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.

Tables of Contents for *The Victorian Newsletter* from 1952 through 2008 are available at <www.wku.edu/victorian>.

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Greetings from the Editor

Victorian Newsletter #117, Spring 2010, offers a special edition of scholarly work marking the 2009 bicentenary of Alfred, Lord Tennyson and Charles Darwin. I'm pleased to present this collection of new and engaging scholarship on two of the most scrutinized figures of the Victorian era. Issue #117 provocatively illustrates that much more remains to be said about Tennyson and Darwin—as individuals, as representative thinkers of the era, and as two of the most enduring influences on *belles lettres* and intellectual history. The articles in this issue insightfully demonstrate the ways that poetry, science, and intellectual history intersect and shape each other.

Patrick Scott's "The Market(place) and the Muse: Tennyson, Lincolnshire, and the Nineteenth-Century Idea of the Book" investigates the ubiquitous "little green Tennysons," referring to the distinctive green-cloth-bindings that characterized the poet's volumes throughout his career. As Professor Scott notes, "From the perspective of book history, it seems incredible that so successful an author, writing in an age of dramatic changes in book production technology, should retain the same small octavo format" over a sixty-five year career. Scott investigates this point by exploring provincial Lincolnshire's book-culture during Tennyson's intellectual and literary apprenticeships and his negotiation of what Thomas Carlyle characterized as a thoroughly mechanized literary marketplace.

Ingrid Ranum's "Tennyson's False Women: Vivien, Guinevere, and the Challenge to Victorian Domestic Ideology" explores the poet's concept of private and public life, and the gendered relation of both realms to women and domestic-and-sexual ideology. Professor Ranum's analysis of Tennyson's notorious "false women" highlights the "disastrous results" of unexamined reliance on a universalized domestic ideology. Non-conforming women, those who "cannot or will not fill the role of angel in the house," pose a problem of cataclysmic proportions—an idea at odds with the submissive disempowerment of women on which this ideology depends. While Vivien's ability to "unman" the great Merlin is less than convincing, the same cannot be said of the example of Guinevere, whose earthly desires find no counterpart in the pristine Arthur.

At the center of this number is Shu-Fang Lai's "The Mysteries of Origin and the Need for a Happy Ending: George Meredith's *Evan Harrington: He Could be a Gentleman,*" so positioned as the only entry focused solely on literary Darwinism. Based on *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, Meredith has been termed an "evolutionary novelist" and "post-Darwinian poet"; but *Feverel* was published six months before Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*. Professor Lai posits that the more relevant text through which to explore this point is Meredith's lesser-known, *Once a Week* serial novel, *Evan Harrington: He Could be a Gentleman*, with its post-*Origin* publication date. Most compelling in this study is its analysis of Meredith's negotiation of highly controversial topics, written for a conservative reading audience—one with whom he had previously been in disfavor.

Aaron Worth's "Tennyson and the Poetics of Alterity" links Tennysonian poetics with Darwinian concerns about the nature of human cognition. Despite his blunt distaste for the pathetic fallacy, John Ruskin cites Tennyson's *Maud* as an "exquisite" example of its appropriate use—that is, "as a realistic index of a disordered mind." The Victorian monologue or monodrama is the pathetic fallacy "writ large," an idea Professor Worth explores through his analysis of three Tennyson monologues: "Saint Simeon Stylites," "Tithonus," and "Lucretius." In this discussion, post-Darwinian concepts about mind and brain, "mindreading" and cognition are seen to inform the poet's "emergent conceptions" about theories of self and others.

Bookending Issue #117 is Leslie Haynsworth's "'The weight of all the hopes of half the world': Tennyson's *The Princess* and Maurice's *Eustace Conway*." F.D. Maurice's only and little-known novel serves as a clear precedent for *The Princess*, from its many similarities (names, plot) to its concern with higher education for women. Tennyson's affiliation with the Cambridge Apostles, of which Maurice was a founder, argues compellingly for the influence of the novel on the poem. But while Tennyson pursued his literary career, Maurice turned to theology, for which he is best known; although the two cultivated a life-long friendship, their comparative views on female education reveal some disparities: "Whereas Tennyson is comparatively realistic, more willing to plunge in and grapple wholeheartedly with the issue of gender politics in all of its complexity, Maurice is undoubtedly both more progressive and capable of imagining a world in

which women like Ida want to live." Considered together, concludes Professor Haynsworth, *The Princess* and *Eustace Conway* variously voice "the weight of all the hopes of half the world."

Finally, the *VN* offers its first film review, Jacob Tierney's *Twist,* by Joseph Good and a double book-review by Veronica Alfano.

As editor, I thank Western Kentucky University for its support of the *Victorian Newsletter*. Special thanks are due to Dean David Lee, Potter College of Arts and Letters and Professor Karen Schneider, English Department Head. Graduate assistant Timothy Adams and undergraduate intern Rachel Sholar made many significant contributions to this issue, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to work with them. Finally, and not least, I am most grateful to Patrick Scott for providing the images featured in this issue.

Deborah A. Logan

Bowling Green

The Market (place) and the Muse: Tennyson, Lincolnshire, and the Nineteenth-Century Idea of the Book[1]

Patrick Scott

One of the paradoxes of Tennyson's career rests on his attitude toward the publishing revolution and new print-formats of his time. This paradox is best summarized as the problem of the "little green Tennysons." From the perspective of book history, it seems incredible that so successful an author, writing in an age of dramatic changes in book production technology, should retain the same small octavo format used for *Poems by Two Brothers*, printed in Louth, Lincolnshire in 1827, through a career that stretched on for another sixty-five years. The familiar green publisher's cloth bindings started relatively late, with the 1845 third edition, second issue, of Tennyson's 1842 *Poems in Two Volumes*; but as to the inside of his books, the physical layout and makeup were essentially the same right from the beginning, and he insisted on keeping them so until *The Death of Oenone* in 1892.[2] How, and indeed, why did Tennyson, as far as I know uniquely among Victorian authors, maintain a single book format from his first book to his last?

The focus in previous studies of Tennyson's publishing history has been volume by volume, with primary attention to the sales and critical responses for each new book (cf. Hagen). There has been little attention to the broader picture of Tennyson's relationship to the great nineteenth-century print-revolution that underlay his individual success, true also of the continuing influence of Tennyson's Lincolnshire roots, the provincial book-

[1] Initial research for this essay, part of a project on Tennyson's Lincolnshire roots, was supported by a National Endowment for the Humanities summer research grant and by a travel grant from the University of South Carolina's Research & Productive Scholarship Committee. For their assistance, thanks are due to librarians at the Tennyson Research Centre, Lincoln (especially Susan Gates); the Lincolnshire Archives Office; the Richard W. Goulding Collection, Lincolnshire Library Service, Louth; the Lincolnshire Local History Collection, Central Library, Lincoln; and the Lincolnshire Room, Grimsby Public Library.

[2] *Poems in Two Volumes* had first appeared in 1842 in paper-covered boards (Wise I: 90). *The Princess* (1847) was the first of Tennyson's books to be issued from the beginning in green cloth boards. The one deliberate exception in binding color (though not in physical format) was *In Memoriam* (1850), where the early printings were issued in purple cloth (the color of mourning).

culture of his formative years, and his subsequent negotiation of the changing literary marketplace. Tennyson was the preeminent Victorian poet who both experienced and survived the seismic cultural realignment in publishing that Lee Erickson and others have described as marginalizing poetry after its Romantic centrality. Tennyson long resisted, evaded, or even perhaps subverted the developments in later Victorian publishing and book production through which his greatest financial gains and most widespread distinction would subsequently materialize.

Tennyson was a publishing success in a period when most poets were not, and from the start of his career he had linked the attainment of literary standing with financial reward. In mid-May 1831, shortly after Dr. Tennyson's death, Tennyson's uncle Charles reported from Dalby to old George Tennyson over at Tealby about the future laureate's career plans:

> Alfred seems quite ready to go into the Church although I think his mind is fixed on the idea of deriving his greatest distinction and greatest means from the exercise of his poetic talents. (*Letters* I: 61)

Poetry brought Tennyson not only distinction but also wealth, enabling him to buy Farringford, build Aldworth, and leave on his death an estate of some £57,000. For comparison, among poets, Robert Browning left £16,000; Christina Rossetti £16,000; and Matthew Arnold £1,040.[3] Charles Kegan Paul, his publisher in the late 1870s and early 1880s, described Tennyson as "a thorough man of business" (Paul 294). In the more acerbic reminiscence of another Victorian publisher, William Tinsley (who himself left only £147), Tennyson "knew his words were golden, and he charged much of the real metal for them . . . . He, I feel sure, received more money for his poetry than all the other Poet Laureates from Dryden to Wordsworth" (Tinsley I: 237). One might see in Tennyson a kind of Northern Poet, New Style, who even if he did not write for money, knew where money was.

But from the perspective of publishing history, a deep strain of conservatism ran through Tennyson's idea of the book that would seem to forebode increasing marginality,

[3] See the respective entries in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. For comparison, among novelists, Dickens left "under £80,000," George Eliot "under £45,000," and Trollope £25,892. Darwin's estate of £146,911 was not primarily derived from authorship.

if not failure. Tennyson would live through the most radical change in book culture since the age of Caxton. The essential features of this change were threefold: changes in scale, in technology, and in the speed of print-distribution. In terms of scale, the number of new titles went up from under two-thousand each year to over eight-thousand by the 1890s, while population growth and improved literacy took the British reading public from perhaps five-million readers in 1800 to nearer forty-million in 1900 (Eliot, "Some Trends" 29; Weedon 46; Altick 166-72; Eliot, "Few and Expensive" 293-94; cf. Scott, "Business" 224). Changes in book production technology not only made books much cheaper, with cheap papermaking and stereotypes for reprints, but also transformed the book's physical appearance, with new illustration techniques and uniform publisher's cloth bindings (Erickson, passim; Feather, *History* 129-34; Gaskell 189ff.; McLean; Dooley; Banham). And the pace of print-communication was radically transformed towards immediacy and ephemerality, by the interrelated developments of railways in the 1830s and 1840s, cheap postage, more frequent newspapers, and thousands upon thousands of new periodicals. The historic shift to national and transnational cultural simultaneity began not with modern electronic media but in the Victorian printing-house (Feather, *History* 134-36; Altick 318-64). Much in Tennyson's idea of the book had been formed before all these effects became apparent; yet cumulatively, over time, changes such as these altered the ways books were perceived.

Something of this underlying cultural change in what books meant can be seen in the personal libraries Tennyson himself knew, now preserved in the Tennyson Research Centre at Lincoln, specifically in the contrasts between his father Dr. Tennyson's book-collection from the Somersby Rectory (fig. 1) and the much larger group of books the poet himself accumulated (Hixson and Scott; Campbell; Moore; Shatto). From Somersby, in the early years of the century, the Centre has some 368 titles, most of them leather-bound, long-standard classical or theological works, and many in old editions, dating back fifty, a hundred, or even two-hundred years before Dr. Tennyson's time. There's a Eusebius from 1659, an Aristotle from 1619, Bentley's *Horace* from 1728, Spenser's *Faerie Queene* in a 1590 edition, and even a *Gulliver's Travels* from 1726. The current holdings do not represent all the Somersby books, and Dr. Tennyson also bought more recent books and modern authors. But the underlying idea of his Somersby library was of

literature as a timeless cultural continuum, and of the book as an honored, long-term possession, even an heirloom, rather than a recent purchase.

Fig. 1. Somersby Rectory

By contrast, from Tennyson's own libraries at Farringford and Aldworth, the Centre has over two-thousand titles, the vast majority clothbound, modern editions and works by modern authors. To take an example from poetry, whereas Dr. Tennyson owned the 1674 edition of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Tennyson, despite his personal preference for an eighteenth-century copy, accumulated nearly a dozen different Miltons. And Milton had to compete with a plethora of modern poetry: David Masson's new Milton of 1874 was jostled on Tennyson's shelves not only by Pickering's Milton of the previous year, but by Meredith, Morris, Monckton Milnes, Alfred de Musset, John Moultrie, Gerald Massey and Frederick Myers, not to mention the pseudonymous Scots poet Samuel Mucklebacket (Campbell I: 73-78). The difference from his father's library was not all of Tennyson's doing or choosing—he not only bought books himself, but as his fame grew he received signed gift or complimentary copies from authors and publishers anxious for his

recognition and endorsement. Moreover, the Centre's collections inevitably lack more ephemeral publications—the newspapers, the periodicals, and even many of the best-selling novels—that we know from other sources Tennyson read. Even with these gaps, however, the predominant impression given by Tennyson's own library is still of its bewildering variety as he scanned a swelling spate of new publications. Between the two libraries, the father's and the son's, a change had taken place, which German book historians have labeled the *leserrevolution*—the transformation of reading.[4] The father's cultural continuum had become the son's cultural kaleidoscope, yet the son's idea of the book, and his inner sense of what it would mean to be a poet, had been derived chiefly from youthful reading in his father's older, pre-Victorian library.

Dr. Tennyson's Somersby library is a noteworthy, but not untypical, product of the flourishing English provincial book culture of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-centuries.[5] The Tennysons' part of Lincolnshire, East Lindsey, was centered (insofar as it has a center) on the market-town of Louth (fig. 2).[6] Because of an extraordinary collection of material about Louth assembled by Richard W. Goulding (1868-1929), antiquarian and son of a local printer, and now preserved in the local library, it is possible to reconstruct the Louth book trade of Tennyson's youth and young adulthood with surprising specificity.[7] Certain recurrences within the book-culture of Tennyson's Lincolnshire youth suggest that the history of the book can provide the material embodiment for larger issues in his poetic career.

A collection like Dr. Tennyson's, small though it would later seem, was limited to the gentry, that is, to the clerical, landed, and professional cultural elite. Significantly, well into the 1830s, the chief national source of information about new publications remained the monthly *Gentleman's Magazine,* rather than any specialist trade journal. Just as this national source overlapped with local weekly newspaper advertisements of

[4] For a good discussion of the term *leserrevolution*, introduced by the German sociologist Rolf Engelsing in the early 1970s, see Davidson (12), who argues, as this essay implicitly argues, that, while Engelsing described a real historical shift, from intensive to extensive reading, he overstated the suddenness and completeness with which the shift occurred.

[5] John Feather concludes that "in 1800, the age of the provinces was about to begin" (*Provincial Book Trade* 124; cf. also Isaac and Perkin; and Feather, "British Book Market").

[6] On Tennyson's regional upbringing, see Scott, "Tennyson, Lincolnshire and Provinciality" esp. 40-42 and n.; 49-50 n. 8; Sturman, *Landscape and Friendship* esp. 8-20.

[7] On Goulding, see Jefferson 1-2; cf. Sturman, *Landscape* 157-75.

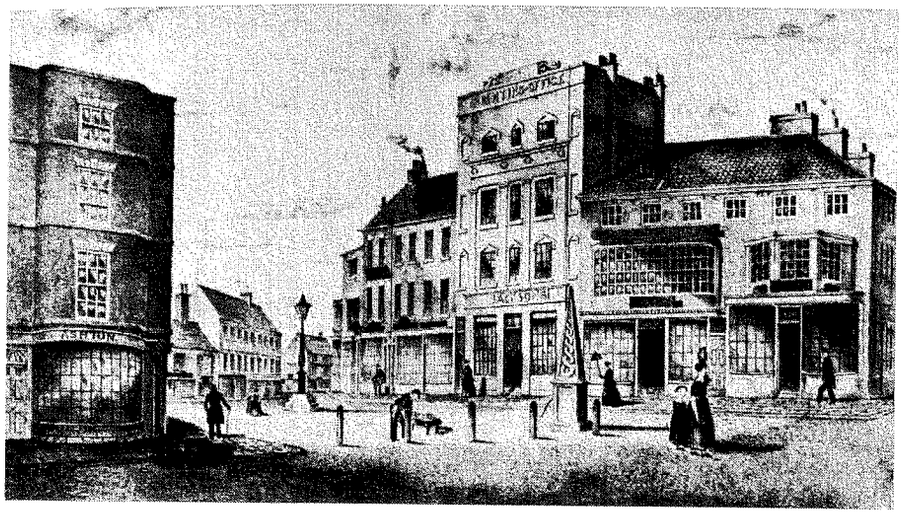


Fig. 2. Louth

newly-arrived titles in, for example, the main regional newspaper, the *Lincolnshire, Rutland, and Stamford Mercury*, so London-based publisher-booksellers were linked to strong networks of local booksellers, often with newspaper offices serving as the channels for book distribution (Newton and Smith 83; Feather, "British Book Market" 242). Louth in the 1820s was one of the five or six biggest towns in Lincolnshire, with a population of about six thousand, and it supported twenty-three inns or taverns, and three booksellers—Hurton's (previously Sheardown's) and Fotherby's, both in Mercer Row, and Jackson's in the marketplace (White 152-62; Goulding, "Printers and Booksellers" and "Notes"). All three shops combined bookselling with printing, binding, and stationery supply, but Jackson was the biggest and most prominent; in 1823, his main property was assessed for rates at £32, Fotherby's at £22, and Hurton's at only £17.13 (*Valuation* 48, 54, 56). It was to Jackson's bookshop that a Louth Grammar School boy in the 1820s went to browse on a school half-holiday (Parkinson, February 28, 1824).

As the local nodes in a national distribution network, provincial bookshops were frequently combined with agencies for advertising and newspapers (like Jackson with the

Mercury) or with agencies for nationally-marketed patent-medicines (like Sheardown, Hurton's predecessor; Hurton himself; and two of the Horncastle shops). Tennyson's *In Memoriam* compares poetry to "dull narcotics numbing pain" (*Poems* II: 372, canto v, line 8), but in the Louth bookshops there had been a quite literal juxtaposition of books and drugs. Typically, much of the stock would be schoolbooks, religious titles, or technical manuals, rather than general literature, and for more standard classical and literary titles, little distinction was made between new and secondhand copies.[8] New stock would not be extensive, and many new books would be special-ordered through the local bookseller, and shipped to him with his batch of weekly newspapers. There was no net book agreement (i.e. fixed book pricing) till the end of the century, and Dr. Tennyson complained that prices for the same book would often be 25-50% higher in Louth or Horncastle than from a London dealer; Jackson, he wrote to his brother in 1812, "I find . . . to be an infernal rogue....all country booksellers are rascals" (Sturman and Purton 12). The father's unmeasured exasperation would be closely echoed in his son's reaction in the 1860s to Moxon's manager, J. Bertrand Payne—"a mixture of ass, rogue, and peacock" (*Letters* II: 523)—and in the 1880s to Kegan Paul—"mean and tricky" (Hagen 159).

For those who lived in Louth itself, Richard Sheardown, the dominant figure in Louth bookselling of the late 1700s, had established a circulating library, which by 1800 had a stock of some 580 titles; the many multivolume novels allowed him to advertise a loan-stock nearing two-thousand volumes, and Hurton continued this lending-library after Sheardown sold up (Hurton; Jefferson 62). The Louth clerical and social elite, however, including Tennyson's schoolmasters from the Grammar School, preferred the library established by the more intellectually-ambitious Louth Literary Society, founded at Fotherby's bookshop in 1813, but passing to the ubiquitous Jackson when it amalgamated with an earlier even more selective society of similar title in 1821.[9] Both literary societies were selective, not only as to membership, but also as to the books it admitted; extant

[8] Sheardown's library catalogue from 1800 advertises not only books (bibles, spelling-books, psalters, primers, schoolbooks in English, Latin, Greek, French, and Italian, common prayers, children's books, and music books), but stationery, writing papers, prints, hanging papers, musical instruments, patent medicines, and bookbinding in three styles ("neat, strong, or elegant"): cf. Feather, *Provincial Book Trade* (69-97).

[9] The earlier society, founded in 1785, was limited to only twelve members, and administered successively from Sheardown's shop and then Jackson's; the more influential second society reached a high of thirty members in 1820, shortly before the amalgamation (Goulding, "Printers and Booksellers").

society records include regular printed ballots of the members on possible purchases, with over half of the proposed titles being turned down (Minute Book; Goulding, "Printers and Booksellers"). The pressures of a conservative book culture on those still entering the local clerical-gentry elite were strong, as can be seen in the valuable older editions of the classics that boys leaving Louth Grammar School in the period chose as leaving gifts for the school library.[10] It was not till the 1830s that a more democratic rival library was initiated, at the Louth Mechanics' Institute; significantly, while the Institute apparently had few books, it offered a range of current periodicals. Also significant is that it attracted the patronage of Tennyson's reformist uncle Charles Tennyson d'Eyncourt (*Lincolnshire in 1836* 149-50; Louth Mechanics' Institute; Jefferson 55). The title of the Horncastle mechanics' institute, "The Horncastle Society for the Acquirement of Useful Knowledge," also founded in the mid-thirties, indicates the radical and utilitarian ethos of the new movement (Wright 101-02). A traditionalist counter-effort to revitalize the once-valuable but old-fashioned parish library by Henry Alington Pye, Warden of the now-marginalized old Louth Corporation, came to nothing against the pressure for change represented by the Institute movement (Smith and Godsmark 21-22).

For collectors like Dr. Tennyson, book ownership and collection-building were often tied to family status, to the standing of one's own family in the books one inherited, and to the difficulties of other gentry families through the occasional windfall of an estate auction. In a sense, building the Somersby library was Dr. Tennyson's more modest clerical equivalent to his brother's grandiose rebuilding of the Tennyson family home, renamed Bayons Manor. Local examples of book auctions are the Bennet Langton sale over at Langton Hall in June 1820, where more than a thousand "scarce and valuable volumes" were sold off; the auction of the Revd. Andrew Burnaby's father's library that Jackson of Louth arranged for Burnaby in 1823; and the three-day auction of the effects of the Revd. Wolley Jolland, the late Vicar of Louth, again by Jackson, in 1831 (Sturman and Purton 20n; Sturman, "Burnaby" 66; Jackson; and cf. Myers "Sale by Auction").

Tennyson's later dialect-poem, "The Village Wife," shows the role of book-auctions

[10] Goulding notes among such leave-taking gifts Cicero's *de Oratore*, Paley's *Evidences*, and Thomson's *Seasons* ("Obsolete Customs"); other leaving gifts are noted in his multi-year biographical series, "Some Louth Grammar School Boys."

in Lincolnshire society. The poet neatly makes the old fashioned squire's entailed inheritance and the break-up of his library represent the underlying economic vulnerability of the clerical-gentry culture, once it had been separated from its traditional landed base: "Booöks, what's booöks," the old wife asks in ironic echo of the Northern Farmer's question about love, and answers "thebbe naither 'ere nor theer," because most of the Squire's "heäps and heäps" of "owd big booöks fetched nigh to nowt at the saäle" held after his death (*Poems* III: 58, 60; ll. 25, 73). Such estate sales offered other families in the district the opportunity to take over, in material form, the cultural capital of their less prosperous neighbors. The auction purchaser's perspective on the take-over comes out in Tennyson's "Audley Court," through his speaker's slightly guilty pleasure over

> . . . a volume, all of songs,
> Knocked down to me, when old Sir Robert's pride,
> His books—the more the pity, so I said—
> Came to the hammer here in March.
> (*Poems* II: 138; ll. 56-59)

The common thread is that, in early nineteenth-century Lincolnshire, books, through monetary value, family links, and relative scarcity, functioned as a kind of social synecdoche, a substitute for land, representing not just status but cultural identity and continuity.

Tennyson's poem "Amphion," beginning "My father left a park to me," and dated by Ricks to 1837, just when Tennyson himself was leaving Lincolnshire permanently, rests on exactly this parallel between inherited literary culture and the responsibility of a landed family's estate. Here the estate as symbol for the culture has fallen on hard times: neighbors are abandoning old traditions for newfangled scientific methods (Arthur Young's agricultural reforms standing in for Lord Brougham and the Utilitarians in culture), and women are importing Romantic and exotic flowers to displace traditional crops (Mrs. Norton, L.E.L., and the literary annuals, perhaps, as rivals to the classics). Tennyson, writing as the legitimate male cultural heir, feels left on his own to rescue a literary estate that has been allowed to run down:

> And I must work through months of toil,
> And years of cultivation,

Upon my proper patch of soil,
To grow my own plantation.
(*Poems* II: 118; ll. 25, 73)[11]

The same image of poetry as landed estate is echoed in the pseudo-copyright notice Tennyson sent to his preferred American publishers, Ticknor and Fields, in 1864, condemning rival American editions of *Enoch Arden* as "exceedingly unhandsome attempts to poach on what is, as it were, your Manor" (*Letters* II: 388; cf. Scott, "Tennyson's *Maud*"). This deep-rooted, often-repeated image suggests that the proposal by Dr. Tennyson's executors in 1831 to sell off the Somersby library to pay the debts would to the Tennyson boys have represented the material sign of their cultural disinheritance (*Letters* I: 59).[12]

But provincial book culture was not only a circuit of distribution and ownership; there was also a circuit of production. By comparison with the late Victorian period, the early years of the century saw a surprising number of books actually produced in Louth and its vicinity. Only a small proportion of these provincial publications get included in the major bibliographical databases, and it is only from local collections like Goulding's in Louth or the specialist local history rooms in the Lincoln and Grimsby public libraries that their issue can now be traced. In addition, some locally-printed books have their origin disguised in the larger databases, if the London wholesaler's imprint alone is used in cataloguing.

Much of the work of a provincial printing-shop was job-work—handbills, legal forms, sermons and the like. Jobbing printers could hardly afford to become closely identified with a single political pressure group; this political non-alignment was a pattern Tennyson seems to have looked for throughout his publishing career, disliking publishers such as Effingham Wilson or (later) Alexander Strahan who became identified with divisive political or religious parties. However, Louth printing could hardly avoid all ties to the local political and business structure. In the church-rate and other controversies of the 1830s, Fotherby's successor, Marshall, seems to have been the publisher of choice for

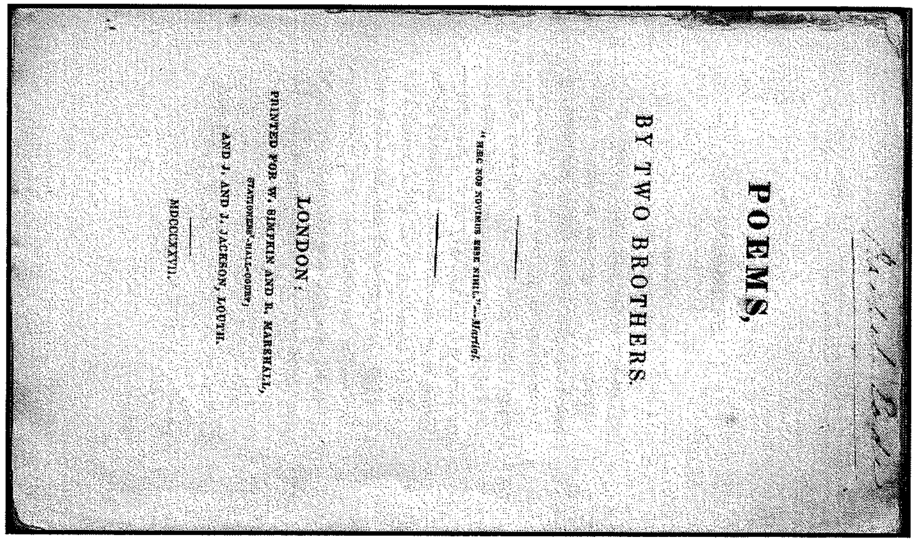
[11] "Plantation" here means the replanting of trees on an estate from which timber had been felled to pay debts, and therefore implies a long-term investment without immediate reward.

[12] On the inventory of Dr. Tennyson's books prepared for the executors, now in the Tennyson Research Centre, see Moore.

reformist pamphlets, and Marshall also published devotional and biographical works for local religious dissenters (Goulding, "Books and Pamphlets"). By contrast, Jackson was more likely to be the printer for sermons from the established clergy; he rented additional premises from the old Louth Corporation, and he undertook printing work for them and for their school, as he did for the important Louth Navigation canal company (Minutes of the Louth Corporation May 16, 1816; June 11, 1816; January 7, 1817, for example). The publisher of the Tennysons' *Poems by Two Brothers* was not only the biggest bookseller in Louth; he was also the most respectable.

In the early nineteenth century, the technology needed for book production differed little, if at all, from that used in jobbing printing, and until the 1830s there was little difference in production method or equipment, whether a book was produced in Louth or in London. According to Goulding, Jackson actually printed several books for London publishers under contract, including, for instance, a reprint in 1811 of William Falconer's poem *The Shipwreck* (for which, incidentally, he was able to charge the London publishers more than 4s. 6d. a copy—the five shillings he charged purchasers of the Tennysons' book can have left little extra profit; cf. Raven 318-19). Sheardown had long produced quite substantial volumes; he printed a New Testament, for example, in 1799, and among his other titles was the 300-page autobiography of a local navy-man, William Spavens, which in 1796 attracted 520 pre-publication subscribers. Jackson had opened his rival business with a flourish by publishing, in the same year, a locally-authored drama *True Patriotism, or Poverty Ennobled by Virtue*, dedicated to the North Lincolnshire magnate Lord Yarborough. Jackson went on to publish a whole series of school-books by the Revd. Thomas Espin of Louth, several works of local history (some illustrated with engravings), hymnals and devotional texts, and a travel book written anonymously by his wife Anne. Provincial publication did not necessarily mean, as it often would later in the century, a pamphlet format and a short print-run; several of these volumes were over 200 pages in length and, according to Goulding's report of the publisher's ledger, print-runs could get as high as two-thousand copies, though typically much smaller.[13]

[13] Information in this paragraph is from Goulding's "Printers and Booksellers" and "Books and Pamphlets."



POEMS,

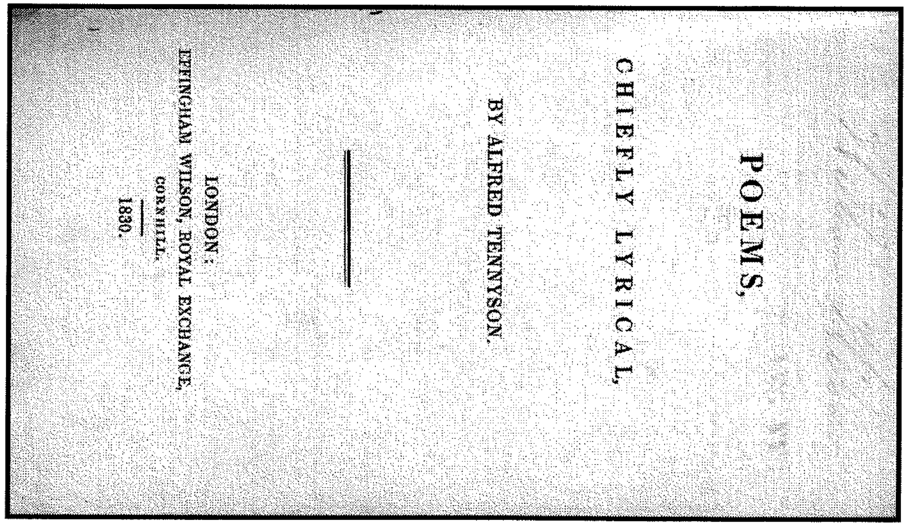
BY TWO BROTHERS.

"HAEC NOS NOVIMUS ESSE NIHIL."—*Martial.*

LONDON;

PRINTED FOR W. SIMPKIN AND R. MARSHALL,
STATIONERS'-HALL-COURT;
AND J. AND J. JACKSON, LOUTH.

MDCCCXXVII.



POEMS,

CHIEFLY LYRICAL,

BY ALFRED TENNYSON.

LONDON:

EFFINGHAM WILSON, ROYAL EXCHANGE,
CORNHILL.

1830.

Original poetry played a significant and distinctive part in the Louth book culture. The poet laureate from 1790 to 1813, Henry Pye, had Louth connections, and much of the local poetry, when it was not devotional, remained, like Pye's, neoclassical in its models. The Byronism of the Tennyson brothers' *Poems by Two Brothers* is quite untypical, though their deference to classical allusion is not. One can make a distinction between more ephemeral single-sheet broadside verse and higher-status publication in book form. One of the best local poets, for instance, was the churchwarden and silversmith, William Wrangham, who never published most of his poetry, modestly leaving it in manuscript. When Wrangham did publish, it was in broadside rather than volume form; his poem *The Christmas Bells*, printed by Jackson as a broadside, gives us our only portrait of Jackson himself, at one of the weekly meetings of the Louth Anacreontic Society at the Fleece Inn, "leaning in his elbow chair" and sending "forth a whiff of best Virginia."[14] Less bashful local poets included G.A. Neville, veterinary surgeon of Kelstern near Louth, whose satiric ode, *Sir Roger Mac-Gull,* set in the "Lincoln middle wolds," was published by Hurton of Louth in 1818, and Mrs. Hennett, whose *Miscellaneous Poems* were printed at the author's expense by Plant of Spilsby in 1820. Mrs. Hennett's poem "Reflection V: Advantages of the Climate We Inhabit" illustrates the pious natural theologizing of the time, and also a rather defensive local self-consciousness:

> Though our sun does not shine, in perpetual blaze,
> And the cold, sometimes nips us in summer's full prime;
> Yet in this our Creator, his wisdom displays,
> Who sends us both sunshine, and rain in its time. (Hennett 39)

Mrs. Hennett's book presented itself as educational, "for the Instruction and Entertainment of Youth," and it is one of very few mid-Lincolnshire publications by women.[15] For young male writers trained in the classical mode, book-publication could represent a kind of cultural coming-of-age within the clerical-gentry culture. An

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[14] Other single-sheet Louth poems include the anonymous *The Passing Bell*; Calthrop, *On the Climbing of Louth Steeple*; and two prize-poems printed on the handbill for the 1821 speech day for Burnaby's Westgate School.

[15] See Anna Webster, "the blind Poet of Grimsby," two of whose poems, "Ode to Genius" and "Invocation to the Freemen of Grimsby," were privately printed by a political patron, ca. 1826 (cf. A.N.L. Munby, *Phillipps Studies* II: 64; Eric Holzenberg, *The Middle Hill Press*, 506); see also the note by Goulding on *A Plea for the Gipsies* (Louth: Squire, n.d.), in verse, by "Miss Langhorne of whom I know nothing except that she was a Louth resident" (Goulding, "Books and Pamphlets").

interesting example is the volume *School Hours,* a collection of prize exercises by Louth schoolboys, some on local topics, edited by the Revd. Andrew Burnaby and printed by Jackson in 1823; indeed, Christopher Sturman suggested that the Burnaby collection may have been one stimulus for the Tennysons to publish their *Poems by Two Brothers* (Sturman, "Burnaby" 67). One item in *School Hours* is of special Tennysonian interest: a contemporary account of a visit to the coast at Sutton written in Latin prose, for which Sturman conveniently provides a translation (*School Hours* 96-99; Sturman, "Burnaby" 69-70).

On the whole, though, the very poetic conventionality of Burnaby's pupils underscores the much greater promise of the Tennyson boys. For instance, Burnaby includes a long piece, "Belshazzar's Feast," some 270 lines of heroic couplets, by Henry Calthrop of Butterwick, who was fourteen when he declaimed in Louth Guildhall:

> Where the dread monarch's palaces arise,
> And burnish'd columns meet the dazzled eyes;
> There Luxury, the siren, lurks around . . . .
> Ill-fated Babylon! within thy plains
> No trace of all thy ruin'd pomp remains;
> Thy columns vanish, and thy domes decay,
> And all thy fading trophies pass away.
>
> (*School Hours* 17, 23-24)

The young Tennyson treats the same subject more briefly, Byronically, and violently, in his poem "Babylon," from *Poems by Two Brothers:*

> Your proud domes of cedar on earth shall be thrown,
> And the rank grass shall wave o'er the lonely hearthstone;
> And your sons and your sires and your daughters shall bleed
> By the barbarous hands of the murdering Mede.
>
> I will sweep ye away in destruction and death,
> As the whirlwind that scatters the chaff with its breath;
> And the fanes of your gods shall be sprinkled with gore,
> And the course of your stream shall be heard of no more.

(*Poems* I: 156-57, ll. 29-40; cf. Paden, *Tennyson in Egypt* 29, 126)

Neither Calthrop nor Tennyson can resist ending with the desolate landscape from the thirteenth chapter of Isaiah, but Calthrop's couplets—

> The forest satyrs shall thy wastes invade,
> The boding owl shall seek thy desert shade; . . .
> The lion only shall thy realms obey,
> He through the desert shall demand his prey—(p. 24)

seem wordy and barely-competent beside Tennyson's version:

> There the wandering Arab shall ne'er pitch his tent,
> But the beasts of the desert shall wail and lament;
> In their desolate houses the dragons shall lie,
> And the satyrs shall dance, and the bittern shall cry!
>
> (p. 157, ll. 41-44)

The more philosophical verses in *School Hours* also show up Tennyson to advantage. The evanescence of youth and the chance of youthful death are themes common to both volumes. Richard Paddison treats both themes in the opening poem, his "Hymn to Providence:"

> Shall I another Spring behold,
> The Summer or the Autumn see?
> Or, ere the sun his course hath told,
> Be snatch'd into eternity? (*School Hours* 4)

Paddison was fourteen when he wrote that, and one is relieved to find that he was to survive for sixty further springs, becoming a prolific leader in local political reform (Goulding, "Louth Grammar School Boys"). Tennyson shares Paddison's rather morbid preoccupation with death, but the stylistic difference in his poetry is huge:

> I wander in darkness and sorrow,
> Unfriended, and cold, and alone,
> As dismally gurgles beside me
> The bleak river's desolate moan . . . .
> Oh! when shall I rest in the tomb,
> Wrapt about with the chill winding sheet?

For the roar of the wind is around me,
The leaves of the year at my feet.
(*Poems* I: 104, ll. 1-4, 13-16)

The Burnaby volume, *School Hours,* shows the presence of certain Tennysonian themes in the Louth book-culture of the twenties, but although it might seem at first glance the perfect intertext for *Poems by Two Brothers,* it only makes one the more aware of the Tennyson brothers' extraordinary early gifts.

Perhaps a better direct comparison, because more mature, is another Lincolnshire poet of the 1820s, Thomas Smith of Gainsborough, whose *Horae Poeticae... Verses Original and Translated* seems to have been printed locally in 1827, although (as with Burnaby's volume and *Poems by Two Brothers*) the London wholesaler Simpkin, Marshall is named as publisher on the title-page (cf. Raven 331). Smith's translations from Horace, Virgil, and Anacreon confirm the typicality of the Tennyson brothers' classical interests. His poem on the churchyard of his native village, if it hardly rivals the style of *In Memoriam,* shows a further and more interesting local parallel to some of Tennyson's graveyard preoccupations:

The dead remind the living they must die...
What, from the stroke of death, can mortals save,
Or stay their progress to the silent grave!
...man, whatever he may choose to own,
The creature is of circumstance alone. (Smith 2, 3)

Smith's Latin verse and translation, "On the Charm of Our Native Soil," even anticipates something of that sense of cultural dislocation which accompanied Tennyson's own departure from the circle of the Somersby hills:

His native soil to ev'ry mortal yields
Delights surpassing human speech to tell;
Man never can forget his native fields,
Whate'er his state, where'er his lot to dwell. (Smith 87)

Smith's poem exhibits, too, that ambivalent defensiveness about the Lincolnshire-London, provincial-metropolitan antithesis which would haunt Tennyson's *In Memoriam*:

What better sure than Rome, can aught be said?
What worse than piercing Scythian cold, declare?
Hither, however, from that city fled
A savage, panting for his native air. (Smith 87)

Both the Burnaby volume and Smith's *Horae Poeticae* illustrate a conventional but well-established poetic discourse in the Lincolnshire clerical-gentry culture of Tennyson's youth. The book-publication of locally-authored poetry was not an everyday, or even an every-year, occurrence in the Louth of the 1820s, but enough of it survives to show poetry-writing and publication as a recognized sign of cultural ambition and achievement. Tennyson was raised and rooted in this Lincolnshire book-culture, and within it in 1827 his poems first found their way into print. These Lincolnshire libraries, booksellers, and printing shops gave Tennyson an idea of the book that remained part of his mental make-up for the rest of his life.

But in the years following that first book, he would have to confront a quite different book culture. Tennyson scholars have naturally tended to stress the aesthetic and psychological elements in his poetic development, but a major factor, at least in the 1830s and 1840s, was the difficulty he had in coming to terms with the rapidly-changing publishing world in London. In 1828, Thomas Carlyle had described this metropolitan publishing transformation as well under way; "literature," Carlyle warned, "has its Paternoster-Row mechanism, its Trade-dinners, its Editorial conclaves, and huge subterranean, puffing, bellows; so that books are not only printed, but, in a great measure, written, and sold, by machinery" (Carlyle II: 102). Tennyson's reaction to the change Carlyle describes was colored and formed by his previous experience in Lincolnshire. Tennyson was unlucky in his first choice of London publisher, Effingham Wilson, who produced *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* (1830), both because Wilson's political radicalism attracted hostile reviews and because Wilson was an unsentimental businessman who enforced his own tough interpretation of Tennyson's half-profits contract (26).[16] But Tennyson's second London publisher, Edward Moxon, proved much more sympathetic. Moxon was not only more prestigious, as the publisher of Southey, Wordsworth, Rogers,

[16] On Wilson's political connections, see Paden, "Tennyson and the Reviewers" (15-39), and Shannon (21-26). In 1833, Wilson apparently claimed Tennyson owed him £11 for the loss on *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* (see *Letters* I: 44 and n1; *Letters of Arthur Henry Hallam* 721; Hagen 15; and cf. Hallam's comment "Effingham of course I shun" in *Letters of AHH* 380).

and Lamb, but much safer politically (Merriam; Hagen chs. 2 and 3; Ostrom). This stable of respectable names, a very profitable illustrated edition of Rogers, and non-literary money-spinners like Haydn's *Dictionary of Dates* allowed Moxon to treat Tennyson with extraordinary leniency, especially in the matter of continuing textual revision; it is chastening for Tennysonians to realize that Moxon's kindness to Tennyson was in part paid for by the exploitation of underpaid literary hacks like Haydn, who died in penury (Myers, "Writing for the Booksellers"). But there may also have been a cultural as well as a financial element to Tennyson's easy relationship with Moxon. Like Tennyson, Moxon was a north-countryman, from Wakefield, who had served his initial apprenticeship to a local Wakefield bookseller and printer (Merriam 5). Following the rather old-fashioned provincial model, Moxon developed his publishing list as a second string to a retail bookshop, and he kept the bookshop going even after the publishing side was well established; throughout his life, Tennyson would use his publishers as suppliers of his own book needs. Moxon was himself a published poet, with two volumes of autobiographical poems to his credit, *The Prospect* (1826) and *Christmas* (1829), though he published no further books except a thin volume of sonnets as a kind of poetic visiting-card for his firm. Among Tennyson's publishers, it is notable that, after Moxon, Tennyson was most comfortable with Macmillan, who had begun his business career with a Cambridge bookshop, before adding a publishing line. It was perhaps these personal and cultural affinities that kept Tennyson with Moxon's so long: it would be twenty years before Tennyson made a living from poetry, and he stayed with Moxon's firm for thirty-seven years in all, hardly the most tough-minded of economic choices on either side.

Some revealing lines first published by Christopher Ricks in 1969 illustrate Tennyson's rather traumatized personal response to the early Victorian publishing transformation (Ricks, "Tennyson Manuscripts" 920). Ricks dates the lines from the mid-1840s, but they sum up much of Tennyson's attitude during the previous decade also:

> Wherefore, in these dark ages of the Press
> . . . should I,
> Sane mind and body, wish to print my rhyme,
> Fame's millionth heir-apparent? Why desire

> . . . the public thumb
> Of our good pamphlet-pampered age to fret
> And sweat upon mine honest thoughts in type
> . . . I today
> Lord of myself and of my ways, the next
> A popular property,...
> Shot like a racketball from mouth to mouth
> And bandied in the barren lips of fools.
>
> (*Poems* II: 153, ll. 1, 2-4, 6-8, 9-11, 12-13)

Read in terms of the Lincolnshire book-culture of Tennyson's youth, what is striking in these lines is the close link between poetry and social rank ("Lord of myself," "heir-apparent"), as well as Tennyson's fear that publication puts this inherited cultural independence at risk.

Tennyson sees the threat in part as a gender issue, a matter of his own "half woman-natured" poetry needing to meet the masculine demands of the Victorian literary market-place: he writes that "I must triple-man myself," lest "the scandal of my leanness turn / To bywords with the market and the muse" (ll. 17-18, 47-48). But it was not just fear of hostile criticism that was unmanning him. It was also the very ephemerality that the Victorian publishing revolution had brought even to book-publication. This was a fear that touched Tennyson's greatest poetry, as in the seventy-seventh canto of *In Memoriam*:

> What hope is here for modern rhyme
> To him who turns a musing eye
> On songs and deeds and lives that lie
> Foreshortened in the tract of time?
>
> These mortal lullabies of pain
> May bind a book, may line a box,
> May serve to curl a maiden's locks;
> Or, when a thousand moons shall wane
>
> A man upon a stall may find,

And passing, turn the page that tells
A grief, then changed to something else,
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.
(*Poems* II: 390; canto 77, ll. 1-12)

At this stage of *In Memoriam,* of course, Tennyson asserts the primacy of the poet's individual expression over the fate of his published poem, the primacy of Muse over market: "to breathe my loss is more than fame" (canto 77, line 15). But as so often in Tennyson's writing, what is being denied or rebutted is imagined in more specific detail than what is to displace it.

It is significant also that in these lines from the Trinity manuscripts, Tennyson fixes his disdain on a matter of publication format (the "pamphlet-pampered age"). Tennyson was to publish at one time or another in most of the new print formats of the period, from literary annuals and illustrated magazines to daily newspapers.[17] His involvement with these formats charts out, decade by decade, the social groups with which he was connected: a kind of semi-aristocratic, silver-fork poetry in the annuals of the early thirties; earnest political didacticism in the newspaper poems of the forties and fifties; a new genre-poetry in the illustrated magazines of the sixties; and a renewed bid for cultural centrality in such late-Victorian intellectual monthlies as the *Contemporary* and the *Nineteenth Century.*[18] Moreover, many of Tennyson's contemporaries would first have encountered his works through the extensive excerpts in Victorian reviews or other periodical reprintings, which appropriated Tennyson texts for quite unanticipated readerships—as when W.J. Linton republished one of Tennyson's fashionable annual pieces in his Chartist weekly *The National* (Armbrust). Rather as scholars of Victorian fiction have long argued on behalf of the novelists publishing in part-issue or serial fiction, one might argue that these more time-bound, even ephemeral, publication-forms materialize for us Tennyson's creative relation to his audiences and his age.

But that generally-plausible argument does not account for the paradox of the little green Tennysons and for Tennyson's own extraordinarily successful resistance to

[17] The only listing remains Thomas J. Wise, *A Bibliography of the Writings of Alfred, Lord Tennyson* (I: 301-63), which makes no distinction between printings Tennyson initiated, authorized reprintings, and unauthorized reprintings (and is certainly incomplete in coverage of the third category).
[18] On Tennyson's engagement with periodicals and periodical editors, cf. Ledbetter, "Protesting Success," and her recent book *Tennyson and Victorian Periodicals.*

successive new print-formats and new publication strategies over the course of sixty years. Even if we leave aside periodical publication, the context for book publication was also undergoing dramatic change. As Erickson argues, even in the 1830s, new poetry in book form was increasingly marginal to the publishing enterprise. By the 1860s and 1870s, first-form publication, the publication on which Tennyson himself and almost all Tennyson scholars have focused, was increasingly irrelevant to the economics of the Victorian publishing enterprise. Traditional publishing history, older histories of individual publishing houses, and publishers' own memoirs often repress the extent to which financial success rested—not on new titles that had still to attract attention, but—on the reprinting and repackaging of older ones for which there was an assured readership and market.

This, I think, lies at the root of Tennyson's conflicts with successive publishers from the mid-1860s on. In 1865, while still with Moxon, Tennyson had been prepared to allow a controlled experiment in slightly cheaper republication, the People's Edition, a selection issued as eight 32-page octavo parts at sixpence a part (*Letters* II: 382 and n2; Wise I: 179; cf. Charles Tennyson 352; Dyson and Tennyson 81). Bertrand Payne, the Moxon manager who ran the firm after Moxon's death, had projected sales from the edition of 50,000 copies, with a profit to Tennyson of £10,000 (*Letters* II: 383); in the event, it earned Tennyson £2200 in 1865 and £3500 in 1866 (Hagen 114). Significantly, Tennyson quarreled with Payne over format, having been "persuaded, against his will, to issue the volume in a more ornamental style than his severe taste generally admitted" (Charles Tennyson 352; Hagen 114). He was at best ambivalent about two projects that Payne pressed on him for high-prestige illustrated editions, of *Enoch Arden* by Arthur Hughes and of the first four *Idylls* by Gustave Doré (*Letters* II: 456-57, 489). He vetoed Payne's plans to publish the first regular collected edition (*Letters* II: 481 and note). He quarreled with Payne, too, over bookkeeping, fees for third-party reprints, and what he viewed as tasteless advertising; and both Payne and Moxon's widow in turn regarded him as grasping (*Letters* II: 458-59, 467, 486, 506-14, 516-17). After the break, Tennyson would mock the social pretensions of "the so-called Captain Bertrand Payne" (*Letters* II: 523). Though lacking evidence, Tennyson suspected Payne's involvement in Alfred Austin's critical attack in *Temple Bar*; in the pirated publication in England of some

poems that had never been formally published; and in Harper's decision to produce American editions, thereby poaching on the property Tennyson wanted preserved for Ticknor and Fields (*Letters* II: 523-25, 533-35, 539 note). The mismatch between Tennyson's and Payne's idea of the author-publisher relationship emerges neatly in his complaint when Payne cut off his daily newspaper subscription to the *Times*, for which Moxon had always paid (*Letters* II: 514).

After Tennyson left the Moxon firm for a five-year agreement with Alexander Strahan, beginning in January 1869, Tennyson's contract allowed him to remain oblivious to just what kind of edition was producing the annual lump-sum of £4300 that Strahan had agreed to pay for the right to reprint older volumes. Strahan was not only reprinting, as Tennyson insisted, the individual volumes in their original format, but also initiated a ten-volume Miniature Edition, from 1870, and a six-volume Imperial Library Edition from 1872 (Wise II: 28, 30). Within four months of moving to Strahan, Tennyson was already bristling at his handling of prepublication proofs (*Letters* II: 521), and within a year reported to J.T. Knowles, "I have written somewhat sharply to Strahan. I am so weary of publishers" (*Letters* II: 539).

The disjunction between Tennyson's focus on first-form publication, where he controlled format, and his publishers' much greater concern with repackaging previously-published material, soured his relations with both the publishers who followed after Strahan, Henry S. King and his partner and successor, Charles Kegan Paul. Tennyson wrote into the Kegan Paul agreement a specific prohibition against very cheap reprints (Hagen 188-93, esp. proviso 9). However, a glance at Kegan Paul's 1880 catalogue tells the story only too clearly; by then, Tennyson's works were available in seven different collected editions, from the Imperial Library Edition at 12s. 6d. per volume in Roxburghe half-morocco, through the Author's, Guinea, Royal, Crown, and Shilling Editions, to the Cabinet Edition, most of them available in various plain and gift bindings. The catalogue offered also *Selections from Tennyson*, *Songs from Tennyson*, *Tennyson for the Young*, and the *Tennyson Birthday Book*.[19] And that leaves out Paul's pioneering Parchment Library series, a kind of fine-printing edition for bibliophiles foreshadowing the

[19] Four-page undated catalogue, signed as integral gathering G, at end of Tennyson, *The Lover's Tale* (London: Kegan Paul, 1879), and cf. the 1880 advertisement reproduced in Howsam, "Kegan Paul" (242).

Morrisian Arts and Crafts movement that Paul initiated with editions of *In Memoriam* and *The Princess* (Howsam, *Kegan Paul* 112-17). The *Publisher's Circular* reported in 1881, perhaps rather optimistically, that "in the varied editions . . . the purses of all sections of Her Majesty's subjects are considered and consulted" (quoted in Howsam, *Kegan Paul* 84). Few of these Kegan Paul reprint editions get into Wise's Tennyson bibliography and, of course, they play no role in the normal biographical accounts of Tennyson's book-by-book career. Print runs could be enormous: the Kegan Paul archives record a single 1882 print-order for the one-volume Crown Edition of 17,500 copies, and Hagen calculated total sales for that edition alone of over 100,000 copies in the first five years (Archives B2, Reel 5, 268; Hagen 150). All too soon, once the basic twenty-eight year period was up, Victorian copyright laws allowed even cheaper reprints, like the little red-bound volumes Richard Edward King issued with variant title-pages as advertising gifts for distribution by Boots Pure Drug Company and Lever Brothers (Scott, "Reply" 341). The original, individual, small-octavo format that Tennyson insisted on for new titles as well as for reprints was increasingly a publishing anachronism.

Such conflicts between author and publisher over format and publishing strategy are certainly not unique. They might be summarized as the divergence between Tennyson's bibliographical conservatism and his later publishers' agile entrepreneurialism. But Tennyson, along with his wife, was simultaneously very alert to the detailed accounts his publishers provided and to the financial yield of the various collected editions, American and colonial rights, fees for reprintings in anthologies, and so on. Clearly, he held in tension with this new publishing world an older, deeper, long-treasured idea of the book, insisting not just on a continuity of poetic style, of the idea of a poem, but also on a continuity of material format.

One perspective on this divergence occurs in a poem Tennyson wrote in 1883 for the William Caxton quincentenary. The standard, stereotyped thought for the occasion would surely have been that Caxton's printing-press made possible intellectual Renaissance, religious Reformation, and political freedom. The poem was to be incorporated in a commemorative stained glass window in Westminster Abbey, and Canon Farrar had suggested to Tennyson that the epitaph take for its theme Caxton's motto, *Fiat Lux*. Tennyson could not bring himself to view even Caxton's printing-press so positively:

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II.—**Poems.**
III.—**Poems.**
IV.—**The Coming of Arthur; Geraint and Enid; Merlin and Vivian.**
V.—**Lancelot and Elaine; The Holy Grail; Pelleas and Ettarre.**
VI.—**Guinevere; Passing of Arthur; Gareth and Lynette; The Last Tournament.**
VII.—**In Memoriam.**
VIII.—**The Princess.**
IX.—**Maud,** and other Poems.
X.—**Enoch Arden.**
XI.—**Queen Mary.**
XII.—**Harold.**

London: C. KEGAN PAUL & CO., 1 Paternoster Square.

Thy prayer was "Light—more Light—while Time shall last!"
Thou sawest a glory growing on the night,
But not the shadows which that light would cast,
Till shadows vanish in the Light of Light.
(*Poems* III: 105, ll. 1-4)

In referring to the shadows cast by Caxton's innovation, Tennyson was surely thinking—not of Caxton's press at the Red Pale in Westminster yard, or even Jackson's old-fashioned printing shop in Louth marketplace—but of the Victorian print-revolution. One irony is, that it was the same Victorian print-revolution, the democratizing of print, which had made possible Tennyson's own cultural status and centrality.

There's a second irony, too. In clinging to the format for poetry with which he had grown up in Lincolnshire and by resisting the chameleon-like possibilities of the Victorian print-revolution, Tennyson established for Victorian readers his own idea of the book, a set of bibliographical codes for poetry that would influence the next generation of poetry publication, from Elkin Matthews to John Lane's Bodley Head. Moreover, Tennyson's extraordinary fixity, even stubbornness, about his poetry's physical format set a framework for audience response that paradoxically allowed him considerable generic freedom between each new set of small octavo, green-cloth boards. The curious conservatism of Tennyson's publishing formats may stand as the concrete symbol of what he also achieved for poetry as a genre—the creation in an age of swift and almost overwhelming change of a viable dialogue between the present and the past. In terms of book-history, as well as of the poetic tradition, it was a past he had first experienced in the provincial book-culture of pre-Victorian Lincolnshire.

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T.W. Wallis, Louth Marketplace, with Jackson's shop, lithograph, ca. 1848.

Tennyson's False Women: Vivien, Guinevere, and the Challenge to Victorian Domestic Ideology

Ingrid Ranum

Writing in 1859, the year Tennyson published *The True and the False: Four Idylls of the King*, Samuel Smiles emphasized the importance of domestic life. The influence of the home, he claimed, has a profound effect upon the order of the broader world:

> The Home is the crystal of society—the very nucleus of national character; and from that source, be it pure or tainted, issue the habits, principles and maxims, which govern public as well as private life. The nation comes from the nursery; public opinion itself is for the most part the outgrowth of the home. (Smiles 341)

With the home and the nursery situated firmly within the sphere of female domesticity, Smiles's view of social order necessarily assigned women substantial public power, albeit exercised from within the private arena of home-life. This conception of the relationship between private and public life depends upon the woman and her home, and whether she is herself "pure or tainted."[1]

In *The True and the False*, Tennyson sketches four characters that enact Victorian cultural anxieties about domestic ideology. Enid and Elaine provide what Victorian critic Henry Elsdale called the *Idylls*' "fair feminine ideal forms" (54)—that is, women who live up to the expectations of domesticity or die trying to do so. Even for them the power of domestic influence is a mixed blessing, at best. William Fredeman points out that

[1] In nineteenth-century domestic ideology, the home was, as Smiles puts it, the "crystal of the world," but also the site and the structure in which the potentially corruptible feminine was either contained or protected. Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall argue that "Woman's virtuosity lay in her containment, like the plant in the pot, limited and domesticated, sexually controlled, not spilling out into spheres in which she did not belong nor being overpowered by 'weeds' of social disorder" (191-92). In this conception, the good home must be proof against invasive social disorder that can infest the home and disrupt the purity (sexual and otherwise) of the woman at the center of the domestic sphere. But the home and wife/mother–through their influence on men and children–also exerted influence on the public sphere. Tennyson's use of the title *The True and the False* aligns with Smiles's reference to the "pure or tainted" home, pointing out the corrupting potential of women who, sexually or in other ways, fail to live up to the domestic ideal.

Tennyson's corpus does include some unambiguous visions of ideal homely life, but that these are rare: "Tennyson does not often resort to such unqualified representations of the domestic vision. More normal are those situations in which the ideal is corrupted by the loss of love or friendship" (373). But if Enid and Elaine, Tennyson's "true" women, perform domesticity to the best of their ability and find the ideal corrupted, then his "false" women encounter domesticity with disastrous results. Vivien and Guinevere reveal the dangers courted by any society that is founded upon domestic ideology. They are the nightmare aspect of the *Idylls*' dream: women who cannot or will not fill the role of angel in the house; women who, because of the symbolic power of the home in this concept of social order, are capable not just of disrupting their own families and communities, but of toppling the state.

Despite its medieval setting, the *Idylls* undoubtedly promotes Victorian domestic values. This Camelot is an idyllic haven from the immoral, uncivil wastelands outside its borders, and Tennyson's Arthur, the domestic king, is explicitly titled "ideal" ("To the Queen," Tennyson, line 38).[2] However, the catastrophes and failures in the text are also linked to those values, and Vivien's and Guinevere's failures especially so. Their tragedies are not merely that they are bad, or weak, or selfish, but that they have such flaws in a society that depends upon their flawlessness. This domestic vulnerability, one of many faults in the Camelot of medieval tradition,[3] becomes central to Tennyson's Arthuriana. In her study linking Tennyson's Vivien and Guinevere to the heroines of Victorian sensation novels, Agnieszka Setecka convincingly argues that Tennyson's departures from his source material (primarily Malory) give both Guinevere and Vivien more power and therefore more blame than either character earns in Malory's versions of their stories (164). Gerhard Joseph makes an interesting psychoanalytical argument about the importance of female Arthurian characters to the male psyche and male characters'

[2] All references to *The Idylls of the King* refer to *The Poems of Tennyson* (ed. Ricks, 1987), with subsequent references cited by abbreviated title and line numbers.

[3] While Arthur's domestic situation is clearly a cause of Arthur's and Camelot's falls in Malory's text, neither Arthur nor Malory's narrator consistently blames Guinevere. At the end of the section "Lancelot and Guinevere," the narrator announces that he will "go unto the morte Arthur, and that caused sir Aggravayne" (Malory 669). Arthur, far from laying all of the blame on his queen, laments, "Ah, Agravain, Agravain, . . . Jesu forgive it thy soul, for thy evil will that thou hadst and Sir Mordred thy brother, unto Sir Lancelot, hath caused all this sorrow" (674). Without excusing Guinevere's adultery, Malory and his Arthur point at the failure of male homosocial bonds as key to Camelot's decay.

ability to wield the "phallic sword" (1990; 64-68). Joseph argues that in the *Idylls*, woman's "influence for good or ill over the Tennysonian sword is total," and that when, like Guinevere, "she refuses to remain the untouchable object into which man tries to crystallize her, she becomes the Tennysonian fatal woman who precipitates the fall of entire civilizations" (67-68). Joseph is right to put the burden of failure not on the woman, but on the expectations that define and limit what would constitute success for her. However, as Enid and Elaine's experiences show, passive object status is not necessarily the eminent position toward which women in the *Idylls* are made to strive. Linda Hughes demonstrates women's place in Arthur's ideology more directly when she claims that Tennyson's 1859 *Idylls* "insist that women are essential in the *workings* of the realm, that women must be inscribed in the idea of Camelot" (45). Women's roles can be seen as active, as work, although the actions that are sanctioned for women are closely circumscribed by the limitations of domestic femininity. Guinevere and Vivien, then, contribute to the destruction of Camelot not by choosing to be subjects rather than objects, but by proving themselves to be problematic subjects, at odds with the fundamental expectations of their society.

In his designations of female characters as either "true" or "false," Tennyson makes it easy to simplify the complex and sometimes contradictory messages in the *Idylls*. Stephen Ahern is no doubt correct when he claims that "the women of the *Idylls* embody aspects of morality in a quintessentially Victorian construction of woman as a symbolic repository of social values" (89). As a domestic text, the *Idylls* presumes domestic gender types. However, Ahern also dredges up the oft-invoked "madonna" and "whore" as types in a "spectrum of ethical capacity" into which all of the female characters neatly fit, explicitly linking Enid to the former and Vivien to the latter (88-89). Tennyson, however, despite the pat designations of "true" and "false," crafts female characters who, while explicitly endorsed or condemned, contribute to an underlying complexity within the text's view of domestic ideology. Vivien and Guinevere are not less ambiguous than Tennyson's "true" women. They are both clearly fallen and dangerous to the social order, but also motivated by their circumstances, explained in a way that encourages understanding and, in Guinevere's case, perhaps sympathy.

Tennyson's Vivien made an infamous entry into the *Idylls*. As Nimuë, she invoked a response that caused Tennyson to withdraw a planned two-idyll set (*Enid and Nimuë: The True and the False*), and in her final form, she is probably the most malign character in the *Idylls*, a clear and present danger to all of Arthur's visionary goals. In the text of her idyll, Tennyson dehumanizes her, closely associating her with snake imagery (as he does Ettarre, a similarly manipulative figure). In Tennyson's version of the fall of man, Vivien is not even allowed to play Eve, the antetype of seductive bad girls. Rather, she becomes the serpent in Arthur's garden. The visual image created by Tennyson's physical description of her seduction of Merlin is more serpentine than human. The text reports that she is dressed in palm-green samite, with a "twist of gold" wound "round her hair" (MV 219-23). Her actions reinforce the evocatively reptilian dress:

> There she lay all her length and kissed his feet,
> .....
> And lissome Vivien, holding by his heel,
> Writhed toward him, slided up his knee and sat,
> Behind his ankle twined her hollow feet
> Together, curved an arm about his neck,
> Clung like a snake. (217, 236-240)

Even without the explanatory last line, the image is not one that could easily be mistaken.

More than her physical behavior links Vivien to the serpent in paradise. She is also the malignant but persuasive temptress who causes Merlin to provide the means for his own defeat. According to J.M. Gray, "The Biblical allusions in *Merlin and Vivien* serve to show how dangerous an adversary Vivien is; no devil is more adept at perverting scripture for her own ends" (53). That Tennyson intended Vivien to be understood as an extreme and even evil character seems clear, since he departs radically from Malory's version of this encounter.[4] In Malory's version of the story, the woman character is a victim in her struggle with Merlin. She finally uses his spell against him only to escape the advances of a sexually aggressive older man, who happens to be half-demon into the bargain (77). Tennyson's Vivien, on the other hand, purposely pursues Merlin, sexually

[4] David Staines proposes that Tennyson based his Vivien at least in part on "the section of the medieval French *Romance of Merlin* which Southey translated in the introduction to his 1817 Malory" (27). He admits, though, that "even this account pales by contrast with Tennyson's Vivien, a fundamentally original creation."

and geographically. When Vivien fails to seduce Arthur, she turns her interest elsewhere: "She set herself to gain / Him, the most famous man of all those times, / Merlin" (163-65). When Merlin, in a fit of melancholy, leaves Camelot and travels to Breton, she follows him. She undertakes this effort not out of any real passion or interest in Merlin, but out of self-interest, for "once he had told her of a charm" (213) of great power which she wishes to use against him. And that desire for a specific power is really only a step toward Vivien's own self-aggrandizement. In her personal quest for power, states the narrator, "Vivien ever sought to work the charm . . . fancying that her glory would be great / According to his greatness whom she quench'd" (215-16).

Vivien's mastery of Merlin in the seduction has been viewed as one of Tennyson's less compelling scenes. Thomas Hoberg is one of the passage's most vehement critics, claiming, "The scene is a dramatic fiasco. Even by Victorian standards, Vivien is an unconvincing seductress; it is inconceivable that she could have beguiled the greenest of Arthur's knights, let alone his wisest and cleverest counselor" (18). In fact, though, Hoberg finds method in Tennyson's unconvincing craftsmanship. In the final version of the *Idylls*, Tennyson expands Vivien's role in the text. He introduces her earlier, as the catalyst for filial destruction in "Balin and Balan"; in shaping "Vivien" into "Merlin and Vivien," he adds a substantial introduction. Hoberg speculates that the power and depth that these additions lend to Vivien effectively prevent Tennyson from improving the seduction scene without giving her too much of the authority that she craves, and that the text must withhold from her. Hoberg is content to assume that Tennyson's *Idylls* could not have withstood a more convincingly characterized Vivien: "Tennyson here confronted a poetic dilemma which he could not resolve. On the one hand, his poetic intuition sensed her flimsiness if he left her half-formed; on the other, an even more fundamental instinct warned him of her potential unruliness if he allowed her to develop any further" (20-21). Vivien is designed as an agent of chaos, and the more effective she becomes at upending the Arthurian applecart, the more trouble the Arthurian world, and by extension the Victorian world, has in containing her destructive power. If she were an entirely convincing match for Merlin, she should be able to dismantle the Round Table, and yet ensnaring Merlin brings Vivien none of the glory that she expects. It is, in effect, her swan song; without further explanation, Vivien virtually vanishes from the text.

While Tennyson uses the values and expectations of domestic ideology to condemn Vivien, he employs the same cultural forces to explain her malevolent behavior. In the introduction that Hoberg found so powerful, Vivien recounts the horror of her own childhood domestic situation:

> My father died in battle against the King,
> My mother on his corpse in open field;
> She bore me there, for born from death was I
> Among the dead and sown upon the wind. (MV 42-45)

Vivien is fatherless, and more importantly, motherless. From infancy she was left at the mercy of King Mark's distinctly undomestic court. Therefore, given the domestic emphases on the roles of home and family in creating order and sensitivity, and considering the profound absence of those homely comforts from her childhood, Vivien might even be excused for her anti-social behavior. In crafting this history for Vivien, Tennyson appeals to prevalent cultural and literary explanations of fallenness, entering a conversation between writers and readers that Deborah Anna Logan describes in *Fallenness in Victorian Women's Writing: Marry, Stitch, Die, or Do Worse.* As Logan points out, "To the Victorian reading public, the primary significance of the absent mother concerns her inability to foster proper moral growth during her daughter's sexual rites of passage, a device employed by many writers to exonerate their fallen heroines" (8). That Tennyson uses this trope even to develop a villainess contributes a complexity to his characterization of Vivien and, by extension, her false and true sisters in the *Idylls*.

While Tennyson invents new material to explain Vivien's anti-social behavior, he rejects the recuperating role in which Malory casts Vivien after she leaves Merlin. Malory's Nynyve reappears in his version of the story of Pelleas and Ettarde, where she enchants both of them to reverse their passions, leaving Ettarde to die from sorrow. Pelleas, on the other hand, goes from loving Ettarde to loathing her, and moves ahead in life to a love affair with Nynyve (103-04). By omitting this incident from his source in crafting his own text, Tennyson takes an important step toward instigating the destruction of Camelot. He has created a more unified character that is also more clearly malevolent,[5]

[5] In doing so, Tennyson eliminates the complicated issue of Malory's Ladies of the Lake. In cases such as Nynyve's, these characters can be hopelessly inconsistent, to the point that it seems likely that each may have descended from more than one original source character. Tennyson condenses and re-divides them into two distinctly defined characters: the destructive Vivien, and the positive, if remote, Lady of the Lake, who authorizes Arthur's power.

thus eliminating the hopeful, familial ending of Pelleas's adventure. Instead of being at peace and in love, safely recuperated into the domestic order of the poem, Pelleas has antagonistic encounters with both Lancelot and Guinevere (PE 553-91). This foreshadows the ultimate exposure of their illicit love, later fragmenting the court in his reincarnation as the embittered and irreverent Red Knight.

Rebecca Umland sees Vivien's treachery as an interesting but ultimately unimportant menace to the Round Table's strictly imposed order (283):

> Certainly, Camelot is toppled by the sexual license of its members, and the blame is particularly directed at the women who deviate from the standard (a)sexual norm. But here a distinction should be made . . . between Vivien's *actual* contribution to the demise of Arthur's order and the *potential* threat she poses. (282)

Since we cannot know how Merlin might have helped in the later trials of the Round Table (he too is ensnared in the source material), this seems an odd bit of speculation. He might have had the power in his wizardry to mend the rifts that developed; it is impossible to know for sure. And Vivien's sins of omission count heavily against her. Her absence from "Pelleas and Ettarre" sets off a string of events which anyone unfamiliar with the story could easily miss, but which are important to this version of the fall of Camelot. The Red Knight's anti-Camelot is defeated by Arthur's young knights, but their campaign turns into a violent, unsanctioned rampage through which the newest members of the Round Table are said to have "slimed themselves" (LT 470). Although the alternate court is soon defeated, its very existence marks Camelot's turn toward armed insurrection, which action is soon pursued by Arthur's nephew Modred.

Vivien's problem, the personal failing that makes her a "false" woman, is her failure to live up to the expectations of Victorian domesticity, and Tennyson has shaped the character to avoid the parts of her analogue that would have fulfilled those expectations. She does not want, as Nynyve does, to rest in Pelleas's adoring love, to civilize him through their domestic bond. What Vivien wants is the kind of power that would be

unavailable to her if she attempted to work within the confines of domestic femininity, the kind of power that Merlin has, the kind of power that men have. Linda M. Shires imagines the conflict between Merlin and Vivien over access to Merlin's book to be more about gender than sex. "This crisis of control over the text is also a crisis of gender," she argues. "For power over the magical word, the charm of poetry and prophecy, is not only a battle of the sexes but also a conflict about self-consciousness enacted through sexual division and cultural constructions of gender difference" (63). Shires is correct in reading this scene as a struggle for power in a specifically gendered relationship. Merlin has the book, and laughs to think of "pretty Vivien" reading it (MV 665). The two openly contend for mastery of language. "Were I not a woman, I could tell a tale," Vivien declares; "But you are man, you well can understand / The shame that cannot be explained for shame" (694-96). There are some discourses—discourses of power and sexuality—that are not available to Victorian women, denied them by the conventions of separate spheres ideology. But despite conventions, Vivien tells her salacious stories about Sir Valence and Sir Sagramore, of Sir Percivale in the graveyard, of Lancelot and Guinevere and Arthur (702-87). She ends with a vile rant that leaves "not even Lancelot brave, nor Galahad clean" (798-803).[6] And when she learns Merlin's spell, she uses that, too, and leaves Merlin trapped in the hollow oak, "lost to life and use and name and fame" (968).

Vivien refuses the linguistic limits that society places on her use of language, just as she rejects its expectations of her desires and motivations. The speaker in the poem designates Vivien a "harlot" (970) and, while unflattering, the appellation may be fair in that she does deploy her sexuality as a means to attain other, non-sexual goals. Like Elaine, Vivien is willing to abandon chaste maidenhood; but unlike Elaine, Vivien is not motivated by any sexual or romantic desire for her partner. She can quote the minstrels who sing, "Man dreams of Fame while woman wakes to love" (458), but she belies the maxim. Vivien seduces with an eye toward fame, not love. She aims to gain "glory" proportionate to her conquest (215-16). Her refusal to accept the conventional bounds of

[6] James Eli Adams rates these unsanctioned utterances as keys to understanding the true conflict in the Idyll: "Vivien's crime is less a matter of seduction than of defamation....*Idylls of the King* is from the very outset structured not simply by contrasting models of female sexuality, but by networks of rumor, gossip, scandal, and slander, networks in which characters are constantly demanding 'proof' not only of individual fidelity but of the stories that characters tell about one another" (421-22).

gender leads to her depiction as dangerously unnatural. Judith Butler reminds us that "Intelligible genders are those which in some sense institute and maintain relations of coherence and continuity among sex, gender, sexual practice and desire" (17). As a "false" woman, Vivien defies cultural expectations of femininity in ways that render her unreadable as a gendered being. She becomes not just a transgressive "harlot," but an indecipherable human being, a serpent, a monster.

Unlike Vivien, Guinevere earns her label of "false" by being too human, as opposed to not human enough, and by wanting a touch of humanity in her mate. While Vivien is entirely malevolent, Guinevere is a deeply conflicted character. She does not live up to the expectations that Arthur and his court have for her, and this failure on her part leads to great destruction in her world. However, she does not purposely set out to do damage, as Vivien unquestionably does. As Gerhard Joseph perceives her situation, Guinevere is the object of intense idealization by "the blameless king" and his court: "the dark side of such idealization and total dependence will be the subsequent Arthurian 'blame' for a woman who is not quite up to sustaining his manhood, who refuses to accept . . . the 'more than mortal purity' such a king and then his equally idealizing knights demand of her" (1992; 183). Guinevere herself notes that the rift in her relationship with her husband is caused by her humanity colliding with his superhumanity. While his purity may make him the model of ideal kingship, it is obvious from Guinevere's response to him that she, at least, does not consider him to be a model husband. In discussing him with her lover, Lancelot, in "Lancelot and Elaine," she laughs scornfully and wonders, "Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless King, / That passionate perfection, my good lord— / But who can gaze upon the Sun in heaven?" (121-23). Arthur is the measure of all men in Camelot, placed on the throne through mystical machinations or pure providence, and Guinevere is his queen, the woman who perhaps should be, but ultimately cannot become, his feminine equal.

Guinevere's ironic indictment of "Arthur, the faultless king" pinpoints the nature of his rather profound fault. He has built a society that can crumble under the weight of one person's moral lapse, and he has no power to either control or persuade that person. Guinevere at times admits to something like admiration of Arthur. In jealous spite she tells Lancelot that for love of him she has wronged Arthur whom, she says, "ever in my

heart of hearts / I did acknowledge nobler" (LE 1201-04). Her general feeling, though, and the one that typically controls her actions, is one she utters when she and Lancelot are not engaged in a lover's tiff: "He is all fault who hath no fault at all: / For who loves me must have a touch of earth; / The low sun makes the colour" (132-34). She cannot love her husband. He exists as a "passionate perfection," not a passionate husband, and she is a passionate woman whose loyalty is lost by "A moral child without the craft to rule" (145).

Arthur's failure to provide passion and warmth to his wife may have had its root in a conflict over expectations about what domestic masculinity should be. According to John Tosh, one of the common bars to men's full incorporation into the warm and happy domestic world was the persistence of a "sharp division of gender attributes within the mid-Victorian family" (65). Tosh argues that "The character gap between the stern father and the loving mother made it extremely difficult for a growing boy to accommodate feelings of tenderness and affection in his masculine self-image." Displays of such tender emotions, therefore, "remained feminine traits which he might yearn after and sentimentalize but could not express in his own demeanor" (65-66). Although Arthur is the most domestic of men—a king who places immense importance on the civilizing influence of home, despite the fact that this domesticity runs counter to some traditional expectations of masculinity—he seems to have adopted a distanced and unaffectionate persona that prevents him from developing a satisfying, earthy, warm relationship with his own wife.

Before this, before the marriage that goes so disastrously wrong was even contracted, the reader is given an image of Guinevere, the delightful daughter. She is introduced even before Arthur, and we know immediately that while he felt an almost physical impact during their initial remote encounter, he made no impression on her at all. "She saw him not," the text reports, "or mark'd not, if she saw" (CA 53-57). Based upon his own regard, which is clearly unreturned, Arthur asks for Guinevere's hand and sets up his impossible expectations for her influence. Marion Shaw argues that in this way, the *Idylls* fits into a growing theme in Tennyson's poetry, which she sees as "a pattern of lovers meeting, usually with disastrous results, in which . . . the lady more and more performs an iconographic function in a drama of male power and need" (75-76). Arthur feels that

he needs Guinevere to establish his own power, and he persuades her father to sanction the match. It is clear, though, that when he hopes for "one life" and "one will" for the two of them (90-91), he has little concern for what she wants from her life, or what she would do with her will.

But Guinevere's will does matter, precisely because Arthur has ensured that it must. In making domesticity the governing principle of the land, and in making Guinevere something like the childless mother of his fledgling nation, Arthur burdens her with the ultimate pressure to conform. Arthur has tied his ability to "will [his] will" and "work [his] work" to his success in securing Guinevere as his queen (86-87). He has made Guinevere central to his civilizing project, without ever making himself central to her life. Helene Roberts argues, "Arthur has sanctioned the power of women in an egalitarian society. The ruinous moral climate centered on Guinevere is the result" (30).[7] However, it is difficult to argue that the kind of power Guinevere has in any way resembles equality. Rather, her power is the entitlement of a domestic icon and is forever compromised by her own desires, which are those both of and for a flesh-and-blood human being.

Of course, explanations of Guinevere's flaw do not make it any less destructive to her society. Umland, in her discussion of Vivien's position in the *Idylls*, turns to Guinevere as a comparative figure for the lissome seductress. While Vivien is clearly the more malign of the two women, she is not in a position to wreak as much havoc intentionally, as Guinevere does without trying: "It is finally the adulterous Guinevere, and not Vivien, who is *most* culpable for the moral corruption of the realm," Umland decides (282). In any of her possible contexts, Tennyson's Guinevere is dangerous and destructive. As a medieval queen, she proves faithless to her husband and her king, breaking multiple vows that are, in this patriarchal society, imagined as mirrors reflecting the relationship between individuals and God. As a Victorian woman and wife, she allows and even invites the violation of her home, compromising its function as a moral haven for her family.

In "Guinevere," after her marriage has horribly crumbled, and when the kingdom clearly appears to be following the same pathway to destruction, the queen finds herself

[7] Roberts asserts that this centering of women that proves so disastrous in the *Idylls* is part of Tennyson's response to the French Revolution, and that Tennyson's domesticity also reflects the continental influence of Prince Albert.

subject to a prattling novice, a gossipy girl with little sense and no diplomacy, although, in her defense, she does not know that the woman she is speaking to is Guinevere. The novice, in attempting to take Guinevere's mind off of her troubles, ironically lights on the topic of the greater troubles endured by those with greater power, while ascribing to the worst possible interpretation of the queen's history:

> "even here they talk at Almesbury
> About the good King and his wicked Queen,
> And were I such a King with such a Queen,
> Well might I wish to veil her wickedness,
> But were I such a King, it could not be."
> .....
> "Yea," said the maid, "this is all woman's grief,
> That *she* is a woman, whose disloyal life
> Hath wrought confusion in the Table Round
> Which good King Arthur founded, years ago,
> With signs and miracles and wonders, there
> At Camelot, ere the coming of the Queen.
> (G 206-10, 216-21)

Guinevere replaces Eve in the novice's understanding of the curse of all women. What's more, the novice understands the queen to be explicitly "wicked" rather than merely weak, or wrong, or insufficient. If Vivien is the serpent, Guinevere, in the novice's conception, is still the ultimate agent of Camelot's fall.

In this idyll, Tennyson provides his readers with a scene of Guinevere and Arthur reunited at the abbey, a scene which is notably original. Throughout their encounter, we are constantly reminded of what their moral and social relationships are by the fact that she lies prone and remains silent while he delivers his address. Antony H. Harrison finds this entire idyll "stridently antifeminist," and it is easy to see why he would read it this way (21). Arthur blames his queen for the ruin of his kingdom, that sparkling vision of how the world could be, and he makes this indictment abundantly clear to her: "Well it is that no child is born of thee. / The children born of thee are sword and fire, / Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws" (421-23). Arthur attacks Guinevere in exactly the terms that

he had enshrined her: as a domestic queen. Here she is figured as childless, but mother to the effects that result from her failure in her unsought and unenviable role.

Arthur continues with his diatribe, explaining why a "false" wife cannot be allowed to "abide and rule a house" (512). He has dispensed even with the actual problem of a kingdom now, and reverted to that essential domestic base: the inviolable family home and its dependence on a "true" woman. He describes the insidious danger of a "false" wife and her terrifying potential to pass for "true" if her husband does not reveal her perfidiousness:

> For being thro' his cowardice allow'd
> Her station, taken everywhere for pure,
> She like a new disease, unknown to men,
> Creeps, no precaution used, among the crowd,
> Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and saps
> The fealty of our friends, and stirs the pulse
> With devil's leaps, and poisons half the young. (513-19)

Arthur's metaphor is far from subtle. He likens his wife (supposing she were allowed to resume her prior life) to an infected prostitute, spreading a venereal disease among unsuspecting young men. Roger Wiehe condemns the speech as hopelessly "vindictive":

> The hysterical metaphor which turns Guinevere into a moral plague-carrier accomplishes its intended end of humbling Guinevere who can creep up and grovel. Arthur thus palms off masculine responsibility wholly upon the woman, turns her into an insidious destroyer of masculine virtue, and converts love into desperate suspicion. (86)

Wiehe's point is well taken. Arthur here seems to descend from the high moral ground into a moment of petty name-calling, and yet, Guinevere abjectly accepts the abuse. Arthur ends with a lament about how his necessary inflexibility will leave him with a "waste hearth and aching heart" (521), which is emotionally affecting, if not exactly compensatory.

In the pause that follows Arthur's rant, Guinevere "crept an inch / Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet" (524-25). The image is strikingly similar, in visual terms, to that

of Vivien snaking her way into Merlin's confidences, but the similarities between the scenes end there. Guinevere attempts no more than this, touching her hands to her husband's feet as she lies on the floor. There is no hint of physical seduction in the scene, despite Arthur's description of his wife's dangerous erotic potential.

Arthur's condemnation of Guinevere is not his final word. He apparently has not come only to bury his wife in accusatory rhetoric. After forgiving Guinevere and urging her to forgive herself, he asks one favor of her:

> Let no man dream but that I love thee still.
> .....
> Hereafter in that world where all are pure
> We two may meet before high God, and thou
> Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and know
> I am thine husband—not a smaller soul,
> Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me that,
> I charge thee, my last hope. (557, 560-65)

Arthur clearly blames Guinevere for all that has happened, but he also has compassion and claims even still to love her. Even as hopelessly shattered as it seems at this moment in the poem, Arthur still clings to a domestic hope, albeit one severely modified from his earlier grand visions. Now he hopes only for a wife who will enthusiastically choose him, not for one who will serve as both foundation and inspiration to a perfect earthly kingdom. He also admits that their reconciliation is no longer possible within his own kingdom, but he holds out hope that it might occur, if Guinevere so chooses, in God's kingdom.

Ahern finds Guinevere's response to the blame that is heaped upon her throughout her eponymous idyll to be ironic and "wonderfully ambiguous" (103). He reads Guinevere as a clever character with radically limited choices, one that chooses repentance and contrition as the most pragmatic options (103-09). This interpretation of the scene is endlessly appealing, clearing up as it does the problematic image of the once-fiery Guinevere, wretchedly groveling at Arthur's feet (577). If Guinevere does not really mean it, if she chooses to crawl because it suits her, the reader can feel that this one character has escaped the trap of domesticity that seems to threaten every female character in the text. Unfortunately, domesticity is the rule under which Guinevere lives,

and though she may rail against it, she does not really have the option of wholly opting out of her society.[8] This reveals a flaw in Ahern's conception of Guinevere as a pragmatic realist. Ahern posits the condemnatory voices around Guinevere—those of Arthur, the novice, and Modred—as a collective "social conscience," a conscience that exists separately from her and that she is able to discount in order to make her decisions as a pragmatic realist (103). However, it is impossible for Guinevere to exist autonomously outside of her society. As Michel Foucault argues, "Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (95). The existence of "power relationships," he continues, "depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations." Guinevere can resist the social power of those around her. She can "play the role of adversary," as it were. But she cannot remove herself from these power relationships, and she cannot now become profoundly disconnected from the very forces that have buffeted her throughout the *Idylls*.

Debra Mancoff wisely cautions readers to remember that we approach Victorian texts with modern sensibilities, and that our anachronistic values greatly color our ability to read scenes such as Arthur's visit to the abbey. She explains that Arthur's speech would have been much differently received in Tennyson's day:

> The harsh light Tennyson turns on Guinevere illuminates the King, whose fury at betrayal seemed justified in a time when marital stability and service were so central to the social order. Modern readers find this scene in the *Idylls* difficult, even distasteful, but to the Victorian audience it displayed the capacity and magnanimity of Arthur's heroic character. (268)

A twenty-first-century audience likely would find Arthur "priggish," to use Wiehe's term (86), or "misogynistic," to use Ahern's (104). However, we do not live steeped in nineteenth-century domestic ideology, so for us ironic distance ennobles Guinevere and

[8] Note that choosing a religious life, as Guinevere finally does, has historically constituted a kind of opting out of domestic life. Despite the conception of a nun as a "bride of Christ," entry into a nunnery meant a functional renunciation of most domestic duties (bearing and raising children, keeping house for a husband) and entry into a society with a mostly female hierarchy. However, the values espoused by the novice in this abbey clearly show that it is not a place outside of the world, untouched by the cult of domesticity.

renders Arthur ridiculous. For Guinevere, though, those nineteenth-century readers, along with Arthur and Modred and the Novice, are her society. Although she may resist the confines of domesticity, she nevertheless remains within the power relationships of her society, and these demand that she finally accept her label as a "false" woman.

It is difficult, though, to accept flat, uncompassionate accusations such as that of William Clark Gordon, who claims, "Arthur was wedded to Guinevere, who wrought the ruin of the round table" (72). Mellifluous as that sentence may be, it still trips the mind. "Wrought" implies intention, and the destruction of the realm was never Guinevere's object. Gordon also reduces Guinevere to a very limited identity: wife of Arthur, ruination of the realm. In the end, Guinevere's failure is due to her power, which fits with Knight's view of a misogynistic Tennyson creating a system in which all women are dangerous because they are powerful. However, the power that Guinevere wields is the authority of an icon, not of a real, autonomous woman. She is expected to function as a moral mother to Arthur's kingdom, without regard to her own desires. She does not have the authority to redefine her role. If she were capable of fulfilling the role, she might have a kind of influence over her husband's realm. As she is, she only has the destructive power to fail.

In his domestic Arthuriad, *The Idylls of the King*, Tennyson invests his female characters with the not inconsiderable powers of domestic femininity. Unfortunately, those powers come with almost insurmountable expectations, and the characters are judged almost entirely based upon their abilities to fulfill those expectations. Both trying to live up to the expectations and defying them prove to be dangerous ventures, and as Clinton Machann argues, they both can also be seriously deforming to the individual:

> In the world of the *Idylls*, in spite of Arthur's ideology, women are not innately morally superior to men. However, they are not monsters, either: if they wield enormous destructive powers it is because of the false images that are projected upon them by the King and his knights. (217)

Elaine and Enid carry with difficulty the burden of moral superiority, although there is little indication that such morality comes naturally to them. Vivien manages to come near to being depicted as a monster in her willingness to defy cultural expectations to gain

masculine power; but she does achieve her goal and, for good or ill, leaves the restrictive environment of Arthur's court. But Guinevere has the hardest track of all of the *Idylls*' women. More is demanded of her, so her failure is almost unavoidable, and when Guinevere fails, Arthur can no longer sustain the dreamy domestic idealism of his Camelot. Tennyson presents Arthur's struggles to impose order as a conscious deployment of domesticity, embedded with all of the cultural anxieties about gender constructions implicated in such a project. But Camelot is the ideal that has always already failed, and in building his *Idylls* on a foundation of domestic ideology, Tennyson has shown the cracks in that foundation, both for Camelot and for Victorian England. Ultimately, the *Idylls* expose the folly not of Arthur or of Camelot, but of any system that relies completely upon deforming ideals of womanhood without acknowledging either the flaws or the power and potential of actual women.

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The Mysteries of Origin and the Need for a Happy Ending: George Meredith's *Evan Harrington: He Could be a Gentleman*

Shu-Fang Lai

Modern critics have long considered George Meredith an "evolutionary novelist" and a post-Darwinian poet.[1] Among early studies of Meredith's Darwinism, more attention was invariably paid to *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859)[2] and to his later poems, especially *A Reading of Earth* (1888).[3] Although *Richard Feverel* was published in the same year, it appeared six months *before* the release of Darwin's controversial *On the Origin of Species*, a factor that challenges claims for the novel's Darwinist influence.[4] A more relevant text through which to explore this point is Meredith's serial novel, *Evan Harrington: He Could be a Gentleman*, published in *Once a Week* from 11 February to 13 October 1860. *Evan Harrington* shows an often neglected perspective on Meredith, who was under the immediate influence of *Origins*, the implications of which he struggled to reconcile. Like many of his contemporaries, Meredith questioned the conflicts between the biblical account of creation and Darwin's evolutionary theory. In *Evan Harrington*, Meredith—without directly mentioning Darwin's name—tailors and weaves the scientist's evolutionary ideas, moral dictums and Christianity together into a myth-making fictional biography.

Evan Harrington is often considered atypical among Meredith's novels, which are usually crammed with philosophical strains and rhetorical complexities; R.A. Gettmann attributes the "uncharacteristic simplicity" of *Evan Harrington* to its original form as a

[1] There are some early studies (mostly unpublished theses and dissertations) exploring the topic, including Erwin A. Robinson (1936), Dominic Anthony Amatore (1978), Ingrid Lavinia Kohler (1975), Laurel K. Hills (1991), Carl Huntington Ketcham (1951). See also Laura May McCreary (1900) and George Roppen, *Evolution and Poetic Belief: A Study in Some Victorian and Modern Writers* (Ohio: Ohio UP, 1956).

[2] Critics and biographers tend to parallel this novel and others published in the same year with *Origin*; see, for example, Renate Muendel (51, 55).

[3] See Carolyn North Curtis, "The Influence of Evolutionary Theory on George Meredith's *A Reading of Earth*." MA Thesis. Brown University, 1962.

[4] *The Ordeal of Richard Feveral* was published 20 June 1859, and Darwin's *Origin* in November 1859.

serial work (974). Yet *Evan Harrington* contains ideas that are often stimulating and demanding for readers. In fact, it is quite remarkable that Meredith chose to confront Darwin's new hypotheses and actively adapted a great many evolutionary ideas to his plots, for by the time he began writing the serial, *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* had been banned by Mudie's lending library for its frank presentation of sexuality (Cline 1: 39). He must therefore have been particularly cautious about writing anything likely to give offence. For example, he was once concerned about his first poem for the magazine, telling the editor: "I fancy the 'Song of Courtesy' might furnish an illustration to Millais—unless the mention of 'bride-beds' be thought too strong for our virtuous public" (37). He was fully aware of the conservative audience for whom he was writing.

A fair-minded reader may wonder how a writer who had just been "tabooed from all decent drawing-room tables" would present a story reflecting a controversial theory, signed with his name and published in such a family-oriented magazine as *Once a Week*. Perhaps Meredith felt that the serial format would make a different impression on supposedly conservative readers than a fully-formed novel.

The theme of *Evan Harrington* appears conventional in its concerns about class differences and the moral code of a gentleman; this code includes such qualities as honor and moral sensibility, despite poverty and questionable or "low" birth, as made clear by its subtitle, *He Could be a Gentleman*.[5] With moral conscience and noble or courageous conduct, a true gentleman can defy the social odds and struggle to survive in times of adversity. The hero, Evan, is the son of a tailor, the Great Mel, who is considered an unusual character of genteel bearing but unable to manage his finances. Evan's three sisters have successfully married into higher classes. After the death of Great Mel, Evan is left in debt, with no choice but to succumb to a career in tailoring. Evan's sisters deliberately arrange opportunities for him to marry the baronet's daughter, Rose Jocelyn. Although Evan falls in love with Rose, she is class-minded at first; despite many obstacles, Evan's nobility, integrity, and goodness eventually prove him to be a genuine gentleman and help him win Rose's love. At the same time, Evan helps solve her family's financial crisis with an unexpected inheritance. Although such a plot was

[5] For an excellent study of Victorian gentlemanly qualities, see Robin Gilmour's *The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981).

popular during the Victorian period, Meredith's originality is seen in his experiments for a higher test of fictional narrative. In addition to imbuing the work with biographical resonances from his own experiences and family background, he also readily responded to the emerging new wave of thinking grounded in science. As the revelation of a bewildered individual involved in an inescapable universal evolution, the narrative clearly demonstrates story-as-survival. Meredith has tried to reason through what he himself or his characters are fighting for, and to present effectively what comes uppermost to his mind. It is known that, at this point in his life, Meredith had recovered from the failure of his previous marriage and was in love again with an aristocratic girl in the neighborhood.[6] From his own experiences and outlook on life, he captures the two dominant forces that determine the future of young Evan: moral discipline and the universal law of nature. These are two strongly entrenched and sometimes conflicting forces that an individual has to act upon. Therefore, though a casual observation of *Evan Harrington* would indicate that it is a story of social climbing, the snobbish upper-class, and a self-lamenting, biographical account common among Victorian narratives, the main thrust of this story actually lies in Meredith's grasp of the struggle for survival, sexual selection, and other hard-core evolutionary plots. Though becoming fashionable in the post-Darwinian era, these issues were never before vigorously pursued in the form of popular literature. Obviously, Meredith aimed at producing a genuine narrative that would probe the Darwinian trend and would make a difference in the highly competitive, journalistic world.

Evan Harrington is imbued with many explicit evolutionary ideas. The predominant plan of the narrative is to unravel, in the author's words, the "mysteries of origin" (233).[7] Above all, the fashionable word "origin," borrowed from Darwin, is lavishly employed in this story. Darwin declares in his *Origin*: "I am doubtfully inclined to believe, in opposition to several authors, that all the races have descended from one wild stock" (80). In his serial, Meredith uses the word "origin" and exploits the affluence of Darwin's evolutionary theory. Introducing Evan's parents, the narrator says "we must descend the

[6] See Gillian Beer, *Change of Mask* (London: Athlone P, 1970): 33.
[7] See Shu-Fang Lai, *Charles Reade, George Meredith and Harriet Martineau as Serial Writers of Once a Week* for a detailed comparison of the thirty-six installment serial version and the one-volume reprint of forty-six chapters. Subsequent citations in the article are to the one-volume version.

genealogical tree" (9). This involves both the mother's rank as a gentlewoman and a lawyer's daughter, and her "dignity of unrelenting physical order," and the mysterious "origin" of the Great Mel, the legendary father who is related to "a great Welsh family, issuing from a line of princes" (9). Regardless of their disparate backgrounds, Evan's parents are said to have married for love, while his elder sisters are "hereditarily combined . . . a certain refinement, some Port, and some Presence" in their beauty and bearing (16). Caroline is married to Major-Lieutenant Strike; Harriet is married to Andrew Cogglesby, a rich brewer; and Louisa is married to a Portuguese Count. Not only Evan's origin, but also "the origin of Cogglesbys" (204) and that of the Jocelyns are introduced in detail; an excellent example of the significance of origins is the Countess's impression of Rose's mother, the "eccentric" Lady Jocelyn whom she suspects is "a person of no birth" (146). The narrator's pointed concern with the origin of virtually every character, major or minor, constantly reminds the reader of the overwhelming natural force underlying everyone's fate: heredity. In fact, such declarations of the congenital natures of his characters help bring to life the diversity of their temperaments and behaviors.

Meredith recognizes the aesthetic potential of Darwin's controversial implication that human ancestors may be connected with the monkey tribe and readily transforms the idea into a metaphor to construct his comedy. When Lady Roseley visits Evan's family when his father dies, she sees his pet monkey Jack, sitting "with his legs crossed, very like a tailor" (15). Seeing the lady wiping tears with her handkerchief, the monkey also gets a towel to imitate her gesture. Such a highly symbolic comparison immediately associates the story with the most famous Darwinian image. Although Darwin deliberately avoided saying directly that our ancestors may share a common origin with monkeys, it was after Bishop Wilberforce and T.H. Huxley's famous debate at the Oxford Meeting of the British Association in 1860 that Darwin's theory was ridiculed as "the monkey theory" (Burrow 41). Here Meredith exploits not just Darwin's theory itself but also its influential implications. In a passing remark, the narrator alludes to the monkey image again: "[W]e know that very stiff young gentlemen betray monkey-minds when sweet young ladies compel them to disport" (206). Moreover, the monkey image is again employed in the characterization of Tom Cogglesby. The Cogglesbys are said to be

"sons of a cobbler" (175), and Sir John remarks that Tom Cogglesby "seems like a monkey just turned into a man." The Countess adds that she is "doubtful about the tail" (314). But Tom Cogglesby is not the only one who is said to resemble a monkey. Mr. Raikes, or "the creature" as the Countess calls him, resembles "a Brazilian ape" rather than "an English gentleman" (355). Meredith exercises his evolutionary imagination in a fox-hunting scene in which the young squire George Uploft, who is "a fat-faced, round young squire—a bully," is compared to a "poor hunted animal" and "a poor brute" (207). As he "was only one leg in love," not showing enough passion for his fiancée Miss Carrington or their engagement, the narrator describes the match in an ironic tone: "Miss Carrington was lean and blue-eyed: Mr. George black-eyed and obese. By everybody, except Mr. George, the match was made . . . for half the population are talked into marriage, and gossips entirely devote themselves to *continuing the species*" (207); emphasis added). The novelist is proficient at measuring the physical traits of his characters and comparing humans to other creatures, but his method of deciding the hierarchy of beings is not similar to scientific deduction. Moral rather than biological factors are key to determining each character's position in the Meredithian genealogy.

Nevertheless, the concept of one species evolving into another provides Meredith with a rich source of fictional imagination; the links between human beings and beasts inspire him to envision a scale to gauge different types of characters metaphysically rather than sentimentally. Renate Muendel comments on Meredith's inclination toward evolution: "As an evolutionist, he believed that Nature had equipped man with the elasticity of body and mind to live happily and usefully" (51). On the surface, it seems as if hereditary law is taken seriously in the story and the novelist is an out-and-out evolutionist. The natural force that governs Evan's world seems more dubious than advantageous at first, as his destiny is to inherit his father's extraordinary nature along with inescapable debt. The vulnerable youth of virtue with his intellectual power and good conduct could easily fall into embarrassing poverty. His rank, anthropologically and socially, is supposed to be not far from that of such comic characters as Tom Cogglesby and John Raikes.

Yet Evan is never compared to the monkey tribe or to any other species: "comparing him with the Jocelyn men, he has every mark of better blood," writes the Countess in a

letter to her sister Harriet (149). She also assures Harriet of the nobleness of their father, to whom she attributes their brother's goodness: "As Papa would say—we have Nature's proof." By protesting her brother's "better blood" and genetic superiority, she is also commenting on her own breeding: "It is gentry in reality," the Countess claims, "for had poor Papa been legitimized, he would have been a nobleman" (204). In this way, what Evan has to overcome—his humble origin—turns out to be advantageous. As Meredith demonstrates, one's social gentility does not guarantee a higher position on the scale of evolutionary development. Rather than being heredity-centric, the focus is now directed to one's congenital nature, a more abstruse philosophical concern. From this new perspective, the Harringtons' origin is of "better blood" and is genetically higher, while the Jocelyns, of "properly respected blood," are in fact inferior and as "poor as rats" (297). The narrator mocks the higher class, comparing them to animals of the lower rank. Rose's brother Harry is said to be "his Grandmother's pet up to the year of adolescence . . . [he] had no turn for diplomacy, no taste for any of the walks open to blood and birth" (298). He squandered time and money; worst of all, he schemed to marry crippled Juliana Bonner, the heiress of Beckley Court. Harry is a foil to Evan, who is a true "gentleman." In this thematic structure, Meredith interweaves the hereditary natural force with what he considers the supreme moral force that determines Evan's fate and future, encouraging his readers to adopt his value judgment.

Given the origins of the Harrington and Jocelyn families, Meredith establishes the disparity between birth and congenital qualifications. Just as in Dickens's *Great Expectations* or in the depictions by many other popular writers of the same period, gentlefolk are not necessarily "gentlemen," and the "shabby genteel" may show worthy dispositions. In fact, the narrator asks the question again and again: "[W]hat is a gentleman?" In the beginning, a conventional definition is given: "A gentleman . . . must have one of the two things—a title or money . . . . Now, Evan has no title, no money" (23). There is a memorable scene in the second serial installment (chapter four in the one-volume edition) of Evan on his way to his father's funeral. When Evan confesses to the postillion his shortage of money and decides to walk the remaining fifty miles, the driver sympathizes with the modest young man and takes him to his destination for free, saying: "Lord forbid I should rob such a gentleman as you" (53). In general, "Money is the

clothing of a gentleman" (56), but Evan, even under pecuniary embarrassment, is able to move the humble rider with his noble and gentlemanly nature. As evidenced in his letter to the editor, Meredith took pains to write and rewrite this chapter in order to "stress small incidents" that "best exhibit character" (Cline 1: 51). Furthermore, even when the editor had a different idea concerning the common formula of serialization in a popular magazine, Meredith protests in another letter: "I fancy I am right in slowly building up for the scenes to follow . . . .It ["On the Road"] develops the character of the hero partly: the incidents subsequently affect him" (49). This small incident establishes a convincing view of Evan's innate moral nobility. As mentioned above, Tom Cogglesby is compared to an animal, but when he asks Evan's mother, "Should you take me for a gentleman, ma'am?" she replies, "I dare say you are, sir, at heart. Not from your manner of speech" (278). This incident also reveals Meredith's subtle humor. In a broader sense, what Meredith ascribes to "a gentleman" is matter-of-fact virtue and natural goodness. Consequently, there are many occasions when Evan is misunderstood, or to put it more exactly, recognized as being a gentleman. For example, the landlady of the Green Dragon inn takes him as a gentleman in disguise: "For you, I'd say, must be a gentleman, whatever your company" (126). His sister the Countess instructs her brother on how to confront the gentry: "Show that you have descended among them, dear Van, but are not of them" (46). This statement echoes the evolutionary idea of being descended from, but not of, the monkey tribe.

After all the references and allusions to heredity and comparisons between human characters and animal traits, the novelist uses the phrase "the secret of evolution" in a key episode: Evan receives a letter from his secret benefactor (the old gentleman whom he meets at the Green Dragon) offering him money providing he becomes a tailor. Although Evan considers it a "trap," the narrator calls the incident the "secret of evolution" (178). This indicates that Meredith was so overwhelmed by the new science that he closely designed a parallel literary study of evolution. But how could he unravel the secret in an imaginative world? How sufficient is his understanding of the science of evolution? How effectively can natural laws be verified in a man-made fictional world? Clearly, what Evan and his father "achieve" in society is not simply due to what they are endowed with through heredity. Even though the biologically superior heredity (in the Countess's

words, "better blood") of the Harrington family is emphasized repeatedly, good characteristics and all the favorable impressions won from others were not enough to uplift their social status. In this family, there is something beyond passive inheritance, and the affinities of the family are represented by a family tree. Even the snobbish Lady Jocelyn recognizes this: "The rules of society are lightened by the exceptions. What I like in this Mel is, that though he was a snob, and an impostor, he could still make himself respected by his betters . . . He was honest, so far; he acknowledged his tastes . . . the tastes of a gentleman" (229). The "exceptions" that Meredith singles out here can "lighten" the rules of society. These "expectations" are parallel to Darwin's "variations" in nature that result in benefits or progress and are the core elements in the mechanism of natural selection. In Darwin's view, a principle called "divergence of character" is essential in the process of formation and natural selection. "Mere chance, as we may call it, might cause one variety to differ in some character from its parents, and the offspring of this variety again to differ from its parent in the very same character and in a greater degree," Darwin explains (155). Thus, under certain circumstances, diversification forms other incipient species, that are prototypes of the future species.

As a *bildungsroman*, the novel is centered on Evan's struggle, defined as the rectifying and edifying of his nature to become a true "gentleman." On one occasion, the narrator remarks:

> I cannot say whether he inherited his feeling for rank from Mel, his father, or that the Countess had succeeded in instilling it, but Evan never took Republican ground in opposition to those who insulted him, and never lashed his "manhood," to assert itself, nor compared the fineness of his instincts with the behaviour of titled gentlemen. Rather he seemed to admit the distinction between his birth and that of a gentleman, admitting it to his own soul, as it were, and struggled simply as men struggle against destiny. (239)

Here, the narrator ponders Evan's heredity, instincts, and conduct or habits, especially under the circumstance of being insulted. All of this is to demonstrate Evan's nature and disposition. He makes it clear that his instincts cannot be attributed simply to inheritance from his father or to any sibling influence. "Instinct" is a general word, but the thought

echoes the chapter entitled "Instinct" in *Origin*—perhaps another key word that Meredith borrows from Darwin. In *Origin,* to explain the role of instinct in the mechanism of natural selection, Darwin gives the famous example that "instinct impels the cuckoo to lay her egg in other birds' nests" (234). Further, an action that requires experience to perform, "when performed by an animal, more especially by a very young one, without any experience, and when performed by many individuals in the same way, without their knowing for what purpose it is performed, is usually said to be instinctive." Instincts may be passed on from generation to generation. "Slow accumulation of numerous, slight, yet profitable, variations" (237) modify the animal's inherited instincts, explains Darwin, and he summarizes the "laws of variation" in a chapter bearing the same title:

> Species inheriting nearly the same constitution from a common parent and exposed to similar influences will naturally tend to present analogous variations, and these same species may occasionally revert to some of the characters of their ancient progenitors. Although new and important modifications may not arise from reversion and analogous variation, such modifications will add to the beautiful and harmonious diversity of nature. (203)

In his succinct style, Darwin outlines the mechanism of evolution:

> [I]t is the steady accumulation, through natural selection, of such differences, when beneficial to the individual, that gives rise to all the more important modifications of structure, by which the innumerable beings on the face of this earth are enabled to struggle with each other, and the best adapted to survive. (204)

The mechanism of natural selection framed in Darwin's theory juxtaposes the descriptions of Evan's heredity, his struggle against destiny, modifications through chances, and adaptation to the environment.

According to Sophie Gilmartin, "Although Meredith's later novels show him to be highly conversant with Darwinian theory and the popular misconstructions of that theory, it is difficult to determine to what degree *Evan Harrington* is influenced by the recently published *Origin of Species*" (149). Leo J. Henkin in his study of the impact of

Darwinism on English novels after 1860 makes a similar comment: "Passing references to the theory of evolution and to Darwinism are to be found in his novels, but none that would suggest an assimilation of their ideas" (204). However, after reading *Origin* and *Evan Harrington* side by side, we are indeed able to trace Darwin's influence and Meredith's immediate response, not only in the latter's use of evolutionary diction but also in his fictional parade of many essential evolutionary ideas. The parallel is more than superficial.

A crucial point that arises from the story is that all the advantageous qualities that Evan obtained (through heredity, instinct, struggle, and variation) do not guarantee a happy ending. Just as with Tennyson's awe of "Nature, red in tooth and claw" (*In Memoriam*, LVI), the hard facts of poverty and social snobbery remain overwhelming and threatening. Regardless of his heredity and malleability, Evan's fate still dangles in incessant struggles and frustrations even up to the last quarter of the story. Evan is in need of another force to get him out of "the domain of tailordom" (as the title of chapter 39 indicates), to regain his love and to procure a higher position in society. Indeed, Meredith is aware of the paradox of such a naturally and socially complex human condition that seems like an entrapment. He thus searches for a different source to encompass the ending and possible solution for Evan.

After alluding to many Darwinian ideas, the narrator steers toward a different direction and appeals to the religious assurance of Providence from time to time. A theological discourse emerges and becomes dominant in the last quarter of the story. This offers a perspective on Meredith that critics have not addressed: he is more complicated than an "evolutionary novelist and poet" who wholeheartedly commits himself to trumpeting Darwinian doctrines in his fiction and poetry. We thus need to take a closer look at how Meredith tries to grasp Darwinism within his humanistic context, and at what point Meredith diverges from Darwinian evolutionary theory.

A clue lies in the Countess's point of view, specifically her shift from initial doubt about the existence of Providence to eventually regaining faith. In the Countess's letter to Harriet reporting the progress of her plot and her new expectation of Evan's union with Juliana Bonner, the heiress of Beckley Court, she appeals to Providence more than once. She believes that Providence will seek vengeance on those who are malicious to her and

her brother: "Providence will inflict that. Always know that Providence is *quite* sure to" (201). She calls Evan a "Pagan" and is concerned about him, the "poor unsupported flesh, [who] is never certain of his victory" (365). But the power of Providence is far beyond that of blind chance and struggle. The Countess speaks of Juliana as "the only friend the Harringtons had in the house . . . whom Providence would liberally reward" (237). In another scene, when Andrew is about to expose Evan's humble background in a conversation with Lady Jocelyn, they happen to pass by a "purl" (brook), where the incident of a near drowning distracts her, thus preventing her from knowing the truth. Such a coincidence, in the Countess's words, is "a piece of Providence" (210).

Evan's true love is Rose, rather than Juliana. The latter is physically fragile, and according to the standard of evolutionary "sexual selection," is weak and inferior. In the battle of life, she could never survive: "Man selects only for his own good," says Darwin (132). However, Rose, more charming and fit than Juliana and more emotionally attached to Evan, has tremendous difficulty in coming to terms with Evan's profession. "Is it a t-t-tailor, aunt?" Rose asks her aunt, Mrs. Shorne, who reveals the fact to her; the mere thought that "Evan was not only the son of the thing, but the thing himself" arouses "a sick feeling that almost sank her" (286). She also needs to change and adapt to reality. In the crisis of Evan's leaving Rose, the Countess feels that she was "still to go through her church-services devoutly . . . but it was hard to feel no longer at one with Providence" (287). She broods on her brother's ill fate in remorse and depression:

> Oh! what principle we women require in the thorny walk of life . . . . it *always* seems to me that what *we* have to endure is infinitely worse than any other suffering, for you find no comfort for the children of T—s in Scripture, nor any defence of their dreadful position. Robbers, thieves, Magdalens! but, no! the unfortunate offspring of that class are not even mentioned: at least, in my most diligent perusal of the Scriptures, I never lighted upon any remote allusion; and we know the Jews did wear clothing. Outcasts, verily! And Evan could go, and write . . . . He is the blind tool of his mother and anybody's puppet. (289-90)

At this time his sister is facing a crisis of faith. By lamenting Evan's fate and complaining of his being a "blind tool of his mother" and "anybody's puppet," the Countess does not realize that she herself is also interfering with and manipulating her brother's fate. Still, she is the central character of the story, whom the feminist critic Barbara Hardy applauds as "a splendid comic character . . . [an] entirely solipsistic and impenetrable character, never eroded by a sense of the world outside self, bent on expunging the past, indefatigable in social intrigue and performance, aided by lies, inventions, boasts, solicitations, and liable to error" (146). Despite being a comic character, the Countess's perspective is nevertheless taken seriously, and her eloquently presented point of view is often mingled with the narrator's frequently intruding voices. Her denunciation of the Scripture signals a threshold moment, a declaration of a new development.

Rose is supposed to marry for both money and blood, but the hard fact is that Evan has neither. Now, not only is the heroine forced to face the dilemma of whether to accept Evan's true identity and condition, the readers too are forced to confront the ultimate outcome of nature at work. The situation compels Evan to accept his tailoring trade and to leave Rose and her high society. The narrator reasons that Evan's social deficiency accounts for their parting, saying that he is a "Pagan, which means our poor unsupported flesh, is never certain of his victory" (365), and that his virtue is also "purely Pagan." Following the Countess's point of view, the narrator plunges into a philosophical meditation on theology:

> The young who can act readily up to the Christian light are happier, doubtless: but they are led, they are passive: I think they do not make such capital Christians subsequently. They are never in such danger, we know . . . . The heathen ideal it is not so very easy to attain, and those who mount from it to the Christian have, in my humble thought, a firmer footing. (365)

Here, the narrator twists Evan's religious footing and his fate, metaphorically to endow him with "a firmer footing" in Christianity. The focus of the narrative henceforth shifts away from a calm quasi-scientific enquiry into the external evidence of the nature of each character, and toward a more ardent quest for the internal, through stream-of-

consciousness and theological ferment. It must be stressed that Meredith's own religious stand at this transitional time was not as clear as when he revealed his beliefs in "a cult of Earth and Life," "the God within," and the evolutionary triad of "blood and brain and spirit" through subsequent works.[8]

From a technical point of view, it is understandable that Meredith resorts to the common device *Deus ex Machina* to solve Evan's seemingly unsolvable difficulty: Juliana bequeaths her inherited property, Beckley Court, to Evan, and Evan selflessly transfers it to Lady Jocelyn. This unexpected money resolves his financial predicament and prevents his moral downfall through taking the blame for his sister's forged letter. This occurrence goes beyond any original expectation of the reader, and poetic justice is thus achieved. In the last chapter, the Countess begins to "admit to herself that it was not entirely her work" but Providence that makes the wish fulfillment: "Providence had answered her numerous petitions, but in its own way," and "Providence consented to serve her" (461). The story concludes with the Countess's letter to her sister from Rome in which she narrates what happened in the past: "You think that you have quite conquered the dreadfulness of our origin"; but, in fact, it is "impossible for the Protestant heresy to offer a shade of consolation" (469). Furthermore, she says, "Earthly-born, it rather *encourages* earthly distinctions" (471). In the end, she is persuaded that "it is utterly impossible for a man to be a *true gentleman* who is not of the true Church" (472).

Writing in late 1859 and 1860, Meredith must have noted the conflicts between evolutionary science and religion that were kindled by the publication of *Origin*. Though the serial invites an evolutionary reading, the narrator dwells more on the moral than scientific perspectives of life as the story develops, and eventually Meredith chooses to end this novel with a theological discourse. It is the other supreme force, of course, that parallels the evolutionary force and dominates Evan's fate. Conceivably, this turning point shows the novelist's way of establishing equilibrium: on the one hand, he is open-minded toward Darwin's theory, which had been rebuked by pious Christian writers, and on the other hand, like many of his contemporaries, he just reconciles the conflicts, still reassuring his readers of the existence of a Providence and presenting it as an even more decisive and powerful force. He is subtle in dealing with Darwinian contexts and

[8] See Roppen, "Evolution as a Cult of Life and Man" in *Evolution and Poetic Belief* (209-78).

theological issues without getting involved with the evolutionary controversies. Like Darwin, Meredith traces the origins of species to as remote a time as possible and focuses on the process of struggle and the reality of natural selection.[9] Norman Kelvin thus considers Meredith as belonging to those who "accepted and spiritualized Darwin's theory of evolution" (3). Whether "spiritualized" or "moralized," the novelist happily makes the best of evolutionary ideas about heredity, instinct, chance, struggle for survival, variation, and sexual selection, and ends his story with a religious reassurance of Providence and a happy ending. In a way, the story is another myth-making fictional biography, and regarding its theme, it is not really on the cutting edge. Learning from Mudie's banning of *Richard Feverel*, Meredith here incorporates Darwin's evolutionary theory but tailors it into an acceptable formula designed to not offend his reading public. The evolutionary ideas he includes support the characterization of his hero as fit and able to struggle for survival; the call for Providence toward the end of the story offers comfort from Darwinism and its dangerous implications of a ruthless nature without God's beneficence.

Meredith's fictional design is clarified in a letter to Captain Frederick, written shortly before he wrote *Evan Harrington*, discussing plot and characterization; to him, writing a story without a plot is like "building a house without a design": "A story must be artificial, but not out of nature . . . . Plot keeps you to nature . . . . It keeps you from dwelling too long and wearisomely on favourite scenes: pushes you ahead: it shows you something to attend to, in the final development. Where there is no plot, no story, the author generally maunders" (9 Sept. 1859; Cline 1: 41). On the other hand, if relying too much on plot, "the blood of this world has no free space to circulate, and the whole creation becomes cramped and still" (42). Therefore, his ideal method is to "follow . . . the Objective rather than the Subjective in your art: aim at being concrete rather than abstract. Solid stuff endures." Metaphorically, from the point of view of methodology, the function of using evolutionary diction and ideas is to solidify his story and to enrich his characterization, while the function of appealing to Christianity furthers development of the plot. Without Providence, there is no happy ending. Considering the historical

[9] Darwin wrote to Lyell: "I do not discuss the origin of man....I do not bring in any discussion about Genesis" (qtd. Desmond and Moore, 474).

background, Meredith—writing for the family magazine, *Once a Week*—is conciliatory, much like the *Bridgewater Treatises* authors who endeavored to confirm the harmonious coexistence of scientific facts and Providence. His story with a happy ending is a configuration of heterogeneous material, the evolutionary, the religious, and the moral.

Though it is beyond the scale of the present study to analyze Meredith's personal religious faith, it is worthwhile to mention an interesting anecdote: upon hearing of his friend Mrs. Jessopp's wish to give his son Arthur a Bible as a birthday present, Meredith wrote to her husband, Rev. Augustus Jessopp:

> I have no objection to his reading the Bible, though I confess that I am already baffled by his comparisons between the dogmas of Genesis and the mild facts of Geology; nor do I think the Old Testament—the Jew Creed and History—can do good to any young creature. He reads the New Testament willingly: the more so that nothing is forced on him.[10]
>
> (May 7 or 14, 1862; Cline 1: 145)

He then added, however: "I try to make him feel compassionately towards the Devil, whenever the deeds of that Gentleman are broached: no more than that; and that should be essential Christianity, if it be not modern." The letter is illuminating in that it shows how Meredith shared his contemporaries' bewilderment about the conflicts between the biblical account of Genesis and geological discoveries that established the foundation of evolutionary theory. In *Darwin among the Poets*, Lionel Stevenson observes:

> Like Tennyson, Meredith undertook to provide a metaphysical interpretation of the new hypothesis; but by ditching all the formulas of traditional religions, he produced a system which is an original whole, whereas Tennyson's is a sequence of tentative discussions . . . . Meredith had developed from the Darwinian concept of man's place in the universe a new god to worship and a new heaven to strive for. (Stevenson 236)

[10] The headmaster of the King Edward VI school, Norwich, where Meredith's son Arthur was a boarder in 1862.

Clearly, while writing *Evan Harrington* during the evolutionary controversies, Meredith was in a formative stage, keen to learn the new science while being equally baffled, for he could not completely forsake the Scripture or the moral disciplines of Christianity. My reading of *Evan Harrington* suggests that up to 1860, Meredith still adhered to his own definition of Christianity as the essential part of gentlemanly conduct and happiness. But he was also inspired by Darwin's evolutionary theory and ready to seek new interpretations of life on earth and the relationship between human beings and nature. Such considerations make *Evan Harrington* very much a novel of its time—one of contemporary significance and presented in an acceptable form of popular literature.

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Tennyson and the Poetics of Alterity

Haron Worth

I.

In his explication of and attack on the "pathetic fallacy," Ruskin uses the human perception of color as a heuristic analogy in his attempt to demolish what he considers a specious and pernicious opposition—lately imported from Germany—between subject and object. Blueness, he stoutly affirms, inheres in the blue object *tout court*—and the obdurate "metaphysician" who suggests otherwise should, Ruskin strongly implies, put down his Coleridge and seek expert help as soon as possible (III: 145-47). Of course, Ruskin's real quarrel in this famous chapter of *Modern Painters* involves not color but the "false" attribution by poets of thought, feeling, and intentional agency—qualities properly ascribable to living *minds*—to mindless forces and objects; as he witheringly observes, "foam is not cruel, neither does it crawl" (148). Consciousness and its concomitants are thus, and for Ruskin self-evidently, objective properties of other minds rather than subjective percepts in whose construction an observer actively participates. Gentians are blue (really and independently of observation), and humans feel anger (with identical qualification). But to perceive anger in a gentian is to engage in a grievous category mistake and, more alarmingly, to give license to legions of poets, particularly mediocre ones ("poets of the second order," as Ruskin puts it), "morbidly" to project emotions of every kind onto an inanimate world.

Interestingly, in their introduction to Simon Baron-Cohen's seminal *Mindblindness: An Essay on Autism and Theory of Mind* (1995), John Tooby and Leda Cosmides evoke the same analogy, although adapted to contrary ends. "Far from being a physical property of objects," they point out, "color is a mental property" (xi), a projection of the perceiving mind; this idea is used to help readers conceptualize "theory of mind," the ability of humans to intuit mental states in others through an innate "mindreading" ability.[1] We metaphorically limn other people with *consciousness*:

[1] For a pioneering discussion of the possible role played by theory of mind in the reading of fiction, see Lisa Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction*.

"Normal humans everywhere not only 'paint' their world with color, they also 'paint' beliefs, intentions, feelings, hopes, desires, and pretenses onto agents in their social world" (xvii). Ruskin's confident premises are thus turned neatly upside down by cognitive science: color and consciousness alike are in the eye of the beholder, rather than being unproblematic *données* or givens. Of course, while grumbling inwardly at having his epistemological foundations exploded, Ruskin might amend his account in light of modern science, thus clinging to his chief complaint: that is, to animate the *inanimate*—to attribute states of mind to entities which reason and experience tell us do not possess them—is artistically inappropriate, perhaps even symptomatic of a sick mind. The habitual use of the pathetic fallacy indicates a theory of mind run amok, permitting the natural world to join the social world as a canvas for the indiscriminate projection of intentionality.

If this is the case, then I suggest further that there is something deeply intriguing—and perhaps not entirely accidental—in Ruskin's citation of Tennyson's lately published *Maud* [2] as an "exquisite" case of the appropriate use of this intentionalist error. Ruskin lauded the artistic use of the pathetic fallacy when it served as a realistic index of a disordered mind. He characterizes the "cruel, crawling foam" mentioned above, for instance, as a kind of affective distortion engendered by a "state of mind . . . in which the reason is unhinged by grief" (148). *Maud* is, then, for him a perfect example of such a use, as the speaker of this "monodrama" surely ranks high among the poet's most conspicuously "unhinged" creations. Indeed, the speaker's mental condition might be said to form the poem's proairetic (narrative) backbone, at least in Tennyson's own conception of its narrative, which he would later summarize as the story of "the heir of madness . . . raised to sanity . . . driven into madness . . . [and finally] recover[ing] his reason" (Tennyson [1911] I: 396). In the poem's opening lines we find the speaker already "on the road to madness," his extreme melancholic and paranoid tendencies immediately in evidence. Later, after Maud's death, he succumbs wholly to insanity and is confined (in a phrase recalling Browning's first, paired monologues) to "cells of

[2] Tennyson's poem and the relevant volume of *Modern Painters* both appeared in 1856; Ruskin notes that he has "just come upon" the poem.

madness" (3: 2).[3] Even his presumed mental rehabilitation at the end of the poem involves his fevered, probably suicidal, participation in the Crimean War.

But it is his animistic predilections, his overheated attributions of intentionality to the world around him, which particularly attracted Ruskin's attention. In the poem's opening lines the speaker describes a "dreadful hollow" with blood-"dabbled" lips and "horror of blood," nuministically inhabited by Echo, to be followed by his apprehension of "the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave" (1: 1-3, 99). One of the two stanzas picked out by Ruskin features a garden of "weeping," "listening," and "whispering" flowers (1: 913-15). The poem bristles with further examples; its speaker's brain, it would seem, works overtime daubing the natural world with specious sentience. Such pronounced animism suggests that something is askew with his theory of mind—but so too do other aspects of his psychology, particularly his "Machiavellian" concern (in the parlance of cognitive researchers) with other minds, whose contents he frequently misconstrues. The speaker is paranoid and obsessed with deception; even as he perceives a natural world alive with thought and feeling, he perceives a social world of "plot[ters]," "cheats," and "liars."[4] Sometimes, to be sure, his suspicions may not be entirely without merit: Maud's brother he terms "this heir of the liar," who "has plotted against me . . . [and] plots against me still" (761-64). But he fixates, too, on the possibility that Maud herself might be a "cheat," wondering skeptically about the "kind intent" he thinks he reads in her "eye," repeatedly asking if she is "all that she seem'd" or if she might employ "deceit" (279-81).

If *Maud's* erratic Machiavellian were an isolated type within the dramatic poetry of the period, there would be little point in seeing his presence in this monodrama—and subsequently in Ruskin's critique of animism in poetics—as anything but a chance occurrence or a reflection of Tennyson's own psychology. But this is emphatically not the case; on the contrary, mindreaders—particularly "primitive," "pathological," or otherwise problematic ones—populate the monodramas and monologues of Tennyson and Browning, the co-inventors and primary practitioners of these forms, with singular

[3] Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *Maud*, in *Tennyson's Poetry* (ed. Hill) (III: 2). Hereafter poems from this text are cited parenthetically by line number.

[4] In the poem's penultimate stanza, the supposedly "cured" speaker can hardly contain his glee at the thought of an imminent divine retribution to be visited upon Nicholas I, whom he conceptualizes as "a giant liar"—a kind of anthropomorphic inflation of the very principle of deception.

density. Their speakers, in other words, strikingly often "paint" the world with subjectivity in curious, extreme, even "sick" ways.[5]

My own interpretation of this phenomenon begins with pointing to the idea that the "dramatic lyric," in all its variety, embodies an artistic interest in exploring the subjectivity of others mirroring, and rivaling, the obsession with mindreading characteristic of so many of its speakers. The Victorian monologue or monodrama is the pathetic fallacy writ large, or embodied structurally, at the level of genre: it is a kind of experimental projection of the coordinates of (lyric) subjectivity onto an imagined other mind, the better to inhabit it from within. Thus, a speaker such as *Maud*'s is not merely an intriguing study in psychological aberration but in many respects an embodiment of the very poetic project that has given him voice, a notion to which I will return.

Some of the most exciting work in contemporary poetics draws upon what Gerard Edelman has termed "brain-based epistemolog[ies]" (2), engendering a diverse and rapidly evolving body of criticism roughly grouped beneath the rubric of the "cognitive."[6] Such approaches provide a valuable critical lens through which to reexamine Tennyson's life and work. I do not merely seek to "use" cognitive theory here to provide a new perspective on the poet—though such an engagement is in itself a timely one—but also to frame a significant portion of his *oeuvre* as an ongoing experiment in exploring and modeling consciousness in its multifarious forms. I suggest that during his creative life—crucially, in his experimentation within the nascent monologue form—Tennyson sought to develop a poetics of alterity, exploring the nature of other minds and speculating on the question of how we come to know them or to imagine that we have done so. In what follows I consider a trio of Tennyson's monologues—the early "Saint Simeon Stylites" and "Tithonus," and the later "Lucretius"—in order to trace the poet's evolving figurations of—and poetic engagement in—"mindreading."

[5] Though I do not discuss Browning here, a look at poems like "Porphyria's Lover," "My Last Duchess," "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister," and "Caliban upon Setebos" discloses a hodgepodge of Machiavellian cognition, animistic projection, and ontogenetically primitive theories of mind.

[6] A useful overview of some recent approaches is contained in Alan Richardson's essay, "Cognitive Literary Criticism."

II.

The young Tennyson delighted in acting the part of the self-mortifying Saint Simeon Stylites "with grotesque grimness . . . laughing aloud at times."[7] His contempt for the saint's pathological brand of asceticism is clear enough; but his ridicule might also conceal an uneasy recognition of a certain structural kinship with his creation, despite the prodigious distance in sensibility between the two. The pillared saint's position was in fact analogous to that of this pioneer of a new poetics of intersubjectivity: both were attempting to merge their own mind (or soul) with that of a seemingly inaccessible other, armed with tools that might have seemed grotesquely inadequate to the task. In early monologues like "St. Simeon Stylites" and "Tithonus" (roughly contemporaneous with Browning's first monologues), Tennyson dramatizes scenarios which constitute striking compressions of his own project, in that they are populated by speakers confronted with the daunting problem of reckoning the contents of an inscrutable mind—the will of God, in the first case, and the radically alien subjectivity of Eos, in the second. As in *Maud*, mindreading thus appears as a central—and problematic—theme in these inaugural monologues which are particularly notable for their parallel strategies of conceptualizing subjective alterity. Specifically, both poems attempt to transmute the essentially binary quality of otherness into a scalable form—the better to suggest a sense of vastness and inaccessibility. Each monologue figures intersubjectivity as immense "distance"—spatial in the case of Simeon, temporal in that of Tithonus—a distance which in each case it seems impossible to bridge.

To take the case of Simeon first: the baroque modes of the saint's penance join together, within an overarching metaphor involving temporal protraction, with the moment of death stretched out over an agonizing length of years: "For did not all thy martyrs die one death? / . . . but I die here / To-day, and whole years long, a life of death" (49-53). But the form of punishment most conspicuously linked with Simeon's attempted approach to the divine—and that, of course, from which he derives his "surname" (158)—involves, rather, spatial extension. Simeon's self-imposed "pillar-punishment" represents a concrete embodiment, via a spatial metaphor, of the inter-subjective

[7] Cited in *Tennyson's Poetry* (66).

"distance" he seeks to bridge, in a pitiful, even comic, fashion. In his efforts to get nearer to the divine mind, Simeon first avails himself of natural heights: "Three winters, that my soul might grow to thee, / I lived up there on yonder mountain-side" (70-71). But eventually he brings human contrivance to his aid, in the form of man-made eminences:

> Then, that I might be more alone with thee,
> Three years I lived upon a pillar, high
> Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve;
> And twice three years I crouch'd on one that rose
> Twenty by measure; last of all, I grew
> Twice ten long weary, weary years to this,
> That numbers forty cubits from the soil. (84-90)

Such comically precise arithmetic, in such a context, itself stands as ample criticism of this attempt to worm one's way into the mind of God by squatting on a succession of progressively taller pillars.

Deeply ironic, too, is Simeon's apparent belief in the facile portability of the spirit, discernible in his ostensible belief in the unembodied or disembodied mind or soul.[8] Throughout the poem we encounter an extreme form of the trope of body as contingent container for mind, here associated with a diseased imagination. Simeon presents a particularly graphic form of the Christian dualist conception, one in which the soul is not only contingently but regrettably embodied within its corporeal frame, a hateful shell which he subjects to impressively creative forms of mortification. The poem's opening, in which the speaker casts his fallen state in terms of a hideous externality—"Altho' I be the basest of mankind, / From scalp to sole one slough and crust of skin" (1-2)—inaugurates, in onion-skin fashion, a ruling metaphor of concentric containers, in which the soul's liberation involves a progressive shedding of inessential corporeal layers. Throughout the poem conventional tropes of containment are invoked—he is "A vessel full of sin," a "dull chrysalis," and so on. The poem treats the body as susceptible to a gradual disassembly, as though all of its components were equally contingent; Simeon tells a story of progressive disintegration, from "my teeth, which now are dropt away" (29) to an anticipated time when "my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone" (43).

[8] For a discussion of the tension between models of cognitive embodiment in the poem, see Tate.

Tennyson's repetition of "drop" is suggestive, as "limbs" are finally to be ranked with "teeth," with no essential distinction being made between them. Such a vision of spiritual portability, absurdly maintained in the face of all contrary evidence, casts into yet sharper relief the absurdity of Simeon's efforts.

"Tithonus," originally composed in the same year as "Simeon," is another monologue centering upon a passionately desired union between the human and the divine. But where the first poem leaves off at the moment of heavily ironized apotheosis, the second explores its aftermath, as the speaker laments the consequences of an immortality which "consumes," of the curse of growing older without "the power to die." These complaints are set against the backdrop of a fundamental inter-subjective divide, the great and growing alienation of two minds—one founded largely in their respective apprehension of temporal existence.

The relationship between Tithonus and Eos is characterized by a decided absence of satisfactory communication; having enjoined his divine lover to "take back [her] gift" of immortality, Tithonus receives no explicit answer. First he is forced to gape helplessly at the succession of unmeaning bodily changes—her "glimmering," "reddening," and "brightening"—associated with her daily transfiguration rather than with any reflection of inner thought or feeling (in rather precise inversion of a cultural abecedary within which such changes, emanating from the body of the Victorian lady, would have been construed as significant) (27, 34, 37-38). He is then left alone to interpret as best as he can her nonverbal signs:

> Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
> In silence, then before thine answer given
> Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.
> Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,
> And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,
> In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?
> "The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts." (44-49)

Tithonus suspects (rightly, as the reader familiar with the myth understands) his lover's tears to be indices of her knowledge of the irrevocability of divine fiat; still, he can only "tremble," *lest* it be true, indicating that some ineluctable residue of uncertainty remains.

In fact, this episode only rehearses a pattern of inter-subjective incompatibility discernible from the first days of their love, as Tennyson depicts it through Tithonus's recollections. The sum of their exchanges betrays a certain essential asymmetry: his original (explicit, spoken) demand for eternal life ("Give me immortality") is answered by a "smile" and the seemingly wordless performative act itself. The early days of their passion seem to have been marked, if not always by "silence," then by the semblance of communication rather than its substance: Tithonus finds himself recalling the lips of Eos "Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet" (61). Tennyson thus captures, through enigmatic silences, ambiguous bodily signs, and unmeaning ("semiotic," in Kristeva's sense) sweet nothings, the basic absence of a shared language, even after Tithonus has been immortalized—a trope which in turn symbolizes the essential inter-subjective distance that plagues the lovers. For Tithonus's tragedy inheres in his hybrid nature, the fact that he embodies a selective combination of aspects of humanity and divinity, with an emergent property—a dreadful "Immortal age"—present in neither.

But while Tennyson's images of the "white-hair'd shadow" with bare "wrinkled feet" grotesquely prowling the halls of dawn invite us to focus on the spectacle of the impossibly aged shell that is Tithonus's body, that "maim'd" form—with all its presumptive agonies and indignities—is really an outward sign of an inward incongruity: a mind equipped with a human conception of time forced to inhabit an indescribably vaster scale of temporality.[9] The celebrated, time-lapse-photography scenarios presented in the poem's opening lines are particularly suggestive in this connection:

> The woods decay, the woods decay and fall
> The vapors weep their burthen to the ground,
> Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath
> And after many a summer dies the swan. (1-4)

These images, followed by the bitter observation "Me only cruel immortality / Consumes," indicate that the speaker has retained a mortal's apprehension of temporality, even as he now has one foot in the eternal. Tithonus's plaint, "I wither slowly in thine arms," wonderfully captures the sense of the two lovers, despite their ironic proximity in

[9] Much the same dilemma was experienced by early readers of Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, which had appeared in the years immediately preceding the poem's composition.

space, progressively diverging within the dispensation of time (5-6). Indeed, elsewhere in the poem, time, in the form of the narrative of the natural human lifespan, is conceptualized as a journey in space. Tithonus begs Eos to "let [him] go," wondering rhetorically,

> Why should a man desire in any way
> To vary from the kindly race of men,
> Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
> Where all should pause, as is most meet for all? (28-31)

The association of subjectivity with temporal experience represents in "Tithonus" another attempt to transmute otherness into a scalable form. In other words, time is to "Tithonus" what space is to "St. Simeon Stylites," its own exercises in temporal protraction and compression being comparable to the other poem's spatialization of alterity, particularly through figures of extension and contraction. As "Simeon" imagines a journey in space towards a (perhaps inaccessible) divine mind, Tithonus records the progressive dissolution of a problematic, imperfectly consummated union between two minds, defined in large measure by their relationship with time.

But where do these parallel figures of hopeless intersubjective division come from? If these poems figure or embody their own scenarios of production, with their tableaux suggesting dramatizations of the emergent monologue form in its attempts to know the mind of another, then the seeming impossibility of any such consummation depicted within the field of representation in both cases may well express a certain essential skepticism or pessimism directed at the genre's overarching project of imagining the workings of other minds from within.

III.

Tennyson's later monologue "Lucretius" (1865) is a fascinating, if neglected, poem premised upon the forcible blending of the speaker's "mind" with "the brute brain" to produce a self-loathing hybrid. The poem draws upon emergent conceptions of both "mind" and "brain" in exploring the embodied nature of cognition, in both the self and others—a condition that asserts itself with a vengeance in this post-Darwinian return to

the genre by Tennyson. Moreover, Lucretius's blended brain proves distressingly proximate to a host of other forms of subjectivity, suggesting that after Darwin, we may indeed be closer than we might wish to the minds of others—but this is hardly a condition to be celebrated.

As in Tennyson's earlier monologues, inter-subjective barriers loom large in "Lucretius": the eponymous poet-philosopher's wife Lucilia fears she has lost his affection, "dream[ing] some rival" even though in truth he "loves her none the less" (4, 15). Accordingly, Lucilia takes the drastic step of staging a cognitive intervention, in the form of a violently irruptive love potion. This provides the condition of possibility for the monologue itself, activating as it does the poet's evolutionarily blended brain and leading to his agonizing descent from the golden halls of abstraction into a painfully concrete phantasmagoria of sensuality—a condition tending as well to dissolve distinctions between and among different forms of consciousness.

As the above opposition indicates, Tennyson's poem invokes two quite distinct, indeed antithetical, models of mind, each suggesting a different relationship to the body. This division is nicely captured by the text's movement, within some dozen lines, from the use of "mind" to that of "brain," subtly signaling a shift from a belief in an unembodied spirit to the recognition of a profoundly embodied organ of thought. The portrait of Lucretius presented in the poem's opening lines suggests the speaker's commitment to a dualist belief in the utter separation of mind and body, with the former privileged at the expense of the latter. The "austere" philosopher's "mind" is preoccupied with "argument" and the contemplation of Epicurean texts, even as his wife seeks a return to the now-fled carnal relationship, "the morning flush / Of passion and the first embrace," that had characterized their early marriage (2-3). The ostensible materialism of his school notwithstanding, Lucretius thinks of the body as a vessel the mind may flee at will. His thought, consistent with academic stereotype, is usually elsewhere—riding the imaginary wave of Epicurean hexameters (12) and leaving his body unavailable for mere fleshly dalliance; small wonder he's become "cold," in his wife's eyes.

Lucilia, by contrast, proves far more attuned to the reality of the embodied mind than her excessively contemplative spouse; she thinks in terms of body and thinks of her husband *as* a body: she "hear[s] his foot / Return from pacings in the field"—he is a foot,

its tread material and to be heard treading, indeed, on the end of the line (5-6). Accordingly, Lucilia strikes at the mind through the body, her "philtre" attacking the blood and so the brain, which she recognizes as the royal road to a man's mind:

> . . . the wicked broth
> Confused the chemic labor of the blood,
> And tickling the brute brain within the man's
> Made havoc among those tender cells, and check'd
> His power to shape. (19-23)

The poem's narrative thus vindicates her, as even her husband must ultimately have agreed; for if Lucretius's folk theory of mind had initially lagged behind the rest of his theoretical materialism, by the poem's end it has caught up dramatically. The philosopher's suicide is accompanied by a histrionic declaration of the inescapable embodiment of mind (or in any event "soul"), its final inseparability from its material component: "Thus—thus—the soul flies out and dies in the air" (273). This poem of the 1860s treats the brain as evolutionary inheritance and cognitive palimpsest, anticipating the model of the triune brain by conceptually locating the antecedent "brute" mind *within* the "man's." This brain is, in other words, a hybrid—a fact the lofty-minded philosopher was able to ignore until the chemical wedding brought about by the potion's agency, its initiation of a ruinous cerebral dialogue experienced from within as a ghastly "tickling," and later a violent seizure by "an unseen monster" with "vast and filthy hands" (219-20).

Interestingly, his hybrid brain, once revealed as such—precisely the task lately performed by Darwin in the larger context of mid-Victorian culture—begins straightaway to perceive and to loathe hybridity everywhere. This is a condition surely made all the more galling by the philosopher's previous ontological resistance to the category of hybridity as such: when a satyr, presumably hallucinatory, appears to him, he cries: "but him I proved impossible; / Twy-natured is no nature" (193-94). Well might he ask, rhetorically, "How should the mind, except it loved them, clasp / These idols to herself" (164), as it is his blended mind which produces an uncontrollable succession of blends, in nightmare and waking hallucination alike. Lucretius is almost immediately subjected to the spectacle of dancing courtesans whom he suggestively characterizes as "hired animalisms" with hands "mixt" together (53, 56); throughout the poem, he is similarly

haunted by the specter of the therianthrope, "twy-natured" mixtures of the human, animal, and/or divine, from "dragon warriors from Cadmean teeth" to "harpies," and from "nymph" and "faun" to "Oread" (50, 159, 187-88). Mentally Lucretius invokes the legend of Picus and Faunus: the former associated with animal transformation (by Circe, into a woodpecker), and the latter a figure linked with Pan, frequently depicted as horned.

Along with this runaway production of conceptual hybrids drawn from a combinatory of animal, human, and divine elements, the potion also seems to engender in Lucretius a habit of mindreading, as he roves along a great chain of inter-subjective inference, speculating about the cognition of beast, man, and god alike (he has also become a thoroughgoing numinist). Lucretius has had an object lesson in the mind's rootedness in the dictates of the body, and he suspects that the gods may not exist in a transcendent realm of "eternal calm." Instead, they, too, might have corporeally beholden minds:

> Nay, if thou canst, O Goddess [Venus], like ourselves
> Touch, and be touch'd, then would I cry to thee
> To kiss thy Mavors [Mars], roll thy tender arms
> Round him, and keep him from the lust of blood
> That makes a steaming slaughter-house of Rome. (80-84)

He thus imagines the divine mind as embodied, and roots his theory of mind in analogy: "if thou canst . . . *like ourselves* / Touch and be touch'd." Later, Lucretius speculates about Apollo's capacity to know the minds of men, with the topos of divine indifference to human affairs here cast as a kind of mind-blindness. Lucretius speaks with confidence about the contents of Apollo's mind, believing that the god is incapable of distinguishing a living eye from a dead one, and asserting that he cannot penetrate into his own head to peer into his intentions:

> And me, altho' his fire is on my face
> Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can tell
> Whether I mean this day to end myself. (144-46)

Furthermore, Lucretius experiences new difficulties in knowing his *own* mind, as when he guesses at, rather than recalls, his own former intent in writing *De Rerum Natura*:

> ...[I] meant
> Surely to lead my Memmius in a train
> Of flowery clauses onward to the proof
> That Gods there are, and deathless. Meant? I meant?
> I have forgotten what I meant; my mind
> Stumbles . . . (118-23)

Such self-estrangement recalls Browning's Caliban and his reflexive commentaries. But while that nearly contemporaneous poem depicts the development of a model of consciousness, Tennyson dramatizes a process of disintegration, with the speaker's cognition in evolutionary free-fall. Nor do I think that the link between hybridity and mindreading in the poem is an unmotivated one: among the blends this blended brain creates, the most crucial perhaps is the conceptual hybrid that is an idea of another's consciousness. If the speakers of earlier monologues invite our ridicule for their conceptions of a radically unembodied mind, Lucretius' all-too-embodied brain leads him towards an unwanted kinship with a vast continuum of other minds, all sharing the lowest common denominator of embodied cognition.

Tennyson's explorations of intersubjectivity did not emerge within a cultural vacuum. Part of my contention here is that "the consciousness of others," as Gillian Beer has termed it in her recent work on Darwin, loomed as a central problem for the Victorian imagination. I understand the dramatic monologue as a kind of mindreading technology, an experiment in conceptualizing other minds which emerged at a key historical moment. This moment reflects Britain's confrontation with a host of threatening forms of subjectivity, ranging from the unknown mind of the colonized native and the swelling domestic under-classes to the Darwinian concept of the proximate animal brain. Any "theory of mind" is, among other things, a conceptual blend,[10] albeit one prompted by the dictates of our cognitive architecture. The dramatic monologue is, likewise, precisely such a blend—conspicuously so, Ruskin's belief to the contrary. We *do* project consciousness and its attributes onto other minds; and, while this is an evolved, innate capacity, it is also one that works in tandem with cultural prompts, from psychological

[10] See Turner (1996) and Fauconnier and Turner (2002) for descriptions of conceptual blending theory, with its attendant terminology, which I use here. I thank Michael Booth and Liz Hart for our illuminating discussions of blending.

theories to artistic genres. The monologue is thus a genre that mirrors or recapitulates, in cultural time, the work of what cognitive scientists call mindreading. Just as we generate a theory of mind by juxtaposing our conceptualization of our own consciousness with the idea of an agent who is not oneself to produce a new conceptual entity, namely the mind of the other, so does the monologue blend the culturally specific conceptual space of lyric subjectivity with the idea of alterity[11] to create a new generic "space" for the exploration of forms of subjectivity. Tennyson's ongoing experiments in this mindreading genre reveal an abiding pessimism; but in viewing the poet as a pioneer of a modern poetics of inter-subjective exploration, we may more fully appreciate his great relevance to our own "cognitive" age.

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[11] An act of blending particularly conspicuous in Browning's favored denomination for the form, the "dramatic lyric."

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"The weight of all the hopes of half the world": Tennyson's *The Princess* and Maurice's *Eustace Conway*

Leslie Haynsworth

In an 1834 letter to Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill wrote,

> A much more remarkable production than anything of mine is a novel which has lately appeared, entitled "Eustace Conway," written by a far superior man, evidently, to the author of "Arthur Coningsby," but the tone of thinking is much the same. You will read it with great interest, I am sure, though you will probably differ from many of the author's opinions as widely as I do. (I: 99)

Mill's contrast is between F.D. Maurice's *Eustace Conway* (1834) and *Arthur Coningsby* (1833) by John Sterling, the latter the subject of a biography by Carlyle and, with Maurice and Tennyson, a member of the Cambridge Apostles.

Similarly, Samuel Taylor Coleridge reportedly spoke of *Eustace Conway* "with very high and almost unmingled admiration"; he "liked it exceedingly" (Want lvi-lvii). That kind of strong praise from exalted literary figures might have seemed to bode well for the novel and for the future literary career of its author, first-time novelist Frederick Denison Maurice. Instead, as Maurice scholar Elmer Cleveland Want notes, "Maurice's novel made little impact outside his own circle of friends and the 'Apostles' at Cambridge" (lv). So slight was the book's impact that it has remained out of print for much of the last century, and the critical edition Want prepared for his Ph.D. dissertation in 1968 remains unpublished.

Unsuccessful as Maurice's literary career has since proven to be, his circle of friends included some of the literary luminaries of the day, one of whom in particular was clearly influenced by *Eustace Conway* at a critical turning point in his own career. Maurice was not just a member of the Cambridge Apostles: he was a founding member and acknowledged leader of the group. One of the young Apostles who arrived at Cambridge

toward the end of Maurice's tenure there was Alfred Tennyson. The Apostles were both socially and intellectually central to Tennyson's Cambridge experience, when the group was still very much under Maurice's influence. By the 1840s, when Tennyson was emerging as one of the nation's most important poetic voices, Maurice shifted from literature to theology.[1] He became the spiritual leader of the Christian Socialist movement and, as such, exerted direct and acknowledged influence on the literary output of a number of mid-Victorian novelists, most notably Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes.

But it is readily apparent that Maurice's lone novel also influenced—and perhaps even inspired—Tennyson's first long poem, *The Princess* (1847). Both works are centrally concerned with issues of education and relations between the sexes, and both posit these issues as being crucial to the well-being of the nation. Maurice's thoughts on these issues led to his penning a novel that tends on the whole to portray women more favorably than men, and to his playing an instrumental role in the founding of Queen's College, London for the education of women in 1848. Alternatively, Tennyson's poem voices a considerable degree of anxiety about higher education for women, and a far more complicated and vexed sense of relations between the sexes than Maurice's novel expresses.

What is interesting about the observation that *The Princess* is, at least in part, a response to *Eustace Conway* has less to do with influence than with the divergent perspectives these two texts bring to the same set of issues. Tennyson and Maurice liked and admired each other; they were of the same generation and part of the same social and intellectual set; and as ambitious sons of country parsons, they surely understood each other in ways that would have set them apart from other members of the Apostles.[2] Despite this shared background and a broadly shared inclination toward progressive politics and theology, their views on gender relations and normative or ideal gendered identity, as manifested in these two texts, are strikingly different. A close examination of

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[1] *Eustace Conway* is, as a debut novel, not unpromising. But as the only novel written by one better known as a theologian, it has received scant critical attention. Whatever literary reputation the novel might have launched for Maurice has been eclipsed by his reputation as a theologian.

[2] Strictly speaking, Tennyson was the son of a country parson and Maurice the son of a Unitarian minister; but both had more provincial and less genteel upbringings than those of the average Cambridge undergraduate of their day.

those differences illuminates some of the complexities vexing the spectrum of Victorian attitudes, ideas, and beliefs about gender.

Moreover, while Tennyson's presentation of gender roles and gendered identity in *The Princess* clearly registers as less progressive than Maurice's, a comparison of the two also shows that Tennyson's grasp of gender politics is both less naïve and more complex than Maurice's. Tennyson's gender politics have never sat well with feminist critics, and *The Princess* is undoubtedly the site of a fairly aggressive shutting down of female agency and female desires that transgress the boundaries of patriarchally-ordained notions of feminine identity.[3] But that shutting down registers so strongly in large part because the poem overtly engages sites of tension and conflict between the sexes. Tennyson has been described as a comparatively simple-minded poet;[4] but putting *The Princess* side-by-side with *Eustace Conway* shows Tennyson refusing to be simple-minded or reductive in his articulation of ideas about gender norms and identities. Arguably, any perceived lack of authorial control over the subject matter stems less from an inability to understand than from an unflinching acknowledgement of complexity, and an unwillingness to simplify matters to the point where the poem's tensions can neatly and convincingly be resolved.

The Princess and its precursor texts

Perhaps the most obvious—and certainly the best-known—precursor for *The Princess*'s central theme of higher education for women comes from Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas*, where the eponymous protagonist's beloved sister, Princess Nekayah, dreams of founding a college for women.[5] *The Princess* also echoes *Rasselas* generically, insofar

[3] Kate Millett's seminal work in *Sexual Politics* (1970) set the tone for much subsequent scholarship on Tennyson's gender politics. Millett sees the primary cultural work of *The Princess* as taming Ida "into a docile but slightly above-average housewife whose additional accomplishment is a discarded bit of learning, abdicated to the higher cause of service to ego and his heirs" (77).

[4] In his introduction to a 1946 anthology of Tennyson's poems, W.H. Auden famously called Tennyson "undoubtedly the stupidest" of English poets (x). For a more detailed list of the various critiques advanced against Tennyson's intellectual powers over the years, see Stephen Grant's "The Mystical Implications of *In Memoriam*."

[5] "The Princess thought that of all sublunary things, knowledge was the best; she desired first, to learn all sciences, and then purposed to found a college of learned women in which she could preside: that . . . she might raise up for the next age, models of prudence and patterns of piety" (Johnson 137).

as it borrows some of the trappings of the oriental tale: it is set in the past in an exotic, vaguely eastern elsewhere, and peopled with noble characters that are and are not like their modern English counterparts. Other potential sources for the poem, according to John Killham, include *The Female Academy*, a 1662 play by the Duchess of Newcastle, and Shakespeare's *Love's Labour Lost* (16). Ultimately, Killham invokes the "improbability of Tennyson's being indebted to any literary forebear for the theme" (16) and concludes that "the theme of marriage and the higher education for women treated in the poem was suggested to Tennyson by contemporary theories and events" (18). That there is no one predominant precursor text for *The Princess* seems likely; but scholar Paul Turner asserts that the original idea for the poem was sparked by *Eustace Conway*, "a novel that he 'dipped into' in 1834 . . . which shares many features with the poem's Prologue" (101). Turner's astute observation notably shifts critical focus from older, well-known precursor texts to one of Tennyson's contemporaries and close affiliates, one whose novel grappled with the kinds of contemporary issues—like the higher education of women—that so often inform Tennyson's own work.

There are several fingerprints on *The Princess* that do in fact look like they came directly from *Eustace Conway*. Most striking is a strong similarity of names: Tennyson's student-poets spin their tale at the country estate of Sir Walter Vivian—and Eustace Conway was raised at the country estate of his uncle Charles Vyvyan. Similarly, family relations in the frame narrative for *The Princess* recall those in *Eustace Conway*: Lilia and her maiden Aunt Elizabeth are near-doubles for Eustace's precocious cousin Maria Vyvyan and maiden aunt, Miss Vyvyan. As Tennyson cast about for a set of characters and the names he would give them, he settled on family names, dynamics, and histories that clearly resemble those in Maurice's novel. Given Tennyson's famed facility with language, these similarities seem likely to have been deliberate rather than unintentional echoes, as if Tennyson was acknowledging, however tacitly, his indebtedness to Maurice's novel, or at least winking playfully at his friend.

More significantly, Eustace's sister Honoria is persistently preoccupied with higher education. Although vexed with the shortcomings of Eustace's Cambridge education, she supports his decision to leave without a degree: "Well, Eustace, I think as universities are so mischievous to men, you must make them over to us. I could be very well content to

live four years amidst old cake and chapels, without asking a single question about the government" (79). Honoria's conclusion—that "her brother and his friends were endeavoring to form themselves into beings who, privately, socially, and publicly, should be half wisdom, half folly, and all contradiction" (21)—aligns with Maurice's implication that women might make better use of a university education than most men do. As the only male child in an intellectually-oriented family, Maurice was sandwiched between seven sisters, several of whom grappled with the larger theological and political issues of the day. While writing *Eustace Conway*, Maurice was tutoring his younger sisters (Want x), and his thoughts about women's academic capabilities were no doubt shaped by that experience.

Tennyson's Lilia clearly shares—even amplifies—Honoria's perspective on what higher education might mean for women:

> Quick answered Lilia, "There are thousands now
> Such women, but convention beats them down . . . .
> Ah! Were I something great! I wish I were
> Some mighty poetess, I would shame you then,
> That love to keep us children! O I wish
> That I were some great princess, I would build
> Far off from men a college like a man's,
> And I would teach them all that men are taught;
> We are twice as quick!["]
>
> (Prologue, ll. 127-28; 131-37)

Notably, what *The Princess* does not share is Maurice's uncomplicated endorsement of this perspective. This, coupled with the echoing of character names from *Eustace Conway*, suggests that Tennyson's borrowing from Maurice's novel may have occurred at a subconscious level. As the emerging poetic voice of his generation (and one who tended to display a fair amount of self-consciousness about that role), Tennyson was unlikely to have left such overt markers of the influence of an obscure novel on his poem deliberately. But *The Princess* was planned out in 1839; further, as Turner points out, Tennyson had read *Eustace Conway* just a few years earlier (101). It is possible that Honoria's offhand remark about making universities over to women even planted the

germ of the idea for *The Princess* in Tennyson's head. And what Tennyson could have picked up from *Eustace Conway* but not from *Rasselas* is a melodramatic plot that engages both familial affections and romantic ones. Despite being most centrally concerned with theological issues and with its hero's philosophical struggles as he seeks to navigate between Benthamism and Coleridgean Romanticism, *Eustace Conway* is replete with thwarted romance and intense brother-sister relationships, like *The Princess*'s Florian and Psyche. Moreover, just as Tennyson's prince has two close male friends who pull him in different philosophical directions, so too does Eustace.

Thus, while the issue of higher education for women does not take center stage in *Eustace Conway* as it does in *The Princess*, the two narratives are structurally similar in several significant ways. Affective drama and narrative tension in both play out across a complex web of brothers, sisters, and friends. In both works, issues of education, politics, and domestic relations are conjoined so as to suggest inextricable relations between them. Whether or not *Eustace Conway* was a direct influence on *The Princess*, the novel is clearly a central part of the cultural and thematic matrix out of which Tennyson's poem emerged.

Gender Politics: *The Princess* and *Eustace Conway*

In her commentary on the poet, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick asserts: "It was the peculiar genius of Tennyson to light on the tired, moderate, unconscious ideologies of his time and class, and by the force of his investment in them, and his gorgeous lyric gift, to make them seem frothing-at-the-mouth mad" (125). More to the point, in terms of gender politics, is Marion Shaw's observation that "No English poet has written more about women than Tennyson" (226).[6] In *The Princess*, which takes us from "the astonishing vision of a feminist separatist community" to "one of the age's definitive articulations of the cult of the angel in the house" (Sedgwick 126), both of these tendencies come to the

[6] Tennyson wrote about many different types of women, including flirts, saints, and "spirited and haughty girls" to name a few (Shaw 226). But Tennyson's fascination with female subjectivity was eventually channeled into a more consistent interest in a particular, Mariana-like type, who "waits to be released by a man from sterile self-absorption and inactivity into marriage or death." Although Ida is neither inactive nor waiting for a man to take charge of her destiny, *The Princess* nevertheless enacts this same fate for her.

fore, as dominant ideological investments in normative feminine identity are very much in evidence. While Sedgwick's claim that the poem evinces a "frothing-at-the-mouth-mad" sensibility may be hyperbolic, *The Princess* does indeed deliberately superheat its gender politics.

Most striking about the poem's engagement with questions of normative or desirable gendered identity is how strongly it gives voice to both male and female, and conservative and iconoclastic points of view. The prince, for example, expresses a sweetly romantic and traditional view of courtly love when he tells Ida:

> O not to pry and peer on your reserve,
> But led by golden wishes . . .
> did I break
> Your precinct; not a scorner of your sex
> But venerator . . . .
> my nurse would tell me of you;
> I babbled for you, as babies for the moon,
> Vague brightness; when a boy, you stooped to me
> From all high places, lived in all fair lights,
> Came in long breezes rapt from inmost south
> And blown to inmost north; at eve and dawn
> With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods.
> (IV: 399-400; 401-03; 407-13)

Here the prince represents man as the hunter and woman as the passive, idealized object of his desires. This benignly sentimental account of his feelings is clearly meant to honor and flatter Ida, yet it denies her subjectivity and agency. Thus, she forcefully advances her own perspective:

> "You that have dared to break our bound, and gulled
> Our servants, wronged and lied and thwarted us—
> *I* wed with thee! *I* bound by precontract
> Your bride, your bondslave! not though all the gold
> That veins the world were packed to make your crown,
> And every spoken tongue should lord you. Sir,
> Your falsehood and yourself are hateful to us."
> (IV: 518-24)

In trying to fulfill his romantic desires, the prince has violated Ida's household and her sovereignty over the most basic aspects of her daily life. The fact that his pursuit of Ida would register with her as a *violation* does not even occur to the prince, but the poem makes certain that readers cannot escape exposure to Ida's perspective. If he is oblivious to her personhood, her existence as an autonomous subject who escapes the frame of his own matrimonial fantasies, the poem refuses to allow us a similar patriarchal complacency. The forcefulness with which Ida articulates the disjunction between his perspective and hers compels us to acknowledge the stark tension between their respective desires, whether we sympathize with Ida or not.

Indeed, as these two passages suggest, the poem creates a full-fledged battle of the sexes. The prince, sustained by his father's traditionally patriarchal view that "Man is the hunter; woman is his game / . . . . We hunt them for the beauty of their skins; / They love us for it, and we ride them down" (V: 147-48, 150), nurses romantic dreams about a woman he doesn't know, while Princess Ida scorns his advances and dreams only of being allowed to have the kind of education—and subjectivity—that he as a man can take for granted. There is no room for negotiation between these competing points of view; while the prince tries somewhat halfheartedly to imagine that he might be able to win Ida over on mutually acceptable terms—"More soluble is this knot, / by gentleness than war. I want her love" (V: 129-30)—his perspective is problematized by his own indeterminately gendered identity (he cross-dresses quite successfully, after all), and by his unstable perspective. Unlike either Ida or his father, both of whom are resolute in their beliefs and their identities, the prince keeps swooning into dream-states where he comes to question not only his identity but his very existence:

> On a sudden my strange seizure came
> Upon me, the weird vision of our house:
> The Princess Ida seemed a hollow show,
> Her gay-furred cats a painted fantasy,
> Her college and her maidens, empty masks,
> And I myself the shadow of a dream,

For all things were and were not. (III: 167-73)

These surreal visions are supposedly physiological in origin, the result of "weird seizures" (I: 14); but in fact, they locate the prince precisely in the fraught and indeterminate space between the king's resolute fantasy of female subordination—"Man to command and woman to obey; / All else confusion" (V: 440-41)—and Ida's resolute fantasy of female autonomy: "therefore I set my face / Against all men, and lived but for mine own" (V: 378-79). The Princess Ida of the prince's fantasies *is* a hollow show; she bears no relation whatsoever to the real woman. But from his father's perspective, the real Princess Ida who stands before him as head of a college for women is also a hollow show, a sham, a painted fantasy, a perverse mockery of the natural order of things. Thus, in the space between Ida's vision and the King's, everything becomes radically indeterminate, for nothing can with any certainty be declared "real."

The middle ground the prince desires to stake out is thus unsustainable; and, in a move that seems to confirm Sedgwick's account of Tennyson as being in thrall to prevailing ideology, the old king's vision wins out. Chastened by the sight of the prince lying senseless after being injured in battle, Ida has an unexpected and abrupt change of heart:

> And then once more she looked at my pale face:
> Til understanding all the foolish work
> Of fancy, and the bitter close of all,
> Her iron will was broken in her mind;
> Her noble heart was broken in her breast;
> She bowed . . . . (VI: 99-104)

Ida's strength of mind and of character will now be pressed into the service of what will remain a patriarchal social order and, indeed, will serve to reinvigorate that order. As the king sees her, she is "Stubborn, but she may sit / Upon a king's right hand in thunder-storms, / And breed up warriors!" (V: 428-30). This is most desirable, given the prince's own lack of warrior-like tendencies; as Kate Millett notes, he is "not promising material—an epileptic with long golden curls who goes about in drag, and sings falsetto while courting" (77). Luckily, as the prince himself has observed, in comparing Ida's mighty brother, Arac, with her mild-natured father, it appears that "The mother makes us

most" (V: 496). Men, the poem proposes, can afford to be unmanly, even childish and weak, as long as strong women can be pressed into the service of the patriarchy. The prince is a particularly—indeed, one would have to conclude, deliberately—unprepossessing masculine subject: yet his desires and his perspective prevail. Arguably, then, through its portrayal of strong and would-be transgressive womanhood, what *The Princess* ultimately creates space for is weak or effeminate manhood.[7] The poem overtly presents alternatives to conventional notions of gendered identity but nevertheless insists in the end on the preservation of traditional gender roles.

Sedgwick concludes that *The Princess* raises the possibility of an alternate model of female subjectivity only to crush it:

> The loving construction of a female world, centered in a female university, looking back on a new female history and forward to a newly empowered future; and then the zestful destruction of that world root and branch, the erasure of its learning and ideals and the evisceration of its institutions—both are the achievements of Tennyson's genius for ideological investment. (126)

At a time when British understanding of masculine identity felt precariously unstable—when, as Shaw and others have observed, "manliness" itself seemed to be taking on increasingly female overtones, while moving aggressively away from, even defining itself against, the feminine[8]—*The Princess* appears to stage its battle of the sexes so as to assuage male anxieties about men's place in the order of things. In effect, the poem says to its male audience, don't worry; even if your gendered identity is as fuzzy as the prince's, you'll be fine: for there's something so essential and immutable about female nature and female biological destiny that even the most wayward of women can and will

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[7] Gerhard Joseph suggests that it is precisely through his lack of manliness, and specifically through his seizures, which did not feature in the poem until the 1851 version, that the Prince attains more subjectivity, "so that he becomes at least as important a figure as Princess Ida, if he does not become the center of focus completely" (82).

[8] See, for example, Shaw, "The Contours of Manliness and the Nature of Woman"; also Elliot Gilbert, "The Female King: Tennyson's Arthurian Apocalypse," and Claudia Nelson, *Boys Will Be Girls*. While, as Shaw points out, masculine identity increasingly came to be defined in opposition to the feminine as the century progressed, Nelson also traces a progression whereby young males were increasingly socialized to adopt more "feminine" virtues. So a real man in mid-Victorian England both was and was not supposed to be "womanly."

be subdued into marriage and motherhood, where they'll prop you up nicely from behind if your masculinity starts to sag a bit.

This is comfort indeed—if it is a credible message. But I'm not sure that it is. The poem does ostensibly ratify the King's patriarchal perspective. Yet, despite the way that perspective gets shut down at the end of the poem, Ida's viewpoint is given a very strong airing in *The Princess*—the poem's very name calling attention to her as its central subject. Tennyson's women, says Shaw, tend to be "shadowy and distant" (221); but Ida is very much in the forefront of this narrative, while the prince inhabits a world of shadows. Princess Ida makes her case repeatedly and persuasively. Scorning the uses to which men have put poetry—"Knaves are men, / That lute and flute fantastic tenderness, / And dress the victim to the offering up" (IV: 110-12)—Ida proposes that literature should have nobler ends:

> ...for song
> Is duer unto freedom, force and growth
> Of spirit than to junketing and love.
> Love is it? Would this same mock-love and this
> Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter bats,
> Til all men grew to rate us at our worth,
> Not vassals to beat, nor pretty babes
> To be dandled, no, but living wills, and sphered
> Whole in ourselves and owed to none.
>
> (IV: 122-30)

Ida speaks an incontrovertible truth: the history of women is marked by patronage and oppression, legally and epistemologically, in precisely the terms Ida describes. While feminist critics hesitate to hail Tennyson as a model for progressive gender politics, he was willing to raise issues that the dominant discourse about gender norms in his day tended to suppress.

While Tennyson himself had a tendency to voice discomfort about women—"the locus of anxiety and dissatisfaction" (Shaw 221)—in much of his work, Princess Ida was no straw (wo)man who is set up to make a fool of herself so that we can rejoice at her rhetorical defeat. Instead, she is allowed to air her perspective forcefully, compellingly,

and repeatedly. The result is that readers are given every opportunity to sympathize with her or at least to understand what lies at the root of her wayward desires. It is that heightened sympathy and understanding that causes Ida's ultimate capitulation to register so forcefully. If she were plainly and simply a villain, or just a very silly girl, we would be inclined to welcome her re-assumption of her patriarchally-ordained role as a rehabilitation or a coming to her senses. But by granting her so much discursive authority, the poem calls attention to the misogyny—or oppressiveness—of its own resolution: Ida's dreams must be crushed if the prevailing social order is to be maintained.

In this respect, *The Princess*'s ideological investments are more blatant than need be. As such, the poem anticipates the move made by the sensation novels and New Woman novels that emerged later in the century. These novels often punish their wayward heroines, seeming to ratify traditional gender norms and conventional notions of domesticity. But sensation fiction's transgressive heroines have a way of escaping the frame; and critics have argued that sensation novels in fact encourage readers to read against the grain of their ostensible ideological investments, to sympathize with and even endorse their heroines' "dangerous" desires, and thus to experience themselves the stirring of rebellion against a patriarchal social order.[9]

Similarly, while the poem tells us that Ida was misguided, and that her dangerous ideas have now been safely contained, her impassioned cry for a different model of femininity is not itself shut down by the poem's resolution. *The Princess* roils the waters of gender politics more than it needs to, thus inviting considerably more reader scrutiny of gender roles and identities than typical of a poem by a fairly conventional male poet.

It is in light of Tennyson's treatment of Ida, his forceful articulation but apparent suppression of her perspective, that a comparison with *Eustace Conway* can be instructive. On the surface, the gender politics of Maurice's novel are far more progressive than Tennyson's *The Princess*; the narrator takes for granted that women are intelligent, sensible, and worthy of being accorded the same amount of respect as men. The novel's portraits of twin protagonists Eustace and his sister Honoria suggests that

[9] See, for example, Ann Cvetkovich, *Mixed Feelings*.

male and female intellect and interests are more similar than conventional educational schemes suggest:

> [T]he attachment of all around them [Eustace and Honoria] . . . strengthened their sympathy with each other. Their guardian . . . by giving them separate occupations, endeavored to prevent it from interfering mischievously with their education: the attempt was not entirely successful. They attended diligently enough to the lessons of their respective masters; but they had so many opportunities of comparing them in their walks and rides, so many for setting on foot common areas of interest, that in the end their studies became not very dissimilar. (17-18)

Honoria and Eustace instinctively defy the norms by which their education is governed, sharing knowledge across the gender divide that is supposed to be the basis for separate intellectual spheres. Implicitly, then, the passage suggests that nature and culture are in this respect at odds: men and women want to learn and think together, and it is only socio-cultural custom that keeps them apart.[10]

Here is a progressive vision of female intellection; but on the other hand, in contrast to the strident battles of the sexes in *The Princess*, this passage has the effect of obscuring any sense that there is a problem with the status quo. While society might prevent women from receiving in full the education they want, women and men can simply work together, as Eustace and Honoria do, to solve this problem. This is the prevailing sentiment in *Eustace Conway*. The novel does, like Tennyson's poem, put its male and female characters in conflict with one another, but these conflicts are not posited as originating in gender difference or in the differing agendas of men and women. Rather, even when these conflicts play out across gender lines, they originate from philosophical

[10] Maurice's male characters are comparatively secure in their masculine identities; Eustace remarks: "Young men like Morton and myself, Lady Edward, who have only left college a year or two, naturally retain much pedantry and boyishness; we are clumsily attempting to catch the style of society, into the spirit of which we have not yet entered; and, as always happens in such a case, we overdo the thing, load our style with idioms . . . and become more worldly than the worldling. We are naturally, therefore, obnoxious to our own sex, as exhibiting a parody upon its deformities; and still more obnoxious to yours, who are so keenly alive to the difference between truth and fiction, effort and accomplishment" (788-89). Perhaps because he is comfortable enough in his pedantic and boyish skin to laugh at himself, Eustace does not feel threatened by intellectually powerful women.

or theological misguidedness. One of the greatest sins against a woman in Maurice's novel is committed by a Benthamite, whose utilitarian beliefs persuade him that the most expedient way of getting a wife is to kidnap an heiress and bring her to his house so that her virtue will be compromised. Eustace foils this plot, but in so doing is accused of having kidnapped the heiress himself; in prison, he meets a German prisoner who converts him to Christianity, thereby setting him on a path to both contentment and utility.

Eustace Conway's most melodramatic twists and turns often lead less to a disordering or reordering of affective relations than to shifts in the protagonists' philosophical or theological perspectives. Given this preoccupation with matters ontological and existential, *Eustace Conway* finds common ground among all its characters' concerns and preoccupations, and proposes that men and women can and do work together to achieve mutual intellectual growth and social and professional advancement. While *The Princess* casts male and female relations as a zero sum game, *Eustace Conway* posits a pleasant synergy between men and women. What Eustace would do if his bride sought to found a university for women (he marries the "Lilia" of the novel, his cousin Maria) remains unarticulated.

All the same, as progressive as it may seem, *Eustace Conway*'s benign account of relations between the sexes does seem naïve in relation to the actual circumstances of the time. Moreover, with its quiet confidence that men and women do share mutual respect, the novel tends to elide any sense of agitation about women's plight. Superficially, if *The Princess* represents a male fantasy about how even the most wayward women can be tamed, *Eustace Conway* posits a sort of feminist fantasy space where women's intellects will be given free rein. In terms of the actual ideological work they perform, both texts can be read against their purported grain: through its violent repression of Ida's ideals, *The Princess* engenders considerable anxiety about women's roles and women's rights. In contrast, positing a world in which women's intellectual equality with men is taken for granted, *Eustace Conway* assuages such anxieties and quells any impulse toward feminist revolution.

Writing gender in "a world of shadows and dreams"

Tennyson, in 1850, named his first, stillborn son Maurice; and in 1852, he asked F.D. Maurice to be godfather to his son Hallam because, according to biographer Arthur Waugh, he "wished his son to be able to say, in the years to come, 'My father asked Mr. Maurice to be my godfather because he was the truest Christian he knew in the world'" (Waugh 109). Maurice scholar H.G. Wood finds a clear reiteration of Mauricean theology in *In Memoriam*:

> in Maurice's eyes . . . . A church committed to a system cannot be genuinely catholic, even if the label be attached to the system. A catholic system is a contradiction in terms . . . . We may note in this connection how clearly Tennyson's verse echoes Maurice's conviction:
>
> Our little systems have their day,
> They have their day and cease to be:
> They are but broken lights of Thee,
> And Thou, O Christ, art more than they.[11]
>
> (Wood 68-69)

When, in 1853, Maurice lost his professorships at King's College London over a theological dispute, Tennyson wrote him a poem, exhorting him to

> Come, when no graver cares employ,
> Godfather, come and see your boy:
> Your presence will be sun in winter,
> Making the little one leap for joy.
>
> For, being of that honest few,
> Who give the Fiend himself his due,
> Should eighty-thousand college-councils
> Thunder "Anathema," friend, at you;
>
> Should all our churchmen foam in spite

[11] *In Memoriam*, prologue, 16-20.

> At you so careful of the right,
> Yet one lay-hearth would give you welcome
> (Take it and come) to the Isle of Wight . . . (497)

Clearly, the esteemed poet had a great deal of admiration for the venerable theologian. But to the extent that they were both interested in issues of gendered identity, Tennyson's perspective was both more muddled and—by that same token—more complex, even arguably more sophisticated, than Maurice's. Tennyson's poem grapples with problems—in particular that of female desires that transgress the requisites of normative domesticity—that Maurice's novel, with its more optimistic view of relations between the sexes, elides. Is it Maurice, then, who lives in a world of shadows and dreams? Certainly his vision of mutual respect and admiration between men and women seems naïve, even unreal, in the context of an age when women did not have access to the same educational or vocational opportunities as men, and when marriage was for women, as Ida points out, a form of legally-sanctioned servitude.

Whereas Tennyson is comparatively realistic, more willing to plunge in and grapple wholeheartedly with the issue of gender politics in all of its complexity, Maurice is undoubtedly both more progressive and capable of imagining a world in which women like Ida want to live. In that respect, while *The Princess* undoubtedly does more to incite feminist revolutionary sentiments in many of its readers, *Eustace Conway* provides a compelling vision of what the end point of that revolution might be. Both texts, then, each in their own way, voice "the weight of all the hopes of half the world" (*The Princess* IV: 166).

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Film Review

Dickens with a Twist: Jacob Tierney Queers Dickens

Joseph Good

Originally released in 2003 and then re-released in France in 2005, director Jacob Tierney's *Twist* was a blink-and-you-miss-it phenomenon in theaters. *Twist* transplants the story of Dickens's fabled Oliver from the squalid slums of Victorian London to the equally squalid wasteland of present-day, inner-city Toronto. The constant reworking of Dickens through filmic adaptations has become an industry unto itself, one in which a small independent film like *Twist* might easily go unnoticed. In terms of budget, an indie film like *Twist* cannot compete with the lavish period pieces that constitute the bulk of Dickens remakes, such as Roman Polanski's 2005 adaptation of *Oliver Twist* or Sir David Lean's 1948 version. Rather, *Twist* represents the continuation of a trend first described by film critic B. Ruby Rich as New Queer Cinema. The first wave of films that comprised New Queer Cinema appeared in the early 1990s and included such works as Gus Van Sant's *My Own Private Idaho* and Derek Jarman's *Edward II* (Aaron 3). These films offered queer filmic adaptations of canonical literary works in settings that were recognizably modern. *My Own Private Idaho* updates the exploits of Falstaff and Prince Hal by placing them in contemporary Portland, Oregon; Jarman's more ambiguous *Edward II* features modern costumes and a number of references to the present day, but locates the action in muted minimalist sets that defy clear identification. In both cases, relocating the action to the present day allows filmmakers to highlight potentially queer interpretative possibilities suggested by the original source texts; contemporary settings offer spaces for amplifying and expanding queer meanings latent in the original literature. Such is the case with *Twist*; transporting Dickens's *Oliver Twist* to the gritty slums of contemporary Toronto enables filmmaker Jacob Tierney to produce a queer reading of Dickens's epic story of Victorian city life, using Toronto's urban underworld to emphasize the novel's potentially homoerotic content.

In narrowing its focus to those aspects of Dickens's novel which favor a queer reading, Tierney excludes a great deal of material. The film does not chronicle Oliver's plight in the workhouse, and makes only vague allusions to the life he led before arriving in the city. This kind of broad revision is not unusual in filmic adaptations of Victorian literature, given the vast scope of the "loose, baggy monsters" typically comprising the era's novels. Occasionally the results are uneven, as with Francis Ford Coppola's 1992 remake of *Dracula*; Coppola's film essentially rewrites Stoker's novel, casting Dracula as more of a tragic antihero than the consummate monster Stoker had in mind. But there is a crucial distinction to be made between films like *Bram Stoker's Dracula,* which rewrite Victorian literature to suit corporate Hollywood tastes, and Tierney's *Twist*, which re-contextualize Victorian literature to draw out important hermeneutical possibilities that are veiled or disguised in the original text. There is, additionally, a valid social critique in *Twist*, and it therefore seems a more authentic adaptation than most Hollywood rewrites of Victoriana.

Many filmic adaptations of classic literature epitomize Frederick Jameson's criticism of postmodernism; they are essentially "the random cannibalization of all the styles of the past" (18). However, *Twist* is not a period piece; it does not create a false sense of historical continuity by emphasizing look over substance (as, for example, Sandra Goldbacher's 1998 film *The Governess*). Rather, *Twist* is engaged in the kind of penetrating social commentary that animates Dickens's best work. Thus, although *Twist* does not attempt accurately to recreate the historical environment of Dickens's novel, it is more genuinely representative of the spirit of Dickens's fiction, and is therefore a truer adaptation of his work than many big-budget Hollywood remakes which jettison crucial social commentary in favor of what is ultimately inaccurate visual spectacle. In this sense, Douglas McGrath's 2002 adaptation of *Nicholas Nickleby* is guilty as charged.

Twist zeroes in on the erotic element suggested by the homosocial environment of Fagin and his band of thieves. Oliver is a boy who arrives in Toronto from the sticks; he falls in with Dodger who, in Tierney's adaptation, hustles nightly to feed a severe heroin habit. Bill Sikes is a pervasive menace so awful and so threatening that Tierney never actually shows him; this may be a nod to one of the standard tropes of gothic literature, where gruesome horrors overwhelm the narrator's descriptive abilities. Sikes remains

unseen throughout the movie; he is only heard in muffled conversations over the telephone with Fagin and Nancy. The grotesque character of Fagin is re-imagined as a hulking brute that alternates between savage abuse and sentimental tenderness; he is essentially a pederast pimp, and the boys are not merely thieves but prostitutes as well. By portraying Fagin's boys as hustlers and junkies, Tierney updates Dickens' vision of urban blight for a twenty-first century audience.

It doesn't take long for Oliver to consider himself "part of the family," and in short order he starts accompanying Dodger on nocturnal assignations with various johns. The familial aspect of Fagin's troupe is the crux of Tierney's adaptation; the emphasis that Dickens places on the institution of family is exploited as a source of ambiguity, a wellspring of uncertainties and contradictions that effectively undermine normative concepts of family structure. This interpretive gesture has a particular resonance for contemporary audiences, especially in Canada, where the film was made; as the concept of the nuclear family moves towards obsolescence, alternative family structures are increasingly visible in contemporary media. Indeed, the depiction of alternative families, and the distinction between functional and dysfunctional families, is a hallmark of Dickensian literature. As Holly Furneaux argues, "Dickens's fictional households provide ample space for so-called alternative families" (153), offering particularly rich possibilities for queer readings, such as that in *Twist*.

The heart of Tierney's film focuses on an unrequited crush that Oliver forms for Dodger. What begins as a simple case of hero worship soon becomes a hopeless erotic obsession. As Dodger regards himself gay for pay, he spurns Oliver's advances. Interestingly, this is precisely the same scenario that develops between the two main characters in Gus Van Sant's *My Own Private Idaho. Idaho*, like *Twist*, queers a canonical work of literature by transporting it to the urban present. In Van Sant's film, the two protagonists are male prostitutes who, like Oliver, fall in with bad company. Mike Waters, played by River Phoenix, falls desperately in love with his partner in crime, Scott Favor, played by Keanu Reeves. Scott prostitutes himself for amusement, not necessity, and he eventually abandons the gutter life for a conventional heterosexual marriage. Like Dodger in Tierney's *Twist*, Scott is the unifying force behind his alternative family structure. When Scott leaves the street urchins for wedded bliss, the

gang falls apart. Similarly, by rejecting Oliver's advances, Dodger destroys the possibility that any lasting bond might result from the provisional family unit formed by Fagin's boys. In both films, the alternative family is posited as a social structure with limited durability. This presents a broader critique of family by emphasizing the importance of self-reliance in a world where all moral bets are off; the individual is at the mercy of a social order that hypocritically lionizes righteousness while tacitly promoting ruthless capitalist exploitation.

As the film progresses, Dodger's heroin habit spirals out of control, and he becomes increasingly reckless. His erratic behavior becomes harder to conceal from Fagin and Bill; at the same time, Oliver's love for Dodger deepens. The more Dodger becomes consumed by his awareness of his own doom, the more Oliver loves him. Nancy tries to warn Oliver that Dodger is a hopeless case, that he can avoid the junkie's fate by rejecting the self-destructive behaviors he finds so alluring in Dodger. A last minute intervention by Dodger's estranged brother fails to provide the needed corrective; in the grim encounter between Dodger and his brother, we learn that Dodger's father was sexually abusive. This sheds new light on Dodger; he is not a "heroin-chic" hipster who has rejected the stable but unfulfilling life of the suburbs in order to wallow in urban squalor; rather, he is the most brutalized of all of Fagin's boys, the ultimate victim who has merely exchanged one form of domestic tyranny for another. Nancy's motherly concern for Dodger and Oliver becomes known to Bill, who perceives her meddling as a threat to his lucrative trafficking in boys and narcotics. A final harrowing plot twist at the end of the film leaves none of the moral ambiguities resolved, but rather deepens the story's profound sense of despair. Here, Tierney boldly asserts that the happy endings demanded by Victorian readers are simply out of place in the twenty-first century; as Adorno asserted that it was inhuman to write poetry in the aftermath of the Holocaust, so Tierney believes that the original ending of *Oliver Twist* cannot authentically represent a world devoid of moral consensus.

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Book Review

by Veronica Alfano

Jason R. Rudy, *Electric Meters: Victorian Physiological Poetics*. Athens: Ohio UP, 2009. xiii + 222 pp.

Sally Bushell, *Text as Process: Creative Composition in Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Dickinson*. Charlottesville: U. Virginia P, 2009. xi + 302 pp.

"In the nineteenth century," argues Jason Rudy in his introduction to *Electric Meters*, "there can be no greater figure for interpersonal communication—the negotiation of self and world—than electricity, and no greater manifestation of this phenomenon in literary form than poetic rhythm" (11). Rudy's ambitious goal is to unite scientific, cultural, and aesthetic discourses by considering electricity as both a literal means of transmission and as a powerful metaphor for it. Just as an electric telegraph instantly carries information from one person to another, so also do poetic meters transmit galvanizing truths from poet to reader—thus using bodily sensation to create broad imaginative communities. By

linking the political nature of Victorian verse to what he identifies as its intense physicality, Rudy aligns himself with the ongoing critical impulse to reconcile historicist and formalist approaches to poetry.

His first chapter, "The Electric Poetess," explores the Romantic concept of "sensibility" through the work of Mary Robinson and Felicia Hemans. Both writers struggle to establish a balance between cognition and corporeality in verse. Robinson underscores the universalizing effects of poetry, which draws its readers into a shared affective experience; Rudy deftly relates her beliefs to early nineteenth-century experiments showing that electric shocks act on all human bodies in the same way. Poetry and electricity alike reveal our unmediated interconnectedness, and so serve as idealized patterns of democratic citizenship. All the same, remarks Rudy, Robinson's verse "offers readers dramatic portrayals of bodily feeling but not mimetic embodiments of physiological experience" (20). Hemans, who wrote a generation after Robinson, also prefers theorizing sensation to enacting it. Her sensibility is more spiritual than physical. Rudy makes the intriguing suggestion that Hemans's emphasis on the figurative and generic is due in part to her status as a female writer; women were encouraged to conform to a prefabricated model of poetic expression, rather than to speak in strongly individualized voices.

True "mimetic embodiment," then, does not appear until later in the nineteenth century. In his next four chapters, Rudy takes advantage of the Victorian period's rich welter of metrical variety, offering compelling new readings of Tennyson, Hopkins, Swinburne, and the "Spasmodic" poets. Gender issues resurface alongside class issues in Chapter Two ("Tennyson's Telegraphic Poetics"), which views *The Princess* (1847) through the lens of physiological sensation. For Rudy, the interpretive key to Tennyson's poem is a circle of girls, holding hands in order to amuse themselves by receiving a mild electric shock, who appear in the Prologue. Princess Ida's story is told by a group of male narrators, and women relieve these men by reciting lyrics as the story changes hands; Rudy ingeniously compares the circle of "electrified girls" to the female lyricists. "Like the relay points of an intricate telegraph network or the nodes of an individual's nervous system, *The Princess* passes its story onward, slightly altered with each generic shift and narrative exchange, yet coherent as a network of ideas and sensations" (63). Lyrics knit

the poem together, lending it emotional power in the process. His telegraphic poetry enables a cautious Tennyson to value both ratiocination and sensory experience. It also allows him to address both Chartism and the "Woman Question": if bodily sensation is a universalizing sympathetic force, does it threaten to incite working-class uprisings and feminist revolutions?

Tennyson—like Robinson and Hemans—is uneasy about becoming a wholehearted poet of sensation, but the so-called Spasmodics have few such qualms. The third chapter of *Electric Meters*, "Rhythms of Spasm," looks more closely at this much-maligned poetic movement. Sydney Dobell emphasizes the ability of telegraph-esque meter to transmit both knowledge and emotion; for the anti-elitist Dobell, explains Rudy, "the self-conscious work of poetic interpretation matters little next to the unselfconscious effects of rhythm on the physical bodies of readers" (79). In a particularly skillful set of close readings, Rudy argues that Dobell's 1853 *Balder* uses striking rhythms and disturbingly morbid content both to illustrate and to speculate on the dangers of passionate poetic embodiment. He then documents an anti-Spasmodic backlash, led by William E. Aytoun, that seeks to re-establish social stability and moral decorum by regularizing scansion. In closing his central chapter, Rudy makes a convincing case for regarding *Maud* as an anxious and ambivalent commentary on Spasmodism; Tennyson's poem employs jarringly irregular rhythm, while associating it with madness.

Rudy's final two chapters investigate the ways in which Dobell's work is revisited, echoed, and corrected throughout the nineteenth century. "Patmore, Hopkins, and the Uncertain Body of Victorian Poetry" provocatively asks us to revise the history of Victorian verse by considering both isochronous intervals and sprung rhythm from a post-Spasmodic perspective. Unlike Dobell, Patmore insists that rhythm is primarily located in the mind rather than in the body: his 1857 *Essay on English Metrical Law* calls attention to the abstract and immaterial nature of scansion (though, notes Rudy, his 1877 volume *The Unknown Eros* flirts with a decidedly unlawful and unregulated prosody). Hopkins emerges as a synthesizing figure, whose metrical philosophy (illustrated in "The Wreck of the Deutschland") reveals an "innovative turning of Dobell's principles to different—that is, more spiritual and less purely physiological—ends" (129). Rudy

expertly shows that electricity, which is both concrete and incorporeal, helps Hopkins to chart a middle ground between the earthly and the divine.

Hopkins's and Patmore's models of "limited freedom" (135) give way in Rudy's final chapter ("Rapture and the Flesh, Swinburne to Blind") to less inhibited and more secular poetic practices. Drawing on nineteenth-century electric field theory, Rudy discovers in A.C. Swinburne and Mathilde Blind an aspiration toward what he calls "rapture"—that is, a pseudo-religious "moment of physiological, emotional, and intellectual union imagined by way of poetic form and content" (140). Though Robert Buchanan dismisses Swinburne's verse as merely "fleshly," Swinburne in fact hopes that the natural world will lend a transcendent quality to humankind's ineluctable materiality. Mathilde Blind, a religious skeptic similarly interested in the resonance between nature and humanity, imagines understanding the orderly patterns of the universe through formal metrical structure. Yet these orderly patterns can threaten to give way to convulsive discord (particularly in the form of social injustice toward women), and Blind's goal proves unattainable.

Harking back to the spiritualized sensibility of Felicia Hemans, Rudy lends his volume a pleasing symmetry by concluding with a meditation on the religious and mystical aspects of electric meters. In a kind of *reductio ad absurdum* of the thrilling rhythmic transmissions Rudy has been exploring, nineteenth-century mediums claimed that the dead could communicate with the living through various knockings and tappings. These assertions are mirrored by Victorian spiritualist poets, who profess to transcribe verses from beyond the grave. Rudy observes that Elizabeth Barrett Browning fuses the material and otherworldly when depicting Aurora Leigh's moment of artistic inspiration ("poetry's divine first finger-touch"), at last creating a "fully realized and corporeal electric poetess" (183).

Occasionally, Rudy's emphasis on the physiological rather than the intellectual aspects of reading poetry can be disconcerting. In maintaining that Robinson is not a crafter of electric meters, for example, he says that "the reader of Della Cruscan poetry must engage his brain...and not rely simply on physiological charges" (28). But surely even the reader of Dobell must also engage her brain. Of Dobell's poetry, Rudy writes that the "affective experience here comes remarkably not through the literal definitions of

the words ["Streaming, gleaming, beaming"] but through the impress of rhythm and sound on the reader" (93). But the affective experience must derive from the *interaction* of sound and sense; another series of trochees ("joking, poking, croaking") would no doubt register as more playful and less martial.

Yet Rudy is well aware that the fantasy of all creation vibrating in tune to charged poetic language is impossible; if he occasionally overstates his case, it is perhaps only because he enters into such deep sympathy with the writers he engages. *Electric Meters* is an impressively wide-ranging and beautifully written book that provides a useful new perspective on the development of Victorian verse, dexterously tying together disparate fields of inquiry and critical methodologies. It is immensely valuable for students of poetry and refreshingly accessible for all readers.

While Rudy concentrates on the visceral and involuntary aspects of nineteenth-century verse, Sally Bushell's concern is with its effortful shaping. Rudy's model of transmission is sudden and instantaneous, whereas Bushell's is gradual and evasive. Electrifying poetic force in her *Text as Process* must, like Dickinson's lightning, "dazzle gradually." Bushell aims to "understand the nature of the text in a state of process and its status relative to the completed work," and at the same time to "develop a critical method and a hermeneutics for interpreting the text in this state" (1). In pursuing these goals, she carefully positions her study in relation to phenomenology, deconstructionist thought, speech-act theory, German textual scholarship, and the French *critique génétique*—and attempts to provide Anglo-American researchers with a new interpretive approach to draft materials that will combine text-critical and literary-critical techniques.

The first three chapters of *Text as Process* present a detailed compositional method, which the next three chapters apply to the poetry of Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Dickinson. "Contextualizing Process," the opening chapter, offers a thoughtful assessment of Anglo-American, German, and French genetic criticism. Such a criticism has been slow to emerge in the United States and England, Bushell remarks, thanks to lingering New Critical influences; the word "genetic" is often "taken to refer to the author's reasons for writing rather than the materials of the process" (15). In other words, analyzing pre-publication material can feel uncomfortably close to indulging in the intentional fallacy. German historical-critical editions tend to reproduce various different

versions of a work with the goal of recreating a diachronic and anti-teleological textual history, while French theorists tend to draw a clearer demarcation between final published versions and *avant-texte*. Bushell intends to draw on both these traditions, including manuscript materials within literary studies but also applying a different mode of reading to the text in process.

Chapter Two, "Theorizing Process," engages at length with an issue that began to unfold in the first chapter and that may be the germ of a distinctively Anglo-American compositional criticism: authorial intention. Bushell emphasizes that she is not seeking to revoke the death of the author altogether, but rather insisting that some form of authorial agency can survive even within a conception of the text as open-ended system. And she adds that accounting for such agency is especially important when reading compositional processes. Writers do feel as if they exert control over their creations, a necessary fiction that enables them to produce works of art. Through an adroit engagement with Edmund Husserl and John Searle, Bushell draws a productive distinction between (in Searle's terms) intention *of* doing and intention *in* doing; therefore, she explains, "all actions can be defined as partaking of intentionality in one way, although they may not all involve self-conscious directedness . . . all language is a kind of act, and all action is intentional" (53). This modified authorial intention will be one of Bushell's motivating forces, but not her only one.

Having laid out this helpful background in an impressively clear and meticulous manner, Bushell is ready in "Reclaiming Process" to discuss compositional method. She distinguishes among compositional context (historically grounded and pre-intentional), intentional context (involving the author's conscious and unconscious aims), and the language totality (unwilled and non-intentional)—arguing that creative process should be examined in terms of all three contexts. With these caveats in place, she goes on to map out the various aspects of authorial intentionality. Her categories include programmatic intention (the writer's goals for an entire work), contingent intention (which pertains to localized compositional acts), revised intention (in which a writer revisits her work with adjusted objectives), and unintended meaning (typos, stains on the pages). Intentionality turns out to be fluid, unstable, and temporally contingent. Moreover, Bushell makes the thought-provoking observation that poetic form itself cues a kind of "consciously

intended unintentionality" (68); rhyme and meter impose arbitrary boundaries on semantic content. Thus intended and unintended meanings are frequently inextricable. Bushell convincingly substantiates this claim as she applies her typology to the pre-publication materials of three major nineteenth-century poets. For example, she shows how a local revision in *The Prelude* serendipitously produces a memorable line. Wordsworth rewrites the phrase "struck again" when he decides to keep it after initially crossing it out; Bushell speculates that he then unintentionally recopies this phrase twice into a revised draft, a mistake that inspires the forceful repetition of "I struck and struck again."

Programmatic intention in *The Prelude* and *The Excursion* is complicated by the fact that these poems were meant to be parts of a larger whole ("The Recluse") that Wordsworth never completed. Drawing on the *critique génétique*, Bushell makes yet another distinction: "programmatic" writers tend to plan in advance and to compose mentally before putting pen to paper, while "process-centered" writers prefer to begin drafting and redrafting without a clear sense of the project's macrostructure. The former type works toward acts of externalized communication, while the latter views writing as an extension of self. Wordsworth, despite his overt dedication to seemingly spontaneous orality, is both process-centered and programmatic. Some of his drafts are free-flowing and uncorrected, while some are halting and heavily revised. Yet certain passages that appear to have sprung from the poet's head fully-formed are in fact imported from his other works; Wordsworth's poetic material dynamically generates new contexts for itself. Bushell cannily concludes that "[t]he characteristic Wordsworthian process—of drawing on the past to create in the present—is here played out in literal, material terms" (116).

The main theme of Bushell's Tennyson chapter is self-translation—illustrated by this poet's trial printings for small groups of friends, by his doodled manuscript illustrations, and by his use of prose plans as he writes the *Idylls of the King*. All three phenomena reveal strongly programmatic and externalizing tendencies. The close readings of Tennyson's doodles are particularly well done; noting that these drawings are often embedded in the manuscript text, Bushell proposes that they provide "a point of temporary closure and of recommencement within the creative process" (132). They therefore imply that Tennyson composed his poetry mentally and then transcribed it in

short blocks. In the second half of the chapter, Bushell analyzes the re-combinatorial aspects of the *Idylls* via Tennyson's re-orderings of its books. She suggests that this long poem is intimately bound up in textual process because—due to its thematic and formal concern with unity, prolepsis, inevitability, and part/whole relations—its "compositional and final structure directly embody its central meaning" (157).

Anti-teleology, for Bushell, is at the heart of Dickinson's poetics. This writer binds her verses into fascicles, but never publishes a completed volume. She scrupulously revises her work, but does not always privilege one version of a poem over another. In a shrewd analysis of Dickinson's revisionary practices (the poet often lets a catalog of competing word choices remain on the page, rather than crossing out rejected options), Bushell points out that she creates "a whole structure of alternate meaning across a poem"—a rich and unstable state of "suspended deletion" (187). A poem can exist in multiple versions simultaneously, rather than hardening into a singular final version. Bushell goes on to argue, counter-intuitively but very persuasively, that Dickinson is in fact deeply invested in teleology. Because she sees poetry as a spiritual endeavor, her work reflects the telos of divine revelation; God, who speaks in poems and parables, authorizes the ambiguous multiplicity of Dickinson's texts. This is Bushell's strongest chapter. Her methodology is extraordinarily well-suited to the paradoxes of Dickinson's unpublished-yet-canonical fascicles, which exist in a state of perpetual process.

Text as Process closes with "A Philosophy of Composition," which returns to broader theoretical concerns. In response to Heidegger's elevation of isolated "thingness" over human production, Bushell maintains that reading manuscript material allows us to juxtapose "the self-sufficient meaning of the text as a work of art, and the meaning of it in the flux of its coming-into-being" (219). Texts exist as authorial creations; they exist as physical draft materials; they exist as the unbounded play of language. Bushell makes a compelling case that compositional critics would do well to account for all three states of being, always considering the relationships between part and whole in this hermeneutic circle.

At times, Bushell's study becomes so invested in its own schematizing processes (it names a bewildering number of types of intention, for example) that it loses sight of larger goals. Its complex theoretical machinery can occasionally take a while to get off the ground; Bushell will painstakingly set up the stakes of an argument, but will march through the argument itself without consistently tying her otherwise excellent close readings back to her central themes. Yet when *Text as Process* does spend time with poems, it brims with brilliant insights, virtuosically demonstrating again and again how a page of draft material contains unique meaning that becomes invisible in a published edition. And Bushell's theoretical expertise is, on the whole, a powerful and sophisticated critical tool. Addressing the troubled question of authorial intention, she elegantly ties together various philosophical fields and takes up an interpretive stance that is both erudite and pragmatic. Her admirable book rewards careful reading, and it should be read by textual and literary critics alike.

Princeton University

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Books Received

Fang, Karen Y. *Romantic Writing and the Empire of Signs: Periodical Culture and Post-Napoleonic Authorship*. Charlottesville: U. Virginia P., 2010.

"Nineteenth-century periodicals frequently compared themselves to the imperial powers then dissecting the globe, and this interest in imperialism can be seen in the exotic motifs that surfaced in works by...late Romantic authors...Fang explores the collaboration of these authors with periodical magazines to show how an interdependent relationship between these visual themes and rhetorical style enabled these authors to model their writing on the imperial project....While periodicals are usually thought to be defined by time, this account of the geographic attention exerted by late Romantic authors shows them to be equally concerned with space."

Gold, Barri J. *ThermoPoetics: Energy in Victorian Literature and Science*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010.

ThermoPoetics illustrates "how analogous, intertwined, and mutually productive poetry and physics may be. Charting the simultaneous emergence of the laws of thermodynamics in literature and in physics that began in the 1830s, Gold finds that not only can science influence literature, but literature can influence science, especially in the early stages of intellectual development....Victorian literature embraced the language and

ideas of energy physics to address the era's concerns about religion, evolution, race, class, empire, gender, and sexuality....these concerns, in turn, shaped the hopes and fears expressed about the new physics."

Gottlieb, Evan, and Ian Duncan, eds. *Approaches to Teaching Scott's Waverley Novels*. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2009.

"Scott's Waverly novels...are increasingly popular in the classroom, where they fit into courses that explore topics from Victorianism and nationalism to the rise of the publishing industry and the cult of the author." Because Scott's writing poses "unusual challenges" for instructors, this volume features a section on "Materials" (editions, background and critical studies, multimedia resources) and a series of critical essays analyzing approaches and strategies for studying these novels.

Hatten, Charles. *The End of Domesticity: Alienation from the Family in Dickens, Eliot, and James*. Newark: U. Delaware P., 2010.

"Few changes in literary history are as dramatic as the replacement of the sentimental image of the home in Victorian fiction by the emphasis in modernist fiction on dysfunctional families and domestic alienation....Charles Hatten offers a provocative theory for this seminal shift which even now shapes literary depictions of the family....[and] shows how the corrosive effects of economic forces on courtship, marriage, and family life become the foundation for a literary critique of the negative effects of the market on the individual."

Morgan, Monique R. *Narrative Means, Lyric Ends: Temporality in the Nineteenth-century British Long Poem*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2009.

"How did nineteenth-century poets negotiate the complex interplay between two seemingly antithetical modes – lyric and narrative?" By examining *The Prelude*, *Don Juan*, *Aurora Leigh*, and *The Ring and the Book*, Morgan posits that "each of these texts uses narrative techniques to create lyrical effects...that manipulate readers' experience of time and shape their intellectual, emotional, and ethical responses."

Norcia, Megan A. *X Marks the Spot: Women Writers Map the Empire for British Children, 1790-1895*. Athens: Ohio UP, 2010.

"During the nineteenth century, geography primers shaped the worldviews of Britain's ruling classes and laid the foundation for an increasingly globalized world. While these primers "employed rhetorical tropes such as the Family of Man or discussions of food and customs in order to plot other cultures along an imperial hierarchy," Norcia's alternative, cross-disciplinary reading "examines the interplay between gender, imperial duty, and pedagogy."

Pemberton, Marilyn. *Enchanted Ideologies: A Collection of Rediscovered Nineteenth-Century English Moral Fairy Tales*. Lambertville, NJ: True Bill Press, 2010.

Each text in this collection "has an important place in literary history as a contribution to, and a result of, the time in which it was written." These stories thus serve as "indicators, instigators, or inhibitors of social change....The annotated fairy tales in this collection, with publication dates ranging from 1818 to 1899, were read, or intended to be read, by both adults and children. All reflect the prevalent societal values pertaining to 'proper' behavior and the gender roles accepted and expected during the period."

Toker, Leona. *Towards the Ethics of Form in Fiction: Narratives of Cultural Remission*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2010.

"Scholars and critics have long recognized the need for ethical criticism to address not only the idea-content but also the morphological aspects of narrative, yet the search continues for ways to study the ethics of narrative form....Toker suggests a method of linking formal features of narratives with the types of moral vision that they represent....[and] argues that cultural remissions have the potential not simply to provide a break from the determinacies of our quotidian existence but also to return us to that existence with some alteration of our perceptions, beliefs, and values."

Wilde, Oscar. *Oscar Wilde in America: the Interviews*. Ed. Matthew Hofer and Gary Scharnhorst. Urbana: U. Illinois P., 2010.

"This comprehensive and authoritative collection of Oscar Wilde's American interviews affords readers a fresh look at the making of a literary legend. Better known in 1882 as a cultural icon than a serious writer...,Wilde was brought to North America for a major lecture tour on Aestheticism and the decorative arts that was organized to publicize a touring opera, Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience*, which lampooned him and satirized the Aesthetic 'movement' he had been imported to represent....Confronted at every turn by an insatiable audience of sometimes hostile interviewers, the young poet tried out a number of phrases, ideas, and strategies that ultimately made him famous as a novelist and playwright....Wilde's perception often proved as sharp as his wit; the echoes of both resound in much of his later writings."

Contributors

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Shu-Fang Lai is Associate Professor at National Sun Yat-Sen University, Taiwan. She is interested in Victorian Science and Literature, Nineteenth-Century Periodicals, and Literary Translation. She is the author of *Charles Reade, George Meredith and Harriet Martineau as Serial Writers of Once a Week, 1859-1865* (2008). She has published articles in *Dickensian*, *Dickens Quarterly* and *Victorian Periodicals Review*, and chapters in books including *Dickens, Europe and the New Worlds* (1999), *Approaches to Teaching Charles Dickens's Bleak House*, (MLA, 2009), and Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* (2010). Her recent work-in-progress is on Dickens's Reading.

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