. As a result of so much required labor, the possibility of a collective aesthetic sensibility and concern is severely limited. Wells argues that to know and create beautiful things and places typically require a good amount of leisure. The reduction of burdensome labor and the opening up of the possibility of leisure and the experience of the aesthetic is part of the role of scientific and technological advancement. According to Ruskin and Morris, all honest work is potentially ennobling, a source of individual and collective fulfillment. It is not, when organized and realized properly, simply a means to specific material ends. And yet, the division of labor characteristic of industrialization eradicates the meaningful and ennobling potential of

many forms of labor, reducing it to a demeaning and alienating process.

Wells agrees with this perception to an extent; and yet, he had other ideas concerning the division of labor and the productive processes of industrialization. He rejects grandiose views about the nature and meaning of physical labor and sees a potential for liberation through innovative technological use and development:

There is...a bold make-believe that all toil may be made a joy, and with that a leveling down of all society to an equal participation in labour. But indeed this is against all the observed behaviour of mankind. It needed the Olympian unworldliness of an irresponsible rich man of the shareholding type, a Ruskin or a Morris playing at life, to imagine as much...physical science...dispenses with man as a source of energy...all routine work may be made automatic...a labouring class – that is to say a class of workers without personal initiative – will become unnecessary to the world of men. (*Utopia* 101-02)

The truly Utopian idea of eradicating the need of a laboring class is, in fact, the most foundationally significant and liberating potential that Wells identifies in the scientific and technological developments associated with industrialization. Certainly, Wells was not alone in seeing the seeds of human liberation contained in part in the realities of industrial technology and production. However, his insistence that a truly Utopian culture and society is virtually impossible without a scientific and technical solution to the problem of human labor is bold and fairly unprecedented. His choice of words in support of such a solution is dialogically mindful of the eloquent argument William Morris makes in "Useful Work *versus* Useless Toil" about the nature of hope to be found in labor. According to Wells, Morris's hope of rest, hope of product, and hope of pleasure in work itself is not situated in any of the productive realities or social arrangements of the past, but rather in an evolution of technical means and social organization projected into the future. Wells makes this quite clear not only in *A Modern Utopia*, but also, a quarter century later, in *The Work, Wealth, and Happiness of Mankind*:

It is only with the coming of power machinery and large industry, that the work of the common human being begins to be limited to regular hours leaving a daily margin of daylight and activity....It is quite a delusion to think that the past was a leisurely time....The past was a time of almost universal drudgery and insufficiency, and the ages of leisure and plenty lie ahead. (756)

Leisure and plenty are a promise of the future only to the extent that there is economic parity and an evolutionary merging of art, science, and technology. Like

Ruskin and Morris, Wells deplored the stupidity and cruelty of industrial exploitation and, to some extent, the large scale destruction of the artistic culture associated with the pre-industrial past; but the myriad problems of industrialization are located in the greed and ignorance of the "masters" and not in machines and science. On this point, Wells is emphatic:

[since] our political and social and moral devices [are] only as well contrived to their ends as a linotype machine, an antiseptic operating plant, or an electric tram-car, there need...be no appreciable toil in the world, and only the smallest fraction of the pain, the fear, and the anxiety that now makes human life so doubtful in its value....Science stands...holding out resources, devices, and remedies....a modern Utopia must needs present...a world that is really abolishing the need of labour, abolishing the last base reason for anyone's servitude or inferiority. (*Utopia* 102)

Wells's Utopian vision is grounded in the idea that mechanization and advanced technologies are irresistible and necessary but unrealized in their full potential as a result of the pervasive ignorance of those in positions of power and influence. In Wells's Utopia, the "underbred masters" are replaced by an enlightened elite trained to serve people (as opposed to themselves exclusively) by realizing and maintaining a kind of utilitarian socialism that utilizes, facilitates, and merges various forms of knowledge for the collective good and happiness. In this, Wells is perhaps closer in thought and vision to the Utopianism of Francis Bacon than to that of his influential Victorian precursors. And yet, Wells certainly agreed with Ruskin and Morris that the realization of a pervasive aesthetic sensibility in everyday life will require a total and systemic social and economic transformation. But, according to Wells, the very possibility of such a transformation will rely in no small measure upon the further progress and acceptance of science and technology.

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*Domestic Imperialism in Several Victorian Texts:**Contact Zones at Home*

Mary Rosner

At best one hopes to arrive at a picture coherent enough to keep discussion going, "true" enough to avoid serious misrepresentation. – L. Code

In her important 1992 study, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Mary Louise Pratt explains how eighteenth- and nineteenth-century texts of travel and exploration were not "politically innocent" documents, no matter how benign their stance may have seemed. Encouraged by capitalists' need for raw materials and by various rivalries for status, power, and money, those texts were connected to such patriarchal goals as "territorial surveillance, appropriation of resources, and administrative control" (Pratt 39). Surveillance, appropriation, control – we use these same terms to describe the motives of the patriarchy as it subdued and reshaped the less powerful within Victorian England. Like the foreign lands that Pratt writes about, Victorian women, for instance, could be seen as inferior, passive, and fertile, as mysterious, ambiguous, and potentially threatening. Like those lands described by Pratt, Victorian women too could be "objectified, hunted, invaded, colonized, owned, consumed and forced to yield" (Collard and Contrucci, qtd. in Rose, *Feminism* 70-1).

Both the parallels between Victorian women and "the rest of the world" (Pratt 39) and Pratt's identification of imperialism as collisions between cultures suggest that her focus might be useful in examining Victorian texts of domestic subjugation. For Pratt, cultural collisions produce "contact zones" that are characterized both by conflict and inequity and by subordinates' strategies to be heard. One of these strategies results in "auto-ethnography," an expression of a kind of ethos where "subjugated peoples undertake to represent themselves in ways that *engage with* the colonizer's own terms" (7) as they adapt textual forms, assumptions and values. Examining constructions of women in three Victorian texts depicting domestic imperialism – *Lady Audley's Secret* by Mary Braddon and the murder trials of Mary Ann Brough and George Victor Townley –

may help us determine whether and how these figures used auto-ethnography to "engage with" the patriarchy in empowering ways. Underlying these texts, and essential to an understanding of their specific contact zones, is another source of patriarchal surveillance, appropriation, and control that must first be addressed: Victorian definitions of insanity.

I. *Victorian Insanities and the Law*

We should...employ these divisions [of insanity] as a chart by which we might shape our course for something like firm land, without allowing ourselves to be lost in the metaphysician's "Ocean of Doubts." They are, after all, only the points and headlands of a recently discovered coast, which navigators have but partially delineated. (Bucknill & Tuke)

Issues of surveillance, appropriation, and control also engaged two Victorian groups – medical and legal professionals – who clashed over the authority to define mental disease. Doctors who investigated questions of insanity, also termed "mad doctors," often introduced new theories about how the mind worked. As a result, they could expand definitions of insanity from the conventional raving madness to madness caused by a partial disorder of the intellect and to new categories of madness that did not interfere with the intellect: disorders of "*the animal propensities*" and of "*the moral sentiments*" (Bucknill and Tuke 98; emphasis added). With the first of these new categories, an irresistible impulse "unaccompanied by mental confusion" causes an irrational act; an individual is "carried away by a force...beyond reason's power to restrain" (Eigen 60, 73). The second describes a disorder of a person's "moral sensibilities" (60) but not his or her reason. According to James Prichard, who first identified the disease, moral insanity is "a morbid perversion of the natural feelings, affections, inclinations, temper, habits, moral dispositions, and natural impulses, without any remarkable disorder or defect of the intellect or knowing and reasoning faculties, and particularly without any insane illusion or hallucination" (16). Some mad doctors further suggested that mental disease could involve *all* mental faculties, intellectual and moral and animal: "reason [could be] dethroned and taken forcibly captive by the animal impulses, and these, when in a state of supremacy, [could] exercise an undisputed and

tyrannical sovereignty over the judgment, conscience, and the will" (Winslow, "Mysteries" 270).

Those Victorian mad doctors who advocated new categories of insanity were brought into conflict with the law over the question of whether a defendant who could *appear* to be normal (that is, not raving) was mentally competent at the time he or she committed murder and therefore legally responsible for it. In trying to claim some of the contested "territory" long possessed by the law, doctors needed to demonstrate that legal definitions of insanity were inadequate, oversimplified, and inferior. But they were directing their demonstrations largely to an audience that wanted to retain the power it already held, that valued verifiable testimony and convention, and that viewed doctors as sources of inconsistent and unverifiable testimony – with some reason. In their view, when mad doctors testified, they could be acting from self-serving motives: to establish their own importance, to improve their reputations, to solicit patients for the asylums they supervised. The testimony of more than one doctor could lead to inconsistency and contradiction in the courtroom, particularly as their knowledge of a defendant varied: doctors might have examined the defendant soon or long after the crime, thoroughly or briefly or never. Their interpretations might not stand up to cross examination; they could seem insubstantial, especially when doctors giving testimony were reluctant to define complex but important terms like insanity or when their definitions did not clearly identify the type of insanity they were attributing to the defendant (Pitt-Lewis 223-24). As a result, statements by these doctors were often ignored or ridiculed by judges who gave instructions to jurors. Uncertainties surrounding the authority of these medical professionals – particularly when testifying against "common sense" (because a defendant did not *look* insane) and when offering only the criminal act itself as evidence of insanity – led to uncertainties about experts' attempts

to sketch the varying frontier, the nice and shadowy distinctions, which separate lunacy from malignity – madness from brutality; to point out where folly merges into mental derangement – where *responsibility* terminates, and *irresponsibility* commences; to distinguish between *eccentricity* and *insanity* – *crime* and *alienation of mind* – *vice* and *mental derangement* – between the delusions of the lunatic and the false conclusions – the illogical deductions – the unphilosophical reasoning of men of sound intellect and of rational understanding. (Winslow, *Lettsomian* 396)

The law typically wanted the line between sanity and insanity to rest on established practice – that is, a sane individual should be aware of right and wrong – but occasional legal cases successfully argued for the newer definitions.

One of these cases, still cited today, involved Daniel McNaughten, a man who seemed sane (not raving) but who was tried for the apparently motiveless and reckless 1843 murder of Edward Drummond, secretary to Prime Minister Peel. According to Alexander Cockburn, McNaughten's counsel,

in the broad fact of day – in the presence of surrounding numbers – in one of the great and busy thoroughfares of this peopled metropolis – with the certainty of detection, and the impossibility of flight – with the inevitable certainty of the terrible punishment awarded to such a deed – a man takes away the life from one who (in any view of the case) had never, in thought, word, or deed, done to the perpetrator of that act the faintest vestige of an injury. (*Report* 53)

Rejecting the prevailing legal definition of madness as a disease of the intellect, the defense relied on medical testimony by physicians who interviewed McNaughten and agreed that he suffered from one of the new insanities. McNaughten's delusion led to an irresistible impulse to murder; according to Dr. Monro, he was deprived of "self-control" because his "moral perceptions" were impaired (*Report* 68, 70). Sir A. Morrison posits that he lost "all self restraint or control of his actions," while Dr. Hutcheson claims "the delusion was so strong that nothing but a physical impediment could have prevented him from committing the act" (*Report* 70-1). The jury apparently agreed: it found McNaughten not guilty, and he spent the rest of his life in Bethlem (Bedlam) Royal Hospital, the mental institution. The verdict also led to the creation of the McNaughten Rules, an attempt to bring consistency to the law by outlining an acceptable insanity defense: either the defendant did not understand the nature and quality of the act or he did not know that it was against the law; if delusional, the defendant was acting within the law assuming the delusions were real. In practice, these Rules were often ignored by sympathetic judges and juries, and the kind of insanity which could excuse an individual from legal punishment was a constant source of direct and indirect debate in journals, newspaper accounts of trials, and even novels. Plots involving domestic imperialism might join that debate by challenging definitions of insanity.

II. Domestic Imperialism in Three Victorian Texts: *Lady Audley's Secret*, 1862

In the three texts examined below – the novel by Braddon and the narratives of and commentary on two Victorian murder trials – a powerful cultural ideal shapes responses to women who are seen as threatening. Because they defy the expectations of the men who aim to keep them subordinate, these women are destroyed. Lady Audley, who consciously creates an image that appeals to the male hegemony *for a time*, is doomed when that image slips to reveal a self-serving and, therefore, dangerous woman who must be put away. Her story suggests that even when the subjugated use auto-ethnography for self-empowerment, it may be only temporary. And as far as we can tell, because the women described in the Victorian trials act in ways the patriarchy condemns, they too are doomed – one to an asylum and the other to death. In addition to revealing the usual power inequities in the repressive contact zones of Victorian England, these texts also show that the patriarchy may not be as powerful as it seems; in these examples of domestic imperialism, it can be marked in damning ways.

Of the three texts mentioned above, *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) by Mary Braddon gives us the fullest account of auto-ethnography as a response to domestic imperialism. Braddon's choice of sensation fiction, which typically demonstrates contact between an oppressive patriarchal culture and dangerous females in rebellion against it, reminds us that her text mirrors an important conflict in her world. The title character of *Lady Audley's Secret* is one of those women rebelling against patriarchal oppression. As her various names – Helen Maldon, Helen Talboys, Lucy Graham, Lady Audley – indicate, this woman aggressively shapes and reshapes her life in order to adapt to changing circumstances. Raised in poverty, she marries an officer, George Talboys; when he is disinherited, he emigrates to Australia to find gold and earn a fortune for his family. But he ends all contact with his wife, and she begins life again with a new name and a new identity. A wealthy and aging aristocrat, Sir Michael Audley, marries her. When George Talboys returns from Australia, he threatens to reveal her past, and she tries to kill him to her retain her hold on the comfortable life she has created. She also attempts to destroy another man intent on uncovering her secrets, a lawyer, her husband's nephew and heir, Robert Audley. Instead, she is destroyed. Her secrets are revealed, her husband

disowns her, and her justifications are used against her. Carried off to a foreign asylum, she soon dies. The “old order” is apparently restored; the Audley family thrives in a “fairy cottage” in a rustic paradise with, we are told, “the good people all happy and at peace” (285-86).

Clearly, Lucy's successful construction of herself to reflect the patriarchy's ideal both empowers and destroys her. In all ways, the society of *Lady Audley's Secret* designates Lucy as “less than” the patriarchs of the novel: George Talboys, Sir Michael Audley, and his heir Robert. As a Victorian woman, she is expected to be self-sacrificing and passive; as a wife, she is assigned a place that John Stuart Mill describes as “slave” or “servant” to a “master” (Shanley 165). As a member of the working class, she is inferior to the upper class and to professional males. Yet despite these “handicaps,” she comes to define herself in ways that gain her temporary power. She plays the role men expect her to play; she pretends to be what men expect her to be when those men can be helpful to her. In other words, she practices auto-ethnographic representation: she shapes herself to appear to be the ultimate dependent, the patriarchal fantasy of “Angel in the House,” the child-wife. As a result, she is loved and admired by men *when* she looks and acts in ways they approve. So she inevitably appears “light-hearted, happy and contented under any circumstances” (Braddon 4); “the innocence and candor of an infant beamed in [her] fair face, and shown out of her large and liquid blue eyes. The rosy lips, the delicate nose, the profusion of fair ringlets, all contributed to preserve to her beauty the character of extreme youth and freshness” (35); “she looked a childish, helpless, babyfied little creature” (92); “she...had such winning ways that she was the favorite with everybody who knew her” (161). But they only “knew” the “her” she constructed to save herself from “awful necessity” (197); they did not know her “ever-recurring fears” of exposure, “her fatal necessities for concealment,...[her] silent agonies” (197). She appears content in a world that valued “outward effect,” but she is far from at ease.

Lucy's auto-ethnographic representation benefits her by giving her some influence over the men she marries – enough to make George feel so guilty about his failure to provide that he leaves for the goldfields, enough to put Sir Michael under her power: she had “complete...dominion” (37) over him, so much so that after her exposure as a “murderer” and impostor, he is barely able to function. But Robert Audley responds

to her differently. While he seems initially enslaved to her loveliness, later, when her artifice begins to be revealed, he becomes an avenging angel, "a pitiless embodiment of justice, a cruel instrument of retribution" (179). Through contact with him, Lucy is also apparently transformed; "from a frivolous childish beauty" that represents patriarchy's ideal, she shows herself to be separate from her auto-ethnographic representation, "a woman, strong enough to argue her own cause and plead her own defense" (190), a rational and independent woman. Thus, when the mad doctor, Mosgrave, allies himself with Robert Audley, he does not act in support of Robert's specific motive – to save the "stainless [Audley] name from degradation and shame" (249) – but to curb the social threat that Lucy represents: "The lady is not mad," he says. "She has the cunning of madness, with the prudence of intelligence....She is dangerous!" (249). She is like the women locked in Victorian madhouses because they "were disobedient, rebellious, or in open protest against the female role" (Showalter, "Victorian" 324). When Doctor Mosgrave and Robert Audley together arrange to put Lucy away, she recognizes the futility of her reconstruction: "Has my beauty brought me to *this*? Have I plotted and schemed to shield myself and laid awake in the long deadly nights, trembling to think of my dangers, for *this*?" (Braddon 256-57).

While Lucy's manipulation of Victorian cultural ideals regarding women is made explicit in *Lady Audley's Secret*, the question of Lucy's madness is left open. She claims to be haunted by a fear of her "mother's horrible inheritance" (257) of insanity, and she explains away actions like the attempted murder of her first husband as resulting from occasional attacks of mental disease: "My brain was dazed as I thought of my peril. Again the balance trembled, again the invisible boundary was passed, again I was mad" (234). She may be mad. She may simply believe she is mad. Or she may be again practicing auto-ethnography, shaping her account to excuse her behavior. When we are told near the end of the novel that Lucy "looked upon herself as a species of state prisoner, who would have to be taken good care of. A second Iron Mask, who must be provided for in some comfortable place of confinement" (245), we never know if she is looking at herself or at her auto-ethnographic representation.

III. *The Trial of Mary Ann Brough: 1854*

In *Lady Audley's Secret*, Lucy's claim to madness invites questions about widespread misconceptions that equated insanity, as young Lucy herself did, with a "mad woman pacing up and down some prison cell, in a hideous garment that bound her tortured limbs" (229). This stereotype is overturned by Lucy's own delicate and child-like mother, who was insane. The book also demonstrates how mad doctors were often implicated in the patriarchy as they judged conduct: they determined who was mentally diseased based, in part, on how those individuals defied approved social standards and how much they threatened social stability. Those most affected by their policing in Victorian England, the largest population in asylums, were women because it was believed that the "instability of their reproductive systems interfered with their sexual, emotional, and rational control" (Showalter, *Female* 55). As Anita Levy explains,

especially from 1850 onward...psychiatric representation provided a natural basis for the subordination of women to men....When considered as functions of a single discourse, then, the human sciences were both "colonialist" and "imperialist" in that they were fundamentally concerned with managing "disruptive" populations such as the working class, colonial peoples, and women. (107)

While Victorian law joined Victorian psychiatry in attempting to "manage" women, they were in conflict with each other over who would determine women's fate in murder trials where insanity was invoked. Texts reporting the Mary Ann Brough case demonstrate this conflict. In June 1854, a man named Brough determined, by means of a private investigator, that his wife Mary Ann, considered by all to be a good mother, was unfaithful: she had committed adultery with a local tradesman; apparently, this affair had gone on for some time. Brough left his wife, but he planned to return in several days to separate her from their young children – aged 11 years to 18 months – and from their home. On the night before his return, after nursing several of her children who were down with the measles and sensing – as she said – a "dark cloud" hanging over her, Mrs. Brough cut the throats of her six children as they lay sleeping. Then cutting her own throat, she fainted. After she woke up, she hung a bloody cloth from the second-story bedroom window to summon help from her neighbors ("Escher Murders").

Mary Louise Pratt's attention to the subordinated draws us again to the woman,

Mrs. Brough, who, in this case, does not appear to practice auto-ethnography at all. Her apparent infidelity marks her inability to fit her husband's, and society's, definition of a good wife; further, she seems unable or unwilling to construct an image that would make her socially acceptable after such a charge. We have no narrator here to help us interpret Mrs. Brough, no novelist who can reveal her thoughts. In fact, Mrs. Brough had no legal right to speak, and the several versions of her perspective through the testimony of others were clearly partial, with the prosecution and defense attempting to describe her in ways that fit their goals. Drawing on the testimony of neighbors, shared assumptions about the immorality of adultery, and reports of her own statements, the prosecution argued that Mrs. Brough behaved normally on the day of the crime: she consciously chose a murder weapon (her husband's razor) and planned the murders. As for motive, her husband had left her without money and planned to take the children, which "she intended he should not do" ("Escher Murders"). The prosecution defined the murders as her way of preventing him from claiming his "property." As one critic wrote after the trial, it was "the act of a vindictive woman upon the discovery of her enormous guilt," her infidelity ("Ann Brough Verdict").

Citing various physical symptoms, testimony from medical experts, and Mrs. Brough's statement – "Something like a cloud over my eyes....I can't tell you what occurred some time after that....I sat a little while, and got up and saw the children, and it all came to me again" ("Ann Brough Verdict") – the defense argued insanity. The primary medical authority for this defense was Forbes Winslow, a leading expert in mental disease, author of *The Plea of Insanity in Criminal Cases* (1843), owner of two asylums, and editor/owner of "the first English periodical wholly devoted to the treatment of insanity" (Scull 233). Winslow interpreted Mary Ann Brough's unexplained nose bleeds as a symptom of brain "congestion," the sensation of a "dark cloud" as a common sign of temporary insanity, and her sudden and unexplainable transformation from a kind and devoted mother to an unnatural destroyer as a clear signal of mental disease. In other words, Winslow declared that the crime resulted from an abrupt and uncontrollable action stemming from some physical weakness of the brain – a claim earlier made by her lawyer who argued that Mrs. Brough was a woman who "in a moment, by some unaccountable impulse" changed from "a kind mother" to "a fiend....under the influence of temporary

frenzy and of an impulse which it was impossible for her to control" ("Escher Murders"). Both at the trial and in later documents, Winslow argued that this impulse was difficult for Mrs. Brough to resist because of exhaustion from caring for the children and because of stress stemming from her realization that "her husband would abandon her forever," that her children would be taken from her, and that she would be "cast...upon the frigid sympathies of the world with the mark of Cain on her forehead" ("Recent Trials" 624). Winslow also pointed to her adultery as another sign of mental illness, not simply a sign of immoral conduct. Insanity, he explained, repeating a common cultural argument, can "often be traced to a criminal indulgence in depraved habits and vicious thoughts...; to long indulged self-will; to a censurable neglect of the cultivation of habits of *self control*." But the presiding judge rejected Winslow's argument that an "irresistible impulse" excused Mrs. Brough from responsibility for her crime and instructed the jury that "undoubtedly every crime is committed under the influence of some impulse, and the object of the law was to control impulses of that description and so prevent crime" ("Ann Brough Verdict"). Nevertheless, the jury found her insane and not legally responsible for her actions. Like Lady Audley, she was confined to an asylum for the rest of her life.

Why – in spite of the judge's instructions to ignore the medical testimony offered by the defense – did the jury reject the prosecution's account of the crime as a deliberate act of revenge by an immoral woman? The common explanation interprets Mary Ann Brough as the representative of a class defined by a cultural role: Victorian women convicted of child-killing were typically found insane and not legally responsible for violating their maternal instincts to nurture – even though this judgment did not necessarily fit legal criteria for the insanity plea. Mary Ann Brough was judged insane because instead of protecting her children, she murdered them. Such an act must be evidence of madness at a time when science and culture equated womanhood with motherhood. It is not auto-ethnography we see in this resolution but merely ethnography, a construction of the subordinated by those in a position of power over them. The male jurors redefined Mrs. Brough to fit their conceptions of the Victorian mother because any other definitions were unthinkable. At the same time, we can also see Mrs. Brough, like Lady Audley, as a woman who, in rejecting the role of the passive female, threatened the establishment. These powerful assertions of self had to be redefined as signs of disease.

Calling her actions insane confirmed cultural, legal, and scientific assumptions of the "weaker sex" and restored order, reason, truth, and light into the world: only a maniac would reject the place defined for her by the patriarchy. Who would know better what her place should be?

Yet the matter did not end with Mrs. Brough in an asylum for the rest of her life where, in words so like those used to describe the end of Lady Audley, "she will be immured in...gloomy courts...,devoted to the reception of lunatic State prisoners; her companions... maniacs...; her only place of exercise...a dismal-looking yard" (Smith, "Defining" 201). Brough's case also fed a series of public debates on the nature of insanity, the authority to determine it, and the danger to the public when "irresistible" became equated with "unresisted."

IV. *The Trial of George Victor Townley, 1864*

Ten years after an all-male jury found Mary Ann Brough insane, George Victor Townley was tried for murder and judged sane, then insane, and then sane again. He had been engaged for several years to Elizabeth (Bessie) Goodwin when she met another man and wrote to break off their engagement. He wrote back: "I answer nothing to your last letter, except that I wish to hear from your own lips what your wishes are, and I will accede to them" ("Derbyshire Murder" 297). In another note to her, he wrote that "We will both be happier and better in mind, as well as body, after this last interview." And in a third note, he explained, "I have but to hear from you what your wishes are, and they shall be complied with...I have sufficient *savoir vivre* not to make a bother about what cannot be helped" (298). Townley took Goodwin walking, with the apparent intention of having her reject him in person. A little later, she was found with her throat cut in several places. Townley, standing some yards away from where she was discovered, helped to carry her into a house where she soon died. The act and the actor were again indisputable. He repeatedly stated that he had committed the crime and should be hanged for it, and he explained his action in a number of ways: "Poor Bessie...You should not have proved false to me"; "She has deceived me; and the woman that deceives me must die"; "I told her I would kill her. She knew my temper"; and "I am far happier now I have done it than I was before, and I trust she is" (*Regina v. Townley* 384). The medical expert for the

defense was again Dr. Forbes Winslow, who reported that when he interviewed Townley before the trial (and several months after the crime), Townley claimed that "he killed her...to recover and repossess himself of property [her person] which had been stolen from him" (385). Following instructions from the judge, the jury soon found Townley guilty.

Reading the encounter through the lenses of Pratt's zone of contact and conflict, we might wonder whether Goodwin used auto-ethnography to construct herself in ways that suited her goals and reflected Townley's preconceptions of what she should be. But her voice is silent as are most of the voices of the subordinated in Pratt's study. Unlike Lady Audley and Mary Ann Brough, Bessie Goodwin can neither make an argument nor have one made for her. If we could hear her words or read her thoughts, we might find that she tried to avoid contact with Townley¹ or that she constructed herself as a rational being in response to his apparently rational notes to her, naively expecting a clearheaded exchange or that she presented herself as a victim of her emotions that drew her away from Townley and towards some other man. But we have only Townley's account of the event, only his perspective. After agreeing to marry him, she betrayed him by subsequently refusing him, thus rejecting her subordinate role; consequently, she had to be punished. While there is conflict and hierarchy in this encounter and while both actors are affected in important ways by the contact, the case does not evidence auto-ethnography.

To test the usefulness of Pratt's theory here, we again need to move beyond the actions of the characters to the interpretations offered in court. And again we find contact and conflict in the depictions of the defendant. In this trial, the case for the prosecution rested on four points: Townley wrote sensible letters to Goodwin; he *looked* sane, even to his family who knew him best; he confessed to the murder; and his action fit the legal (McNaughten) definition of sanity. As the prosecutor stated, "the prisoner knew the nature and quality of his act, and that it was prohibited" (*Regina v. Townley* 386). In response, the defense argued that there was insanity in Townley's family history; he looked frenzied; he suffered from a delusion that men were conspiring against him; and

¹ At least one account says that Goodwin wrote and told Townley *not* to come to her but that his mother misrepresented her message ("Derbyshire Murder" 298).

he held questionable ideas. As the medical expert Winslow explained, Townley

repudiated the idea of its being a crime, either against God or man, and...attempted to justify the act, alleging that he considered Miss Goodwin as his own property; that she had been illegally wrested from him by an act of violence; that he viewed her in the light of his wife who had committed an act of adultery; and that he had as perfect a right to deal with her life as he had with any other description of property, as the money in his pocket. (385)²

Further, Winslow reported that Townley experienced no regret and believed that he was above the law, feeling "he had perfect liberty to think and act as he pleased, irrespective of any one else." The doctor testified that the defendant was "a man of deranged intellect...[who did] not appear to have a sane opinion on a moral point"; in addition, Townley, who "assumed a wild, maniacal aspect," believed that "six conspirators [were] plotting against him with a view to destroy him" (385-86). In spite of his intention to establish Townley's insanity, Winslow ended his testimony by making a statement very close to the language used by the M'Naughten Rules to find a defendant legally responsible (sane) because he knew what he did was illegal. Winslow asserted his confidence that Townley knew "these opinions of his [were] contrary to those generally entertained, and that, if acted upon, they would subject him to punishment."

In giving instructions to the jury, the presiding justice did two things that reinforced the power of convention. First, he reiterated the details of the case in ways that privileged the prosecution: Townley's letters were sensible; he knew the consequences of his action; his family never doubted he was sane; his delusion about a conspiracy was not connected with Goodwin. Further, he described Townley's identification of Goodwin as his "chattel" as "the conclusion of a man who arrived at results different from those generally arrived at...but not a delusion" – in a sense, labeling Townley's objectification of Goodwin an eccentricity, unusual but not mad. In addition, the justice questioned the effect a not-guilty verdict might have on the safety of society: "what would be the consequences of society if men were to say every woman who [broke an engagement]...should die?" (*Regina v. Townley* 387). The second move in his instructions to the jury was to set the legal context for their judgment by citing examples

² Townley gave at least one explanation that had no connection with reclaiming property: "I had no intention to go and kill her. I had lost all control over myself.... *I do not remember anything at the very last*" (*A Voice* 9). This explanation, which suggests an irresistible impulse, apparently had no role in the trial.

and precedents of sane and insane behavior and by legally defining insanity. He explained that if the members of the jury

believed that at the time the act was committed, the prisoner was labouring under a delusion, and believed that he was doing an act which was not wrong, or of which he did not know the consequences, he [should] be excused. If, on the other hand, he well knew that his act would take away life, that [it] was contrary to the law of God and punishable by the law of the land, he was guilty of murder.

The jury fulfilled the directions of the court and sentenced Townley to death. But the story continues in ways which demonstrate that the "interactions" and "interlocking practices" between the contact zone of law and medicine extend beyond this specific trial. Because of the strength of the medical testimony from Winslow and Dr. Gisborne, the surgeon of the jail who gave evidence similar to Winslow's (*Regina v. Townley* 386), a Commission in Lunacy interviewed Townley. This group found him both insane "in view of the extravagant opinions deliberately professed by him, of his extraordinarily perverted moral sense, and of the hereditary taint alleged and apparently proved to have existed in the family of [Townley's] grandmother" (*Journal of Mental Science* 9) and justly convicted. The finding had no place in the law where insane defendants could not be convicted. Before the finding could be addressed, Townley's counsel arranged for a certificate of insanity assigning him to Bedlam:

This proceeding...immediately produced an outburst of surprise and dissatisfaction on the part of the public. The evidence given at the trial respecting the supposed insanity of the prisoner had been received with much incredulity, and the settled opinion of the great majority of the nation, which was strongly upheld by the newspaper press, was, that Townley, at the time he committed the crime, and from that time down to the period of his trial, was in a state of mind which made him fully responsible for his actions and justly amendable to the penalty of the law. ("Derbyshire Murder" 311)

The public outcry that followed what seemed to be a successful evasion of the death penalty for a murder conviction led to a *second* Commission in Lunacy that found Townley sane at the time of the murder and legally responsible. He was sent to prison, where he soon committed suicide (Smith, *Trial* 131-32).

Clearly, the legal representatives in this trial told one story, and the medical told another; and both stories clashed. Can we determine whether this "contact zone" had any

far-reaching effects on these figures and the communities they represented? We know that Winslow's diagnosis may have led him into another conflict, this one involving a critical medical community. One doctor wrote that

the active advocates of the madness of Townley have evinced such absurdly inexact and confused notions, as must, were there anything like an adequate general knowledge of insanity abroad, have subjected them to much ridicule and even contempt. By noisy clamour and empty declamation they have striven to conceal the vicious character of their proceedings, and, like a well-known fish, to escape under the shelter of the inky cloud which they have purposely made. ([Maudsley] 77)

And in a monograph published in 1864, the editors of the *Journal of Mental Science* noted that "Townley's insanity, as described by [Winslow], was a medley, a scientific patchwork, ingeniously constructed, boldly devised, striking in appearance, but really a scientific incoherency – a mixture of incompatibles" (37). If we recall the usefulness of auto-ethnography as a strategy for gaining power in a contact zone, we might ask if these criticisms had any effect on whether and how Winslow – or any other medical expert – gave testimony in the future or whether the presiding justice was influenced enough by the complications following the verdict to change the kind of instructions he gave, the way he defined insanity, or the precedents he cited. All we know now is that the law that initially sent Townley to Bedlam rather than to the gallows was revised to close this "administrative loophole" (Smith, "Boundary" 381 n23).

If we return to Townley's verdict and place it against the mental specialist's diagnosis of "latent insanity" (Braddon 249) in the dangerous Lady Audley and the (male) jury's insanity verdict of Mary Ann Brough, we see the force of Victorian culture at work. Women are called insane when they act against convention. They are considered victims of their biology or their inheritance or their poverty or the unexplainable when they murder. But a man who kills a woman may merely be doing "repo" work: Bessie Godwin is simply property; therefore, Townley felt he "had as perfect a right to deal with her life as he had with any other description of property, as the money in his pocket" (*Regina v. Townley* 385). In destroying Bessie Goodwin, the law determined – and the public apparently believed – that Townley was acting in a reasonable way, driven by an exaggerated version of a conventional opinion: "Miss Goodwin's affections (herself, as it were) had been stolen from him; by taking from him who had robbed him that which had

been stolen, he did *in a certain sense* recover his property, even though it was under the condition of destroying it" (*Voice* 59). His actions, which indicated that he saw Bessie Goodwin as less than human, were unchallenged perhaps because they so closely mirrored notions about women in the Victorian world.

In *Imperial Eyes*, Mary Louise Pratt explains that in a contact perspective, subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other "not in terms of separateness...but in terms of co-presence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power" (7). Applications of Pratt's language to the texts discussed in this article suggest that imperialism was alive and well within the homes of Victorians and that we can read interactions between the more and less powerful as sites for contact, conflict, and dialectic exchanges. Since, according to Pratt, auto-ethnography "involves partial collaboration" with the powerful, in examples of domestic imperialism we can look for signs of that collaboration and any empowerment from it. In *Lady Audley's Secret*, we find a woman who understood the role that culture had assigned her and she learned to play it advantageously; she may have also learned to "talk the talk" of the temporarily insane as a means – she mistakenly believed – of saving herself. In contrast, Mary Ann Brough's case offers no indication of her adapting to the expectations of her husband and society. Instead, she defied the approved roles of wife and mother – the latter to such an extent that the jury could only see her actions as insane. And Victor Townley's trial depicts the powerless Bessie asserting a defiant independence in a context where she had none. Townley, moreover, becomes a site of conflict between two substantial cultural forces, medicine and law, neither of which adapted to the other. Auto-ethnography seems to have no place in this personal or cultural conflict.

As these three cases of domestic imperialism also suggest, women may not be as powerless as Victorian culture seems to define them, and patriarchs may not be as powerful as we have long believed. For a time, Lady Audley overpowered George Talboys and devastated Michael Audley; Mrs. Brough defeated her husband; and Bessie withheld from Victor Townley her person, his "property." Yet while the costs to the women were extraordinary, easy stories about the power of the patriarchy do not get us very far: even medicine and law were involved in clashes whose outcomes were

unpredictable. To see stories of domestic imperialism more fully, we need to extend our readings beyond the borders of texts, to the cultural values reflected in them and to other documents as well – for Lady Audley, not just to other sensation novels but, for instance, to documents by legal and mental professionals; in Brough's and Townley's cases, to other trials and other testimonies and to debates outside the courtroom. And we need to look for patterns of "interlocking understandings and practices" in place of simple binaries and "separateness" (Pratt 7), patterns that are unexpected rather than stereotypical. For while familiar stories can be satisfying and valuable, they can also close off thoughts on all that falls outside.

And so for my ending, I return to imperialism as a site of a potentially valuable heuristic. In *Out of Our Minds: Reason and Madness in the Exploration of Central Africa*, Johannes Fabian argues that imperialists could step outside of patriarchal and "rationalized frames of exploration" in order to gain more complete knowledge about Others. He suggests that "we must [likewise] pass cultural boundaries to reach common ground" (278) – advice which invites us to discover or imagine or invent shared interests, values, experiences and stories. Similarly, feminist geographer Gillian Rose claims that boundaries should be analyzed as "highly complex, ... multidimensional, sometimes overlapping and sometimes contradictory"; spaces which can refuse "oppositional exclusion" and can be sites of "reversals" and "paradoxes" ("Tradition" 416). Following Fabian and Rose, perhaps we should conceive of Victorian stories like these not as just many-layered but as always folding in and reaching out in complicated ways, like the fabulous creatures of the deep.³

³ This research was funded by an Intramural Research Incentive Grant: Research on Women from the Office of the Vice President for Research.

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Books Received

Adamson, Alan H. *Mr. Charlotte Bronte. The Life of Arthur Bell Nicholls*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008.

"Few people who have sought to avoid publicity have had to endure as much of it...as Nicholls...[Adamson] explores why Bronte, cool and hostile towards Nicholls in the early days of his curacy at Haworth, came to respect and love him, and shows how Patrick Bronte, her difficult father, grew to rely on him after her death."

Bodenheimer, Rosemarie. *Knowing Dickens*. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 2007.

"Bodenheimer explores...nineteenth-century ideas about the unconscious mind. Dickens found many ways to dramatize in his characters both unconscious processes and acts of self-projection...[negotiating] the ground between knowing and telling, revealing and concealing."

DeGroot, Christiana and Marion Ann Taylor, eds. *Recovering Nineteenth-century Women Interpreters of the Bible*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007.

"[B]iblical interpretation includes few women's voices...This volume analyzes...[works by] Christina Rossetti, Florence Nightingale, and Harriet Beecher Stowe...written in a variety of genres: novels and poetry, catechisms, manuals for Bible study, and commentaries on the books of the Bible."

Dillon, Lisa. *The Shady Side of Fifty. Age and Old Age in Late Victorian Canada and the United States*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008.

Dillon "explores the psychological, social, and economic dimensions of aging from 1870 to 1901...integrating statistical analyses of historical data from Canadian and U.S. censuses with a discourse analysis of ideas about age and old age."

Losano, Antonia. *The Woman Painter in Victorian Literature*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2008.

This study "argues that Victorian women writers used the controversial figure of the woman painter to intervene in the discourse of aesthetics. These writers were able to assert their own status as artistic producers through the representation of female visual artists."

MacKenzie, Norman H. *Excursions in Hopkins*. Philadelphia: St. Joseph's UP, 2007.

This book is based on the Martin D'Arcy Lectures delivered at Oxford (1988-89) by Norman MacKenzie, combining "his love of research into the contexts out of which Hopkins's poems were written with his deep knowledge of the poems through the various stages of their composition."

Menke, Richard. *Telegraphic Realism. Victorian Fiction and Other Information Systems*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2008.

"The book analyzes the connections between fictional writing, communication technologies, and developing ideas about information, from the postage stamp and electric telegraph to wireless. By placing fiction in dialogue with media history, it argues that Victorian realism was print culture's sophisticated response to the possibilities and dilemmas of a world of media innovations and information flows."

Plotkin, Cary H., Ed. *Soundings. Hopkins Studies in Transition*. Philadelphia: St. Joseph's UP, 2007.

"Norman H. MacKenzie, to whose work these essays pay memorial homage, set a standard of scholarly rigor and editorial achievement that have influenced every student of Hopkins. These twelve essays, from seven countries and four continents, exemplify Hopkins criticism sixty years on."

Scharnhorst, Gary. *Kate Field. The Many Lives of a Nineteenth-Century American Journalist*. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 2008.

"Kate Field was among the first celebrity journalists. A literary and cultural sensation, she not only reported the news but often made the news herself because of her sharp wit and vibrant presence. She wrote for...*Boston Post*, *Chicago Times-Herald*, and *New York Tribune*....[and] was an outspoken advocate for the rights of black Americans."

Tromp, Marlene, Ed. *Victorian Freaks. The Social Context of Freakery in Britain*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2008.

This book examines "definitions of 'freakery' and the unstable and sometimes conflicting ways in which freakery was understood and deployed...capitalist consumption, the medical community, and the politics of empire, sexuality, and art."