

The Victorian Newsletter

The Victorian Newsletter publishes scholarly articles by many of the most prominent Victorian academics of the last half century. As such, the *VN* reflects the genesis and development of contemporary Victorian studies. *The Victorian Newsletter* is a refereed publication featuring analyses of Victorian literature and culture.

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

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The Victorian Newsletter

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Cover Image: William North by Dante Gabriel Rossetti
Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery
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Greetings from the Editor

When I returned from the Victorians Institute Conference held at University of South Carolina in Columbia last October, a colleague asked, "So—what's new in Vic Lit?" The running joke being that there is rarely anything actually *new* in Victorian literature, she expected I'd say something like, "Oh, the usual." On the contrary, I was pleased to respond, "there *is* something new: have you ever heard of William North?" For me, the intellectual highlight of the 2008 conference was a special panel entitled "The Elusive William North," featuring a range of scholarly perspectives and presented in conjunction with the issuing of North's *The City of the Jugglers* by the University of South Carolina Press. As it turns out, for all his elusiveness, North was himself a sort of Victorian pop-culture icon, particularly in the United States, where his influence on New York's bohemian counter-culture directly shaped the rising generation of American writers. A disillusioned idealist who lived fast and died young, William North managed to leave an impressive mark on literary and social history in his short life.

It is my great delight to offer this very special number of *The Victorian Newsletter*, which is devoted exclusively to the work accomplished by that conference panel and to the new research and scholarly resources it generated. In his "Introducing a 'Lost' Victorian Novel: The Elusive William North and *The City of the Jugglers* (1850)," the initiator of this particular North project, Patrick Scott, outlines the uniqueness of his literary discovery from the University of South Carolina's Rare Book Collection, which has proven indeed to be a remarkable find for the wealth of associations it has sparked already.

Part One continues with panelists' papers, including Lanya Lamouria's "North's *The City of the Jugglers* (1850) and the European Revolutions of 1848," which investigates North's political and intellectual engagement with the second French Revolution in particular, and offers insight on his life prior to emigrating to America. "The (After) Life of William North among the New York Bohemians" by Edward Whitley and Robert Weidman analyzes North's posthumous influence, positing that his theatrical suicide in the wake of thwarted romance and literary obscurity became an ideological inspiration to the transatlantic bohemian movement. Rebecca Stern's "*The City of the Jugglers* and the Limits of Victorian Fiction" examines this novel's challenge to a range of political and social expectations, not

least of which is the novel structure itself. From the novel's obscurity in its own time to its peculiar relevance in our time, and from North's life in Europe to his death in America, the articles in Part One richly suggest the many fruitful directions for scholarly investigation represented by this author and his thus-far obscure *oeuvres*.

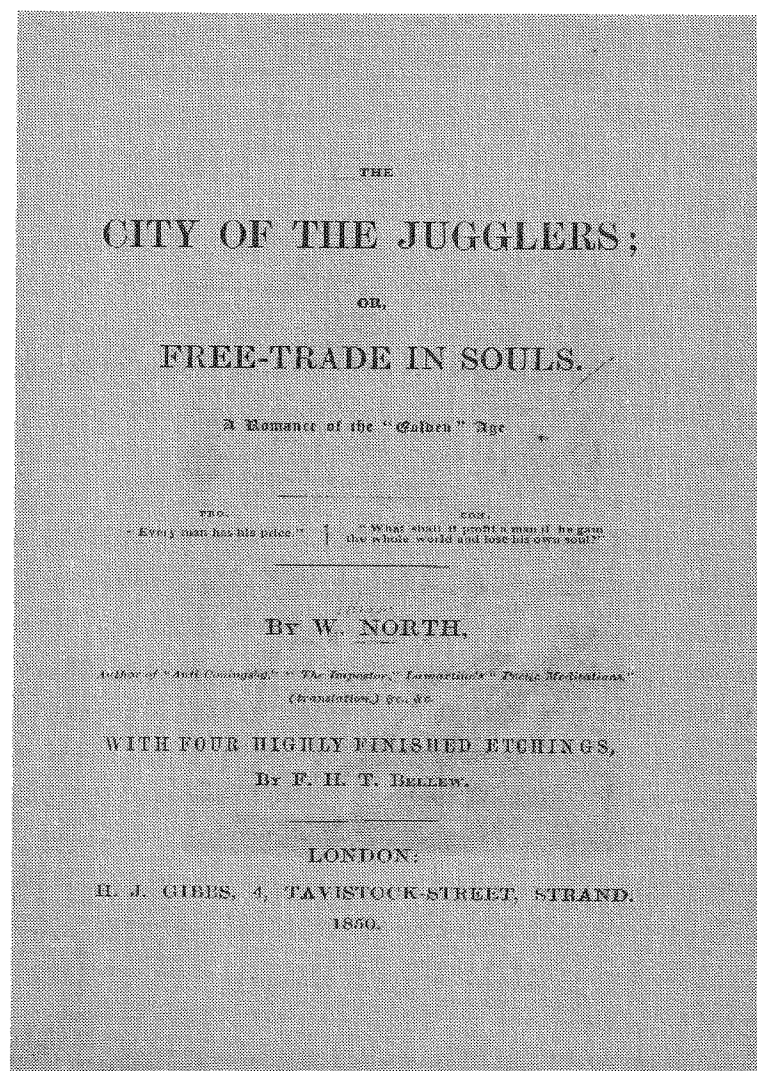
Part Two of *Victorian Newsletter* #115 features the collaborative scholarly endeavors of Allan Life and Page Life, beginning with the provocative "North *versus* North: William North (1825-1854) in Light of New Documentation." This extended analysis provides compelling evidence for the autobiographical underpinnings of North's writing, offering insights aimed at subverting both the elusiveness and obscurity seemingly characterizing his life and legacy. The concluding—and crowning—entry, also a collaborative work by Patrick Scott, Allan Life, and Page Life, begs the question of North's *obscurity* by establishing the *pervasiveness* of his presence in literary history. This bibliography, "A Preliminary Checklist of Writings by and about William North (1825-1854)," constitutes a veritable six-degrees-of-separation linking North with celebrities, writers and journalists, artists and bohemians throughout mid-century Europe and America.

It goes without saying that a publication such as this depends on collaborative efforts, and for that I thank Patrick Scott for orchestrating the project and the panel showcasing William North; the contributors for their editing and timely revisions; Potter College Dean, David Lee, and English Department Head, Karen Schneider, for their support of *The Victorian Newsletter*; and assistant editor, Kim Reynolds, for her energetic and enthusiastic innovations.

For the wealth of images throughout #115, I thank Patrick Scott and Rob Weidman. I'm especially grateful to Rob for his advice on the images provided by Lehigh University's Digital Library and Special Collections Library, and for technical assistance with the cover.

Finally, my thanks to Zack Adams, whose assistance is reflected on each and every page.

Deborah A. Logan
Bowling Green
April 2009



(Fig. 1) Original title-page to North's *The City of the Jugglers*
PRO. "Every man has his price."
CON. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

Introducing a "Lost" Victorian Novel:

The Elusive William North and The City of the Jugglers (1850)

Patrick Scott

What is the least known but most relevant novel of the 19th century? What if it began with a credit problem in the financial markets?

It was about four o'clock on a spring afternoon. The City was still in full activity. The gold was rattling on the bank counters, and the clerks were cashing their notes as coolly as if the whole affair had been anything but a gigantic juggle. Practical men—too practical to think—were paying in their deposits with a touching and child-like confidence. No suspicion had they that they were trusting to a system which, "like the baseless fabric of a vision," might at any moment dissolve into nothingness. Practical men do not understand the currency—they despise theorists who do. They swear by Sir Robert the Devil and—everybody is in debt to everybody in consequence. (North, *City* 1)

That is the first paragraph of one of the most elusive books by one of Victorian literature's most elusive writers. The book, William North's *The City of the Jugglers, or Free-Trade in Souls* (1850) appears to survive, at least in libraries that catalogue their books into OCLC, in no more than three copies, only two of them in North America. According to one report after North's death, the book never sold a single copy.

To me, this book is irresistible. Who can cavil at a novel featuring a new stock market that specializes in buying and selling souls at rates fixed by supply and demand? The inventor of this new investment opportunity, the villainous Ignatius Loyola Grey, has a sure sense of relative market cost:

That very morning he had bought three Irish M.P.s, an Italian *chargé d'affaires*, and a Cabinet Minister's mistress, for a total of six thousand guineas, after considerable chaffering; whilst a man of science in difficulties had been easily bargained for at a solitary hundred. (160)

North anticipates the central role of the media in modern society, when he hinges his novel on a newspaper strike (by the *Daily Timeserver*, the *Daily Nous*, and the *Morning Ghost*) that

causes absolute panic among the London populace (237-41). North recognizes also that a government's overseas policy may be calculating and manipulative, rather than simply high-minded; his fictional British cabinet includes thinly-disguised caricatures of Lord John Russell (as Lord John Twaddle) and Palmerston (as Lord Pumicestone), and the colonial secretary is "the great Earl Grub [Early Grey], whose plans for getting rid of our colonies by disgusting them with the mother country, and goading them to justifiable rebellion, are so little appreciated by less eccentric politicians" (92). North continually pushes beyond more conventional political commentators, as when he divides English society not into three classes, but into four—the Idol Worshipers or Aristocrats, the Gold Worshipers or Plutocrats, the Fire-Worshippers or Democrats, but also the Bosh-Worshippers or Somnocrats (110-11, 119-20). His is a novel, too, that responds to contemporary events, even before they happen, anticipating the following year's Great Exhibition of the Industries of All Nations at the Crystal Palace with its own Great Exhibition of the Souls of All Nations (193-94, 198-213). In 1848, the British people notoriously failed to follow their European contemporaries on the path to revolution; it would be nearly twenty more years before the British parliament took up the question of voting eligibility in the Second Reform Act, and another century and a half before the British monarchy was seriously called into question. Yet North's novel ends in a Chartist revolution, the enacting of universal (male) suffrage, and the hero being asked by the Queen to be prime minister (this he declines, being too staunch a republican ever to serve a monarch [247]). North's writing teems with sharp insights that seem eerily prophetic:

The middle classes are suffering too bitterly from restricted currency, over-taxation, and colonial bungling. They are beginning to see their own interest, and it pulls with the people. (177)

North's novel is of course a romance, or political fantasia, as well as a scathing political satire, and some Victorianists (the kind who don't like the near-contemporary delirium scenes in Charles Kingsley's *Yeast* or *Alton Locke*) may not be attuned to such stylistic and generic risk-taking. But we seldom have the opportunity to read anything Victorian for the very first time, and this is a book of eerie timeliness that simply dropped from view. Even if we leave aside the fortuitous relevance of its satire on stock-market speculation, other sallies, once perhaps wild fantasy, no longer seem so far off target: "One set of ingenious rascals had started an office as agents to all kings in Europe for the sale of titles. Patents of nobility were growing as common, and about as valuable, as protested bills

in the market" (225). Equally, more than a hundred years before it became legally possible in Britain to refuse an inherited peerage, North made his hero do just that:

Entering the House of Lords in his ducal robes, with his coronet upon his head, Arthur Bolingbroke Darian, called Duke of St. George, deliberately proclaimed his resolution of renouncing for ever his title, his peerage, and all its privileges. Amid the dismayed looks of his colleagues, he cast his coronet to the ground, trampled upon it with contempt, and quitted the hall of legislators, mid a silence more ominous than the most stormy disapprobation.

The pale nobles looked at one another, like mariners expectant of shipwreck; and cold drops of perspiration oozed from beneath the wig of the chancellor. (229-30)

This projection of the coming republic is not simple-mindedly romantic or visionary. The passage's dim foreshadowing of Max Beerbohm and the full-robed ducal suicide in *Zuleika Dobson* surely hints at a playful, perhaps self-protective, irony of tone in at least some of North's more melodramatic imaginings. But who in mainstream mid-Victorian fiction was imagining such things at all?

North's novel contains one resonant episode that encapsulates the morally-ambivalent position of intellectuals in comfortable circumstances as they champion the rights of the poor, and that suggests he had the capacity to write, not only satire and fantasy, but fiction that could compare in seriousness with that of the major Victorian novelists. One evening, late in the novel, the poet Bernard Viridor, the Duke of St. George's comrade in revolution, returns from the Great Exposition to his apartment at the Inns of Court and hears sounds of breathing in the unused store-room (fig. 2):

...entering the closet, which was of considerable size, he held up the flickering light, and cast a searching glance into the darkness before him.

Scarcely had he done so, than an object, which at first sight he mistook for a bundle of old clothes on the floor, started up, and displayed to his astonished gaze the figure of a man, so ragged, so emaciated, and so wild in its aspect, that he half-mistook it for a spectre of his own imagination. (215-16)

The wild figure turns out to be the apartment's former tenant, penniless and without family or friends; evicted to live on the streets, he now hides in the store-room, from which he ventures out when the hero is away to scrounge leftover food scraps and read the papers. It is a brief episode, but a haunting one, and one that surely hints at North's potential as a novelist that he



(Fig. 2) "The Lumber Room" by F. H. T. Bellew
From William North, *The City of the Jugglers*

himself was only just beginning to discover.

William North (1825-1854) is not unknown, but he has been shadowy even to specialists. In his own time, North was widely published, in the eighteen-forties in London and in the early eighteen-fifties in New York. Yet there is no modern biography, and there was no entry for him in such standard works as the *Oxford Companion to English Literature*, the *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, or the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Even John Sutherland's omnivorous *Stanford Companion to Victorian Fiction*, which does offer a brief entry on North, does not list this book.

In his own autobiographical fiction, North was an aristocrat by birth and a republican by conviction. New detective work by Allan and Page Life (see part two of this issue) has failed to find support for the story North told to contemporaries, that he came from the cadet branch of a rich landed and clerical family; while his American contacts were allowed to believe his relatives included the Earls of Guilford and a Bishop of Winchester, as well as the former Prime Minister Lord North, any relationship that existed must have been quite distant and indirect. In his teens, North's father removed him from a conventional English classical education at Temple Grove School to study in Germany at the Universities of Bonn and Berlin. He returned to London with advanced liberal views, immediately quarreled with his very conservative father, and moved into chambers at the Inns of Court, aiming at a career, not in law, but in literature. His first book, *Anti-Coningsby: or the New Generation Grown Old, by an Embryo M.P.* (1844), a two-volume political satire on Disraeli and the Young England movement, was published when he was only nineteen but later disowned; at least one contemporary reviewer found its portrayal of high society, and its personal attacks, "coarse and vulgar" (*Fraser's* 211-12); North himself later commented, "Since then, six years of earnest study and reflection . . . have left the writer an altered, if not a better man" (*City* 93). This was rapidly followed by a three-volume political novel, *The Imposter: or Born Without a Conscience* (1845), and the shorter *Anti-Punch: or the Toy-Shop in Fleet Street* (1847). Alongside these books, he was contributing regularly to *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, *Eliza Cook's Journal*, and similar publications.

Perhaps because North had been out of England for several years, and so was unusually alert to the social changes that had occurred in his absence, even these early writings include much acute satiric observation. *Anti-Coningsby*, for instance, undermined by its crude anti-Semitic caricaturing of Disraeli as Sidonia, the ambitious leader of Young England whose besotted aristocratic backers plot to proclaim him emperor, nonetheless

strikes a nerve when it comes to describe preparations for his coronation by Archbishop Pusey:

Round the outside of the cathedral temporary seats were erected for the convenience of those spectators of the procession who could afford to pay half a guinea for a portion of the consecrated space...The seats inside were disposed of at the rate of one to ten guineas, according to their position, and as the dean and chapter took great care to make it known that the money thus obtained would, without deduction, be applied for the benefit of the poor of the metropolis, no one could rationally object to the proceeding. (II.157-58)

There is also a youthful glee as North describes how his little band of anti-Coningsbyite heroes escape from the troops sent to arrest them by hijacking "one of those recently-invented railway velocipedes" (a light railway truck propelled by foot-cranked like a bicycle) and "scudding away at the rate of some fifteen miles an hour":

On they whirled, sometimes through chasms dark and deep, sometimes upon the summit of a ridge, with a precipice on either side; beneath high bridges, through long, gloomy tunnels, still on they whirled. By Jove! Our fathers would have started to see the wonders we see every day; and should some recent pilgrim to the shades describe to them such things, their weak minds, all astonished at his words, would class them with the tales of faery land, and legends of Arabian romance. (II.144-45)

Increasingly, though, North had ambitions to be more than a satirist of high society and political absurdity. He also translated the French writer Alphonse Lamartine's *Poetical Meditations* (1848) and, on the outbreak of revolution, he travelled to Paris (see *City* 123). He soon decided, however, that Lamartine was insufficiently revolutionary in his lifestyle. North returned to London to publish a new edition of William Beckford's *Vathek* (1849), with a memoir of Beckford, which became his most reprinted work. A friend of the Rossetti brothers, North was also involved in 1849 in initial plans for the Pre-Raphaelite magazine, *The Germ*. Christina Rossetti distrusted him as a "rabid" Chartist and free-thinker, but North remained on good terms with other members of the family. It was at this point in his career that North published *The City of the Jugglers* and a companion pamphlet, also very rare, *The Infinite Republic: a Spiritual Revolution* (1851). He later claimed that not a single copy of the novel had sold, asserting that even one purchaser would have told friends about it and success would have been assured.

Certainly, none of this literary activity brought North what he thought an adequate income. He spent and lost on literary projects, and gave away much of the money he had, and in their essay Allan and Page Life document the depths of his financial failure and disappointment. He launched the short-lived *North's Monthly Magazine*, of which the only known copies, once in the British Library, are reported as "destroyed by enemy action." In 1852, he emigrated to the United States. There, in New York, North associated with the emergent Bohemian literary circle later associated with Pfaff's Tavern. He worked hard, and for a time he seemed to flourish. His Poe-like short stories and poems appeared in *Putnam's Monthly Magazine*, *Graham's Magazine*, *Harper's*, the *Whig Review*, and the *Knickerbocker*. The best of these stories were reprinted after his death in the *New York Saturday Press*, as discussed below in the essay by Edward Whitley and Robert Weidman. He wrote a farce, *The Automaton Man*, successfully produced at Burton's Theatre, and he drew on his experience in France to write a *History of Napoleon III* (1853). But he felt disappointed both in love and in his literary career. North had often discussed and threatened suicide, and in November 1854, he killed himself by drinking prussic acid, leaving in manuscript his final and most successful novel, *The Slave of the Lamp* (1854), a posthumously-published satire on New York society and the literary scene which would later be reprinted as *The Man of the World* (1866, reprinted again in 1877).

To ask a group of Victorian scholars now about William North usually brings blank looks. When I first discovered *The City of the Jugglers* in the library stacks some years back, I thought no one knew anything of its author. Certainly those on whom I pressed its claims had never heard of him. I now realize that scholars with different specialist interests have in fact studied portions of his life and work. The Disraeli biographies often mention North's *Anti-Coningsby*. Because of North's friendship with Dante Gabriel Rossetti, he flits through the footnotes of Pre-Raphaelitism, and it was Rossetti who sketched the clearest surviving portrait of North [cover image]; it was a chance mention of North in a phone call to Allan Life that first alerted me to earlier comments on North by the late William E. Fredeman and others. North makes a similar fleeting appearance in the later memoirs of New York's mid-century literary bohemia, and many of these sources have recently been helpfully assembled by Edward Whitley and Robert Weidman on a wonderful web-site, *The Vault at Pfaff's*, based at Lehigh University (<http://digital.lib.lehigh.edu/pfaffs/people/individuals/31/>). North's two early novels, and his last, are both available on Googlebooks, and the first has even been reproduced (if misattributed) by a print-on-demand publisher.

Somehow, though, there has always been a gap at the center of this knowledge. Even at its best, talking with others about North has often seemed like asking a committee of blind men to describe an exotic animal. Some of them have a firm grasp on one or another body part, but each has only a partial sense of the whole.

The gap at the centre has been *The City of the Jugglers*, simply because since 1850 almost nobody has had access to a copy. Books can only get on Google if there is a copy in a Google library, and libraries seldom surrender a book to mass digitization once someone realizes it might be rare or valuable. Now for the first time in over 150 years, based on the copy in the University of South Carolina's Rare Books and Special Collections, North's elusive and unexpectedly relevant novel is again available, in two ways: the full text (page-by-page digital facsimile) is free on the web, at

<<http://sc.edu/library/digital/collections/coj.html>>

and the same facsimile is available more readably as a print-on-demand paperback, published by the University of South Carolina Press.

North's book is perhaps the only English novel fully to take up the challenge of 1848 and the revolutions elsewhere in Europe, and to imagine such a revolution as possible in the nation of shopkeepers. It is the most committed republican novel of the Victorian period. It is one of the best fictional windows into the ethos and hopes of intellectual Chartists, with none of the ambivalent ventriloquism of, say, Gaskell or Kingsley. It is a book that, taken seriously, could reconfigure views about the literature of the 1840's. It is short enough for the skeptical to risk their time in reading. And its satire is often very funny. Maybe, at last, William North and his novel now have a second chance.

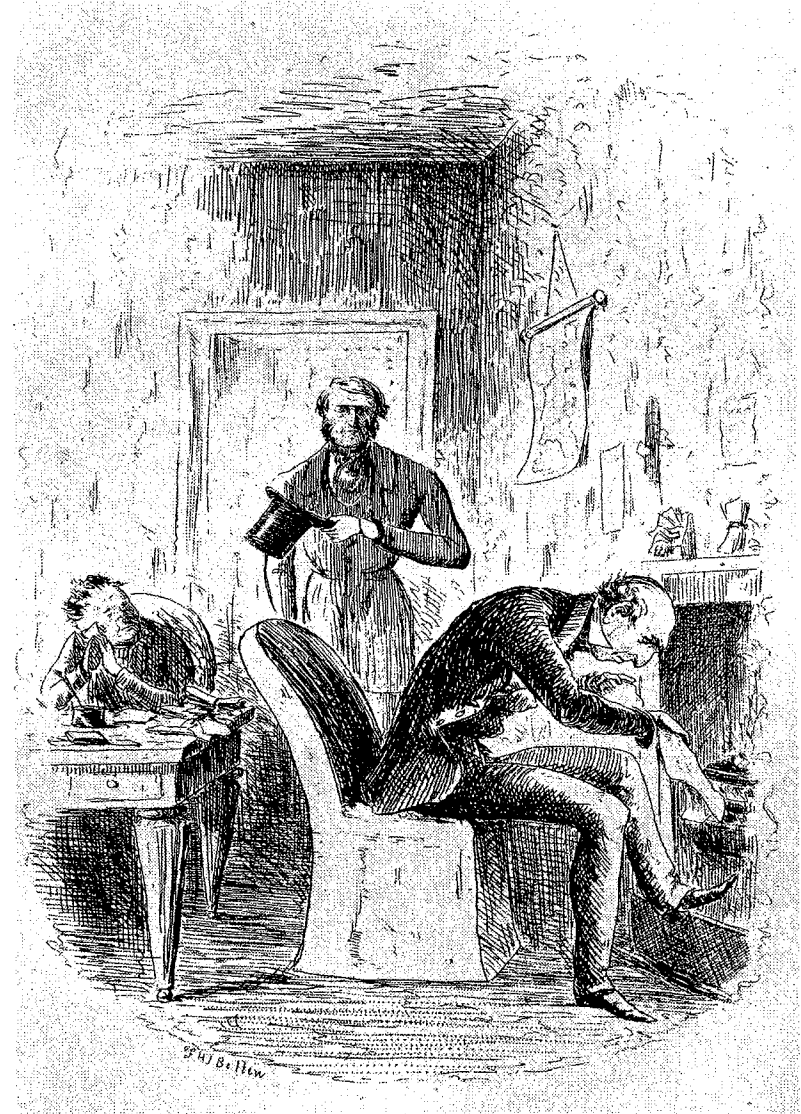
University of South Carolina, Columbia

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(Fig. 3) "The Timeservers" by F. H. T. Bellew
From William North, *The City of the Jugglers*

*North's The City of the Jugglers (1850) and
the European Revolutions of 1848*

Lanya Lamouria

William North's *The City of the Jugglers; or, Free-Trade in Souls* (1850) will surprise readers whose expectations have been shaped by such canonical mid-century novels as *Dombey and Son* (1848) and *Jane Eyre* (1847). The surprises begin with the plot. The novel opens in the City, London's commercial district, in the aftermath of the railway mania of the mid-1840s and the European revolutions of 1848. The businessman Ignatius Loyola Grey, emboldened by the recent speculative frenzy, is finalizing plans for a new kind of financial deception or "juggle"—a "General Agency for the Sale and Purchase of Human Souls" (North 3, 11). Though the name of Grey's agency suggests that he negotiates Faustian bargains, he is no believer in the occult. Instead, he creates an exchange through which one person can formally buy over or bribe another. Grey's glossy brochure for his company explains that he hopes "to facilitate those negotiations which, in every civilized community, must constantly occur" (40). As North's novel soon makes clear, such corrupt financial negotiations are central to all aspects of life in Britain and Europe. In *City*, writers sell their services to the highest bidder, populist agitators take bribes, and newspaper editors are paid by foreign rulers in return for favorable articles. Thus, when Grey opens his Soul Agency, he does not create a new market. He simply exposes what North believes to be true: Britain is a massive financial "system" whose operation depends on the "Free-Trade in Souls" (2).

It is this system that North's heroes, the republican-aristocrat Arthur Bolingbroke Darian and the republican-poet Bernard Viridor, are determined to undermine. Although they aim first to destroy Grey's agency and the Soul Exchange to which it gives rise, their final objective is to initiate a European-style republican revolution in Britain. Both men have tested their commitment to radical ideals by fighting in the European revolutions of 1848. One long chapter recounts Darian's military adventures in the Hungarian Revolution, where he meets Basiline, a lovely Magyar aristocrat on the verge of execution; subsequent episodes evoke Viridor's days working alongside poet-politician Alphonse Lamartine after the Paris Revolt. Together, Darian and Viridor, aided by the "Illuminati," a London branch of an

international republican organization, foment what is best viewed as an intellectual-force rebellion. First, they stage a Grand Exposition of the Souls of all Nations, a nightmarish version of the Great Exhibition that showcases the varieties of madness plaguing modern British citizens. The Grand Exposition gives "a great moral shock . . . to the conscience of the age" and, in turn, triggers a panic in the soul market (229). Next, they encourage journalists to strike against the insidious practice of anonymous publication, an action which results in the rise of a liberal press committed to giving voice to the people's demands for political reform. In the novel's concluding pages, Darian and Viridor's dream of a British Revolution of 1850 is almost realized. After the masses, joined by the middle-classes, march for Universal Suffrage, Viridor, now a Member of Parliament, carries a bill that extends the franchise to all men over the age of twenty-one. Though he is offered the post of Prime Minister, he refuses. The narrator, tying up loose ends, announces that "a dissolution of Parliament was expected soon" (247).

As this plot summary suggests, *City* often reads less like a mid-century novel than a *bricolage* of various genres of writing packaged in a three-volume format. Indeed, in moving from one chapter to the next, North shifts from a miniature Gothic narrative (see chapter three, "A Curious Family History") to an extended philosophical debate (chapter four, "Certain Illuminati are Introduced"), all the while incorporating bits of parody that would be at home in the pages of *Punch* (North's moniker for the *Times* is the *Timeserver*).¹ But it is precisely this generic instability which makes possible the novel's exuberant satirical fantasy. What is original about this fantasy is in part the subject matter—what other Victorian novel features a Soul Exchange or, for that matter, a dissolution of Parliament?—but it is not the subject matter alone. Thomas Carlyle, a thinker who exerted strong influence on the mid-Victorian imagination, used his early writings to identify "Mammon-worship" and the legacy of political revolution as two of the era's most pressing social concerns. We need look no farther than *Dombey and Son* and *Jane Eyre* to see examples of novels that follow Carlyle's lead. Dickens's plot, for instance, turns on the bankruptcy of the overreaching businessman, *Dombey*, while Brontë's narrative of female rebellion is steeped in the language and imagery of political revolt. What distinguishes North's *City* is that it treats financial failure and revolt

¹ North offers his own characterization of the novel in his concluding chapter, and what he emphasizes is its generic multiplicity. He apostrophizes, "This work,—this volcanic eruption of my soul, speech in the spiritual parliament of thought, sarcastic repartee to liars social, liars political, liars dialectic, analytic, and synthetic,—this mythical history, magnetic revelation, dream of poetic vanity, incomprehensible cartoon, or whatever else it turns out to be in the eyes of men or angels..." (223).

not as themes through which to explore the moral drama of individuals like *Dombey* and *Jane*, but as central plot events to which character is largely subordinated.

Mary Poovey's observation about the role of financial plots in Victorian fiction is relevant in this context. As she notes, "the vast majority of British novels published between the late 1840s and the end of the century use financial plots...as thematically central but formally marginal" (37). *City* reverses the typical emphasis, moving formally marginal material—the financial and revolutionary plots—to the center of the narrative. In this sense, North's novel represents an important mid-century example of "minor literature," in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's sense of the term. *City* unearths materials buried in the "cellar" of major writing and brings them into the "full light of day" (Deleuze and Guattari 17).² In what follows, I argue that North's novel unearths a particular social nightmare that haunts mainstream writing in the period following the 1848 revolutions, transforming this nightmare into a full-blown republican fantasy. In the wake of the political crises, Victorians had little reason to fear that a lower-class revolt would take place on British soil. They did, however, have reason to worry about the domestic financial markets. The recent railway mania and the widespread commercial crisis it triggered showed Victorians that financial crashes posed a real threat to the domestic social order. As we will see, North's novel vividly imagines a scenario that Victorian economists, politicians, and journalists only suggest: *City* proposes that the British government is undermined not by the rise of politicized proletarians but by the crash of a speculative market.

Before elaborating this argument, we need first to locate North's *City* in the broader context of Victorian writing about the 1848 revolutions. There can be no doubt that the novel invites a reading in this context. Although North wrote his satirical fantasy because his political consciousness was shaped by the European revolutions of 1848, the writer was also capitalizing on wide-spread British public interest in the crises.³ In the months after the

² Deleuze and Guattari characterize minor literature in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. See chapter 3, "What Is a Minor Literature?," for their full, three-part definition. My discussion makes use of only their second point: "The second characteristic of minor literatures is that everything in them is political" (17). In explaining this characteristic, the theorists quote from Kafka's ruminations on the meaning of his "minor" literary production. It is Kafka who observes that "what in great literature goes on down below in the cellar...[in minor literature] takes place in the full light of day" (qtd. in Deleuze and Guattari 17).

³ North, like Viridor, went to Paris to work with Larmartine. North's fiction also demonstrates that he was intent on imagining himself as an actor in the 1848 revolutions. In *City*, his semi-autobiographical protagonists play important roles in Hungary and France. Later, in *The Slave of the Lamp* (1855), the hero Dudley Mondel, another character who shares North's biography, remembers his time studying about Germany as a period of political awakening and activism: "I became a republican amongst republicans, and helped to lay the seeds of the revolution which in 1848 shook all Europe to its foundations" (306).

February Revolt in Paris, the event that catalyzed the wave of upheavals across Eastern and Central Europe, London was overtaken by what could be described as a revolution mania.⁴ News of the revolutions dominated the metropolitan dailies, which used a rudimentary telegraph to offer thrilling, late-breaking reports. But it was the new illustrated press that turned the political crisis into a form of entertainment, including lavish illustrations of key battles and charismatic political leaders. Although this media frenzy was initially fed by anxiety that republican revolution would spread to England, fears of a domestic revolt subsided after the disappointing Chartist demonstration in April, 1848. Europe's revolutionary movements continued to hold the Victorian public's imagination, however, because they were understood as world-historical events with the potential to inaugurate another reign of terror or a new era of pan-European political progress.

A quick survey of Victorian responses to the most celebrated of the revolutions, the French Revolution of 1848, shows just how overwrought the sense of historical expectation became. In the days after the February Revolt in Paris, for example, the most conservative Victorian journalists insisted that the new upheaval represented a reenactment of the first French Revolution and would drag France back to the violent past of 1793. *The Times* predicted that, unless France could quickly establish "a strong and conscientious government," "bands of wretches" were sure to "emerge from their holes" and inaugurate another "reign of terror" ("Express from Paris"). Liberals, however, countered by noting that the speed of the crisis—King Louis Philippe was overthrown and a Second Republic announced in the span of three days—showed that historical movement itself was undergoing a kind of progress. A writer for the *Athenaeum*, reviewing two books published within a month of the February Revolt, explains that, because the Revolution had compressed the events of years into days, the revolution had already "assume[d] an historical character":

The work of an ordinary cycle has been compressed and accomplished within these comparatively few days....The downfall of [King Louis Philippe] in France, looking through all the crowd of circumstances which have followed, seems as much a piece of history as the death of Caesar or the destruction of Carthage.—Nor is this altogether an illusion of the senses. The conditions are as much changed mentally as they are materially. The rapid locomotion of ideas is not

⁴ For general histories of the revolutionary movements in Europe, see especially Priscilla Robertson's classic *1848: A Social History* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1967) and *The Revolutions in Europe 1848-1849: From Reform to Reaction*. Eds. Evans and Von Strandman (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000).

more wonderful than that of a rail-way-train. (April 15, 1848; 384-85)

This reviewer was not alone in believing that historical "conditions" had changed radically and permanently. One of the authors under review, the radical-leaning Walter Kelly, opens his book with an equally bold announcement of the significance of the contemporary movement: "The Revolution accomplished in Paris on the 24th of February, 1848, is without a parallel in history... [a] solitary example of a new order of facts" (1). These and other Victorian writers give expression to what Hannah Arendt has termed "the pathos" of revolutions, the "ever-repeated insistence that nothing comparable in grandeur and significance [has] ever happened in the whole recorded history of mankind" (34). This sense of historical anticipation collapsed as the republican governments established in 1848 faltered (and they faltered quickly—France's Republic sustained its first substantial blow in June, 1848). Victorian radicals, of course, tried hard to keep the dying embers of the revolutionary movement alive. George Julian Harney, founder of the London Democratic Association, managed to launch the internationalist *The Red Republican* in 1850—the same year North published *City*.

When located in the context of post-1848 Britain, North's novel begins to look a little less strange. In *City*, North undertakes the project of imagining what at least some British radicals called for: a continental-style republican revolution on British soil. Even readers who did not sympathize with his politics were well-prepared to understand this project. Events in Europe had equipped them to envision a world in which "a new order of facts" prevailed. What is perhaps more important, the middle-brow newspapers and magazines that covered the European revolutions had familiarized readers with much they would encounter in North's novel: the political theorists whose failings North's characters endlessly debate (theorists such as Etienne Cabet, Louis Blanc, and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon); the sometimes-secret operation of international republican organizations, like the Illuminati; and even the character-types embodied by the novel's twin protagonists, Darian and Viridor. To be sure, these men are heroes in the Carlylean mold; North tells us that their closest historical analogues are to be found in two of Carlyle's favorite revolutionary actors, "Mirabeau" and "Napoleon" (11). But North's protagonists are also patterned after the most famous political leaders of 1848. Darian is remarkably similar to the man he fights for in Hungary, Lajos Kossuth, an aristocrat who became the nation's political and military leader. Viridor, a man of "vast importance in the great movement of the European world," closely resembles Lamartine, the celebrated poet who initially took the reins of France's Second Republic

(150). Insofar as Viridor is the more important of the two heroes, North's *City* might be accused of indulging in a self-aggrandizing fantasy of the writer as a Shelleyan legislator of the world. After all, North proposes that the revolution is accomplished in part by striking journalists and, earlier, he dedicates the novel to "all living men of letters," calling them "fellow soldiers in the war of liberty" (ii). Here, however, as in most aspects of the novel, North's fantasy is grounded in the hopes and fears of the historical moment.⁵

And yet the claim that North bases his revolutionary fantasy on the European revolutions requires some qualification. While his visionary 1850 revolution resembles a mid-century continental crisis, it is different in at least one important way. In *The City of the Jugglers*, the event that causes the anticipated dissolution of Parliament is not the rising of the middle-classes and masses—they do not appear until the final chapter, after the revolutionary movement has been set in motion—but the panic on the Soul Exchange. The writer takes pains to demonstrate that the Exchange is the fulcrum that moves the entire narrative. Thus, Book I narrates "The Opening of the Soul Exchange," Book II describes "The Grand Exhibition of the Souls of All Nations," and Book III traces the effects of the Exhibition—"The Panic in the Soul Market" and consequent revolution. North asserts that, although his protagonists are heroic, they are not the prime movers of the political crisis. As the narrator notes in the novel's last pages, Darian and Viridor "knew that a terrible explosion was at hand, and prepared to ride the wave" (227). According to North, what propels this revolutionary wave is the financial market, the rise and fall of the free-trade in souls.

North is not, of course, the first or only Victorian writer to suggest that a financial panic might trigger a political one. Carlyle's *The French Revolution* (1837) counts as an influential example of this type of politico-economic analysis. As Barbara Weiss has observed, the opening chapters of Carlyle's history link France's impending revolution to the nation's inability "to pay her bills" (149). But if North follows Carlyle in linking finance with revolution, he also departs from the precepts of his mentor, and the nature of this departure is

⁵ North was not the only Victorian writer excited by the example of Lamartine. Charlotte Brontë wrote: "How strange it appears to see literary and scientific names figuring in the list of Members of a Provisional Government!...do such men sway the public mind most effectually from their quiet studies or from a council-chamber?" (*Letters* 35). Others viewed Lamartine as a dangerous example of the poet as demagogue. Economist Nassau Senior posited that Lamartine's *History of the Girondins* (1847) created a revolution industry aimed at the masses: "Theatres were opened, in which [the Great Revolution] was acted....The shops and the stalls along the Quays and the Boulevards, and in the Courts of the Louvre, were covered with portraits of its chiefs, and with prints exhibiting its principle scenes. Thousands of copies of...*Girondins* were sold in cheap forms, in numbers, or by subscription; and probably as many thousand more were lent out to read at a price which the lowest workman could afford" (6).

instructive. Carlyle's point is that the monarchy mismanages the nation's finances, producing the social conditions that spurred the people to revolt; France's bankruptcy is thus just one of many symptoms of the ineffectual rule of the *ancien régime*. For North, however, the panic is not the result of government mismanagement. The British monarchy and Parliament actually have no control over the Soul Exchange or any other financial market, for that matter. The true rulers of the City, of Britain and, indeed, of Europe, are its feckless capitalists—its “jugglers.” Insofar as free-trade rules Britain, North proposes, a blow to the financial markets could destabilize the government and dissolve Parliament. He is simply following his own logic to its inevitable conclusion. I would emphasize, however, that his book follows another logic as well. North's 1850 fantasy of a Britain revolutionized by a market panic taps into an undercurrent of fear created by the railway mania and the commercial crisis to which it gave rise: the fear that a domestic economic panic could lead to political chaos.

Before turning to Victorian writing about the railway mania, we should look more closely at how, in North's novel, the panic in the Soul Market causes a revolutionary transformation in the British government. His foundational assumption is, as I suggest in my introduction, that “life in England is essentially a system of traffic” (93). This is certainly what he wants to convey in the novel's panoramic opening description of the City, worth quoting at length:

It was four P.M. in the City. Attornies [sic] were cheating their clients, or assisting them to cheat other people. Merchants were calculating the chances of the markets, like gamblers inventing martingales. Clerks were adding up figures as clocks add up minutes. Cashiers and secretaries were reflecting on the facilities of an impromptu voyage to California. Directors of companies were “cooking” the accounts of their shareholders. Waiters at Joe's, Sam's, Tom's, Betsy's, and other chop-houses, whose proprietors are apparently more proud of their Christian names than usual, ordered countless chops through patent *gutta percha* telegraphs. Cooks basted themselves with half-and-half whilst roasting before their fires, like Fox's martyrs, bound to the stakes of their tyrants. Crossing-sweepers were industriously clearing streets as dry as carpets and begging of passengers as charitable as cannibals. Usurers were meeting gentlemen who wanted to borrow money at the rate of—nonpayment. Adventurers were keeping appointments with capitalists they hoped to drag into speculations. Capitalists were contriving monopolies by which to crush non-capitalist adventurers.

Stockbrokers were playing monkey tricks on the Stock Exchange. Hebrew gold kings were manufacturing intelligence to astonish the stock-brokers. Couriers were dashing off with the commands of London financiers to foreign potentates. Messengers were arriving from the sham, entreating aid from the real sovereigns of Europe. And plenipotentiaries of the daily press were calmly overlooking the whole ant-hill with sublime indifference to the struggles of its busy insects, generalizing for millions the knowledge which, even to those in the midst of the bustle, was too often but semi-obscurity and chromotropic confusion. (2-3)

There is much worth noting here, particularly North's apparent parody of the Victorian financial writing that developed in the 1840s in an effort to explain the mysterious realm of the City to middle and upper class investors (Poovey 18). The novelist may well have been targeting a particular book: *City Men and City Manners. The City; or, the Physiology of London Business* (1845), by the political economist D. Morier Evans. What is most relevant for our purposes, however, is North's picture of a world that is structured by an elaborate and totalizing system of juggling or chicanery. The financial corruption clearly extends from the top down to the bottom of the social hierarchy—from “cheating” attorneys down to “begging” crossing sweepers—before spreading outward through corrupt financial channels: “usurers” eventually exert their influence on “foreign potentates.” In a later political work, the satirical pamphlet *The History of Napoleon III*, North announces that mid-century rulers, whether they are monarchs or emperors, are essentially no different than directors of companies. He thus refers to France's ex-King as the head of “Louis Philippe & Co.” (9). In *City*, though, North's argument is different. Foreign rulers, and presumably domestic ones as well, are puppets controlled by “the real sovereigns of Europe,” the “Hebrew gold kings” and their legions of usurers, adventurers, capitalists, stock brokers, and mercenary newspaper men. What North finally emphasizes is that, although this “system” of financial governance is far-reaching and comprehensive, it is built upon a sham foundation and is, consequentially, radically unstable. “The millions” can only experience the City as a dizzying “chromotropic confusion.” In this evocative phrase, we may hear echoes of the most famous mid-century critic of Victorian capitalism, Marx, who imagined that, when the bourgeoisie reduced all human relationships to those of cash payment, it undermined the foundations of society, creating an ever-shifting world in which “all that is solid melts into air” (476).

It is true that North frequently and loudly denounces communism in *City*. Though he is critical of a “system” that seems synonymous with capitalism, he champions the “freedom”

of capitalist "competition," as long as it is purged of the corrupting force of self-interest (49). Nonetheless, he shares with Marx a Hegelian belief in the dialectical movement of history. As Viridor, North's mouthpiece in the novel, explains, "I am no despiser of Hegel. I believe that our enemies may go so far as to rush of themselves into the torrent of truth over the precipice of error" (39). In the novel, the Soul Exchange represents the "error" that Viridor and North's enemies rush over, the error that makes it possible for them to see the limits of their commitment to the market and materialism more generally. Although soul agents like Grey at first believe that "Money was to be made out of nothings. They called *human souls* NOTHINGS!," North repeatedly reminds us that the soul market has "one good effect": "Capitalists began to study the nature of a Soul" (101). Later, the narrator remarks, "Psychology became a fashionable study, and Metaphysics and Ontology were consequently much more generally patronized than of old" (226). Thus, even before Darian and Viridor stage the Grand Exposition of the Souls of All Nations, Londoners are attuned to the value of the human spirit. What the Exposition of mad people shows them is that the soul is of moral, not financial, worth. In this way, the "error" of the Soul Exchange leads the nation to recognize the "truth," and the trade in souls collapses. As North tells it, however, this panic in the Soul exchange has one further effect: the transformation of the British government. Some readers will be frustrated that North does not explain how the panic in the market causes the British Revolution of 1850; instead, he devotes his attention to the political maneuvering of Darian and Viridor in Parliament. I would argue, however, that North may not explain it because, in 1850, he did not need to detail the process by which a collapse of the British financial market could produce political crises. The railway mania of the mid-1840s offered a vivid, real-world example.

According to Weiss and other scholars of Victorian financial history, what distinguished the railway bubble of the 1840s was that it "undermined the entire economy" and, as a result, created a fear of generalized social chaos (25). The commercial crisis was widespread in part because the collapse of the railway companies coincided with the crop failures of 1847. But there was another reason why the panic was far-reaching: the general public, not just capitalists, had been persuaded to invest in speculative schemes to cover the country with new railroad lines.⁶ As a result, the bursting of the railway bubble led not only

⁶ For an account of the mania and ensuing commercial crisis, see D. Morier Evans's *The Commercial Crisis of 1847-1848*, which emphasizes that people from all levels of British society invested in largely unsuccessful schemes (2, 41). North seems to have this historical fact in mind when he writes that the rage

to the failure of traders, merchants, and banks but to waves of personal bankruptcies.⁷ Initially, Victorian commentators did not tend to view this financial debacle as a figurative or literal equivalent to revolution. Once revolts began to topple the monarchs of Europe in early 1848, however, the comparison seemed obvious. In *The Commercial Crisis 1847-1848*, D. Morier Evans explicitly linked Britain's financial woes with the turmoil in France by way of a simple argument. He pointed out that the French Revolution worsened the existing financial conditions in Britain and Europe. At the same time, however, he could not help but suggest that commercial crisis itself represented a British version of the Terror. Here, for instance, is his description of the beginning of the panic in railway shares: "From one end of the kingdom to the other the tocsin of alarm resounded" (19). In an August 1848 session in the House of Commons, Disraeli made the metaphorical connection between the financial crisis and the revolution even more explicit. Exhorting the members to recognize the seriousness of the nation's economic trouble, he observed that the railway panic had resulted in "uprootings of commercial dynasties in England not less striking than the fall of those political houses of which we have lately heard so much" (qtd. in Evans, *Commercial* 73).⁸

What is perhaps most striking is the way that this equation (financial panic = political revolution) shaped Victorian perceptions of the European revolts themselves. As I have just suggested, after the outbreak of the revolutions, mid-Victorians began to view their own commercial crisis as an event with revolutionary potential. At the same time, however, they read the equation in the opposite direction (political revolution = financial panic) and often viewed the French Revolution in particular in financial terms. We can see evidence of this tendency in the many journalistic pieces that compare Louis Philippe, the former King of France, to an English gentleman ruined by the recent commercial crisis. The idea that the ex-King was a bankrupt made sense because of the bourgeois character of Louis Philippe, who, from the beginning of his reign, was known as the "citizen" or "bourgeois" King. Indeed, in the days following the Revolution, when the fugitive monarch shaved his whiskers, discarded his wig, and escaped from France to England under the name "Mr. Smith," at least one

for speculation in souls "acted upon all classes,...even the ladies" (103).

⁷ See Evans's Appendix to *The Commercial Crisis* for a list of the approximately five hundred firms that failed. See Weiss for a discussion on personal bankruptcies (23-9).

⁸ Although Disraeli speaks here of commercial dynasties, he may have been thinking of national ones as well. In August 1848, the public learned of the spectacular failure of the 2nd Duke of Buckingham. Details of the massive sale at his estate, Stowe, filled the London papers for two months: "Such sales, like Revolutions, are great levelers. The public at large are admitted to view a previously private inner sanctum, and encouraged to handle and evaluate and bid for works of art and property of every kind gathered over

Victorian journalist proclaimed that Louis Philippe had realized his true—that is his middle-class—social identity. “His nature is *bourgeois*, and eminently English,” a writer for *The Spectator* proclaimed, describing him as “a respectable, ‘warm,’ bulky, alert old gentleman—a fund holder, a shareholder—prosaically, materially, and skeptically commonsensible” (qtd. in Kelly 121-22). For many other Victorian writers, however, this analogy did not quite work: if the King was a British gentleman, then the ex-King was a ruined gentleman, a bankrupt. A writer for *The Illustrated London News*, for instance, remarked that the exiled Louis Philippe was really no better than a “beggared fugitive” (“The Great Revolution” 143). A poem in *The Puppet-Show*, published in the same week in March, made an even bolder declaration:

We blushed, we groaned, to see thee seek
 Mean safety in disguise,
 And, like a *knaveish bankrupt*, sneak
 From sight of honest eyes. (“Welcome” 2; emphasis added)

This image of Louis Philippe-the-bankrupt so captured the Victorian imagination that more than one journalist related a prank played at the Tuileries, Louis Philippe’s former home, in order, it seems, to underline precisely this point. “A bill was stuck upon the Tuileries with this inscription,” Kelly reports: “‘The whole of this house to be let, by reason of default of payment’” (88). While we might explain away these satires of the former King by noting that they simply exploit his status as the “bourgeois” king, this approach would, in my view, produce a reading that was partial at best. When these pieces are read in the context of Victorian responses to the commercial crisis of 1847 and the European revolutions of 1848, they instead emerge as testaments to British fears that domestic economic turmoil, a consequence of the new speculative markets that financed British progress, could bring down kings and queens.

North’s strange novel—what he calls his “mythical history”—could also be explained away as a piece of ephemera whose value is principally as a historical document of British radical enthusiasm for the revolutions in Europe (223). The writer himself seems to treat *City* in this way, as the naïve production of youthful idealism. His later writings make clear that he lost his faith in a republican future for Britain. In *The Slave of the Lamp*, written after he had emigrated to America, he proclaimed that “Britannia is a decrepit hag” (240). And his

centuries by an aristocratic family” (Learmount 118-19).

prognostications for Europe were equally grim. There was no hope for a free Germany, he declared in *Slave* (298). Neither was there hope for France: in *The History of Napoleon III*, he painted a portrait of the Second Emperor as an “Imperial Juggler” who “pick[ed] the pockets” of the nation (40). Although North came to view the “mythical history” he narrates in *City* as historically irrelevant, the novel is in fact a tool for historical interpretation, as a lens through which to reread the mid-century Victorian imagination.

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The (After) Life of William North
among the New York Bohemians
 Edward Whitley and Robert Weidman

William North left Great Britain for the United States in 1852 and headed straight for New York City, where he wrote prolifically, fell in love with an unattainable woman, and then killed himself in a highly theatrical manner. As our title implies, more influential than North's life, perhaps, was his posthumous legacy, which inspired the Manhattan-based bohemian literary movement that went on to launch the careers of such luminaries as Walt Whitman and Mark Twain. Although he spent a relatively short time in New York (he committed suicide in the fall of 1854), his impact was far more widespread than his current standing in British and American literary history suggests. North chose to end his life by his own hand; but his idiosyncratic force survived and prevailed as a symbol of creativity, passion, and intellect.

During the mid-nineteenth century, many New York bohemians followed their London and Parisian counterparts in wearing their poverty as a badge of honor, as proof of their willingness to sacrifice life to art. That North apparently renounced his wealthy upbringing to pursue a literary career further endeared him to the proponents of the bohemian cause. Claiming descent from the Earl of Guilford, North was ostensibly born into an affluent English family; but, by his own account, he abandoned the life of privilege that was his birthright at a young age ("Mr. William North" 4). After briefly attending a German university, where he immersed himself in literature and philosophy, he took up an itinerant lifestyle as a writer. William Michael Rossetti, who befriended North in London during this period, recounted that, at an early age, North's "eccentricities had alienated his father, and he had to shift for himself," elaborating, "[h]is shifts were numerous—assuredly more numerous than his shirts. He shifted lodgings among other things; and how he managed to keep a roof above his head was often a mystery to me" (166-67).¹ Despite these difficulties, North

¹ Whether North abandoned this life of privilege of his own accord or was turned out of it by his irate father is not entirely clear from Rossetti's comments. If North's semi-autobiographical statements from *The Slave of the Lamp* are to be trusted, it would appear that it was North himself who initiated the break. "I felt my

published his first novel, *Anti-Coningsby* (1844) at age nineteen, then went on to publish several more books, contribute to a number of literary journals, and establish a short-lived magazine of his own (called *North's Magazine*) before leaving for New York eight years later ("Mr. William North" 4).

North's reasons for leaving England are not entirely clear. Some evidence suggests that he thought of the United States as a place that would offer him greater opportunities to further his career. The editors of North's posthumously published novel *The Slave of the Lamp*, for example, recount that, "[a]fter struggling with adverse circumstances for many years in England, he came . . . to this country, and upon his arrival, immediately sought literary employment" (Preface ix). A number of other sources, however, cite North's political idealism as the reason for his decision to emigrate to the United States. Henry Sutherland Edwards, for one, suggested that North was in search of a true Republic, "introducing himself as a man who had been driven out of Europe for his political opinions" (81). *The New York Times* similarly recorded in 1854 that "Mr. North immigrated [sic] to America...to enjoy the Republican Freedom for which he always yearned, and which he was so eminently capable of appreciating" ("Mr. William North" 4). Similarly, in 1858 Fitz-James O'Brien (fig. 6) reminisced about "[p]oor North, the Republican philosopher, who hoped so much when he sought this country, and who came to so melancholy an end after he had tried it" ("A Paper" 513). There is also evidence to suggest that North came to the United States for reasons far less seemly than either to advance his career or to gain greater political freedoms. North, it appears, was running away from at least two romantic relationships, and possibly even an illegitimate child.

William Michael Rossetti noted that "when [North] quitted London for the United States . . . he left behind him two women who had some claim upon him," elaborating that one "figures in his verses as Blondine, while the other is 'the dark-souled Brunetta'" (167). (North's poem "Brunetta," it bears noting, features a male narrator who flees from the title character "[t]o a new world far distant" after a "wedding of shame" [205]). North himself never married, but his relationship with one of these women left Christina Rossetti sufficiently confused about his marital status to inquire of her brother William, "Is he married?" in a letter regarding North's personal effects: "Yesterday Mr. North sent for his

dependence upon my father an oppression," he wrote, insisting that he preferred to live the life of a struggling writer (a "slave of the lamp"): "the slavery of the lamp now began; but as yet it was a voluntary servitude" (310-11; see also 316-20).

box. To-day Mamma has consented to take in letters for him: how long this is for I know not. Is he married? a young lady with a child in a cab left the message" (20). In his annotation of his sister's letter, William explained that "[s]ome arrangement had been made for the convenience of William North, who was now either changing lodgings in London, or else preparing to go to the United States. He was not 'married,' but perhaps he ought to have been" (19). Whatever the reason for leaving the U.K. for the U.S., North's departure was hasty enough to catch his London friends off guard. In a letter of March 1852, Dante Gabriel Rossetti invited his brother William to a hastily planned sendoff for North, stating that, "North is going all of a sudden to start for America" (105).

In New York, the twenty-seven-year-old North worked furiously to establish himself as a respected person of letters. According to William Winter (fig. 6), a hanger-on at the New York bohemian scene, when North arrived in the United States "he wrote industriously for 'Graham's Magazine', 'Harper's Magazine', 'The Knickerbocker Magazine', 'The Whig Review', and other periodical publications" (315). North's impact on the American literary scene has yet to be accurately documented, as observers from the period provide disparate accounts as to the degree of success that he actually achieved. Winter noted in 1909 that North was "[n]ot widely known in his own time, [and] he is not at all known now" (314-15), while a *New York Times* obituary from 1854 declared that "Mr. North was perhaps more widely known than any other writer connected with the periodical literature of America or England. His poems and tales have been reprinted in hundreds of magazines and papers here and in the Old Country" ("Death of Mr. William North" 4).

Regardless of the impact that his writings may or may not have had on the literary world, it is clear that professional authorship produced little in the way of remuneration for the young writer who, at the time of his death, left behind "an open letter, which contained a ten cent piece and two cents, and on the envelope was written: 'The remains of my fortune and labor for ten years'" ("Suicide of Mr. William North" 3). Another of North's friends, Henry Sutherland Edwards, attempted to explain North's financial failure by claiming that, "In the United States . . . [North] was at first well received, and invited to contribute to different periodicals. But he could not write to order; he was unable to fall in with the ways of editors, and his work was sometimes too original for ordinary publications" (81). Junius Henri Browne offered an alternative scenario, writing that North "found the struggle harder than he had anticipated; for, though a man of talent and culture, he lacked directness of purpose and capacity for continuous work" (156). Whatever the cause of his failure, many

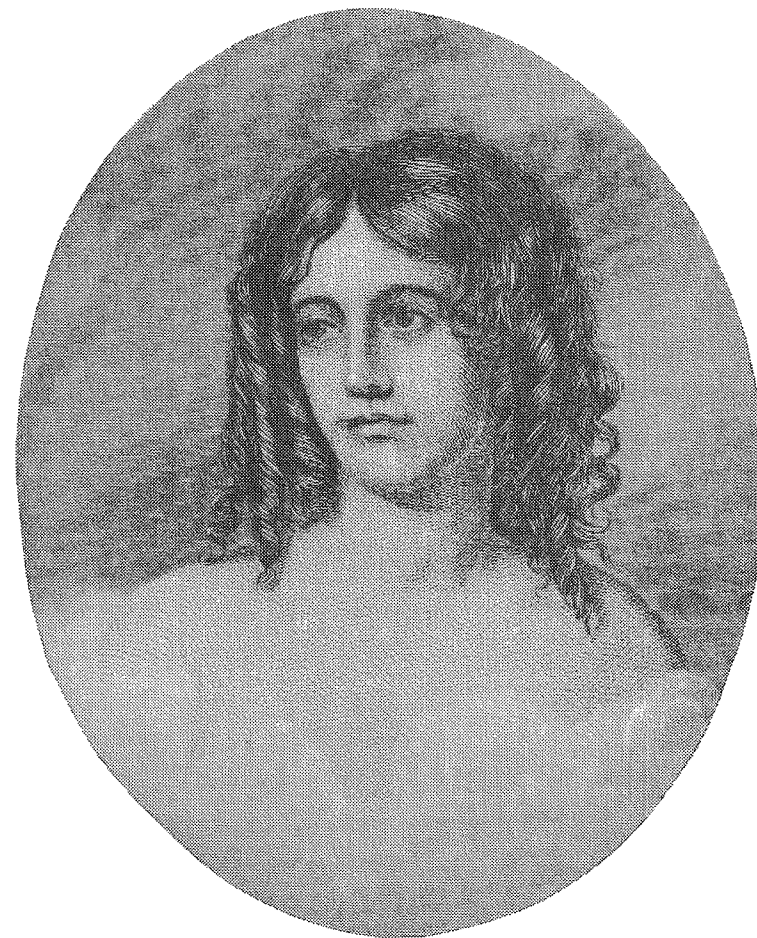
echoed Rossetti's assessment that North eventually turned to suicide when "money refused to be forthcoming" for the ambitious young author (167).

But financial failure was not the only reason cited for North's decision to end his life. Shortly after his suicide on November 14, 1854, North's friend and literary executor, Charles Seymour, wrote that, despite North's financial difficulties, "The cause of death was love, not poverty" (qtd. in Winter 313). William Winter concurred that the reason for North's suicide was "hopeless love" over a woman he described as being "beautiful enough to have inspired idolatrous passion in the breast of a marble monument" (315). The woman in question, Genevieve Genevra Fairfield (fig. 4), was the daughter of poet Sumner Lincoln Fairfield and a published author in her own right (Hillyer 24). Genevieve's mother, Jane Fairfield, later said of her daughter that "love, with her, was out of the question," noting that she appreciated North's intellect but took little or no interest in his romantic advances: "She liked his conversation, for it was truly fascinating; but when he ventured on the subject of love he forfeited what little he had gained in her esteem" (218). However, historian Sinclair Hamilton has postulated that North's love for Genevieve may have been reciprocated if not for the interference of her mother, whom he labeled "a selfish, domineering woman, with no desire to see her daughter united with an impecunious writer," arguing that "had [Genevieve] been left to herself a union with North might have resulted" (53).² If North's own semi-autobiographical fiction is taken as a reliable gauge of the author's own sentiments, Jane Fairfield comes into focus as the stepmother of *The Slave of the Lamp* who prevents Mondel, the main character, from wooing his beloved Columbia.³

Whether or not this failed romance with Genevieve Fairfield is what ultimately pushed him over the edge, it appears that thoughts of suicide occupied North well before he met her or even arrived in the United States. Henry Sutherland Edwards, speaking of their time together in Paris, described an incident in which North admitted to attempting suicide with laudanum and then feigned stabbing himself in the heart with a knife (82-3). On the same occasion North wondered aloud if the *Times* would publish a review of his poetry to

² Hamilton also raises the possibility that Genevieve's mental illness—she was committed for a time to an insane asylum in Philadelphia—could have made a legitimate romance with North virtually impossible (53). Also, Jane Fairfield writes, "she was wedded to authorship. 'I shall never marry,' she would say, 'but live with you, mamma, and become famous, which is enough of happiness for me'" (189).

³ Genevieve appears to have been the model for Columbia, the heroine of *The Slave of the Lamp*, sharing her blond, blue-eyed features that were of "a type which at all times fascinated Mr. North" ("Notices of New Books" 2).



Very truly,
Genevra G. Fairfield.

(Fig. 4)

mark the occasion of his suicide. Henry Clapp, Jr. (fig. 6) also remembered that North's "mind was always a little bit shaky, and he often threatened to commit suicide. He told a friend once that he had tried to shoot himself that day, but the pistol would not go off" (qtd. in "Bohemianism" 9). Jane Fairfield similarly recalled that North frequently discussed his plans for suicide with his friends (218), and the *New York Times* obituary for North characterized his suicide as an entirely premeditated affair: "A more determined and deliberate suicide has never been committed" ("Mr. William North" 4). On the morning of his death, North confided to his friend, Dr. Charles J. Hempel, that he had planned to kill himself with prussic acid, but "felt too chilly" to go through with it and promised the doctor that he would make no further attempts to take his own life. However, when Hempel called on North again that afternoon he found the corpse of his friend dressed in an all-black suit lying on the bed near a partially emptied bottle of acid ("Suicide of Mr. William North" 3).

In addition to the envelope containing twelve cents, North's deathbed was strewn with the manuscript for a novel, a prospectus for a comic newspaper, letters to various friends and associates (including one marked "private" addressed to Charles Dickens), and a postscript for his previously published work *The Infinite Republic* (1851), a quasi-philosophical treatise modeled after Edgar Allan Poe's *Eureka* that included a defense of suicide ("Suicide of Mr. William North" 3).⁴ In *The Infinite Republic*, North disputed the correlation between "the instinct of immortality" and a human "desire of self-preservation" by insisting that "many men have not only faced death fearlessly, but actually committed suicide, with a perfect faith in an eternal spiritual destiny" (qtd. in "Philosophy" 281-82).⁵ North's dramatic death attracted a good deal of attention, as did the posthumous publication of his novel *The Slave of the Lamp*, one of a number of manuscripts left unpublished at his death ("Mr. William North" 4). Nearly thirty-five years later, William Sidney Hillyer would reminisce in the *New York Times* that North's "sad end lent a morbid interest" in this novel, and that even though *The Slave of the Lamp* was "read by many at the time of its publication,

⁴ The *New York Times* reported that "Dr. Hempel, who was [North's] intimate friend, has taken charge of all the MSS. that were in his room" ("Suicide of Mr. William North" 3). It was William Michael Rossetti who first compared North's *The Infinite Republic* with Poe's *Eureka*, noting, "I have read it; but avow myself incompetent to say whether it is partial sense or unmodified nonsense" (166).

⁵ The postscript to *Infinite Republic* that North left at his deathbed reconfirmed his commitment to the doctrines espoused in the book: "Five more years have elapsed . . . I have not changed an opinion expressed in that Book" ("Suicide of Mr. William North" 3). It appears that North's theories regarding suicide and immortality proved convincing to more than just himself; in an essay, North recalled that Edwin Adolphus Ashford committed suicide shortly after hearing his arguments regarding suicide and the afterlife, admitting that he "often fancied that but for our meeting Ashford might yet have lived" ("National Humor" 303-04).

it is now known only to the literary student, and it has sunk into the same oblivion that has engulfed the fame of its writer" (170). Despite North's ultimate descent into obscurity, however, a number of his friends worked to keep his legacy alive in the years immediately following his death.

During the late 1840s and early 1850s, North cultivated a friendship with Henry Clapp, Jr., the man who would later become the ringleader of the bohemian arts community centered at Charles Pfaff's beer cellar in lower Manhattan (fig. 5). Originally from Massachusetts, Clapp was once an ardent supporter of abolition, temperance, and other

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(Fig. 5) Advertisement for Pfaff's Beer Cellar

reform movements prevalent in New England at the time. After living in London and Paris during the 1840s, however, Clapp soon gave up on social reform and adopted a bohemian lifestyle. Soaking up the experiences of the Latin Quarter that Henri Murger had recently celebrated in his *Scènes de la Vie de Bohême* (1846), Clapp was described as having a "demeanour [that] was quite worthy of one of Henri Murger's young men" (Edwards 87). It

was during this transformative time in Europe that William North became Clapp's "great chum," as one contemporary observer noted (Senex 610).⁶ In addition to being present at Henry Clapp's European rebirth as a bohemian, North would also play a key role in Clapp's efforts to transplant the spirit of bohemia to the United States.

Upon returning to America in the early 1850s, Clapp was eager to recreate the literary bohemianism of London and Paris in New York City. One of his contemporaries recalled that Clapp "believed it to be his destiny to establish a new sort of literature in New York....With this object in view he drew around him many of the promising literary men of the day" (Charlton 162). As "the King of Bohemia," he found great success at Pfaff's bar, which eventually became known as "the trysting-place of the most careless, witty, and jovial spirits of New York,—journalists, artists, and poets" ("Pfaff's" 2).⁷ Those who were a part of the bohemian in-crowd had a regular spot at Clapp's table in an underground section of Pfaff's referred to as "the cave." "I used to go to Pfaff's nearly every night," Walt Whitman reflected on the period from about 1858 to 1862:

When it began to grow dark Pfaff would politely invite everybody who happened to be sitting in the cave he had under the sidewalk to some other part of the restaurant. There was a long table extending the length of this cave; and as soon as the Bohemians put in an appearance.... Henry Clapp would take a seat at the head of this table. I think there was as good talk around that table as took place anywhere in the world. ("A Visit to Walt Whitman" 10)

While North died before New York's bohemian scene migrated to Pfaff's, he associated with many of the writers who would later make up the core of the Pfaff's crowd—such as Frank Bellew, Sol Eytinge, and Fitz-James O'Brien—as a member of the Ornithorhyncus Club.⁸ Evidence of the impact that these associations had on North can be found in *The Slave of the Lamp*, which features a number of characters modeled after the bohemians who would go on to frequent Pfaff's: Henry Clapp appears as Peregrine Cope, a "New England Yankee" who

⁶ Winter confirms that Clapp "knew [North] well" (316), as does Edwards, who records in his memoir that "Clapp . . . had known [North] intimately in London and in Paris, [and] greatly admired him" (83).

⁷ For more on the Pfaff's community see Parry, Hahn, Lalor, Stansell, and Gailey. Mark Laue will also be publishing *Republicans of the Cellar: The Antebellum Political Crisis and the Emergence of American Bohemianism* with Kent State University Press some time in the near future.

⁸ As Winter recalled, "There was a notable group of writers and artists in New York, of earlier date than the Pfaff Bohemian coterie, comprising, among its many members . . . Francis Henry Temple Bellew, Charles Gayler, William North, Sol Eytinge, Charles G. Rosenberg, Charles B. Seymour, and Fitz-James O'Brien....That society, unlike the Pfaff's coterie, was, after a fortuitous fashion, organized, and it had a name,—the remarkable name of the Ornithorhyncus Club" (308-09).

is also an "editor, orator, and man of letters" (*Slave* 63, 355), Frank Bellew is Templeton Bivar (Bellew's middle name was Temple), and Fitz-James O'Brien, North's literary rival, provides a model for the hack writer Fitzgammon O'Bouncer (fig. 6).⁹

North not only witnessed the beginnings of America's first bohemian movement: he also served as a catalyst for helping the bohemians to forge their identity as a group. The historian Albert Parry has posited that "North's suicide on November 14, 1854, began the true Bohemia. It cast the cloak of romantic tragedy over his circle" (49). There is no doubt that the friends of North who later congregated at Pfaff's were moved by North's struggle as both a writer and a lover, seeing in his suicide a testament to the sacrifices required of the bohemian creed. But there is more to the afterlife of William North than the "romantic tragedy" of his suicide. For Henry Clapp in particular, North represented more than just the sublime tableau of an artfully constructed suicide. Clapp had "greatly admired" North since their initial meeting in London, and it appears that this admiration stemmed in large part from what he considered to be North's intuitive intellectual capabilities (Edwards 83). Clapp said that North "studied nothing, but he knew everything. Without the habit of application, he possessed the gift of intuition. He had only to stand before the Temple of Knowledge for its gates to fly open" (qtd. in Edwards 83). For Clapp, the legacy of North's unstudied intellect, as much as (if not more than) his tragic death, was the key to transforming the New York bohemians from pub mates into a vibrant community of writers and artists.

Specifically, Clapp saw in North an heroic (if tragic) figure who had managed to avoid the conventionality that plagued society by tapping into a mind that functioned according to "the gift of intuition" rather than the shackles of social convention.¹⁰ Clapp and the bohemians vigorously denounced social conventions of every type. As William Winter said, Clapp spent much of his life engaged in a "continuous, bitter conflict with conventionality" (60). Ada Clare—who was universally regarded as the "Queen of Bohemia"—wrote a benchmark definition of bohemianism that specifically targeted

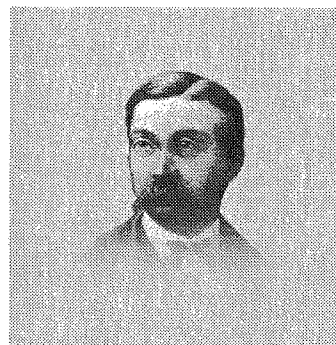
⁹ According to Winter, North and O'Brien were friends at one time, but they "quarreled," leading North to viciously satirize O'Brien in *The Slave of the Lamp* (67). Thomas Picton similarly noted that "Mr. North, in his life-time, had been on intimate terms with Mr. O'Brien; but shortly prior to his composition of the *Slave of the Lamp* their good fellowship had been dissolved from a quarrel, and the romancer satirized his former companion under the title of Fitzgammon" (4).

¹⁰ Clapp echoed North's ardent defense of independent thinking in an editorial he wrote for *The Saturday Press* regarding the temperance movement, quoting North: "I would rather see the whole world drunk from choice than one man sober from compulsion" ("[When an attempt]" 4). William Michael Rossetti similarly remarked on North's resistance to conventional ways of thinking: "religious opinions he had none, but only anti-religious. To be tied down to church ceremonies was of course not in his line" (167).

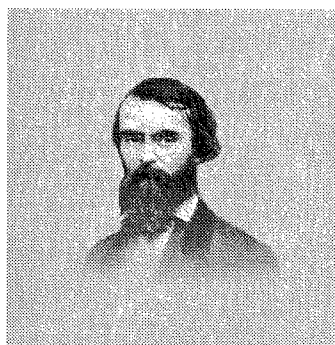
conventional ways of thinking and knowing:

The Bohemian is by nature, if not by habit, a cosmopolite, with a general sympathy for the fine arts, and for all things above and beyond convention. The Bohemian is not, like the creature of society, a victim of rules and customs; he steps over them with an easy, graceful, joyous unconsciousness, guided by the principles of good taste and feelings. Above all others, essentially, the Bohemian must not be narrow minded; if he be, he is degraded back to the position of mere worldling. (60)

Just as Clare distanced herself and her fellow bohemians from “mere worldling[s]” and other “victim[s] of rules and customs,” one of Clapp’s earliest efforts to bring a bohemian ethos into the New York literary scene involved regarding William North as an example of someone whose thinking was “above and beyond convention.”



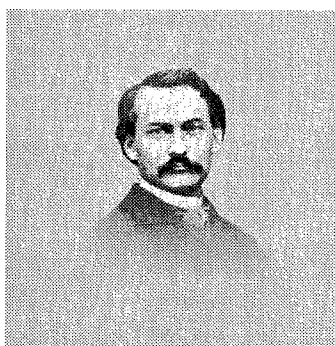
Fitz-James O'Brien



Henry Clapp, Jr.



William Winter



George Arnold

(Fig. 6) Some of North's associates

What Clapp did was to choose one of North's short stories to jump-start *The New York Saturday Press*, the weekly paper he created in 1858 to serve as the literary organ for the Pfaff's bohemians. In the inaugural issue of *The Saturday Press* on October 23, 1858, Clapp filled most of the front page and an entire column of the second page with "The Living Corpse," a story that North had originally published five years earlier in *Putnam's Monthly*.¹¹ A certain degree of sensationalism no doubt motivated Clapp's decision to publish a story whose title alone invokes the specter of North's infamous suicide—indeed, the opening paragraphs of the story have the unnamed narrator declaring that his tale "is perhaps the first time that a DEAD MAN has spoken in the language of the living" (1). But aside from seducing readers with the morbid allure of a voice from beyond the grave, "The Living Corpse" is the story of an heroic (if tragic) attempt to defy convention. Desperate to experience something other than the commonplace, the narrator cries out to the Universe, "Let me *feel* happiness, not merely dream it.' And everlasting echoes from all the depths of Kosmos, even from the farthest bounds where creation, ever encroaching, borders upon awful chaos, everlasting echoes answered 'DREAM!'" (1).

In response to this ambiguous message from the cosmos—has the narrator been doomed to dream of but never actually feel happiness? or has he been commanded to dream into being a world of happiness?—the narrator attempts to create a world of absolute joy by experimenting with mind-altering substances. He uses alcohol, opium, hashish, and other chemical stimulants, and then finally invents a gaseous substance that grants him access to an unparalleled state of physical and spiritual bliss. This bliss, however, comes at a tremendous cost: after the narrator and his wife decide to spend their lives in the intoxicated haze produced by the gas, his wife dies and he becomes a living corpse, embalmed, as it were, in the fumes of the gas. The tragedy of the story, however, is overshadowed by triumph: "My destiny was in my own hands," writes the narrator, "and I became, if not the greatest, at least the most extraordinary of earth's children....I am a living corpse; and I am the only being bearing the shape of a man who could ever honestly declare himself to be *perfectly contented with his lot*" (2). Unlike Thoreau's mass of men leading lives of quiet desperation, the narrator of "The Living Corpse" claims, heroically, to have overcome all of the physical, social, and even cosmological conventions that limit human potential.

¹¹ William North, "The Living Corpse." *Putnam's Monthly* (Jan. 1853): 32-39. The editor of *Putnam's*, reflecting upon the contributors to the magazine's first issue, asserted that North arrived in the city the same week as Irish author Fitz-James O'Brien (Briggs 2). This synchronous arrival represents just one in a

Henry Clapp followed the publication of "The Living Corpse" in the subsequent issues of *The Saturday Press* with another North story, "The Magnetic Portraits," which appeared in two separate installments on October 30 and November 6, 1858. In "The Magnetic Portraits," a young couple who is engaged to be married is photographed by an eccentric inventor who can use the photograph as a window into their lives, allowing him to observe their every move in real time. Horrified that the inventor will be able to witness the events of his wedding night, the young man murders him and reclaims the photograph. Clearly, "The Magnetic Portraits" is nowhere near the bohemian manifesto that "The Living Corpse" is. What is most telling about Clapp's decision to publish "The Magnetic Portraits," though, is the sense that North's fiction was enough of a draw to attract readers to the fledgling *Saturday Press*. Clapp was desperate to have his paper become a success—so desperate, in fact, that he often reprinted positive reviews of *The Saturday Press* in a column titled "Opinions of the Press." How much of the *Press*'s subsequent success can be attributed to these initial offerings by William North would be difficult, if not impossible, to accurately assess, but the *Press* eventually did receive a tremendous amount of praise from publishers, editors, and writers in both the United States and abroad.

While that praise often came from newspapers that have themselves since slipped into obscurity—*The Ohio State Journal*, for example, called *The Press* "the best of papers" and *The New York Dispatch* said that "*The New York Saturday Press* is the most saucy, clever, independent, and piquant literary weekly now or ever published anywhere" ("Opinions" 1)—luminaries of American literature also had positive things to say about *The Press*. Walt Whitman remarked towards the end of his life that "the [Saturday] Press cut a significant figure in the periodical literature of its time" (qtd. in Traubel 375), and William Dean Howells said that during the 1850s and 1860s "The young writers throughout the country were ambitious to be seen in [*The Saturday Press*], and they gave their best to it....It is not too much to say that it was very nearly as well for one to be accepted by the *Press* as to be accepted by the *Atlantic*, and for the time there was no other literary comparison" (63).

Two of the young writers who benefited most from the fleeting fame that the *Press* acquired during its short life are today regarded as major figures of American literature: Walt Whitman, himself a regular at Pfaff's, and Mark Twain, who befriended a number of the Pfaff's bohemians in California. During Twain's California sojourn in the 1860s, he wrote

chain of connections between the two authors, which would extend well past their lifetimes.

"Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog," which found its way into *The Saturday Press* with the help of Pfaff's regular Artemus Ward. Twain would later say that "The 'Jumping Frog' was the first piece of writing of mine that spread itself through the newspapers and brought me into public notice" (450). Similarly, *The Saturday Press* revived Walt Whitman's career at a crucial moment in the poet's life. After the commercial failure of the first two editions of *Leaves of Grass* in 1855 and 1856, Whitman found a champion in Henry Clapp, who, around the time that the third edition of *Leaves of Grass* appeared in 1860, launched an aggressive publicity campaign designed to keep Whitman's work before the public in the pages of *The Saturday Press*. Over the course of about a year, Clapp published eleven of Whitman's poems, printed twenty-odd reviews of *Leaves of Grass*, and ran an additional eight poems that were written either as parodies or in homage to Whitman's unique style (many of which were by fellow Pfaffians).¹² As Howells noted, Clapp "was kind to some neglected talents, and befriended them with vigor and zeal. The chief of these was Walt Whitman, who, when the *Saturday Press* took it up, had as hopeless a cause with the critics on either side of the ocean as any man would have" (65). William North was another such "neglected talent" befriended by Henry Clapp whose career, one can only imagine, would have benefited from the continued attention of *The Saturday Press*.

What *did* happen is that North's reputation found itself, posthumously, at the center of a plagiarism scandal with another of the Pfaff's bohemians and former Ornithorhyncus Club member, Fitz-James O'Brien. Soon after O'Brien published his story "The Diamond Lens" in the January 1858 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, the assistant editor of *The New York Times* and the former editor of a periodical titled *The Sachem* publicly accused him of plagiarizing the tale from an unpublished North manuscript for a story called "Micro-Cosmos" ("Literary Intelligence" 111-12).¹³ The public debate over the alleged plagiarism was not only an attack on O'Brien's integrity as a writer, but also a referendum on the artistic legacy of William North.¹⁴ For example, when George Arnold (fig. 6), another frequenter of Pfaff's bar, defended the originality of O'Brien's story he did so by casting aspersions on

¹² For a fuller account of the Whitman-Clapp relationship, see Gailey.

¹³ The manuscript for "Micro-Cosmos" has never been located. For more on this, see the relevant entries in the bibliography of works by and about William North in this volume.

¹⁴ The primary combatants in this debate were O'Brien and *New York Times* assistant editor Augustus Maverick, who admitted to not having "any particular acquaintance" with North ("The Diamond Lens Controversy" 2). However, two close friends of North were brought into the argument as witnesses; Frank Bellew defended O'Brien, while still proclaiming himself "Mr. North's oldest and most intimate friend," whereas Charles Bailey Seymour attacked O'Brien and questioned Bellew for not acting as North's

North's literary talents: "North had not brain enough, and has nowhere indicated the possession of half enough, to have conceived such a work. It is like saying that Mr. Tennyson borrows inspiration from Mr. Tupper" (147). Thomas Picton, the former editor of *The Satchem*, took the opposing viewpoint, arguing that North was the superior writer of the two: "Any person acquainted with the two parties cannot fail to draw a disparaging distinction between the scholastic attainments of the late Mr. North and the Hibernian pretensions of the ever-present and somewhat pertinacious Mr. Fitz-James O'Brien" (4). Years after both North and O'Brien had died, the plagiarism controversy remained so tied to their names that when a reviewer set out to defend O'Brien's legacy, he did so at the expense of North's, quipping that "their methods were utterly dissimilar, and their talents of a different order, Mr. O'Brien writing like a scholar and a man of the world, Mr. North as it pleased the gods at the moment, frequently like a Choctaw" ("Literaria" 245).¹⁵

Being caught in a plagiarism scandal with one of his least favorite writers was probably not the legacy that William North had hoped for. There is little reason to doubt, however, that North wanted a legacy of some sort and that he wanted to be remembered somehow and in some way. Indeed, the aura of morbidity with which he surrounded himself throughout his life (as well as in his theatrical death) was, in many ways, an outgrowth of this desire for recognition. *The New York Times* noted that, "A little genial appreciation was all [North] asked; he felt he deserved it, for he had worked hard for the boon. It was when this was disputed—and in his forays among strangers who had never heard his name it was apt to be—that he became most gloomy, and retired bitterly within himself to fresh contemplation of human destiny and woe" ("Notices of New Books" 2). The despondency for which North was famous is nowhere more apparent than in those moments in his oeuvre when he summoned the image of a "living corpse." Aside from giving one of his most successful stories that name, North has the main character in *The Slave of the Lamp* ask, "[W]hat if I become a living corpse, a disembodied spirit, a spectre of my former self?" (*Slave* 168), and similarly has the narrator of the poem "Blondine" morbidly reflect on the futility of his versifying:

champion ("Last Words" 2). For more on the plagiarism scandal, see "Literary Intelligence."

¹⁵ Years after the plagiarism scandal had subsided, their relationship took an ironic turn when North was wrongly credited as the author of one of O'Brien's poems (see Scovel, Dunlop, and McCann). Although O'Brien may not have plagiarized from North, he did plagiarize from Russian author Vladimir Odoevsky. Neil Cornwell has demonstrated that O'Brien's "Seeing the World" was taken nearly word for word from an antebellum French translation of Odoevsky's "The Improviser," and he has also revealed a number of striking similarities between "The Diamond Lens" and Odoevsky's "The Sylph" (159-62, 164-67).

Like a moving corpse I wandered,
And on empty trifles pondered,
Making rhyme
In monotonous despair
To some melancholy air. ("Blondine" 547)

The nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries were content to let North's literary corpus suffer a similar fate as the "living corpse" North so despondently imagined. Whether or not the twenty-first century will treat him more kindly remains to be seen.

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*The City of the Jugglers and
the Limits of Victorian Fiction*

Rebecca Stern

I consider myself a pretty seasoned reader, but I admit that *The City of the Jugglers* shocked me. To be honest, this novel surprised me a number of times, but when I hit the eighteenth page of Book III, my jaw dropped. The narrator states,

This is the beginning of the history I have hoped would find some few kindred souls to sympathise with its mysteries. The beginning, did I say? Yes, the beginning, indeed; however contradictory may seem the conventional necessity which compels me, at the same moment, to acknowledge with regret that it is...THE END. (250)

What? My initial response to this final paragraph was a sense of outrage that I rarely experience in reading Victorian literature. My anger quickly gave way to a sense of curiosity, first of the mundane variety—was North just tired? did he not know how to end his novel?—and then of a richer breed: what is the contract between novelist and reader? and why might an author violate it so flagrantly? The question that haunted me throughout my reading experience was, what is at stake for me, as both casual reader and literary critic, in my repeated but impulsive sense of violation?

Let those questions serve as a beginning. Given that the novel closes with both an appeal for friends (“some few kindred souls”) and a hopeful declaration that “this is [only] the beginning,” it seems appropriate to conclude this section of *The Victorian Newsletter* by opening to the critical challenges North’s novel poses. In its day, *The City of the Jugglers* achieved neither an audience nor staying power, but its recent reissue by the University of South Carolina, the panel that celebrated its launch, and this issue of *The Victorian Newsletter*, born from that panel, offer North’s novel a second chance.

Other essays in this collection have already offered up “a few kindred souls,” locating North among his compatriots in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and the taverns of New York, and situating the novel among North’s other works and among economic literature, more generally. In this piece, I want to build upon Lanya Lamouria’s sense of *The City’s*

utilitarian function, in that it makes visible various of the anxieties that haunted major British literature at mid-century. I mean here to take that sense of haunting into the twenty-first century, to highlight the challenges this book poses for current literary criticism, and the problems and opportunities it presents, perhaps especially with regard to “conventional necessities.”

Late in *The City of the Jugglers*, Viridor, a poet who also goes by the moniker of Grand Master of the Illuminati, wins election into Parliament with a majority of nine, the number of the muses. The reaction to Viridor’s triumphant speech nicely demonstrates both the fascinations and the horrors of William North’s strange lost text:

Then burst from the panting crowd, upon whose hearts the words of Viridor descended like drops of liquid fire, one mighty, heartspoken shout for equal rights as men, which swelled and swelled upon the air, until even at Westminster, its magnetic shock caused trees to wave, and the souls of oligarchs to tremble. (243)

As even this short excerpt makes clear, *The City of the Jugglers* is no ordinary Victorian novel. In fact, I am not sure that this is a “novel” at all. North terms it “A Romance of the ‘Golden’ Age,” his spare quotes indicating not only a dig at Victorian mammonism but also a more general skepticism about cultural values around 1850. Among the values in question were apparently the public’s literary tastes: the novel had long since displaced the Romance as a dominant form, and that stylistic shift may help to account for *The City’s* sad fate with the public (it is not clear that North sold even a single copy).

It seems unfair, though, to blame *The City’s* abysmal sales record on the text’s generic anomalies alone. Its phrasing, for example, could easily have done it in (“the panting crowd,” “drops of liquid fire,” a “magnetic shock [that] caused trees to wave, and the souls of oligarchs to tremble”). And, if genre and phrasing were not enough, the themes, characters, and fantastic plot also broke (and break) most of the rules of Victorian classification. I certainly would not have bought this novel in 1850, and I found it rather painful reading, even a century and a half later. And so, I do not recommend reading *The City of the Jugglers* for pleasure.

But I do recommend reading it, teaching it, and writing about it. Here is why: while I would not call *The City of the Jugglers* a “good” novel, I do find it “good for” addressing quite a few significant scholarly questions. Did I find *The City of the Jugglers* aesthetically pleasing? No. Did it move me? No. But is it important? Absolutely. *The City of the Jugglers* eschews Victorian conventions. This text radically unsettles easy categorization and

definition. It is a *lumbering limit* case of what Ian Duncan might term *the monstrous novel*, pressing as it does at all the capacities of taxonomy, posing, as Duncan suggested in his keynote address to 2008's Victorians Institute, "the real threat, terror, and menace of borderlessness."¹

North's queer book begs a series of questions that are key to current critical taxonomy. For example, when does a novel cease to be a novel, and what makes a text "Victorian" as opposed to "Romantic" (or anything else for that matter)? Its aesthetic and formal challenges are substantial as well, in terms of what qualifies as "good" writing and what sorts of structural divisions are acceptable. Implausible plot devices press the reader to define exactly where an author crosses the line into absurdity, as do its characters' names (Viridor, Basiline, and Ignatius, for example). And North's exuberant references to contemporary figures seem to beg the reader for limits: is it *too* much to sprinkle a novel (or Romance or satire) with allusions to George Sand, Marx, Hegel, Byron, and Spinoza? Is a jab at George Mudson, "The Iron Czar," too bald a reference to George Hudson, the railway king? And then, of course, there is the question, seemingly made for cultural historians: why did readers in 1850 fail to respond to North's satirical analogue for the Great Exhibition, the Grand Exposition of the Souls of All Nations?

I could go on, but suffice it to say that it is hard to miss this novel's challenges to standards of form, style, genre, plot, theme, and characterization. *The City of the Jugglers* baldly flouts the conventions of both its own literary milieu and our subsequent classificatory systems for Victorian literature. In so doing, it proffers a unique pedagogical opportunity: not many texts single-handedly expose quite so many standards of taxonomy.

WHAT IS IT? As various scholars have argued, Victorian exhibitions of curiosities served both to entertain and to offer limited cases by which to define emerging cultural categories.² At the London Aquarium, an array of Piccadilly halls, and venues across the East End, promoters displayed human "oddities": genetic anomalies and foreign peoples together reinforced the categories of normalcy, Britishness, refinement, and beauty. *The City of the*

¹ In Duncan's analogy of the novel as formal model of human nature, the "grotesque," "intercolated," messiness of the populist novel (as in G.W.M. Reynolds or William North) stands opposed to the contained, constrained austerity of, say, Austen. "The Great Book of Nature: The Novel and the Science of Man." Keynote address, Victorians Institute Conference. University of South Carolina. October 3, 2008.

² See, for example, Marlene Tromp's edited collection, *Victorian Freaks: The Social Context of Freakery in Britain* (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2008); Lennard Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body* (London: Verso, 1995); and Rosemary Garland Thomson, *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body* (New York: New York UP, 1996).

Jugglers is a textual curiosity, although its function for Victorians was rather limited, given that none them, apparently, read it. But for current audiences, it serves in the tradition of the "curiosity" by simultaneously shoring up and making visible the borders by which we arrange literary categories.

Take genre, for example. North's book opens with a critique of capitalism that would have been familiar fare in 1850, and the style of the first paragraph seems conventional enough:

It was about four o'clock on a spring afternoon. The City was still in full activity. The gold was rattling on the bank counters, and the clerks were cashing their notes as coolly as if the whole affair had been anything but a gigantic juggle. *Practical* men—too practical to think—were paying in their deposits with a touching and child-like confidence. No suspicion had *they* that they were trusting to a system, which, "like the baseless fabric of a vision," might at any moment dissolve into nothingness. (1)

With precise attention to time, season, and space, North embarks upon his tale with an attentive omniscience reminiscent of Dickens, or Thackeray, or Trollope. Juxtaposing the rattle of gold and the swish of cash across palms with his foreboding remarks about the money market, this passage could slip seamlessly into a realist novel. However, the literalist description of the "Free-Trade in Souls" that follows offers an explicit challenge to the conventions of realism that influenced even the most sensational of Victorian fictions. To be sure, many successful authors pushed hard against the boundaries of plausibility—Dickens's Krook spontaneously combusts in *Bleak House*; a suitor turns a remarkable navy blue in Collins's *Poor Miss Finch*; and I've always found the flood in *The Mill on the Floss* to be a bit too convenient—but, to a greater or lesser extent, most canonical Victorian authors aimed to throw at least a light veil over their allegorical devices. *The City of the Jugglers* makes no such effort.

North is not joking. In the fading light of this spring afternoon, the Soul Agent spells out his plans in no uncertain terms: "I propose to *deal in human souls!*" (7). And lest the reader mistake this plot for some Faustian spin-off, North clarifies, "It is in the souls of the living, not the dead, I propose to speculate" (8). North's novel transposes metaphor into material: the Soul Dealer sets up a storefront replete with "a large brass plate" that advertises his trade, and the "GENERAL AGENCY FOR THE SALE AND PURCHASE OF HUMAN SOULS" opens for business.

The selling of souls is no joke in this novel, although it is a bit hard not to find it at least mildly laughable. That is not to suggest that North makes light of capitalist ethical compromise but rather that the literalization of metaphor is not so easy to swallow. I venture to say that that is because the metaphor itself is sufficiently familiar to make “the free trade in souls” decidedly interesting, especially to scholars of economic history. However, North’s serious engagement with “soul trading” means that one cannot compare *The City of the Jugglers* to *Little Dorrit* or *The Way We Live Now* or even Trollope’s earlier, considerably more satiric venture, *The Struggles of Brown, Jones and Robinson*. North shifts almost immediately from allegorical to realist depiction of this “market,” making the “Free Trade in Souls” unique among novels of economic critique.

If a reader rejects the bizarrely realist Soul Agent and his ventures, one need not “buy” him to get North’s point, for the novel turns quickly from weird realism to political diatribe (though it takes a brief detour through the Gothic tale on the way). When Arthur Darian, the Duke of St. George and lover of the cross-dressed dethroned princess, Basiline, takes over the narrative, the reader finds herself set squarely in an eighteenth-century philosophical stew, seasoned liberally with Chartist principles. In one remarkably long sentence, Darian turns to Viridor and lets fly:

“You are aware that I have always held that the great struggle of modern revolution, between democracy and aristocracy, sympathetic love for man and superstitiously exclusive selfishness, human *vis inertiae* and centrifugal force, ignorance and knowledge, conservation and reform, Whiggery and honesty, childish finality and infinite progressive ambition, fear of losing the old and courage in creating the new, genius and duncehood, and by what other synonymes [sic] the contest may be described, is at bottom neither more nor less than the grand philosophical question of Materialism v. Spiritualism—the system of Death and the system of Life. A crisis is now at hand—read this prospectus!” (39).

What begins as an excursion into Liberal sermonizing comes to dominate much of the novel, but not without forays into melodrama, flights of Romantic fancy, and sharp, satiric bits that North could have lifted from *Punch*.

When North shatters generic conventions, it seems pretty clear that it is no accident. Rather, he presents his strangely hybrid text as a strategic intervention in a field of publishing that he renders scathingly mind-numbing. North’s Victorian press makes the capitalist public

incurious, avaricious only for monetary gain and inattentive to philosophy, to ideological transformation, and to the potential for political transcendence. As *The City of the Jugglers* marches across literary boundaries with positive disdain, careening from realism to political economy to republican diatribe to Romantic tale, it unsettles and unmoors its readers’ steady assumptions. There is a clear utility to the sense of discomfort it cultivates.

The generic oddities I have been discussing thus far recur on the level of form: *The City*’s physical shape is bizarre. When Ian Duncan discusses “the novel as a formal model of human nature,” he notes that it repeatedly tests “how much difference the human can tolerate before it ceases to keep its form.”³ *The City of the Jugglers* is a perfect example of a book that not only fails such a test, but obviously has no interest in passing it. Books One and Two seem normal enough, if a bit stunted, comprising approximately one hundred pages apiece. But with Book Three running a mere eighteen pages, the novel turns out to be a deformed triple-decker that slouches defiantly towards “The End.”

In a pedagogical situation, the bizarre end with which I began this essay offers multiple rewards: the exhausted reader enjoys the foreshortened final book and cannot help but recognize the discomfiting absence of structural symmetry. Is it simply habit that makes the triple-decker such a comforting form? North’s disfigured final act might open into a conversation about circulating libraries or about varying chapter lengths within symmetrical serial parts; it might allow for a differently complicated discussion about the implicit contract between author and reader I note above; it might call for a clarification of classificatory terms (what counts as Victorian, Romantic, Modernist, Early-Modern?). “What is it?” Given how productively *The City of the Jugglers* challenges its readers, it may well be that North’s novel’s time has come, and that the beginning and the audience he had sought in 1850 have arrived at last.



*There are but two classes of Soul-Dealers—
DUPES and SWINDLERS.*

(Fig. 7) Motto from *The City of the Jugglers*

³ Duncan, “The Great Book of Nature.”

Part Two.

Biography and Bibliography:

New Work on William North

*North versus North: William North (1825–1854)**in Light of New Documentation*

Allan Life and Page Life

The True poet, or inventive spirit, writes *himself*.—Dudley Mondel, *The Slave of the Lamp*

“All men of genius,” declares William North, “should write autobiographies” (“Memoir” 4). It is arguable that North, who considered himself a genius, wrote little else. His four novels are avowedly narrated by *the author*, a fact enforced with snatches of reminiscence, vignettes of current circumstance, and citations of his own work. These narrators urge an affinity between themselves and their protagonists, especially in *Anti-Coningsby* (1844), *The City of the Jugglers* (1850), and *The Slave of the Lamp* (1855).¹ The last, published a few months after North’s suicide, devotes 123 pages to a “Memoir” in which, according to its anonymous preface, “Mr. North undoubtedly speaks mostly of himself and his family” (xii). Ostensibly, this autobiography is authored by Dudley Mondel, a character modeled on North—“but not sufficiently,” the preface cautions, “to make author and hero identical” (xi). While the same reservation applies to the “heroes” of North’s other fiction, he is exceptionally partial to characters that resemble him in mind and even in appearance.

The personality of William North dominates his essays. The first installment of his anonymous enquiry into “Pretended Spiritual Manifestations” begins with a critique of spiritualism, re-creates an actual séance, and settles into reflections on the author’s past and present, punctuated by puffs for his metaphysics. Another anonymous article, “National Humor,” recounts the author’s escapades in three countries. On the whole, such essays are too egocentric to be either persuasive or ingratiating, but the same self-absorption yields admirable results in North’s comic fiction. “Literary Speculations,” a story clearly authored by North, stands the angst of Dudley Mondel on its head with a lively burlesque of the travails of a would-be editor. If North’s romantic experience inspires passages of rhapsodic

¹ Abbreviations used for North’s four novels: AC = *Anti-Coningsby*; CJ = *The City of the Jugglers*; Imp =

idealism, it also encourages *jeux d'esprits* like "The Old Boy," "My Ghost," and a minor masterpiece in verse, "The Man Who Married His Grand-Mother." In *The Imposter* (1845), North, aged twenty, achieves a serio-comic epitome of the world as he found it, or was finding it, since the very process of composing fiction (preeminently, about oneself) is the overriding theme of this novel.

Admittedly, the autobiographical dimensions of North's works are more easily recognized than verified. No Victorian author of comparable significance is so meagerly documented. Virtually all of his correspondence appears to be lost; the exceptions were published or written at the time of his suicide in New York on 14 November 1854. In its report of that event, the *Daily News* remarks that North "had many friends in London" (5 Dec 1854:3c), but contemporary references to his years in England are scanty, and the brief reminiscences of a few British associates appeared decades after his death. In America the record is more substantial, but outside North's own publications, it is of limited value in reconstructing his experience before March 1852, when he resolved to cross the Atlantic. Though North found supporters in the United States and authored a wide range of contributions to American periodicals, he suffered from mental instability that had deepened during his final years in England. Despite its lucid style and humorous interludes, *The Slave of the Lamp* reflects the bipolarity, the paranoia, and the delusions of grandeur of its creator. Dudley Mondel, its protagonist, possesses abilities inconsistent with his personality, let alone with his experience. A technological genius like Mondel would hardly suffer the privation in Victorian England recorded in his "Memoir." Nor would he likely ignore an American millionaire's backing of his inventions, or attempt to shoot himself after being rejected by a blue-eyed society belle. Worse, Mondel is a vainglorious cad, who dismisses the former women in his life as "experiments," perverts his friends into tools of his destiny, and exploits anyone inclined to finance his hedonism, beginning with a father whom he detests. Had William North been "identical" to his hero, he would have died without friends in London or anywhere else.

Even compared to "Count de Biron," the man "without a conscience" in *The Imposter*, Dudley Mondel is the least appealing of North's protagonists; yet the Memoir attributed to this character is apparently an autobiography of William North. As we began to investigate North's life, we expected to find discrepancies between the experience of the

The Imposter; SL = *The Slave of the Lamp*.

character Mondel in England and that of North himself. Certain events in Mondel's family and early manhood are at least as melodramatic as anything else in North's fiction. We presumed that, like Mondel, North was by birth a member of the British gentry, if not the aristocracy. Our presumptions were unfounded. North's immediate ancestry, identified here for the first time, differs from that of his protagonists and contradicts North's statements in America. Conversely, we have been able to verify events that may strike readers today as contrived or fantastic. Though much of North's life remains undocumented, further investigation would probably substantiate the truth of most of the Memoir. Encouraging this view are numerous parallels between "Mondel's" narrative and snatches of autobiography in North's other publications. In this essay, we reconstruct North's experience in England and the Continent and explore its likely effect on his writing. Such a presentation can only be tentative, but it is offered with the conviction that William North was a gifted author, whose life and work can enlarge our understanding of Victorian England and America.

I.

Introducing Dudley Mondel, the narrator of *The Slave of the Lamp* declares "his father an English gentleman," born "of a distinguished and historical family" (50, 69). After North's suicide, the *New York Daily Times* (16 Nov 1854:4) records that he "was related to the ancient family of the Earl of Guildford [*sic*], a Peerage created in the latter part of the fourteenth century." The preface to *The Spirit of the Lamp* is more specific: "He was connected by the ties of consanguinity with the Guildford [*sic*] family, one of his ancestors being Lord North, Earl of Guildford" (viii). The likely source of this information is North himself, who according to Champion Bissell "affected to trace his lineage to Lord North, the famous minister of George III" (703). Dudley Mondel follows suit: he shares a heraldic motto with the Guilfords (*Animo et Fide*), and by implication is "related" both to his creator and to Clarence Guilford, the hero of *Anti-Coningsby*, whose entrance gate displays a griffin from the family coat-of-arms (SL 265; AC 2:148). (In his frontispiece to *The Imposter*, North claims this same device by burlesquing it, in a caricatured griffin atop the family motto.) Presumably Mondel is christened for Sir Dudley North, the seventeenth-century economist.²

² While it is quite possible that William North was descended from Edward North, first Baron North (c. 1504-1564), through one of that family's many branches, we have not been able to prove such a connection. The most promising branch would seem to be that of Sir Dudley North (1641-1691), though the Christian name Dudley appears in other branches and was even used in the feminine (Dudleia). The name Dudley was given to William North's elder nephew. William North does *not* appear to be a

Clarence Guilford, not to be outdone, "could trace his lineage from a *British* king—a real, *ancient* Briton, and a Norman count. . . . And remember," cautions the narrator, "that . . . a pure descent, clearly traced through many generations of gentle blood, is far more valuable than a patent of nobility—even a dukedom" (*AC* 1:29-30).

Courtesy of his mother, Dudley Mondel is the grandson of an American senator (50). Mondel tells us that his grandparents—in reality, his *maternal* grandparents rather than, as the Memoir suggests, his paternal grandparents—resided at Lakeland House, a "country-seat" near London. He presents his grandfather as an ingenious but representative squire, whose house, though "modern," enshrines an armory suggestive of knightly forbears (248-49). In *Anti-Coningsby*, North's persona wields "my ancestral sword" and parks his hat on "an old bust of my grandfather" (1:7, 89). In *The History of Napoleon III*, North writes of a "secret mission" conducted in the Hague by "my grandfather," a gentleman so fastidious that, "on a first visit to the Duke of Bedford's he mistook Lord John for a flunkey" (14, 44). Even when he satirizes false pride in one's ancestors, as he does throughout *The Imposter*, North assumes the stance of one whose birth has conferred the privilege.

While the facts we have discovered fall short of supporting North's aristocratic pretensions, his own family history may be of greater interest than those of his characters. His paternal grandfather, William North (1768?-1835), a prosperous blue and postern color manufacturer of City Road, London, who may also have received income as a "proprietor of houses," had taken his only son John into partnership, along with Samuel Saville Kent (later to become famous as the father of murderess Constance Kent and her young brother-victim). William Michael Rossetti describes John North—whom he identifies only as "North Senior"—as "a gentleman in good circumstances" who rented a studio at 17 Red Lion Square to William's brother Dante Gabriel and his friend Walter Deverell from January to May 1851.³ In addition to being a proprietor of houses, John North followed in his father's footsteps as a "blue" and "starch" manufacturer.⁴

Probably in late July or August 1823, John North married Rosamond Atkinson, the second daughter of William and Jane Lynn Atkinson.⁵ A prominent architect, William

descendant of the famous Lord North, minister of George III.

³ *P.R.B. Journal* 85, 97; Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences* 1:166. John North's ownership of 17 Red Lion Square is confirmed by an account of a theft at that address (*Morning Chronicle* 23 Aug. 1838: 2).

⁴ "Senex" recalls half a century after his acquaintance with North in London that his father was a "barrister and Q.C. in good practice" (610), but he is likely confusing North, Sr. with the father of another member of this circle, Mr. Bliss (cf. Rossetti, *Præraphaelite Diaries* 240).

⁵ On 29 July 1823, John North, a bachelor of St. Giles Cripplegate, obtained a Vicar-General's license to

Atkinson (1774/5-1839) was responsible for the restoration of many Gothic-style residences, including notably Sir Walter Scott's Abbotsford, which Atkinson superintended between 1816 and 1823. On 30 March 1820, Atkinson introduced Scott to artist Benjamin Robert Haydon (*Haydon* 2:267n7). The claims of Dudley Mondel that, as a child, his mother had books inscribed to her by her friend "Sir W. S., the great Sir W.—!" and took drawing lessons from the "unfortunate H—n" (244) may not therefore be exaggerated. In the early 1830s Atkinson moved from Grove End, Marylebone, to an estate near Walton-on-Thames and Richmond Park, Surrey. The house he designed and built there, dubbed "Silvermere" (the "Lakeland House" of Dudley Mondel's grandparents), was on a 170-acre property with a natural lake of ten acres (*Brayley* 2:368; twenty acres, according to Dudley). In the lake, according to Mondel, were seven islands, each of which bore the name of one of his aunts and uncles (*SL* 249); William North's Atkinson grandparents had seven children, four daughters and three sons.

According to the *International Genealogical Index*, William North, born 25 September 1825, was christened at Old Church St. Pancras on 3 November 1825, the son of John and Rose (presumably a familiar form of Rosamond) North.⁶ William's sister Eliza, born 1 October 1828 at St. John's Wood, Marylebone, was christened at the parish church of St. Marylebone on 20 December 1828, the daughter of John and Rose North.

II.

Apart from a single reference by Mondel to "one of his [father's] houses" in which he resides for a time (320), William North ignores in his writings the primary source of his family's income, and in America he encouraged the belief that he was of the landed gentry. What counts is North's probable silence, even in London, about the success of his immediate forebears in manufacturing. More surprising is his absolute silence (at least in print) about the career of his grandfather Atkinson, a self-made man whose accomplishments one might expect to inspire pride and emulation.

On another matter, North is more explicit: Dudley Mondel's memoir expresses profound emotion over his parents' unhappy marriage—a union rocky from the start, his

wed Rosamond Atkinson of St. Marylebone, a spinster and a minor, with the consent of her father, William Atkinson of Grove End, Marylebone. John was born in 1795 or 1796 at Lambeth, Surrey; Rosamond at Marylebone on 15 January 1803.

⁶ It is not known if William North was born at sea, like his protagonists Biron (*Imp* 1:7) and Mondel (*SL* 50).

parents reportedly quarrelling in their honeymoon carriage and on the verge of breakup when Mondel was only a small child. He was almost eleven when the separation finally came. His father accused his mother of adultery, and Mondel and his sister were eventually sent away so that their mother might not find them. He was destined to see his mother one last time, during the holidays, when, distraught and veiled in black, she accosted the carriage in which he, his sister, and their governess approached the house gates. At their tearful parting, his mother swooned. Several months later, Mondel's father, accompanied by a young woman of 22 or 23, visits him at Temple Grove school, with two pieces of news: his mother died of a fever some weeks ago (before, Mondel says, her case against his father in the ecclesiastical court could be concluded); and he has remarried (on the *very day* after his mother's death, Mondel says). Mondel furnishes an acrid description of his young stepmother (255-57, 266-67).

Curiously enough, this melodrama mirrors true events in the lives of William North's parents. Following their separation (probably in late summer 1836), Rosamond North, "a very fine-looking woman," brought suit against her husband John North, "a gentleman of large property," in the Court of the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul, for restitution of conjugal rights.⁷ John North, seeking a divorce, seized letters exchanged between her and his apprentice Mr. George and charged her with adultery. Denying the charge, Rosamond North boldly set out to prove that the John North carrying on a "criminal intercourse with a female named Saunders," described as "a most beautiful woman," and John North, her husband, were one and the same person. On the evening of 19 January 1837, in company with the driver of London cab 487 and a Mr. Newman, Rosamond forced her way past the garden gates into North's house in Wood Lane, St. John's Wood (a house with which she was unfamiliar, judging from wrong turns made during their escape and the fact the cook claimed no knowledge of a "Mrs. North"). Rosamond succeeded in spying Miss Saunders and her husband, who had been "enjoying a brandy and water," upstairs in his bedroom. Wielding a poker, John North pushed his wife twice and threw the cabman over the banister. North proceeded to raise eyebrows by preferring assault charges against his wife in Kensington Petty Sessions court. The judge dismissed assault charges but required bail, "as [North] had sworn he went in fear of what might occur through Mrs. North's influence." Litigation resumed in the ecclesiastical court on 28 April 1837; and no verdict having been issued, the

⁷ "Curious Charge of Assault," *Morning Chronicle* 31 Jan. 1837: 4. All quotations in this paragraph are

case was resumed on 20 January 1838, with sentence again reserved.⁸ Two months later, on 25 March, Rosamond North, aged 36, died of typhus at number 2, South Street, Grosvenor Square. (Her death certificate does not specify her relationship to any male—as daughter, as wife, or as widow—a most exceptional circumstance for the period.) Four days following, John North secured a license to marry Elizabeth Emily Saunders, which he did two days later on 31 March.⁹ The re-marriage of North's father had taken place not, as Mondel's had, the *day after* his mother's death (a speedy feat nearly impossible under the circumstances), but rather *six days later* (still quick work).

To explain his father's behavior, Mondel calls him a religious maniac, seeking to purge his sins by *marrying* his young mistress.¹⁰ He claims this fanaticism was longstanding, and constituted a fundamental difference between his parents, since his mother, like her own father, was a "free-thinker." Even so, Mondel preserves "a Bible given me by my mother," and he recalls his youthful indignation when his maternal grandmother proposed that he should become a clergyman (245, 249-50, 343). As for his father's zealotry, Mondel illustrates this by describing a work actually published anonymously by John North, *The Perfect Law of Liberty* (1849), with a lithographic frontispiece which he ascribes to the author. Most of the book consists of parallel texts of the four gospels: by no means an unprecedented notion, but one which Mondel derides as insane (268-69).¹¹ His reaction may reflect his own lapsed fervor: at fourteen, Mondel would commit his nights to "enthusiastic

from this source.

⁸ Developments in the case are reported in "North Against North," *The Times* 29 Apr. 1837: 7; "North Against North," *The Times* 22 Jan. 1838: 7; "North v. North," *Morning Chronicle* 22 Jan. 1838: 4.

⁹ On 29 March 1838, John North, widower of St. Luke Old Street, was granted license to marry Elizabeth Emily Saunders, spinster of St. Pancras, at St. Luke Old Street. Emily, as she was evidently known, was "of full age," born in Buckinghamshire probably in 1816. The marriage took place on 31 March 1838: John North, widower of City Road, merchant, son of William North, merchant, married Elizabeth Emily Saunders, spinster of 13 Hamilton Place, New Road, St. Pancras, daughter of William Saunders, architect, at the parish church of St. Luke. It is not known if Emily Saunders was related to Nathaniel Saunders, the husband of John North's sister Elizabeth. Nathaniel Saunders (c. 1801-1860), water-bailiff of London for many years, was a member of a civic-minded and philanthropic family prominent in the Corporation of the City of London.

¹⁰ According to William Rossetti, North Senior, in stating his terms for renting the studio at 17 Red Lion Square to Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Walter Deverell, "stipulates ... that the models are to be kept under some gentlemanly restraint, 'as some artists sacrifice the dignity of art to the baseness of passion'" (*P.R.B. Journal* 85).

¹¹ John North is identified as the author of this anonymous work in *Catalogue of the Library of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* (1876): 76. The work was announced as: *The Perfect Law of Liberty: a simple arrangement of the Four Gospels; addressed to all who would judge correctly of what that perfect law consists, or who desire to compare and study the difference between its undeviating consistency and the imperfect changeable laws suggested by the passions of mankind* (*Publishers' Circular*, 12:282 [15 June 1849]: 211, advert. 620). It was published with a different sub-title.

devotion" of the Gospels, and once "dreamed the whole scene of the Crucifixion with . . . awful vividness." According to Mondel, this "gushing enthusiasm" was stemmed when his father insisted he go to bed and reserve his Bible studies for "a more fitting season." Having "a strange dread of fire" (not so strange, perhaps, given John North's concerns as a manufacturer), his father "much disliked any one to burn lamp or candle during the night."¹² Nevertheless, Mondel "at one leap" concluded "that all professed Christians were hypocrites . . . their religion . . . a mere fancy" (270-71).

III.

Dudley Mondel is the principal source of information on North's formal schooling. After tuition in an unnamed academy, where he excels in mathematics under a man who becomes his private tutor, Mondel is sent, aged twelve, to Temple Grove School, ten miles from London at East Sheen (253-54, 258). If, as seems reasonably certain, this was the case with North, he entered this prestigious grammar school in the fall of 1837. In *Anti-Coningsby*, the narrator pronounces Temple Grove "first-rate," and its headmaster (identified by Mondel as "T—"), "one of the most finished gentleman and profoundest scholars of his day" (1:21). This pedagogue, Jonathan Thompson,¹³ is disparaged by Mondel, who at twelve runs away from Temple Grove with another boy and is flogged by the headmaster on his return (276-80). In Mondel's eyes, Thompson's saving grace was his wife Ann, who encourages Mondel's literary talent and whose family has friends in Germany (262, 286). This German connection becomes significant when Mondel graduates from Temple Grove at age fourteen. In his last term at the school, he is the only pupil of a German master, Professor Jacobi, and shortly after graduation his father accompanies him to "B—n" (Bonn) where Mondel resides with the family of "Herr K—," a former minister of the Kingdom of Westphalia (284, 286, 292). After approximately two years at the University of Bonn, Mondel transfers to the University of Berlin, where he remains (with a six-week sojourn at the Lake of Tegel) until his return to Britain in "November" (299-302, 309-10).

While elsewhere North exaggerates his age during these three years on the Continent (e.g., "National Humor" 305), the dates implicit in Mondel's account are plausible. If North arrived at Bonn in fall 1839, when he was fourteen, he would have spent two years in the city

¹² Between 23 December 1829 and 20 January 1830, the elder William North and his son John North took out insurance policies with the Sun Fire Office on properties at City Road, 5 Aldermanbury, and 24 Compton Terrace.

until fall 1841, when he could have headed for Berlin. He could not have left Bonn earlier, since North and a Polish friend (who subsequently migrated to Paris) met Franz Liszt on the nearby island of Nonnenwerth, where the composer was based between early August and late October 1841 (AC 1:109-10n; Saffle 114, 134-38; Walker 1:367-68). North would have returned to England in November 1842; en route, Mondel spends three nights in a Hamburg hotel half destroyed in the conflagration of that city, which occurred in the previous May (not, as Mondel states, as he was traveling there [310]).

With typical asperity, Mondel speculates that his father was "glad to get a son, rapidly approaching adolescence [at *fourteen?*], out of the way" on the Continent, the better "to enjoy the society of his young and pretty wife, undisturbed" (285). In fact, there is ample evidence, even in Mondel's reminiscences, that John North was committed to the education of his son. According to Mondel, tuition at Temple Grove was over £100 per annum, and his allowance for his first three months in Berlin ran to "some four hundred five-franc pieces" (each worth about three American dollars), which his father had to supplement because of his son's prodigality (275, 301-02). On two occasions, when Mondel is "thirteen" (c. 1838) and "twenty-one" (Fall 1846), his father is "abroad," suggesting business on the Continent, probably Germany (288, 333). "Herr K—" is a friend of Mondel's father, who expects the elderly courtier to encourage his son's scholastic progress at Bonn (286). His confidence is misplaced, since by Mondel's own account he squanders his opportunities in a university that, despite political upheavals, claimed eminent scientists among its faculty. In *The Imposter*, North credits one of them, Johann Jacob Noeggerath, with anticipating in a lecture he attended "more than three years ago" (c. 1841) the theory of evolution propounded in Chambers' *Vestiges of Creation* (*Imp* 1:288n). Science and allied disciplines were presumably what John North expected his son to cultivate in Bonn, especially if William had won the mathematics prize at Temple Grove that Mondel awards himself (283). But, even in Berlin, where he seems finally to have applied himself to a specific area of study, North's acquisitions were of a different kind.

IV.

The least satisfactory result of North's adolescence on the Continent was a massive infusion of class consciousness. In the "Memoir," practically every schoolmate at Bonn is a

¹³ 1841 census, Temple Grove; "J. Thompson" was headmaster 1835-1843 (Leinster-Mackay 41).

Baron or a Count, and Mondel is ever mindful that he has "danced with countesses and associated with princes" (322). Even a comparatively bourgeois crony in Bonn and Berlin, one "A—," is "the son of Germany's most popular living poet"; in a footnote to *City of the Jugglers*, the father is also a "celebrated ... historian" (SL 302, CJ 27n).¹⁴ While "A—" is musically inclined, most of Dudley's other peers at Bonn anticipate the stock-in-trade of Ruritanian romance—beer fests, caterwauling, duels to uphold the patrician *code d'honneur*. According to this code, to slap a fellow student was unpardonable, while "'snobs,' that is tradesmen, &c., may be caned or thrashed to any extent," as befits "inferior orders of being" (297). Mondel condones this etiquette, and North in his "National Humor" essay commemorates the first sight of his fast friend "G—," who showed his good breeding by affronting a Berlin restaurateur, and displayed his wit by hurling a plate of soup into the man's face (306).

North's complicity in such *noblesse n'oblige* had been anticipated on the home front. According to Mondel, Temple Grove enlisted boys from the first families in Britain, and the only parent he names connected with the arts is Lord Macaulay. Regimen at the school was Spartan, yet the boys were served by waiters at dinner and their torsos were scrubbed daily by young women, who despite their discretion were compared by one imaginative youth to attendants in an Oriental bath-house (SL 273-74). Conversation with such underlings was forbidden, and the pupils imbibed a "classical" decorum. Not that North required much encouragement. From childhood he revered the *Iliad*—not in the Greek but in Pope's heroic couplets, and he immersed himself in other eighteenth-century renderings of the classics. In a posthumous essay on "The Grand Style," North reduces all viable protagonists to three "types," epitomized by Achilles, Ulysses, and Prometheus (424-25). Defects in these paragons are ignored, and though North identifies most readily with Ulysses, it is Achilles whom he hails as "the King of men" (SL 251). The implausibility that afflicts North's "ideal" leaders can be traced to this simplification of mythology. Perhaps the worst example disfigures *The City of the Jugglers*, where Arthur Bolingbroke Darian ("the Duke of St. George") evokes in his majestic stature and inflexible rectitude nothing more human than the Achilles statue in Hyde Park, frock coat and trousers replacing his fig leaf.

¹⁴ Can this be a son of the second marriage of Ernst Moritz Arndt, rector of the University of Bonn and poetic spokesman for German nationalists? Or was the father's celebrity less topical? The same ambiguity pertains to the friend with whom North visited Liszt at Nonnenwerth, a young Polish "Baron von R—": Mondel gives this name as "Rominski," but one might have ventured a more illustrious family (AC 1:109-10n, SL 299).

Continual association with titled youth and heirs to landed estates would have encouraged William North to manufacture a "bluer" blood than he actually possessed. This process surely commenced with his father, if not his paternal grandfather. The father of Bernard Viridor, who parallels John North in most particulars, is a Tory with "amazingly old ideas" for a man in his forties, which he "inherits ... with his plate from his grandfather or his great-grandfather before him" (CJ 143). The selection of Temple Grove School suggests a City manufacturer aspiring to the landed gentry, while the social consequences of a scandalous divorce case, capped by marriage with his mistress, doubtless increased John North's ambitions for his son. He reaped as he sowed, for not only did William return from the Continent with aristocratic standards of comfort and expenditure, he was alienated from the enterprises on which the family income depended. This prejudice quickly encompassed the entire range of the professions, until any form of specialization, let alone of academic tuition, was disdained by North. Mondel brags of his negligence as a student in Germany, where he drew caricatures of professors during lectures. He also dispensed with dictionaries in his assimilation of foreign languages, which North claims to have accomplished by perusing translations of literature (SL 290; AC 1:97n). Mondel derides his father's deference to any "superior in one particular branch of knowledge" (243), a critique that North extends to medicine. In *The Imposter*, the "hero" is chorused by North's persona as he humiliates a leading physician, who opposes such infallible therapies as homeopathy and mesmerism (3:43-49). The professional military fares little better, and when Mondel observes that his disciplinarian father "ought to have entered the army," he swells a cannonade of abuse (243). Without a day of martial training, Arthur Darian (the modern Achilles) would have led the Hungarians to victory in 1848, had the doctrinaire embraced his counsel: "rapidity! rapidity! rapidity!" (CJ 59). In North's later fiction, untutored scientific geniuses like Dudley Mondel and "The Master of the World" transform everything from steam ships to heavy artillery. Predictably, North endorses in his first novel the cause of "Captain" Samuel Alfred Warner, a charlatan who claimed to have invented a torpedo that could sink an enemy fleet. His invention does just that, when the French launch an armada against Dover (AC 1:245-51).

Underlying this glorification of the inspired amateur is nostalgia for the Enlightenment, with its gentlemen of universal accomplishment (e.g., AC 1:30-31&n). For North, this ideal was epitomized by William Beckford, whose *Vathek* he hails as the supreme "Oriental" romance. Representative of genius, as North defines it, is Beckford's precocious fertility: in his "Memoir" prefaced to *Vathek*, North claims (falsely) that the work "was

written and published before our author had completed his twentieth year, it having been composed at a *single sitting!*" (6-7). A piece of furniture that might have witnessed "this feat of rapidity and genius" was prized by North, who announces in *Anti-Coningsby* (1:167) that he is creating this very work on a table from Beckford's Fonthill Abbey (see also "Memoir" 10-11). What North fails to appreciate is Beckford's care in superintending the publication of his writings, let alone his committed study of Arabic manuscripts (Gemmett 80-90). Besides, the most indolent German student would realize that eighteenth-century Orientalism had been superseded by several decades of recondite scholarship. Despite his professed acquaintance with such matters (Mondel, for example, claims familiarity with "the ancient Hindoo philosophers": *SL* 326), North, like his characters, tends to dismiss academe as irrelevant to an author of genius, and certainly to a "gentleman." At a lunch of well-heeled "universalists" in *The Imposter*, the company unites in praising A. W. Kinglake's *Eothen* (1844), "so superbly divested of all pedantry, and boring descriptions of localities and correctness of former travelers, and, still more tedious, antiquarian conjectures" (2:38).

A seventeen-year-old who nurtures such convictions might fulfill his promise as a writer, but he would be the last person who should study the law. Ironically, this is precisely what North found himself committed to. The circumstances are plausibly recreated in *City of the Jugglers*, when Viridor is articulated as a clerk to a solicitor named "Lumber" (*CJ* 141-43). John North it seems was cheated in this arrangement, while his son, finding little to do at the office, turned his hand to literature, which had been his avocation since childhood. After several false starts, including a picaresque serial about "a beggar" (*SL* 314-17), Mondel in his nineteenth year seizes on the celebrity of a novel by a rising politician to advance his own career. The novel is Benjamin Disraeli's *Coningsby*, which appeared in May 1844 (Flavin 67); six months later, *Anti-Coningsby*, authored by "An Embryo, M.P." was issued by T. C. Newby. In Mondel's estimation, this was "a bold, dashing, satirical extravaganza" through which he first "tasted the sweet poison of popular fame" (318-19). In reality, the authorship of *Anti-Coningsby* remained unknown to most readers, despite North's subsequent attempts to broadcast it. That he would have done so is surprising, for the anonymous author was lambasted in contemporary reviews as an unscrupulous opportunist and, in *Fraser's* (31.2:214), as a vindictive *woman* ignorant of politics.

Despite these contemporary verdicts, *Anti-Coningsby* remains significant from both an autobiographical and an historical standpoint. The hero, Clarence Guilford, has succeeded in the very profession intended for North, since he is a solicitor who resides above luxurious

chambers in Lincoln's Inn Fields. As usual with North's gentlemen of destiny, Guilford excels without fatigue, qualifying for the bar in two years and relegating the tedium of his practice to an assistant, who is himself a "gentlemen ... by birth and education" (1:83). This leaves Guilford ample time for literary endeavors, and for conversations with other young gentlemen. The redeeming feature of these colloquia is the frequent presence of Omnibus Wiggleton, Guilford's cousin and a forerunner of Algernon Moncrief in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. If Guilford represents a pseudo-professional ideal to which North aspired, Omnibus personifies a more realistic self-assessment. Where Guilford is provident and calculating, balancing "novelty" and decorum in his critiques of art and society, Omnibus is imprudent and unreflective, and sums up his aesthetics by exclaiming, "Give *me* Dickens!" (1:50). When Omnibus attempts to second his cousin's sentiments and actions, he manages to burlesque them. This applies to the most notorious aspect of the book, its blatant anti-Semitism. At a political rally in front of the Royal Exchange, Omnibus announces that nearly every rogue since the deluge was Jewish, including Jack Sheppard and Captain Kidd (1:148). The absurdity of this claim undercuts the equally extravagant attacks on Jews by Guilford and the author's persona. This amelioration is appropriate, since North in his subsequent writing is less overtly anti-Semitic than a great many British contemporaries. Even Guilford favors his beloved with verses by Heinrich Heine, a "fantastic Jew" whose love poetry North hoped to issue in a volume of translations (*AC* 1:202-03; *Imp* 1:265-67). North's deference not only to Heine but to "Spinoza the Hebrew" (*SL* 327) suggests that nothing more odious than opportunism motivated the anti-Jewish diatribes of *Anti-Coningsby*.

V.

A few years after publishing *The Imposter* (1845), North dismissed it as "a wild, reckless sketch, which it were waste of time for any reasonable being to peruse" (*CJ* 196n). Nonetheless, this triple-decker novel is arguably his most important book. The protagonist, Alfred Milford, is the son of a deceased woman artist and a bookseller, whose mercantilism recalls that of North's own father. Unlike North, however, Milford is liberated by his father's death, and believes that his true parent is none other than Lord Byron. Appropriating the bookseller's estate by burning his will, Milford assumes the alias of "Count Mesmer de Biron" (pronounced BY-ron), invents a fraudulent pedigree that is ultimately verified by the Russian court, and ascends the social ladder to a peerage, complete with a "hereditary" castle. Judged as a novel, *The Imposter* is afflicted with fantastic coincidence, inconsistencies of

plotting and characterization, and incessant authorial intrusions. If some of these "defects" are calculated, others doubtless proceed from the circumstances of the work's composition. Like *Anti-Coningsby*, North's second novel was probably written in installments, which were promptly dispatched to T. C. Newby for printing. In exchange, North would have received advance payments. Had North revised the entire manuscript before submission to the publisher, he might have confirmed the genius that he believed himself to possess. As it stands, the book is among the most fascinating might-have-beens of Victorian literature.

The Imposter represents a major advance over *Anti-Coningsby*. Unlike the first novel, where high society conversation devolves into ghoulish chatter and atrocious punning, *The Imposter* presents dialogue of dramatic force and intellectual depth. Especially impressive are exchanges in volume three between Prince Aurelius von Rosenberg and "Count de Biron." Rosenberg is a credible portrait of an aristocrat devoted to scientific innovation, which he places at the service of others. Biron, by contrast, serves no interest but his own. He is, in the words of the subtitle, *born without a conscience*; in the phrenological parlance of the narrative, his organ of *conscientiousness* does not exist. He anticipates subsequent North characters defined by absence. Sometimes this is a virtue—the absence of *fear* that North confounds with courage. But other protagonists are destitute of empathy, driven by insatiable egotism that would be megalomaniacal save for the "genius" that validates their pretensions. Such is the case with "The Living Corpse," resigned to a factuality of desire and fulfillment that leaves him "contented." "The Master of the World," after decades of persecution by inferior minds, is too contemptuous of the planet to destroy it. While these are extreme instances, North excels in portraying the feel of *not* to feel it, aided by a pellucid style encouraged by eighteenth-century models.

The improvement in North's writing during his twentieth year reflects the influence of Henry George Atkinson, to whom *The Imposter* is dedicated. Presented as "George Harley" in Mondel's reminiscences, Atkinson (2 Dec. 1812-28 Dec. 1884) was his youngest maternal uncle. A Fellow of the Royal Geological Society, he published little until 1851, when a volume of his correspondence with Harriet Martineau ignited intense controversy. Before this sudden notoriety, Atkinson was admired in select circles as a phrenologist and mesmerist. If these claims to distinction cut little ice today, Atkinson remains impressive: an accomplished (and affluent) man of the world whose letters to Martineau convey an intellectual integrity reminiscent of Auguste Comte's.

North's reunion with his uncle, and their brief but intense friendship, are described by

Mondel. According to this account, North was sufficiently emboldened by the success of his first novel to quarrel violently with his father. The primary cause was his stepmother, whom Mondel denounces as "an implacable torment," thanks to her "defective education, added to natural weakness of mind" (320). (Small wonder, if William used such language to her face, that Emily North became his "secret, interested, and determined enemy" [SL 317]). Quitting the garret rooms in one of his father's houses, North wrote his uncle, whom he had not seen since childhood. The 1851 Census lists Atkinson, like North's father, as a "Proprietor of Houses," and he could have lodged his nephew in one of them. *The Imposter* (2:194-95) places North in a flat overlooking Regent's Park near the Zoological Gardens on the north side. Atkinson lived nearby at 18 Upper Gloucester Place, and the two spent many nights walking, conversing on philosophy and science. North, who had explored transcendentalism in Berlin, encountered in his uncle "a materialist philosopher": "He absolutely hated the idea of a future state, repudiated all spiritual theories and transcendental metaphysics" (SL 323-24). He must at least have been open to contrary views, and the most rigorous dialogues in *The Imposter* doubtless echo their discussions. Through Atkinson, North experienced the kind of social and intellectual gatherings he had only imagined in *Anti-Coningsby*. Even his bank account was bolstered when, at his uncle's urging, he invested in lucrative railway shares. Not surprisingly, in an appendix to *The Imposter*, North speaks of Atkinson as "my dear friend" (3:App:v).

Paradoxically, a novel owing so much to H. G. Atkinson may have terminated his friendship with its author. Doubtless there were other causes: if North profited from the railway boom, Atkinson according to Mondel lost a fortune, along with many other investors commencing in the summer of 1845. This, according to Mondel, so depressed his uncle that he gradually lost interest even in his nephew (324-25). However, Atkinson was surely alienated through his nephew's tactlessness in print and, doubtless, in society. Recalling William North in 1868 ("Allegories" 472), William Rossetti declares, "I ... never expect to meet a more genuine specimen of the *tête montée*," and "hothead" tallies with a good deal of North's *oeuvre*. In *Anti-Coningsby* alone, North caricatures half the leading parliamentarians in Great Britain, and other targets include Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, William Charles Macready, Thomas Noon Talfourd, and Richard Hengist Horne. In *The Imposter*, he assaults *The Times* and all the other "Organs of Public Opinion," which he personifies in a clumsy frontispiece for volume three. North also turns his sights on Dr. John Elliotson, Britain's leading exponent of curative mesmerism and an associate of H. G. Atkinson. Having

pronounced Elliotson the apostle of “dull materialism,” the twenty-year-old metaphysician speculates whether “the doctor will ever reconcile himself to having a mind” (1:192; 3:App:xvi). The same appendix reproves Atkinson himself, for failing to publish more widely his scientific insights (3:App:v). If North in a book *dedicated* to Atkinson indulged such whims, what of his personal behavior? One clue is a footnote in *City of the Jugglers* (240n), where he celebrates his own conduct at a reception attended by Benjamin Disraeli. North instructed his host (himself a Member of Parliament) to inform Disraeli that the author of *Anti-Coningsby* was present, in case he might care to issue a challenge. In all likelihood, this outlandish breach of etiquette occurred during North’s association with Atkinson, for his subsequent access to such events was at best restricted.

If North apprehended that his “dear friend” might object to such antics, he probably assumed that the phrenological orientation of *The Imposter* would make amends. While questioning some of its dogma, Atkinson devoutly believed in this “science,” which is referenced throughout North’s book. North even lithographs “phrenological” cameos of his leading characters, with letterpress analysis of their “organs.” More relevant, however, to the main action of the book is “A New Map of the Brain” (1:frontispiece). Here, caricatures of phrenological attributes cavort in a honeycomb cranium, and despite North’s assurances to the contrary (3:App:vi-vii), this design appears to burlesque the whole subject. The novel reinforces this impression: its chief apostle of phrenology, Colonel Rossmill, is an impercipient fool, whose greatest regret after Biron’s escape from justice is that he has been cheated of a cast of his skull. Phrenology is better served by Prince von Rosenberg, who gives a private demonstration of “phreno-magnetism”: a phenomenon, according to North, discovered by Atkinson (*Imp* 3:App:xii).¹⁵ Nevertheless, when the Prince endures an emotional and intellectual crisis, he smashes a phrenological cast symbolic of “the vanity of [materialist] philosophy” (2:228-29). What he does not reject is mesmerism, pronounced by North “the most glorious principle of nature with which we are as yet acquainted” (3:App:xi). Yet, while Rosenberg employs this power to explore the psyche and heal the sick, Biron breaks the bank in three European casinos in company with a dissipated young man who, when mesmerized, foretells the cards in *rouge et noir*. After the young man collapses in a fit,

¹⁵ Rosenberg’s demonstration includes a display of clairvoyance (*Imp* 1:193-94) resembling that described in a published letter from Atkinson to Dr. John Elliotson (*Morning Chronicle* 8 July 1844: 5). Atkinson’s informant was the barrister and author Edmund Phipps, whose drawing-room in Park Lane was minutely described by Alexis, a clairvoyant cited by North in *The Imposter* (1:194n). Prince von Rosenberg also resides in Park Lane.

Biron kills him. Sufficiently charismatic to dispense with mesmerism when courting his personal Trilbys, Biron employs it to keep his harem enslaved. A propagandist against “satanic” mesmerism could hardly contrive a more dire warning than *The Imposter*.

Above all, Atkinson must have resented the characterization of Prince Aurelius von Rosenberg. A comparison of the Prince and Mondel’s uncle “George Harley” suggests that throughout the first volume Rosenberg is a virtual portrait of Atkinson. There is the same commanding stature, the same courtly yet aloof demeanor, the same misanthropy tempered by *noblesse oblige*, the same fierce independence in pursuing the same enquiries, and the same relations with women. To Mondel’s bewilderment, “all the women I saw appeared to admire, many to idolize, this cold, strange, unimpressible man. He treated them like children, and they looked up to him as a wonder and a mystery” (324). Such is H. G. Atkinson as he appeared to his nephew. It is doubtful that Margaret Fuller, to whom Atkinson introduced North (*SL* 323), and Harriet Martineau would have tolerated such condescension, and in one of his letters to Martineau, Atkinson contrasts himself “in a calm moment” with his condition “when under the influence of any passion” (275). Yet the wildest passion failed to effect the transformation in Atkinson experienced by Prince Aurelius. After the heroine, Augusta Merlmore, weds Biron, the Prince confronts his true feelings for this young beauty, which he has hidden not only from her but also from himself. Finding no solace in materialism, Rosenberg opens his Hegel and his Fichte, and emerges a born-again transcendentalist. This “reclamation,” along with his declarations of love for Augusta (reminiscent of Claude Frollo’s hysterics over Esmeralda in *Notre-Dame de Paris*), would surely have offended Atkinson, who risked association with this character through being the dedicatee of the novel.

VI.

With Rosenberg’s *volte-face*, North may have sought to celebrate romantic love, which is damned with faint praise in the rest of the book. In particular, “love at first sight” is travestied in several scenes, commencing with “Count de Biron’s” first night on the town. Rising from his seat in the stalls during an interlude at the Haymarket Theatre, he spies his future wife in a private box through his opera glass, and stands riveted “like a marble statue in a museum—a pump in a square, a hat-stand in the hall,” while she returns his gaze in “delightful communion of soul with soul,” through the lens of her own opera glass (*Imp* 1:39-43). Outside the theatre, “romantic” Biron refuses to recognize a discarded mistress who has borne his child, and no sooner has he wed his Haymarket belle than he covets a widowed

Duchess. To discard his wife, Biron falsely accuses her of adultery with Prince von Rosenberg, and the result is a sensational court case transparently modeled on the litigation between John and Rosamond North. In the preceding chapter, a visceral confrontation between an indignant Rosenberg and a remorseless Biron is deplored by the narrator himself. "Alas! few know how many parallel cases are constantly occurring! how often poor defenceless woman is immolated at the shrine of man's dark selfishness!" (3:123).

The adjective "dark" in this passage is not fortuitous. Mondel stresses that his father was "dark," in addition to being "haughty, vain, irascible, and ... naturally selfish and sensual." Combine these attributes within a person "tall, handsome and agreeable, even cordial in manner," who is both "strong in will" and devoid of "physical fear" (*SL* 243), and one has a fairly accurate portrait of Biron, minus the "genius" that ensures his success. Nor is the "Count" the only dark villain in *The Imposter*. Adolphus Cashall, a ruthless (and stupid) City capitalist, boasts "huge black whiskers and eye-brows" (1:51). He is introduced in the midst of a real estate fraud, which can hardly be irrelevant to John North's activities. Significantly, his mentor in crime is a solicitor, Monville, who anticipates the dark geniuses of North's later fiction, including Ignatius, the Soul Agent of *City of the Jugglers*; Professor Dunkelheim, the inventor of "The Magnetic Portraits"; and Berkeley, "the Alterer" of currency and circumstance in *The Slave of the Lamp*.

In itself, being "dark" does not guarantee wickedness in North's fiction. Doubtless mindful of the Scheherazades and Lalla Rookhs of "Oriental" romance, North in his second book is "inclined to agree" with Prince Pückler-Muskau in preferring "a skin of ... clear brown tint ... to the pale loveliness of more northern climes" (*Imp* 3:152-53). In this novel and in *Anti-Coningsby*, ideal ladies are brunettes. They conform to a recurring type in North's work, even when he comes to prefer blondes. The narrator of *The Imposter* articulates "the laws of anatomical beauty, which directs [*sic*] that the limbs should be thickest at the roots, and gradually taper towards the extremities" (3:7). The result is heroines with ample torsos and dainty hands and feet; their brows are bows, their profiles cameos. Their skin (*pace* Pückler-Muskau) is white as ivory and soft as down. Though they are compared to classical statuary, their appearance suggests the plates in *Heath's Book of Beauty*, in which Augusta, heroine of *The Imposter*, is actually featured (2:235). A more animated analogy is women in pictures by Daniel Maclise, a prototype, in his style and subjects, of Harry Scapes, the versatile young artist in *The Imposter*. Despite North's friendship with the Pre-Raphaelites, the innovators thanked by Mondel for teaching him how to paint (*SL* 287), his paragons tread

a different earth than Elizabeth Siddal, Annie Miller, and other "unconventional" models.

As much as any writer of similar accomplishment, North might justify Thomas Hardy's conviction that a man fabricates his perfect mate in adolescence, and declares a woman "well-beloved" onto whom he projects that preconceived ideal. Explaining how he could love a "fair stranger at the first glance," Mondel asserts: "We love types. The moment we see a sufficiently near approximation to the type within us, we love it" (349). The narrator concurs: "We love a type which is, in reality, an ideal reflex of our own souls.... Hence a more perfect image of the ideal type will always destroy all feebler images; hence inconstancy ... ; hence the agonies of genius, in its deep longing for sympathy, which it can only truly meet with in genius itself" (47). While North by this time assumes with Mondel "a pre-existent harmony between two spiritual types" (*SL* 168), his rationale for infidelity is anticipated in Biron's words and deeds. For Mondel (and doubtless for North), the construction of a "perfect image of the ideal type" begins in childhood, with a doting mother blessed with "appreciation of genius" (i.e., his own) and a repertoire of talents worthy of a Gothic heroine (243-44, 246). Mondel's mother is "fair" and blue-eyed, and his sister, like Mondel himself, takes after her. Mondel recalls his sister as "a beautiful fairy-like child" with "the most delicate complexion in the world," his constant companion in a Neverland inspired by chivalric romance (246-48, 254-55). North may be exaggerating, since Mondel's sister is only two years his junior, while North's was three. However, Mondel also reminisces that he and his sister "loved one another dearly," since "the most perfect sympathy existed between [us] at all times." He also admits that even in childhood he was wracked by "fantastic love-dreams" of "beautiful little girls," conceding that these were the only fantasies he did *not* share with his sister (255, 264). In a sarcastic critique of G. P. R. James, North ridicules this novelist's partiality for lovers who are raised together, "and a tender *liaison* formed as it were in the cradle" (*Imp* 2:218-19n), but he himself contrives analogous plots. In *Anti-Coningsby*, Clarence Guilford has known his cousin and future wife, Atalanta, since childhood; Prince von Rosenberg first set eyes on his own perfect mate, Augusta, when she was twelve (*Imp* 3:64). As the curtain falls on *The City of the Jugglers*, Viridor commits his soul for all eternity to a teenager whose "dream-like beauty" and pale "angelic countenance" (235-36) anticipate Mondel's tributes to his sister. Columbia Yonkers, the predestined match for Dudley Mondel, is a blonde with the blue eyes of Mondel's "fair" mother. The narrator insists on a "scientific" basis for Mondel's preference, and cites Taussensel's *Passional Zoology* to verify that blondes are more "celestial" than brunettes. In an outright rejection of

the dark-haired women who populate his first two novels, North associates blondes with “the pale [and superior] countries of the North”—with what Mondel dubs “our supreme Scandinavian [*sic*] race” (89, 241). North had composed by June 1854 a verse drama about *Odin* (now untraced), which he attempted to publish and have produced on the New York stage (SL 406&n). Though the promiscuous Freya seems an unlikely “type” of an innocent and faithful blonde, the author doubtless shaped mythology to conform with his ideal standards.

Like Guilford at Eton (AC 1:268-69), Mondel compensates for the absence of girls at Temple Grove by inventing them, in nocturnal talk-fests with other boys (274, 276). In Germany, North like Mondel doubtless serenaded the resident Juliets, but he did not ascend to their balconies. Judging from “A Reminiscence of the Rhine,” a serio-comic poem “Written on the Ohio” in 1853, North was still a virgin when he quit Bonn for Berlin. Though he might have experienced foreplay with a “little glove-girl” in that city (SL 302-03, 305), his sexual initiation apparently occurred in November 1842, en route to London. In the most plausible romantic vignette in North’s *oeuvre*, Mondel huddles for warmth for three days with his sole companion in the Schnell-Post for Hamburg, “a poor young actress.” Arriving at Hamburg, which was partly destroyed by fire, he and this “pretty girl” put up for three days in a half-burned hotel. “With many kisses, [we] bade one another farewell for ever, in all human probability” (SL 309-10).

Back in England, Mondel centers his fantasy life not on an *artiste* he slept with, but on a well-born fashion plate. He calls this paragon “Rosalie”—a name reminiscent of North’s mother, though this German girl is a handsome brunette. She is also older than Mondel—by at least *two years*, since she is eighteen when he first sees her, while he is still in Bonn. She visits the city to attend the wedding of her cousin, the daughter of Herr K— who is hosting Mondel. Rosalie’s father is a Colonel and a Baron, and she herself is “the most beautiful girl in Germany” (287, 293). To her probable amusement, Master Dudley courts her with adolescent *savoir-faire*, and when poor Rosalie’s shoelaces are severed one night by marauding students, Mondel challenges the entire gang to duel with sabers (294-95). The offending parties decline to fight, and North so piqued himself on this victory that he alludes to it (albeit “with a laugh”) in *The Imposter* (3:124). Mondel soon collapses amidst feverish dreams of Rosalie, refusing all medicines until the young lady herself appears. “At her hands I would have taken poison,” asserts Mondel in a disquieting anticipation, since these recollections are surely factual (298). So intent is Mondel on seeing his *liebchen* again that he

transfers from Bonn to Berlin, since on the way he can spend a month with Rosalie’s family in “W—.” This is their final meeting, but until he was about twenty-one, North appears to have fancied returning to Germany, to “demand” this lady’s hand in marriage (SL 305). His resolve was less than firm: Mondel alludes to a rash proposal to another woman that was summarily rejected (331). As a man no less than as a writer, North was conflicted, torn between the judicious constancy of Clarence Guilford and the impetuosity of Omnibus Wiggleton. In *Anti-Coningsby*, Wiggleton, spying a beautiful Italian girl in a first-floor window on Oxford Street, falls on his knees at their first interview and resolves to ““marry you to-morrow, if you will but condescend to accept me!””:

“Stay!” said Lucia, “you are not now capable of calm reflection.”

“I never am—”

“You may change your mind?”

“Never!” (1:303-4)

To redeem this craziness, North makes the *donna della finestra* a Countess as well as an artist. Omnibus weds her in the end, but Mondel is less fortunate; Rosalie marries “a judge, the president of a college of officials in Prussia” (306). The afterglow of North’s infatuation may have enlivened his portrayal of Augusta, the brown-haired and articulate heroine of *The Imposter*. In addition, North’s experience with Rosalie had a more enduring effect. Though Mondel insists that “every stranger [in Germany] supposed me to be two or three years older than I really was” (293), North surely drew on his feelings of immaturity around Rosalie to create “The Old Boy,” one of his most ingenious stories. The narrator recalls how, as a schoolboy of fifteen, he dreamed in a single night the next ten years of his life, and proceeded to live as if that decade had already transpired. Like Mondel at twelve, he escapes his boarding school disguised as an adult, and next he establishes himself in London as a successful author. When it comes to romance, his masquerade is less successful; he falls in love with *Rosina*, an aristocratic girl of eighteen, who rejects his overtures because of his youthful appearance. The contrast between a juvenile (and effeminate) exterior and a mature (and masculine) psyche is not unique to this story; rather it characterizes the protagonists of most of North’s fiction, including his four novels.

In the only known description of North, William Rossetti recalls “a pale, rather fleshy young man, with bright eyes, a slightly high clear voice, and very pallid straight hair of a yellowish tinge” (*Some Reminiscences* 1:167-68). This vignette accords both with a tiny portrait by Dante Rossetti, identified by his brother as William North (cover image), and with

Frank Bellew's frontispiece for *City of the Jugglers* (fig. 8). Another Bellew etching—Viridor discovering an intruder in his lumber room (fig. 2)—suggests a more formidable profile of the same person. Allowing for similar idealization, North's protagonists are apparently modeled on their creator; only Biron deviates from the blonde and pale archetype. North likely held from adolescence an intense insecurity about his appearance, which he attempted to lessen with a "martial" moustache ("National Humor" 310). In the course of his novels, the deceptive boyishness of his protagonists yields steadily to manliness, ascending in Biron's case to heroic proportions. Toward the conclusion of *The Imposter*, Biron enquires, "What avails me this perfection of outward form[?]" (3:281). Whatever it avails him, it is literally miraculous, for at the outset Biron "limped—one leg was shorter than it[s] fellows [*sic*]... the hero of these pages was club-footed" (1:11). Having stressed this deformity, North instantly forgets it, even when Biron is on the dance floor. Lord Byron may have limped, but a North protagonist cannot, even when his meditations mimic Richard III's or anticipate Captain Ahab's.¹⁶ In his later writings, North's obsession with external "organization" betrays him into outlandish generalizations about actual people. While "all great poets have been men remarkable for their physical beauty and perfection," "your regular humorists are mostly queer-looking fellows, apt to be dwarfish and wrinkled ..." ("National Humor" 300-01). Similarly, Viridor in *City of the Jugglers* derides political reactionaries, including Louis-Adolph Thiers and Lord John Russell, as "miserable abortions ... whose dwarfish, insignificant forms ... typify the pettiness of their undeveloped intellects" (191).

VII.

Such claims sit oddly with the metaphysics consolidated by North in the wake of *The Imposter*. In opposition to H. G. Atkinson's "materialism," North ransacked "the sublime doctrines of Fichte" (*SL* 327) and contrived an adaptation of the most idealistic transcendentalism. While Johann Gottlieb Fichte, "the wisest and noblest of the German transcendentalists" ("Grand Style" 423), posits an Absolute Ego that manifests itself within (illusory) space and time as separate egos, North dispenses with the supreme ego altogether,

¹⁶ A similar process ameliorates so ordinary a disability as myopia; Clarence Guilford admits to this (facetiously?) early in *Anti-Coningsby* (1:55), yet betrays not the slightest evidence of it in his subsequent derring-do. "Senex" (610) describes William North as "a man of eccentric vision, physical and mental," and it is likely that North was handicapped through a refusal to wear spectacles, which he regarded as "disfiguring" (*CJ* 43). In "Literary Speculations," the first-person narrator recounts the illusion that he glimpsed an unfaithful servant "in the distance. But, being short-sighted, I set it down as mere fancy" (541).

and identifies the only real, "eternal" entities as distinct human psyches, which he labels "atoms." Each atom seeks enjoyment while avoiding pain. In *The Imposter*, this "pleasure principle" is presupposed not only by the hedonistic Biron but also by the altruistic von Rosenberg: the only distinction between them, philosophically speaking, is how this satisfaction is to be obtained. As for the eternity of each psyche, this validates (to North's satisfaction) the survival of the individual ego after death. Not only does it endure, it continues to evolve in a positive sense. "Perchance," rhapsodizes Mondel, "I had been ... a stone, a plant, a fish, an insect, a bird, and a mammal. I was now a man, I might be an angel, a god, a Kosmos... . In the Eternal Infinite there was space for all things" (330). Of all the improvisations on Chambers' *Vestiges of Creation* (a work lampooned by Biron but commended by his creator: *Imp* 1:290-300; 3:App:xvi-xviii), this is perhaps the most extravagant. In 1846, North apparently expounded his "revolutionary" insights in a poem rejected by "the philosophic publisher by speciality" (*SL* 332). The manuscript was discarded early in 1850, but only after North had completed a prose version (*SL* 349), which he published in the next year as *The Infinite Republic*. Before he committed suicide, North penned a note affirming that he had "not changed an opinion expressed in that book" (*New York Daily Times*, 16 Nov 1854:3).

Judging from this testimonial, North's philosophy brought little consolation even to himself. His metaphysics became a standing joke among some of his cohorts; on his first evening with North and some mutual friends in August 1848, Dante Rossetti participated in a rhyme-fest to which he contributed a single stanza:

'Twas thus, thus is, & thus shall be:

The Beautiful — the Good

Still mirror to the Human Soul

Its own Intensitude! (*Correspondence* 1:48.9)

Rossetti found North "a touch gentish," but "affronted" might characterize North's response to this burlesque. Other than William North, the only known person who may have been influenced by his "infinite republic" of immortals was a medical student in his mid-twenties named Edwin Adolphus Ashford. As North recalls, Ashford was a friend of Thomas Woolner, who sculpted a profile in plaster of "Adolphus Ashford" in 1847 (Woolner 336). After hearing North and Woolner propound "the indestructible and eternal nature of the individual spiritual essence," Ashford committed suicide with prussic acid in June 1848. Recollected by North as "a tall, thin, pale, deep-eyed man," Ashford needed little

encouragement: his suicide note urged his mother, "Tell the twelve idiotic cheesemongers, grocers, &c. who will form the British jury, that the proper verdict to return is, that E.A.A. died because he could not live."¹⁷ Still, North reflects, "we have often fancied that but for our meeting Ashford might yet have lived" ("National Humor" 303-04).

If North perverted the solipsistic reveries of his youth into self-destructive dogma, this reflects a succession of personal crises that afflicted his early manhood. Like Mondel, North evidently expected to celebrate his twenty-first birthday by inheriting, from his paternal grandfather, "reversionary property to the value of thousands of pounds" (331). When Mondel's birthday arrives, no bonanza is forthcoming, since "on examination of the will of my grandfather, a flaw in my title was discovered. My reversionary possessions were, perhaps, unsaleable, *without my father's consent!* I trembled at my danger," as well he might, for Mondel has squandered his savings, and though he writes of "profits" from his second novel, he finally explains its "deadened" sales as one more consequence of the financial panic (331-32). More likely, T. C. Newby wrote off *The Imposter* as it was being printed; volume three displays numerous typographical errors and, as a finale, the insertion on pages 289-90 of an alternative conclusion to volume two. Mondel admits that his "timid" publisher refused to advance money on a projected third novel until he had read the entire manuscript (332).

John North must have withheld his son's inheritance, though, like Mondel's father, he seems to have granted him a small allowance in return for resuming his legal studies (*SL* 334). North meanwhile had apparently tried to salvage his finances by floating a magazine, a blunder compounded when his only remaining literary acquaintance¹⁸ withdrew a serial contribution. That bubble quickly burst, leaving a printer's bill of £50, according to Mondel (333-34, 336). Mondel lands in debtor's prison, abandoned by his family and practically all his friends, since the loyal "Bivar" (Frank Bellew) is in Edinburgh. Among his few visitors is his only servant, presented in "Literary Speculations" (538-41) as a thieving Spaniard. In desperation he appeals to his sister, now married to "a rich man." His sister "obtained the money for my release, and extorted a promise" from their "marble," "iron," and "adamant" father to grant Mondel a paltry income (334-39).

¹⁷ *Morning Chronicle* 24 June 1848:4.

¹⁸ In "Literary Speculations" (537) this ally is identified as "the brilliant Lady B—," who contributes "the first chapters of a fashionable novel." This is probably Rosina Lady Bulwer-Lytton, who is so lavishly praised throughout *Anti-Coningsby*, generally at the expense of her estranged husband, that the novel may have been attributed to her in some quarters (*Imp* 1:v).

Much of this account is doubtless true, for William North had been imprisoned for debt by 13 April 1847. On or just before that date, a petition was filed in the Court of Bankruptcy, Basinghall Street, by "William North, late of No. 9, Portsea-place, Connaught-square, in the county of Middlesex, Articled Clerk to an Attorney, and now a Prisoner in the Debtors' Prison for London and Middlesex, in the city of London, an insolvent debtor."¹⁹ He was required to appear in Court on 6 May to be examined and for the purpose of appointing creditors' assignees. He was still imprisoned on 25 June, when a second notice was published, stating that the Court would issue a final order in his case on 8 July.²⁰ From that date until the death of E. A. Ashford almost a year later, North's life is undocumented, but Mondel decries his poverty and derangement during this period. Towards the end of 1847, North, like Mondel, probably attempted suicide with an overdose of laudanum (*SL* 340), and Viridor makes a second try with a pistol, but is spared through "inferior percussion caps" (*CJ* 149). The topic of suicide is frequently broached, sometimes farcically, sometimes grimly, in North's earlier fiction; after 1847, this subject was doubtless never far from the mind of William North.²¹ Not that the long-term effects of North's ordeal were entirely negative. Incarceration amongst "a miscellaneous rabble," and the subsequent experience (recounted by Mondel) of running a school for working-class children (*SL* 337, 341-42), weaned North from the blatant snobbery of *Anti-Coningsby*. William North the eccentric but companionable radical, who won the friendship of contemporaries like the Rossetti brothers, James Hannay, and Sutherland Edwards, was doubtless a product of this chastisement.

Unfortunately, North lacked the physical and mental stamina to overcome such a downfall. About a year after leaving Germany, Mondel falls into "weeks" of delirium from the strain of translating a "voluminous German work" (317)—perhaps "the Travels in Egypt" of Prince Pückler-Muskau that North rendered into English (*Knickerbocker* 41.3:284). This serious illness, which probably befell North in early 1844, was exacerbated by the bungling of a young physician, encouraging North's hostility to the profession. While writing *Anti-*

¹⁹ *London Gazette* 13 Apr. 1847: 28; 25 June 1847: 41. In the second advertisement, North is identified as "Articled Clerk to an Attorney, and Author."

²⁰ It is possible that North's sister Eliza did assist him. On 19 August 1845, Eliza North, only daughter of John North of Shepherd's Bush, had married a wealthy wharfinger, William Chapman Raymond. The couple and their three children were occupying a house at 4 Montague Place, Clapham Road, on 30 March 1851, perhaps one of the very houses in which John North led a "double life" in 1837-38, according to his wife Rosamond's testimony.

²¹ Nevertheless, North's suicide shocked friends in London like Dante Gabriel Rossetti (*Correspondence* 1:54.72; 2: 55.4, 55.6). Sutherland Edwards was "horrified," despite North's claim "a few years" before to have attempted suicide with "too much" laudanum (82). This conversation probably occurred later than the

Coningsby, North was “more than once interrupted by ill health,” identified in his second novel as “nervous headaches” (AC 2:242; *Imp* 1:iii). Authorial vignettes in *The Imposter* are set at midnight or later (1:213; 2:194-95), and when around 1851 he was calling regularly on Dante Rossetti, “North’s hour” was eleven p.m. (Rossetti, *Works*, 271). Such typically bohemian habits can also point to insomnia, which may have afflicted North since childhood. Both Mondel (*SL* 248) and North himself in “Pretended Spiritual Manifestations” (1.4:365) admit to hallucinations that terrified him as a boy; in the essay, he speaks of the recent experience of “ascending a particularly high and steep staircase,” after which he “distinctly saw a figure, which we took for a friend who *was not in the house*, walk before us into a room, which proved to be empty.” Raised in a household infested with suspicion and intrigue, policed by a father who charged his mother with conspiring against him, North was emphatically paranoid. His first novel includes the diagram of a security envelope to frustrate “certain nameless individuals” who are spying on his mail, including “the proofs of *this very work*” (AC 2:175-76). A few years later, North informed Sutherland Edwards (82), “There is a conspiracy of silence against me,” sabotaging his magazines and impeding recognition of his books; major players included the publishers of *Punch* (as alleged in “National Humor” 310). Eventually, this supposed plot threatened his life as well as his writing. Mondel expounds what doubtless became North’s conviction: that his own father desired his death, lest he avenge his slain mother, like a reverse Hamlet (339). As for the entire population of privileged and middle-class Britons, North entertained mounting animosity. “Men call me eccentric, fools whisper that I am insane,” snarls Mondel: “Let my *work* speak for me” (360). Judging from his final novel, North seethed with resentment not only against the English establishment but against the workers they exploited. During the height of the Chartist movement in 1848, Mondel attempts to foment a European-style revolution and dreams of the violent overthrow of those who oppress his genius. To his disgust, the Chartists prove as spineless as shopkeepers, whom he dismisses as “cowards” (344, 346). Denied the human tools he required to combat his enemies, North as much as Mondel conceived his writing in martial terms. “I do not sneer, I strike!” he proclaims, from a book which, according to Sutherland Edwards (81-2), failed to enlist a single buyer (*CJ* 117n).

Henry Vizetelly, who published *The Puppet Show*, a comic journal to which North began to contribute in 1848, alleges that this “hare-brained” author “regarded himself as a

similar attempts attributed to Mondel and Viridor.

sort of coming Messiah” and “indulged in savage diatribes ... put into print at his own expense ... [which] speedily found their way to the omnivorous buttermaker or trunkmaker.” Vizetelly further asserts that “most of his *confrères* looked upon [North] as more fitted for Bedlam than to be left to roam at large down Fleet-street and the Strand” (1:323, 337). Particularly disquieting—or risible—was North’s discovery that he was as great a scientific innovator as some of his characters. On 7 November 1851, Dante Rossetti received the prospectus for *North’s Monthly Magazine*, “forwarded to me by the remarkable editor; wherein it is set forth that the secret of Perpetual Motion has been at length happily discovered, & will be at once revealed in the first no. of that new periodical, where an article is to appear on the principle of ‘self-propelling ocean vessels’!!!” (*Correspondence* 1:51.24). Writing from America, North evidently apprised the Rossetti brothers of further inventions, including “an unequalled rotary engine” (Christina Rossetti 1:89). At Cincinnati in June 1853, North promised “No More Smoke, No More Chimneys, Boilers or Coals” if the city was powered with heated air, based on chemistry disproved by the reviewer of *Scientific American* (“No Smoke” 341). Such delusions were remarkable in a man who counted a civil engineer among his intimates,²² but the expertise even of a friend was unlikely to count with North in his later days. Like Viridor, he must have believed “that his genius had developed itself in its torpor” following his incarceration for debt (*CJ* 149), and we have already observed North’s conviction that genius in one endeavor could flourish elsewhere. As in England, so in America: North regarded disbelief in his science and philosophy as a personal affront. When “Microcosmos,” one of his most ambitious stories, was (evidently) misplaced by *Putnam’s* after its rejection by *Harper’s*, his paranoia shifted into high gear. His pamphlet denouncing Napoleon III is spiced with equal animus against these two periodicals. Even as he assaults French despotism, he professes little faith in American democracy. “All progress *must* come from above,” he proclaims, and his harangue implies which British expatriate should be placed there (45). The *United States Review*, which appointed North its literary editor for several months in 1853, lamented in May 1855 that “ever-craving vanity ... was the bane of his existence.... He had ... an overwhelming opinion of his own powers, and of the power his opinions should exercise over his friends and brother writers. Finding ... these claims disallowed, he ... thought the world engaged in a great conspiracy against him” (418).

²² A review of “Current Literature” in *The Palladium* 1 (Nov 1850: 406-07) includes a lively description of Frank Bellew, based on his sojourn in Edinburgh. “Educated as a civil engineer,” Bellew sought other employment after the bursting of the railway bubble. When this article appeared, Bellew was aboard “The

By early 1854, North was writing that his own "life precious now to science and literature" was "within three or four days of dissolution" unless he returned at once to England (D. G. Rossetti, *Correspondence* 1:54.10).

VIII.

Countering this impression of North is the guileless enthusiast recalled by some of the people who knew him best. For all his aggressive rhetoric, North was chiefly a danger to himself. Few writers have so effectively burlesqued their own pretensions. Even in *The Slave of the Lamp*, Mondel is provided with a Sancho Panza cum Mercurio in the character Peregrine Cope, a genial portrait of Henry Clapp. Yet there is ample evidence that North was mentally unstable for several years before his suicide; in America he betrayed abundant signs of megalomania, as that term is defined by Richard B. Ulman and Harry Paul (2006). In a nineteenth-century milieu, he illustrates the "Nobel Prize Complex," associated by H. H. Tartakoff with people who entertain unrealistic goals encouraged by "grandiose narcissistic fantasies fostered in childhood," including "(1) the active, omnipotent fantasy of being the 'powerful one,' with grandiose features; and (2) the passive fantasy of being the 'special one,' chosen by virtue of exceptional gifts" (cited in Ulman and Paul, 5). In company with his sister, Mondel passes his childhood in a fantasy world of heroism and beauty, validated by his mother's love, and totally alien (he insists) from the pastimes of other children. In reality, such imaginative flights are pervasive in normal childhood, but their persistence into adulthood can fuel what Ulman and Paul term "the Narcissus complex," centered on "a fantasy of being a megalomaniacal self and empowered with magical control" (6). Recollecting the youth of Clarence Guilford, his aunt recalls how, "'at times, he would imagine himself possessed of that mighty signet mentioned in the [*Arabian Nights*], which rendered its owner, ruler of the invisible spirits, and would stroll through woods and fields holding imaginary converse with his unearthly companions!" (*AC* 2:100). As an adult, Dudley Mondel employs mesmerism to transform his landlady into a psychic tool (*SL* 224), while Biron declares himself superior to any magician, since through animal magnetism—the "wondrous science," the "philosopher's stone," the "lever of Archimedes"—he can "move the world" (*Imp* 2:142-44). Like the protagonists of "The Master of the World" and "The Living Corpse," neither Mondel nor Biron can be labeled a megalomaniac, since each

Ohio," on his way to America.

possesses the powers he lays claim to. In another respect, however, Mondel discloses the psyche of his creator. Protean genius cannot deliver him from bipolarity, from pendulum swings from exaltation to despair.

"Every man," announces the narrator of "The Old Boy," "is double" (149). One form of duality, the contrast between the exterior and interior man, North explores in this story and in *The Imposter*. But another cleavage, between manic and depressive states, is only gradually acknowledged in North's writing. He responds defensively to a critique of *Anti-Coningsby* in *The Spectator*, alleging that the author's "mind was most assuredly in a dual state"—a perception all the more telling since it followed a review of Arthur Labroke Wigan's *A New View of Insanity: The Duality of the Mind* (1844). North tries to laugh off this diagnosis, reminding his critic that all brains are divided "into two distinct halves or hemispheres," and that his novel appeared in two volumes (*Imp* 3:App:v-vi & n). Half a decade later, in the one-volume *City of the Jugglers*, bipolarity is manifest in the narration. Occasionally, North presents himself as but "the sentinel of the night whose trumpet heralds the morning" (224). He shares his apprehension that, since "life is uncertain ... I may possibly die before completing this work." Yet in the very next paragraph, as "the sun is setting," North hearkens to "the murmur of the human ocean, the mighty hum of the vast and potent city—I feel as an orator addressing a mighty army" (120). In the versified "Prologue" to the work, North promotes himself from sentinel to generalissimo of the "sons of light"; though this is supposedly a "dream," the megalomania of the conception is startling. Viridor, the warrior bard of the new order, is a glamorized self-portrait, and the novel features a colloquium between three of "the dozen or twenty persons of genius living at the present moment on the face of the earth" (33), who parrot North's philosophy at each other. The most eloquent of "the supreme Illuminati" who will deliver lesser mortals from Soul Agents, Viridor addresses their council with messianic authority. Yet, on his way to this assembly, Viridor is halted by paralyzing doubt (177). If this "black phantom" evokes temptations in the Wilderness, it is more suggestive of North's own bouts of depression. "How often has my loud laugh shaken the air," confides Dudley Mondel, "when within my heart the vision of Death sat enthroned, and palpable to my soul!" Even here, Mondel rebounds into egotism: his "exquisite tortures" place him among "the great thinkers of earth," while his comedy displays "a vigor of merriment rarely equalled" (308-09).

In its grandiose wish-fulfillment, the "dream" prologue to *The City of the Jugglers* recalls a central component of megalomania: a capacity for self-hypnosis, generating a

narcissistic fantasy world (Ulman and Paul, xvi, 16, 208). The process is often abetted with drugs: Mondel admits to regular doses of opium and "ether" in the year following his imprisonment (342). Biron smokes a hookah among his harem (*Imp* 3:168), and "The Living Corpse" explores the entire spectrum of addiction. Beyond an affinity for pipe tobacco and alcohol, North's experience with drugs is unknown, but the hallucinatory frontispiece to *City of the Jugglers*, with its drifting puffs of vapor, is at least evocative (fig. 8). Etched by North's intimate Frank Bellew, the design owes its graphic style to Richard Doyle, but there the resemblance ends. Whereas Doyle is persistently whimsical, Bellew's etching is unsettling in its grotesque renderings and conflation, reminiscent of the French illustrator Tony Johannot. A caricatured William North reclines at lower left: a flaccid, goitrous personage, indeterminate in age and even in gender. While this unbeautiful dreamer is about as heroic as a string bean, he is linked through an upward diagonal with the Titan at upper right. Physiognomically, these two figures resemble each other, encouraging a sense that the martial potentate embodies the sleeper's megalomania. That Bellew *intended* such a reading seems as implausible as North's sanctioning of it, and the glaring warrior may embody the Illuminati: the composite Messiah who will topple the gold-worshippers and power-jugglers. More precisely, he could portray that modern Achilles, the Duke of St. George, or (to quote the "Prologue") he might personify "*Thought ... / The strong Prometheus of the North*" (xii). Also on hand to dispel materialism are a Fairy Queen with a scepter and her trio of attendants with magic wands. Death and the Devil are visible at upper left, pursuing the same bloated capitalist who is being led by a chain in a vignette below: his leader is Ignatius, the dark genius who invents the "Soul Agency," while the capitalist himself is "Robert Russel Brown," who ends up hanged from a lamp-post by indignant Londoners (247).

A literal reading, however, evades the more subtle implications of this frontispiece. In his pose, the Titanic figure at upper right is less evocative of Prometheus than of his arch enemy Jupiter. The king of the gods conjures his Biblical equivalent, the personal God evicted from North's cosmology. In renouncing his adolescent belief in an intrusive, judgmental deity, North rejected both the faith of his father and his father's despotism. Indeed, *The City of the Jugglers* presents a transcendental alternative to John North's *The Perfect Law of Liberty* (1849), which interprets atheism and mammon as omens of the coming apocalypse. The unsigned frontispiece to this religious treatise, attributed by Mondel to his father (SL 269), is an architectonic portrayal of the Last Judgment with Christ at the apex, trumpet-blowing angels below, and the shell of this world cracked wide to reveal a



(Fig. 8) William North, *The City of the Jugglers*
Frontispiece by F. H. T. Bellew

skull. In Bellew's design, symmetrical assurance is dissipated: instead we behold eroding boundaries, like the merging cells of a phrenological cranium. Without the vindictive giant at the top, and the dreaming author at the bottom, the etching would delineate chaos. Frank Bellew was born in India, and North was fascinated by "Oriental" traditions, including South Asian ones. In his generative repose, the sleeper in this etching is analogous to a central component of Hindu iconography, in which Vishnu lies on the coils of the serpent Shesha Naga. The multiple heads of Shesha spread like a canopy above the dreaming god, approximated by Bellew with a crescent of faces and fin-like wings. Shesha, however, is the guardian of his Lord. The presences haunting William North are evil.

IX.

Especially disquieting in Bellew's etching is the absence of North's "ideal" woman, save for the Fairy Queen and her entourage. In the novel, memorable sections are devoted to Viridor's romance with Grace Morton, a "fair" and lively girl of seventeen, whom he rescues from a marauding cow in the Zoological Gardens (134). Their intimate encounters occur in run-down chambers in the Temple, where North was presumably living when he composed this work. In *The Slave of the Lamp*, this same young woman appears as "Blanche D'Arcy"; she also figures as "Blondine" in a poem of that name dated "March 1852"—the very month North sailed for America. Judging from these references, North met this (unidentified) teenager early in 1850, and became engaged to her (to the extent of buying her a wedding dress) around June of that year, when he completed *City of the Jugglers*. The daughter of an impecunious author, she had grown up in a coastal town and was living in 1850 with a sister and her husband on London's South Bank (*SL* 349-353; *CJ* 137). Her bohemianism is minimized in her first literary appearance and maximized in her final one. Mondel declares that his "little angel" "had no conventional ideas, whatever. She was absolutely a child of nature" (352). Shortly after their engagement, they severed, and since Mondel attributes this debacle in part to his own "insane fit of jealousy," perhaps this *angel* proved more fallen than William North could endure. Mondel (as usual) heaps blame on others, beginning with Blanche (her "insane fit of pride"), proceeding to her conniving elder sister, and concluding with Blanche's "perfidious friend" who, desiring our hero for herself, gets her deserts and dies of consumption that same year (353-54). The poem "Blondine" tells a different tale: here, the young lady deserts the speaker because she "fears" him and his "madness." Ironically, *The City of the Jugglers*, which concludes with Viridor's raptures over "my

eternal bride," could have reinforced this apprehension. In a novel replete with good and evil geniuses, Grace Morton appears refreshingly ordinary. Viridor's need for such a companion is movingly portrayed, placing North himself in a sympathetic light. But Grace is compounded of "ideal" and somewhat contradictory qualities: innocent as a child yet wary of men; devoted to her father yet independent to the point of obstinacy; a "daughter of the people" whose "small hands ... were white and delicate as a princess's." These attributes, furthermore, are more clear to Viridor from their first interview than they are to Grace herself (134-36). Like most of North's protagonists, Viridor can read people's faces like books, though he would deny himself the omniscience of Dudley Mondel, who is "profoundly versed in all the mysteries of feminine nature" (*SL* 46; our italics). Only the narrator is aware that Grace has fallen in love with Viridor at first sight: she herself "did not know it," let alone "reason upon it." "Like an exquisite flower, she had taken root on one spot, and that spot was Viridor's heart." By novel's end, she "had learned to impassion herself for all Viridor's aims" (136, 240, 249). If North entertained such expectations, his fiancée's defection is unsurprising.

In the final stanzas of "Blondine," the speaker claims she returned to him, alluding, without specifics, to "how she died." *The Slave of the Lamp* is less restrained: Blanche deserts a model husband she can never love because Dudley Mondel rules her heart. In the finest tradition of the repentant *grisette*, she dies consumptive in the arms of her Dudley, who sacrifices his remaining money on her burial and exiles himself to New York. While this story might prove as authentic as Mondel's account of his parents' separation, there is ample room for skepticism. Chronologically, Mondel's account is implausible; he places his reunion with Blanche after the initial appearance of what is clearly *North's Magazine* (January 1852). Not more than two months later, on 11 March, Dante Rossetti announces that "North is going to start all of a sudden for America" (*Correspondence* 1:52.1&2). If the Rossetti brothers were never among North's intimates, he did pay regular visits to Dante Gabriel, and whatever Dante learned of North's affairs, he doubtless shared with his brother. After observing that "to be tied down to church ceremonies was ... not in [North's] line," William Rossetti recalls that, when he sailed for America, "he left behind him two women who had some claim upon him." This denotes two *living* consorts, one of whom William specifies as the subject of "Blondine," to whom "he was seriously and even passionately attached" (*Some Reminiscences* 1:167). In "The Separation," a florid lyric published by North in October 1853, the speaker promises to return (if possible) to a woman who resembles "Grace Morton"

with her "silken" tresses, her "bosom fair," and her "sweet girlish prattle." If this erstwhile fiancée died eventually of consumption, she may have remained "dead" to North. Mondel exclaims that the "pale spectre" of this woman "haunted me like a crime" (355), and North's remorse at this separation may have inspired a story that appeared in the final year of his life. In "Blanche Hendrickson," a prosperous New Yorker meets his blonde and gray-eyed paragon in a railway carriage, only to realize she stands six feet, ten inches tall. Submissive to social prejudice, intimidated by his beloved's "greatness," he tries to wed her to a towering rustic with literary ambitions. The result of his "infernal pride" is Blanche's death from a broken heart, and the suicide of the disconsolate giant she has rejected.

According to William Rossetti, the other woman with some claim on North inspired his poem "Brunetta," dated "New York, August 23, 1852." Dark in hair and dark in "soul," she is probably identical to the "fair Rosamond" dismissed in four sentences by Dudley Mondel, despite the admission that she lived with him as a "supposed wife." So exasperated is Mondel by this "union of caprice and recklessness" that he would have resorted to his customary expedient of attempting suicide, save for the miraculous reappearance of his sister, who (for reasons best known to himself) "I had not seen for four years" (356-57). The poem denounces Brunetta as carnal, since she arouses what the chaste narrator of *City of the Jugglers* terms "the degrading satisfactions of the flesh" (123). Her claim on North was strong enough to "attain" his name even in America, according to the poem.²³ Indeed, she seems to have followed him to New York, where she may have insisted on continuing their relationship. The only evidence for this ultimatum is the poem, but there is much innuendo in *The Slave of the Lamp* (commencing on 75-6) about a reputed "wife" of Mondel who accompanied him to Niagara Falls, where North places himself on 19 July 1853.²⁴

²³ A possible clue to the woman's hold on North is provided by Christina Rossetti, who informs her brother William on 29 August 1851: "Yesterday Mr. North sent for his box. To-day Mamma has consented to take in letters for him: how long this is for I know not. Is he married? a young lady with a child in a cab left the message." Footnoting this enquiry half a century later, William ventures: "He was not 'married,' but perhaps he ought to have been" (C. Rossetti, *Letters* 1:53 &n2). As William Rossetti also notes, North was evidently shifting lodgings during this period, and since North's sister Eliza had two children between the ages of one and three (the eldest a boy named Dudley), she might have been the woman in the cab. However, if North was being assisted by his affluent sister, why would he ask Mrs. Rossetti to take in his mail?

²⁴ On this date, Joseph Avery was swept over Niagara Falls, after being marooned for hours on a rock at the brink of the cataract, and despite attempts by a large crowd to rescue him. In an "unwarrantable digression" from his narration of *The Slave of the Lamp* (122-27), North turns this tragedy into "a remarkable adventure" in which he casts himself in a starring role. Arriving on the scene shortly before the death of Avery (whom he neglects to name, but whose "pleasing appearance" he commends), North assumes virtual command of rescue operations, while comforting "a fair and pretty creature" who swoons into his arms,

Though Mondel writes of sharing "a handsome villa" with his "fair but uncongenial friend" (357-58), this may be a flight of fancy on North's part. On 30 March 1851, when the census was taken, William North may be the 27-year-old annuitant of that name lodging at 34 Great Russell Street in the parish of St. George Bloomsbury. Again, Mondel is our only authority for the claim that North was able gradually to sell his "reversionary funds" at a fraction of their value. Mondel at least inspires credence by recording that whatever money he realized was summarily invested in futile publishing ventures or squandered on flings like a trip to Paris with "Peregrine Cope" (Henry Clapp). By "Mondel's" own admission, the period following North's broken engagement was one of hardship,²⁵ compounded by the departure for America of Frank Bellew in late 1850, and by a thunderbolt of the following summer when, in Mondel's words, his father "disinherited me and resolved to give his whole property to his wife" (269). This is the substance of John North's will, dated 25 July 1851 and ignoring both his children. Whatever the son's entanglements with women, he probably quit England to escape his creditors.

William North arrived in New York a fully qualified man of letters. Despite his best efforts, he was enslaved to the "lamp" of a profession. In America, the sheer variety of his publications was rivaled only by that of Fitz-James O'Brien, a fellow expatriate who lodged with Frank Bellew for a time. O'Brien resembled North not only in versatility but in a dominant theme of his fiction. Back in "the old country," O'Brien too had been disappointed in love (Fiske lvii), and his presentations of thwarted idealism are both imaginative and poignant. Yet the volatile and dissipated O'Brien accommodated the psychic demons that conquered William North. If anything, North's initial success in America fueled the megalomania channeled into his later writing, and his quest for an ideal consort proved fatal to him and, probably, detrimental to its object. In New York, North soon fixated on Genevieve Genevra Fairfield (fig. 4), a precocious author who was already betraying signs of

and whom he identifies as the victim's "mistress." He even claims that, an instant before he died, Avery screamed the woman's name ("Mary!"). The only excuse for this ludicrous fiction is North's megalomania, which arguably possessed him at intervals as he composed this novel. Cf. the eyewitness report by Charles Welden, a veteran of the London *Daily News* who published in New York as the "City Hall Bell-Ringer" (*New York Times* 19 May 1861: 5; Maverick 143).

²⁵ "Senex," an American whose recollections of London can be dated to 1850, recalls one evening at "an eating-house in the Strand," where "North and [Henry] Clapp [were] sitting at one of the tables, the former engaged in writing as rapidly as possible and the latter waiting to take the manuscript to the publisher, or editor, to procure the means of paying for the dinner they had ordered" (610). William Rossetti declares, North's "shifts were numerous—assuredly more numerous than his shirts. He shifted lodgings among other things; and how he managed to keep a roof above his head was often a mystery to me" (Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences* 1:167).

mental illness (Fairfield 217). When the blue-eyed young beauty refused further contact with him, North consoled himself with fantasies of eternal reconciliation, such as he fabricates in the poem "Castania." In "The Phantom World," a narrator whose marriage proposal is rejected achieves the ultimate solution: following an interval of yogic preparation, he generates the ideal woman from his own psyche. But other poems and stories by North reflect a more exploitive viewpoint: the author who, at twenty, had burlesqued "love at first sight" in *The Imposter*, now presented it as scientific fact, consistent with a theory of "harmonious" soul-mates. Convinced that such a bond existed between himself and Geneva Fairfield, he informs her in two poems dated June 1854 that she must play his muse or risk his blood on her hands. These psychotic effusions, which he reinforced in interviews with Geneva's mother and dramatized through the histrionics of Dudley Mondel, were printed in the *New York Daily Times* on 18 April 1855, six months after North had killed himself with prussic acid. While Geneva Fairfield's surname was suppressed, her identity was perfectly obvious to some readers. By 1860, Geneva had been committed to an asylum, and in 1910 was still residing in the Government Hospital for the Insane in Washington, D.C.²⁶

On the morning of his suicide, William North assured a friend that he was prepared to die but feared to expire in the cold; this confidence he had already shared with Geneva's mother (*New York Daily Times* 16 Nov 1854:3; Fairfield 218). Might he have associated the chill of his meager lodging with his father's house, where no fires were allowed at night? John North survived his son by less than five years; on 27 April 1859 he died, aged 63, in his West London home at 15 Wood Lane, Shepherd's Bush. Considering North's impression that his father was wealthy, the estate (at least at this date) was modest: on 17 May, his effects were valued at under £5000. A year later, on 19 May 1860, his widow Elizabeth Emily North married John Stephenson, a civil servant with the Inland Revenue. What she may have felt about her stepson's suicide is unknown. She survived the event, almost to the day, by 56 years, dying, aged 94, in London on 15 November 1910.

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²⁶ Fairfield Family Web site.

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For access to many online subscription databases hosting periodicals and newspapers, we are indebted to the University Libraries of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In addition to print sources, we have also accessed biographical source and reference material on Web sites such as the National Archives of Great Britain, as well as a number of subscription-based Web sites specializing in genealogical and family history materials. We accessed sources and obtained copies of primary documents between October 2008 and February 2009. Works signed by and works attributed to North are in a single list below. For discussion of works attributed to North, see "A Preliminary Checklist of Writings By and About William North."

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- Saffle, Michael. *Liszt in Germany, 1840-1845: A Study in Sources, Documents, and the History of Reception*. Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon P, 1994. Franz Liszt Studies Series, no. 2.
- Senex [pseud.]. "A Slender Sheaf of Memories." *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* 70.420 (Dec. 1902): 605-17.
- "*Slave of the Lamp.*" *New York Daily Times* 18 Apr. 1855: 2.
- "*Slave of the Lamp.*" *United States Review* 35.5 (May 1855): 417-18.
- "Suicide of an Englishman at New York." *Daily News* 5 Dec. 1854: 3.
- "Suicide of Mr. William North." *New York Daily Times* 16 Nov. 1854: 3.
- Sun Fire Office Records. Guildhall Library. William North; John North.
- Ulman, Richard B., and Harry Paul. *The Self Psychology of Addiction and its Treatment: Narcissus in Wonderland*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Vizetelly, Henry. *Glances Back Through Seventy Years*. Vol. 1. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1893.
- Walker, Alan. *Franz Liszt*. Vol. 1: *The Virtuoso Years 1811-1847*. Rev. ed. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1987.
- [Welden, Charles]. "The Bell-Ringer at Niagara: Flight the Third: With an Episode on the Recent Tragedy." *New York Daily Times* 23 July 1853: 3.
- Woolner, Amy. *Thomas Woolner, R.A., Sculptor and Poet: His Life in Letters*. London: Chapman and Hall, 1917.

A Preliminary Checklist of Writings by and about

William North (1825-1854)

Page Life, Patrick Scott, and Allan Life

Early on in preparations for the reprint of North's *City of the Jugglers* and for the Victorians Institute conference panel, both Allan Life and Patrick Scott realized that the usual reference works could not provide much guidance. We began, independently, putting together our own working checklists, to supplement the only previous listing, that at Edward Whitley and Robert Weidman's online archive *The Vault at Pfaff's: An Archive of Art and Literature by New York City's Nineteenth-Century Bohemians* (as accessed October 2008):

<<http://digital.lib.lehigh.edu/pfaffs/people/individuals/31/>>

Page Life, who was already collaborating with Allan in other research on the Pre-Raphaelites, also began tracking North items. After the conference, the three of us agreed to pool our findings and make them available to other researchers.

The list below is avowedly preliminary; nonetheless, our aggregated findings make a surprisingly substantial list for an author who has been largely unknown even to Victorian specialists. Many of North's books survive in very few copies, and for some we have had to depend on catalogue descriptions. Despite the increasing digitization of nineteenth-century periodicals, and their increasing searchability, the list we can offer of North's periodical contributions is only partial; his signed contributions to the more prestigious American periodicals in the period 1852-1854 are quite well represented, though still incomplete. In particular, before widespread digitization, we would probably never have found the items North published in 1853 in the Cincinnati weekly magazine *Pen and Pencil*, edited by William Wallace Warden, also publisher of North's *The History of Napoleon III*.

The checklist is divided into four parts: 1) manuscripts; 2) books, translations, edited periodicals, etc.; 3) periodical contributions; and 4) selected references about William North—with particular emphasis on nineteenth-century sources—each arranged chronologically by publication date. Items within a given year are arranged by least to most specific publication date: for example, 1854 (in alphabetical order by author or title within the same year); April 1854; 16 April 1854. Most, though not all, items have been examined;

the most complete (or at times only available) information is given. In general, the earliest known attribution is cited. Annotation is limited to noting special content and to information bearing on attribution or publication issues.

In addition to print and microfilm sources, including standard catalogues of British, American, and French national bibliography, we have relied heavily on freely accessible World Wide Web resources, such as those currently available via Google Book Search (Google URLs are not given), as well as subscription-based databases, such as the *Gale Nineteenth-Century British Library Newspapers*, *ProQuest American Periodical Series Online*, *ProQuest Newspapers*, Columbia University *Making of America* series, and *WorldCat*. Indeed, this bibliography could not have been attempted without access to these vital resources; for that access, we are greatly indebted to the University Libraries of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of South Carolina. Web and database searches were conducted between October 2008 and January 2009. To avoid repetition and save space, we do not specify at the end of a particular bibliographic entry which Web resource(s) were used to identify it. We hope this preliminary list will prove helpful, and we welcome additional entries or information.

A substantial part of North's work is either unidentified or lost. The extensive contributions North reportedly made in the 1840s to such British weekly newspapers as *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*¹ and *Eliza Cook's Journal*,² presumably unsigned, have not yet proved traceable. It seems probable from hints in North's autobiographical novel *The Slave of the Lamp* that he wrote at least one further full-length novel, published in serial form, and now lost. Nor, except for the important re-printings in the *New York Saturday Press* discussed in Whitley and Weidman's essay, have we tried to include all re-printings of North's work in American periodicals: one contemporary commented discouragingly in 1853 that North's short stories "have during the present and previous year been . . . extensively reprinted in our papers from one end of the States to the other" (*Pen and Pencil* 16 Apr. 1853: 500), and the same source also mentions that North's friend Frank Bellew, who illustrated *The City of the Jugglers*, was at work on illustrations for a collection of North's short stories to be published by Appleton: we have found no trace of this volume. Notices of North's death in the *New York Daily Times* (15-16 November 1854) reported similarly that

¹ North claimed his work for *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* was plagiarized by Harper's (*The History of Napoleon III*, 28n).

² *Eliza Cook's Journal* ran from 5 May 1849 to 25 November 1854.

"His poems and tales have been reprinted in hundreds of magazines and papers here and in the Old Country" and that North "was the first to translate Miss Bremer's *Midnight Sun* from the Danish," which if true would mean yet another book now lost. The prospectus for a monthly semi-comic illustrated paper to be titled *The Philosopher* was found in his room, and he left "the tragic drama of 'Odin,' another drama, and some poems, principally addressed to ladies."

Unsigned works attributable to North fall into several categories: 1) those which North himself claimed to have written; 2) those attributed to North by others during his lifetime, for example, in journals such as *Pen and Pencil* and *The Knickerbocker*; 3) those attributed to North after his death in contemporary sources by those who likely knew him or were familiar with his work, such as the authors of the *New York Daily Times* obituary and *The Slave of the Lamp* preface; 4) those in which autobiographical elements are sufficiently strong to justify attribution; and 5) those in which style, content, and other elements combine to support the attribution. North was literary editor of the *United States Review* for an undetermined period in 1853, and there is strong internal evidence that he authored a number of contributions in different genres in the journal of that year. Items from the *United States Review* selected for inclusion under "Periodical Contributions" are representative—those which seem most certainly attributable to him—though other works might be advanced.

Elsewhere may be found scattered references to works by North which have not been identified. The Rossetti brothers mention that North edited a periodical called *Journal of Mystery*,³ and a journal with the title or partial title *Signs*.⁴ North contributed to the *New York Weekly Leader*,⁵ to *Sachem*,⁶ and to one of the best comic papers published in America, *The Lantern*,⁷ which ran for eighteen months beginning in spring of 1852. He is credited with "The Confessions of a Monster"⁸ (presumably a story). Within North's own works are a number of references to other lost or unidentified items, including "The Voice from the Crowd" (*The History of Napoleon III*, 39), many of which are likely unsigned. For literary historians and bibliographers alike, North has long been a shadow figure, a mystery man. Just

³ Entry for 16 March 1850 in *The P.R.B. Journal* (1975): 63.

⁴ *The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* 1 (1997): 92; letter 49.11 (18 Sept. 1849) to W. M. Rossetti.

⁵ Attribution in *Circular* 3:149 (16 Nov. 1854): 594. This periodical began publication on 18 March 1854.

⁶ According to Thomas Picton, its editor (*New York Times* 27 Feb. 1858: 4). Probably the *Oneida Sachem* (Oneida, NY: John Crawford), which began 24 June 1854, or possibly its predecessor, the *Oneida Telegraph* (11 Oct. 1851-c. 3 June 1854).

⁷ See Kingman (1875).

how elusive he could seem is demonstrated by successive researchers identifying his first anonymous novel, *Anti-Coningsby*, as written instead by the Scottish critic John Wilson, writing under his Blackwoodian pseudonym Christopher North.⁹ One error we hope does not get entrenched in the databases is from a recent digital reprint of *Anti-Coningsby* (Kessinger, n.d.), whose cover boldly attributes the authorship of North's parody, not to North himself, but to his satiric target, Benjamin Disraeli.

MANUSCRIPTS

"Moralva the Basilisk" ["The Basilisk"] [poem]. [N.d.] Angeli-Dennis Collection. University of British Columbia, Rare Books and Special Collections. Box 12, item 9.
– "by William North" (in hand of W. M. Rossetti) inside front cover; "Moralva" crossed through on caption title.

BOOKS, TRANSLATIONS, EDITED PERIODICALS, ETC.

Anti-Coningsby; or, the New Generation Grown Old. By an Embryo, M. P. London: T. C. Newby, 72, Mortimer St., Cavendish Sq., 1844. 2 vols. (309, 253 p.) 19 cm.
– issued in boards; price 21 shillings; "Who'll exchange old lamps for new."– title page; preface dated 20 November 1844; published between 14 and 29 November 1844 (*Publishers' Circular* 7:173 [2 Dec. 1844]: [345]); "Dec. 2, 1844, Mr. Newby has this day published . . ." (advert., 351); Sadleir (1951), item 709b.
– for North's own comments, see introd. to *Imposter* i-ix, and *City of the Jugglers* 93n and 125; reviewed: *Bell's Messenger*, *Hunt's London Journal*, *Liverpool Journal*, *News of the World*, *Spectator*, *Weekly Dispatch* (*Travels and Adventures in Egypt* 2:344, advert.)

* Digital facsimile available via Google Book Search.

Reprinted Kessinger, [2008?]; author given as Benjamin Disraeli on title page and

⁸ Attribution in "Editor's Portfolio," *Pen and Pencil* 1.16 (16 Apr. 1853): 500.

⁹ "A certain Professor Wilson (Christopher North) replied to *Coningsby* with an *Anti-Coningsby*, published in 1844." Leon Poliakov, *The History of Anti-Semitism*. Vol. 3: *From Voltaire to Wagner*. Trans. from the French by Miriam Kochan (New York: Vanguard, 1975): 334, footnote 30, with note on p. 538. Poliakov cites Raymond Maître, *Disraeli, homme de lettres: la personnalité, la pensée, l'oeuvre littéraire* (Paris: Didier, 1963): 14, 19 (notes).

spine.

Apparently reissued: 1847. 2 vols. in 1. 20½ cm. (copy in Library of Congress)

The Impostor; or, Born without a Conscience. By the Author of "Anti-Coningsby." Phrenologically illustrated. London: T. C. Newby, 1845. 3 vols. (ix, 304; 292; 312, 22 p.) 20 cm.

– issued in boards; price 31 shillings, 6 pence; dedication to Henry George Atkinson, Esq., F. G. S.; published between 14 and 29 October 1845 (*Publishers' Circular* 8:195 [1 Nov. 1845]: 306); advert. [316]

– for North's own comments, see *City of the Jugglers* 196-97n.

* Digital facsimile available via Google Book Search.

The Anti-Punch; or, the Toy-Shop in Fleet Street. A Romance of the Nineteenth Century.

By the Author of "Anti-Coningsby." London: Dipple, 1847. 87 p., 1 plate. 13 cm.

Travels and Adventures in Egypt: With Anecdotes of Mehemet Ali. By Prince [Hermann von] Pückler-Muskau. London: T. C. Newby; Parry, Blenkarn, and Co., 1847. 3 vols. (iv, 358; 341; 253 p.)

– North "also translated Prince Puckler Muskau's Travels in Egypt" (*The Knickerbocker* 41.3 [Mar. 1853]: 284). This title most closely matches "Travels in Egypt" and is presumably North's translation; apparently first issued: London: T. C. Newby, 1845, in three volumes, with the title *Egypt and Mehemet Ali*; preface dated 29 February 1846; "T. C. Newby" appears in small type above typographically prominent "Parry, Blenkarn, and Co." North's *Anti-Coningsby* is advertised at end of vol. 2.

Poetic Meditations. By Alphonse de Lamartine. Translated by William North. London: H. G. Clarke, 1848. 159 p. 18mo.

– issued in cloth; price given variously as 10 pence or 1 shilling; published between 14 and 29 August 1848 (*Publishers' Circular* 11:263 [1 Sept. 1848]: 283); North not mentioned in advert.; *City of the Jugglers* advert. ([254]) announces that a new edition "shortly will appear," illustrated by Bellew, published by Gibbs, giving North as translator and reprinting Lamartine's letter to North about the translation.

– for North's own comments, see *City of the Jugglers* 123n.

The Puppet Show, contributor. London: J. Dover, 1848-1849. Vol. 1, no. 1-vol. 3, no. 71 (18 Mar. 1848-14 July 1849).

* Digital facsimile available via Google Book Search.

Continued by: *The New Puppet Show*, editor? London: G. Vickers, 1849. Nos. 1-6 (21 July-24 Aug. 1849).

– Vizetelly (*Glances* 1:330) wrote much later that he and his brother had founded this paper which “leapt into temporary success” because of political events, and prints the prospectus, while a near-contemporary report presumably based on the comments of North himself claimed that it was written and illustrated by North and Frank Bellew, attaining a peak sale of “nearly fifty thousand copies” (*Pen and Pencil* 1.16 [16 Apr. 1853]: 500).

Vathek: *An Arabian Tale*. By William Beckford, Esq. With Notes, Critical and Explanatory. London: George Slater, 252, Strand, 1849. Memoir by William North. xv, vi, [7]-160 p. 14 cm. Slater’s Shilling Series of Popular and Classical Works, no. 2.

– boards or cloth; some adverts. dated 1 August 1849; this work “already published.”

* Digital facsimile available via Google Book Search.

– reprinted 1850; cloth or boards; price 1 shilling.

New York: s.n., 1849.

London: H. G. Bohn, 1852. xvi, [7]-160 p. 14 cm.

– reprint of Slater (1849).

Philadelphia: Henry Carey Baird, 1854. 180 p. 19 cm.

– “A Memoir of the Author” appears on the title page; secondary publisher New York: Wiley (*New York Daily Times* 7 Apr. 1854: 3).

New York: James Miller, 1868. 207 p. 18 cm.

* Digital facsimile available via Google Book Search.

– [same], n.d.

– reprinted, [1872]. 207 p. 19 cm.

New York: Thomas R. Knox, [1886]. 207 p. Title: *The History of the Caliph Vathek*.

New York: John B. Alden, 1887. 136 p. 19 cm. Elzevir Library 291.

New York: Hurst, [1888?]. 136 p. 19 cm. Arlington Edition.

New York: Pollard & Moss, [1889]. 207 p. 19 cm. Title: *The History of the Caliph Vathek*.

– see Jon Millington, *William Beckford: A Bibliography* (Warminster: Beckford Society, 2008): 258-60.

The City of the Jugglers; or, Free-Trade in Souls. A Romance of the “Golden” Age. By W. North, Author of “Anti-Coningsby,” “The Impostor,” Lamartine’s “Poetic

Meditations,” (translation.) &c., &c. With four highly-finished engravings, by F. H. T. Bellew. London: H. J. Gibbs, 1850. xii, 250 p., plates. 22 cm.

– price 10 shillings, 6 pence; “PRO. ‘Every man has his price.’ CON. ‘What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?’”–title page; prologue dated June 1850.

* Facsimile reproduction: Columbia, SC: AccessAble Books/University of South Carolina Press, 2008. Introduction by Patrick Scott. Digital facsimile available via USC Web site: <http://sc.edu/library/digital/collections/coj.html>

The Infinite Republic: A Spiritual Revolution. By William North. London: Published for the author by H. G. Clarke & Co., 1851. xi, 45 p.

– contains a letter addressed to Thomas Doherty; copy reported in Library Company of Philadelphia, *Catalogue*, vol. 3 (1856): 1070; passages quoted in *The Knickerbocker* 45.2 (Feb. 1855): 201-02; translated as *Une révolution spirituelle; ou, La république de l’infini* (Paris, 1855).

– for North’s own comments, see *City of the Jugglers* 112n and “Pretended Spiritual Manifestations,” *United States Review* 1.4 (Apr. 1853): 364.

***North’s Monthly Magazine* [*North’s Magazine*]**, editor. [London, Jan.-Feb.? 1852].

– untraced; attribution in letters by D. G. Rossetti, 7 Nov. [1851] (*Correspondence* 1 [2002]: 188-89; letter 51.24); and by W. M. Rossetti, 8 Feb. 1852 (*Selected Correspondence* [1990]: 26-27; letter 24): “North is bringing out a *North’s Monthly Magazine*, price 2d.: in No. 2 whereof appears “The Confessions of a Pin.” Briggs (1868) refers to *North’s Magazine*.

The Hint, editor and illustrator. New York: Smith, 1853[?].

– an illustrated comic newspaper that lasted two weeks, six issues as a daily and two as a weekly (*American Bibliopolist* 7.78 [1875]: 263). Date cited as 1853 (Seymour and West [2007]) and 1854 (*American Bibliopolist*; Mott [1938]). “It has been hinted that the paper died of overindulgence in puns.” (Mott 183)

The History of Napoleon III. Penned and Penciled by William North. Cincinnati: W. Wallace Warden, 70 West Fourth street, 1853. 48 p. 21½ cm.

– dedication to Frank Bellew, Esq.; “Gibson House, Cincinnati, June, 1853”; with 50 humorous illustrations; advertised in *New York Daily Times* between 26 May and 15 June 1853 as forthcoming. “This is my first book published in America.” (45)

The Automaton Man

– unpublished drama (untraced); attribution in *New York Daily Times* 18 Apr. 1854: 1; performed 10 April 1854, and three more times through 18 April, at Burton's Theatre, New York; reviewed, *New York Daily Times* 11 Apr. 1854: 4.

Odin

– unpublished verse drama (untraced), completed 17 June 1854; signed "W. North" in dedicatory poem of same title published in *New York Daily Times* 18 Apr. 1855: 2; see also *Slave of the Lamp* 406n.

Une révolution spirituelle; ou, La république de l'infini. Par William North. Traduit de l'anglais par Henry de Beaufort. Paris: C. Nolet, 1855. 72 p. 19 cm.

– translation of *The Infinite Republic: A Spiritual Revolution* (1851); translator unidentified (possibly North himself); Bibliothèque Nationale catalogue distinguishes translator "Henry de Beaufort" from Henry Charles Fitzroy Somerset, Duke of Beaufort. Apparently reissued Paris: chez tous les libraires, [1890]. 76 p. 23 cm.

The Slave of the Lamp. A Posthumous Novel. By William North, Author of *Anti-Coningsby*, etc. New York: H. Long & Bro., 121 Nassau-street, 1855. xv, 17-437 p. 20 cm.

– issued in cloth; \$1.00; "Who will exchange old lamps for new?" *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*—title page; "With a memoir of the author" (vii-xii), possibly by Charles C. B. Seymour; completed the morning of North's suicide (*New York Times* 27 Feb. 1858: 4); Sadleir (1951), item 1835.

* Digital facsimile available via Google Book Search.

The Man of the World. By William North. Author of "The Usurer's Gift," "Anti-Coningsby," "The Phantom World," etc. Philadelphia: T. B. Peterson and Bros., 306 Chestnut Street, 1866. xv, [17]-437 p. 19 cm.

– price: paper \$1.50; cloth \$2.00; retitled reprint of *The Slave of the Lamp*. "Oh! had I but one being to share / My dreams and fears and delights and tears, / And were she passing passing fair / With azure eyes, and amber hair; / Might she be prest, / To my fond breast! / And I, in words of flame declare / My glowing love, and she confess, / An echo—this / Were brighter bliss, / Than, save in castles in the air, / Illumes life's bleak wilderness!"—title page (poem from *Slave of the Lamp* 263-64).

Reissued: **The Man of the World. A Novel.** By William North. Author of "The Man that Married his Grandmother," "The Usurer's Gift," "The Phantom World," etc.

Philadelphia: T. B. Peterson and Bros., 306 Chestnut street, 1877. xv, [17]-437 p. 19 cm. Petersons' Dollar Series.

– issued in cloth, \$1.00; advert. *Publisher's Weekly* no. 291 (11 Aug. 1877). "With a few unavoidable exceptions, the characters in 'The Man of the World' have originals in real life. The strong appeals with which it abounds have been elicited by a personal knowledge of the miseries, humiliations and hardships some have to endure. In the character of Dudley Mondel, the author undoubtedly gives us glimpses of himself, while in the memoirs of the hero, he undoubtedly speaks mostly of himself and family, and this part of the work will be found to be of no ordinary character. As a work of art, it is remarkable, and for pureness of style, elegance of diction, and force of thought, it has seldom, if ever, been surpassed. Its pages are eminently thoughtful, for the author was a great thinker, and many of his ideas are of startling boldness. There will also be found much profitable reading in the volume, and of a kind not often found in novels, for the author was sincere, and though written perhaps in excitement, it was the excitement of doing good."—Title page. Poem on title page of 1866 edn. replaced by excerpts, some altered, from the preface (xi-xii).

PERIODICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

"The Usurer's Gift." *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 3.14 (July 1851): 232-36.

– story; unsigned; attribution in *Slave of the Lamp* ix.

"Blondine. A Poet's Death-Song." *The Knickerbocker* 39.6 (June 1852): 545-48.

– poem; signed W. North and dated March 1852.

"The Old Boy." *American Whig Review* 16.2 (Aug. 1852): 149-54.

– story; unsigned; attribution in *Pen and Pencil* 1.16 (16 Apr. 1853): 500.

"Napoleon the Little. By Victor Hugo." *United States Review* 31.4 (Oct. 1852): 369-86.

– review essay; unsigned; attribution based on parallels in *City of the Jugglers*.

"National Humor. A Fragment." *American Whig Review* 16.4 (Oct. 1852): 300-12.

– essay; unsigned; attribution in *Slave of the Lamp* 94n; autobiographical.

"Micro-Cosmos [Microcosmos; Microcosmus; Dew Drop]."

– unpublished story (untraced), c. December 1852; attribution in *New York Times* 26 Feb. 1858: 4, etc.; rejected by *Harper's* and *Putnam's*; allegedly plagiarized by Fitz-James O'Brien in "The Diamond Lens."

- for North's own comments, see *History of Napoleon III*, 28n.
- "My Ghost." *The Knickerbocker* 40.6 (Dec. 1852): 504-08.
– story; signed W. N.; contents page: William North.
- "The Living Corpse." *Putnam's Monthly Magazine* 1.1 (Jan. 1853): 32-39.
– story; unsigned; attribution in *Pen and Pencil* 1.16 (16 Apr. 1853): 500; reprinted: *Saturday Press* (23 Oct. 1858): 1-2.
- "The Master of the World." *United States Review* 1.1 (Jan. 1853): 48-61.
– story; signed W. N.; attribution in *Pen and Pencil* 1.16 (16 Apr. 1853): 500.
- "An Amateur Suicide." *United States Review* 1.2 (Feb. 1853): 156-60.
– story; unsigned; attribution suggested by theme, style, and known connection to journal.
- "The Man Who Married His Grand-Mother." *The Knickerbocker* 41.2 (Feb. 1853): 104-07.
– poem; "edited by William North"; contents page: William North.
- "Brunetta." *The Knickerbocker* 41.3 (Mar. 1853): 204-06.
– poem; signed William North; dated "New-York, Aug. 23, 1852"; index title: "The Story of Brunetta."
- "Castania." *United States Review* 1.3 (Mar. 1853): 234-35.
– poem; unsigned; attribution in *The Knickerbocker* 41.5 (May 1853): 478; *New York Daily Times* (16 Nov. 1854): 1.
- "The Magician." *United States Review* 1.3 (Mar. 1853): 276-78.
– poem; unsigned; attribution in *The Knickerbocker* 41.5 (May 1853): 478.
- "A 'Speaking Likeness.'" *The Knickerbocker* 41.3 (Mar. 1853): 238-40.
– unsigned; contents page: William North; autobiographical.
- "The Watchman." *United States Review* 1.3 (Mar. 1853): 254-65.
– story; unsigned; attribution in *The Knickerbocker* 41.5 (May 1853): 478; striking resemblance of style and content to North's stories about quest for the ideal woman.
- "A Great Drug Store. 'Poetry's a Drug.' Bookseller's Motto." *United States Review* 1.4 (Apr. 1853): 324-25.
– poem; unsigned; attribution suggested by theme, style, and known connection to journal.
- "Henri de Balzac." *United States Review* 1.4 (Apr. 1853): 325-29.
– essay; unsigned; arguable attribution based on strong resemblance to North's essay "National Humor" (Oct. 1852).

- "Knick-Knacks." *United States Review* 1.4 (Apr. 1853): 381-82.
– review; unsigned; attribution suggested by theme, style, and known connection to journal.
- "Pretended Spiritual Manifestations." *United States Review* 1.4 (Apr. 1853): 355-68; 1.5 (May 1853): 425-29.
– essay, in two parts; unsigned; attribution based on references (esp. 363-64) to his *Infinite Republic*; style and points of reference are characteristic.
- "Villette." *United States Review* 1.4 (Apr. 1853): 384.
– review; unsigned; attribution suggested by theme, style, and known connection to journal.
- "Have We a Bore Born Among Us?" *Pen and Pencil* 1.16 (16 Apr. 1853): 497-99.
– essay; signed William North.
- "The Masterpiece." *Pen and Pencil* 1.17 (23 Apr. 1853): 531.
– poem; signed William North; "(Written for the Pen and Pencil.)"
- "Dining-? (Written at the G—n House, Cincinnati)." *Pen and Pencil* 1.18 (30 Apr. 1853): 558-59.
– poem; signed William North; "(For the Pen and Pencil.)"; apparently refers to Gibson House.
- "Reception of Mrs. Beecher Stowe in London." *United States Review* 1.5 (May 1853): 452-55.
– essay; unsigned; attribution suggested by theme, style, and known connection to journal.
- "The Queen of the West. (A Word to the Social Systematisers)." *Pen and Pencil* 1.19 (7 May 1853): 586-87.
– poem; signed William North; "(For the Pen and Pencil.)"; begins "Well! Here I am in Cincinnati."
- "To English Anti-Slavers." *Pen and Pencil* 1.21 (21 May 1853): 660-62.
– poem; signed William North; "(Written for the Pen and Pencil.)"
- "Literary Speculations. By One Who Has Had Enough of Them." *United States Review* 1.6 (June 1853): 535-46.
– essay; unsigned; attribution suggested by theme, style, known connection to journal, and autobiographical references.
- "The Ship of Fate." *Pen and Pencil* 1.23 (4 June 1853): 725.

- poem; signed William North; “(Written for the Pen and Pencil.)”
- “No More Smoke, No More Chimneys, Boilers or Coals.” *Pen and Pencil* 1.26 (25 June 1853): 817-18.
- essay; signed William North; reviewed in *Scientific American* 9 July 1853.
- “Damascena.” *The Knickerbocker* 42.1 (July 1853): 65-67.
- poem; signed William North; contents page has subtitle: “A Sketch.”
- “The Phantom World.” *Graham’s American Monthly Magazine* 43.2 (Aug. 1853): 175-78.
- story; “prefatory remark” signed “William North, *Gibson House, Cincinnati, Ohio, May 1853*” (North now having the supposed author’s permission to publish).
- “A Reminiscence of the Rhine. Written on the Ohio.” *United States Review* 2.2 (Aug. 1853): 166-68.
- poem; unsigned; attribution suggested by theme, style, and known connection to journal.
- [“The Spirit of Beauty is Born.”] *The Knickerbocker* 42.2 (Aug. 1853): 195-97.
- untitled poem; arguable attribution to William North. “There is an exuberance of melodious versification . . . which will remind the reader of ‘Blondine,’ by William North, Esq.”
- “The Spirit of the Times; or, The Fast Age.” *United States Review* 2.4 (Sept. 1853): 257-63.
- essay; unsigned; attribution suggested by theme, style, and known connection to journal.
- “Timur the Tartar.” *United States Review* 2.4 (Sept. 1853): 236-37.
- poem; unsigned; reprinted with changes as “Timour the Tartar,” signed “by the late William North,” in *The Knickerbocker* 45.4 (Apr. 1855): 353.
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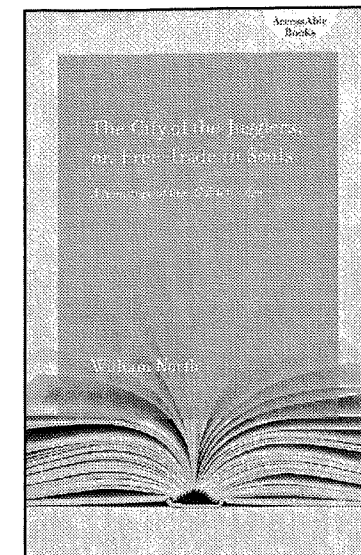
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Book Reviews

Marlene Tromp, ed. *Victorian Freaks: The Social Context of Freakery in Britain*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2008, pp. xiii + 327. By John Miller

Marlene Tromp's edited collection of twelve essays on freaks, freakery and enfreakment in Victorian Britain continues and develops work in a field Rosemarie Garland-Thomson describes in her foreword as "Freak Studies." The volume includes reappraisals of such relatively familiar figures as the elephant man, Joseph Merrick, and the bear woman, Julia Pastrana, alongside investigations of less frequently encountered examples of human anomaly and examinations of freakery in the fiction of Frank Aubrey, H. Rider Haggard, Wilkie Collins, and Charles Dickens. Tromp's aim to "situate freaks in their Victorian cultural context" (1-2) unfolds through a series of explorations of the complex inter-implication of the marginal and the mainstream that comprise a theoretically and ethically rigorous investigation of an under-researched aspect of British cultural history. The essays contribute variously (and with varying degrees of penetration) to studies of disability, race and gender and also to Queer Studies and, more tentatively, Animal Studies. Extensively illustrated and conceived and organized with clarity, *Victorian Freaks* is a significant and engaging resource for Victorianists and, more broadly, an important addition to scholarship on otherness and outsidership.

The first of four sections focuses on "Marketing and Consuming Freakery" and, most prominently, examines the operation of freakery as an aspect of Victorian commercial discourses. Heather McHold's "Even As You and I: Freak Shows and Lay Discourse on Spectacular Deformity" emphasizes the perhaps surprising importance of bourgeois respectability in the marketing of freak shows. In the face of growing disapprobation of the questionable morality of such displays, normative marital and employment histories located many performers within middle-class ideologies of consumerism and domesticity that emerged as a crucial aspect of their appeal. The involved relationship of the freak to consumerism is explored further in Joyce L. Huff's "Freaklore: The Dissemination, Fragmentation, and Reinvention of the Legend of Daniel Lambert, King of Fat Men." Lambert, a 700 pound gaoler from Leicester who died in 1809, remained a well-known figure

in the Victorian era whose hyperbolic physical dimensions facilitated a celebration of English eccentricity and national robustness, notwithstanding a tendency to view examples of foreign corpulence as a marker of racial inferiority. Timothy Neil's final essay of the section "White Wings and Six-Legged Muttons: The Freakish Animal" extends the range of enquiry to nonhuman freakery, scrutinizing the connections of animal enfreakment with the exhibition of human freaks. The confusion of categories of human and animal provided a key part of the frisson of freakery, and while Neil's investigation of animals offers a welcome expansion of the scope of the collection, the absence of a substantial engagement with recent theoretical work on animals and animality is to the essay's detriment.

Opening the second part on "Science, Medicine and the Social," Megan Kennedy's "Poor Hoo Loo": Sentiment, Stoicism, and the Grotesque in British Imperial Medicine" provides an intriguing study of the medicalization of freakery through the case of a Chinese man suffering from scrotal elephantiasis. Although medicine promised to de-sensationalize freaks by their integration into scientific taxonomies, reports and illustrations of Hoo Loo's affliction and his death under a British surgeon's knife evince a continuingly sensationalist rhetoric. Illustrating a "body growing out of control," Hoo Loo's story conveys a fascination with the colonial grotesque through which medicine expresses anxieties regarding the exotic other. Medical appropriations of freakery are also at issue in Christine Ferguson's consideration of Dr. Frederick Treves' representation of his most famous patient, the "elephant man." In "Elephant Talk: Language and Enfranchisement in the Merrick Case," Ferguson investigates the role of language and speech in the construction of Merrick's feminized and infantilized subjectivity and perhaps most importantly provides a decisive reassessment of "our favourite metaphors of liberation": ideas of voicing or silencing that structure access to language as the key to social and political empowerment. Nadja Durbach's "The Missing Link and the Hairy Belle: Krao and the Victorian Discourses of Evolution, Imperialism, and Primitive Sexuality" which completes the second part is an account of a hirsute, Siamese performer that adds interesting detail to well-established arguments on sexualization, bestiality and the racial other.

"Race, Empire and Commodity" forms the third part of the collection and these are themes that feature notably in Tromp's "Empire and the Indian Freak: The 'Miniature Man' from Cawnpore and the 'Marvellous Indian Boy' on Tour in England." Through meticulous and evocative explorations of Indian freak show "exhibits" Mohammed Baux, a thirty-seven-inch-tall dwarf, and Laloo, a boy with a parasitic twin emerging from his torso, Tromp

foregrounds the “double monstrosity” of exotic freaks as both physically deformed and racially other and argues their significance as embodiments of commercial and political Anglo-Indian power relations. Kelly Hurley’s following “The Victorian Mummy-Fetish: H. Rider Haggard, Frank Aubrey and the White Mummy” moves the discussion of empire into a different context. The imperial Gothic fictions of Haggard and Aubrey are consistently attracted to the freakish figure of the mummy through which anxieties concerning British imperial fragility are acted out. Although Hurley’s consideration of Victorian romance provides an important context and a valuable counterpart to the other essays in the collection, Haggard scholars, in particular, will find little new here. Rebecca Stern’s “Our Bear Women: Affiliating with Julia Pastrana” which completes the section develops the analysis of freakery and British imperialism through a re-examination of the career, both in life and after death in the exhibition of her corpse, of the Mexican artiste Pastrana. Most interestingly, Stern reads “recognition and affiliation” as well as exploitation into Victorian apprehensions of Pastrana’s extraordinary body, adding nuance to the relentless othering she appeared to stimulate.

The final section on “Reading and Spectating the Freak” begins with two closely related and thought-provoking investigations of the literary production of Victorian freaks. Martha Stoddard Holmes’ “Queering the Marriage Plot: Wilkie Collins’s *The Law and the Lady*” and Melissa Free’s “Freaks That Matter: The Doll’s Dressmaker, the Doctor’s Assistant and the Limits of Difference” pursue freakery in studies of Collins and Dickens, respectively. Holmes’ reading of *The Law and the Lady* is notable for its persuasive exploration of Collins’ remarkable “bilaterally limb-deficient” Miserrimus Dexter, reclaiming him as a “material representation of the relationships that exist and might exist among a range of embodiments and sexualities” (256). Like Holmes influenced by Robert McRuer’s work on Queer Theory and Critical Disability, Free highlights the transformative roles of freaks in Dickens’s *Our Mutual Friend* and Collins’s *The Moonstone*, from which she posits the “functionality of difference” (273). These renegotiations of the location of freaks in relation to normative culture culminate in Christopher R. Smit’s final essay of the collection, “A Collaborative Aesthetic: Levinas’s Idea of Responsibility and the Photographs of Charles Eisenmann and the Late Nineteenth-Century Freak-Performer.” Eisenmann’s involvement in producing *cartes de visite* for freak show performers is speculated as a collaboration between the able-bodied photographer and his bodily atypical photographic subjects, rather than as abuse of a disabled victim. Following Levinas, Smit argues that this

exchange should be read as essentially dialogical: a relationship characterized by reciprocity and responsibility.

Victorian Freaks is a valuable and stimulating work of cultural criticism that amply demonstrates Tromp’s assertion that “freakery must not be perceived as marginal to Victorian culture or irrelevant to mainstream social issues” (176).

Andrew Miller, *The Burdens of Perfection: On Ethics and Reading in Nineteenth-Century British Literature*. By Susan E. Colón

Implicative criticism, according to Andrew Miller, is writing in which the writer’s thinking is unfolded and made visible to the reader so as to generate a multiplicity of responses, all of them transformative. Its foil, argumentative criticism, seeks closure rather than disclosure; it elicits agreement or disagreement but not transformation. This distinction is foundational to Miller’s project—both his subject and his method—in *The Burdens of Perfection: On Ethics and Reading in Nineteenth-Century British Literature*. Implicative writing dovetails elegantly with the notion of perfectionism that the book scrutinizes: the pervasive Victorian narrative pattern whereby one is transformed by contact with an exemplary other. Miller writes, “To cast oneself into words—to display deliberation—comes to writers such as Cavell as a demand, a pervasive ethical responsibility, an aspect of what it is to be among others, which is to say to be at all” (114).

As Miller eloquently details the encounter of his own mind with the minds of previous exemplary implicative thinkers, especially Stanley Cavell, he writes with the clear aim of extending to readers a potent invitation to respond by resisting, conspiring with, or completing his thinking with their own. This makes for a richly intriguing overlay of readerly and writerly processes: the Victorian literature enacts on its readers the perfectionism it narrates among its characters, and we watch Miller unpack that simultaneous narration and enactment while himself enacting the perfectionist drama in company with his interlocutors and with us.

The Burdens of Perfection looks nothing like an older school of ethical criticism that traces or reproduces novels’ moralizing concern with personal comportment. In the early pages of the book, Miller establishes that perfectionism is not necessarily associated with a

particular politics, not simply conservative and conformist, not by and for a privileged class or gender, and not reducible to classical liberal narratives of the individual against the state, public opinion, or disciplinary technologies of surveillance. Miller feels around the edges of the novels' ethical tensions, illustrating how authors such as Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and Anthony Trollope demanded and complicated the ethical engagement of readers.

Perfectionism, which appeared in an embarrassing variety of discourses, is especially suited to the genres most characteristic of the Victorian period: the *bildungsroman*, the dramatic monologue, and the prose essay. In all its various forms, it entails one person's escape from disabling skepticism ("a culturally general but forceful doubt over the certainty of one's convictions about oneself and one's relation to others") by means of "a powerful attachment to someone who is found (in particular ways) to be exemplary" (xii). The ethical work of the novels is found in their implicative power—a power to transform that rests as much in their implicative formal properties as in their preoccupations and content. Crucially, as Miller never lets us forget, the response to the exemplar is not slavish imitation, but rather a complex range of further transformations and innovations as the subsequent thinker resists, conspires with, and completes the thinking of the exemplar (the catalogue of verbs is F. D. Maurice's).

Miller's early chapters explore the novel's special resources for not only representing, but also engaging in, perfectionism so understood. These techniques include free indirect discourse, whereby the voice of the narrator not only merges with the voice of a character but also merges with the thinking voice of the reader; and casuistry, in which the vexed process of applying general moral guidelines to particular circumstances is made visible. A third technique is the Victorian novel's signature "virtuoso manipulations of perspective" (2), in which readers vicariously experience one or more characters' points of view. This formal and affective exercise in third-person perspectives undermines the basis for the exercise of the will: how can I choose this action over that action if I can give as much weight to the perspectives of others as to my own perspective? Second-person engagements (between characters, and between readers and characters) constitute the therapy for the paralysis of will that attends such perspectival experiments.

The chapters in Part II examine the moral psychology accompanying perfectionist narratives. Especially rewarding is the chapter on Newman's critique of "knowingness," which is the response to skepticism that takes refuge in misguided epistemological self-

confidence. Beginning from the insight that skepticism per se is not opposed to religious belief (the Christian is just skeptical about different things), Miller shows how Newman's suspicion of knowingness enables a perfectionism that "invites his listeners and readers to imitate a particular, heavily burdened relation to language: a particular interpretative practice—one that turns on our abilities to convert words through our response to them, thus allowing them to convert us" (160). A chapter on Dickens, particularly *Dombey and Son* and *Great Expectations*, examines shame as the painful yet psychologically necessary knowledge of others' knowledge of one's failures. Finally, Miller returns to Dickens and reaches forward to Henry James to discuss what he calls the optative, which is a sort of perfectionism in reverse: contingent possibilities that lie in the past, rather than in the future. The exploration of alternative possibilities for such "lives unled" was another peculiar contribution of the nineteenth-century realist novel.

Miller's secularizing of ethics, while in some respects refreshing, is also arguably anachronistic. After alluding early on to the importance of Evangelicalism, and especially Methodism, in setting the tone for the century's perfectionist discourse, Miller is perhaps insufficiently cognizant of the religious valences that were enfolded among, if they did not constitute, the ethical stakes of even the more secular of the figures he discusses. The exception to this tendency, the chapter on Newman, yields insights rich enough to make this reader wish the overlap of ethical with religious thinking in the period had been more fully examined.

While deeply learned and thoroughly acquainted with a wide range of primary discourses, *The Burdens of Perfection* is intentionally light on "coverage" of earlier criticism. Miller is choosy about his interlocutors, and prefers sustained engagement with a select group of critics he finds implicative (principally Stanley Cavell, but also Raymond Williams, Eve Sedgwick, and D. A. Miller). Endnotes are slight, and some inexplicable absences (like Caroline Levine's highly germane treatment of skepticism and the realist novel) do occur.

Miller is a critic's critic, and to read him is to be led on a journey in which, though the signposts are as clear as they can be, the ends elude neat characterization. The strengths and the beauties of this book are many: the unaffected personal voice, the brilliant writing, the fluent engagement with Victorian and contemporary philosophy. The book gracefully achieves its ambitions of being implicative, and will no doubt elicit the hoped-for range of transformative responses.

Books Received

Barton, Anna. *Tennyson's Name. Identity and Responsibility in the Poetry of Alfred Lord Tennyson*. Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008.

Corbett, Mary Jean. *Family Likeness. Sex, Marriage, and Incest from Jane Austen to Virginia Woolf*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2008.

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Rosenman, Ellen and Claudia Klaver, eds. *Other Mothers. Beyond the Maternal Ideal*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2008.

Schroeder, Natalie and Shari Holt. *Ouida the Phenomenon. Evolving Social, Political, and Gender Concerns in Her Fiction*. Newark: U. Delaware Press, 2008.

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Contributors

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John Miller recently completed a PhD on the representation of exotic animals in Victorian and Edwardian adventure fiction at the University of Glasgow, where he is a tutor in the English and Comparative Literature programs. He has articles published or forthcoming on R. M. Ballantyne, John Buchan, colonial taxidermy, and Victorian big game hunting.

Patrick Scott is Professor of English and Director of Special Collections at the University of South Carolina. In addition to the reprint of North's novel, his recent publications include the text for a fine-press edition of Clough's *Amours de Voyage* (Barbarian Press, 2007), an edition of Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (Signet, 2008), and contributions to *Victorian Newsletter*, *Victorian Poetry*, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, *Scottish Studies Review*, and *Victorian Studies*. He is president of the Victorians Institute, 2008-2010.

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Robert Weidman is pursuing a doctoral degree in Learning Sciences and Technology at Lehigh University, where he is Digital Library Technical Coordinator. He is co-editor (with Ed Whitley) of *The Vault at Pfaff's* and contributes to biographical and bibliographical research for the project.

Announcements

Call for Papers: Victorians Institute, October 16 & 17, 2009.

Converse College, Spartanburg, SC

“Creativity and the Arts in Victorian Culture”

We invite paper proposals examining a range of arts, including: high arts (painting, drawing, sculpture, music, drama, dance, and the literary arts); middle-brow arts; popular culture and art; folk arts; the arts and crafts movement; architecture and art; literary treatment of the arts and responses to arts; culturally significant aspects of these arts in their own right. Also, since 2009 is the 200th anniversary of Tennyson’s birth, papers that specifically address the poet’s relationship to, and treatment of, the arts are particularly welcome.

Send queries and 250+ word abstracts to: anita.rose@converse.edu or to Anita Rose, Dept. of English, Converse College, 580 E. Main St., Spartanburg, SC 29302. Deadline for proposals: May 15, 2009.

OSCHOLARS offers a survey of journals that publish articles on the period c.1880-c.1910, edited by Dr. B. J. Robinson, Professor of English, North Georgia College & State University. Published monthly under “The Rack & the Press” at <http://www.oscholars.com/TO/oscholarshp.htm>, new titles are added monthly.

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