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I. LEADING ARTICLE

ROBERT BROWNING: "OUR HUMAN SPEECH"

Critical acceptance of *The Ring and the Book* as a nineteenth century poem of significance often includes observations which may be used to challenge the integrity of the poem and the craftsmanship of its author. For it is difficult to consider as significant, though the judgment be offered in the kindest spirit, a poem whose theme, pervading imagery, and characters are believed not to be representative of the poet's intent. If Browning has said that he did not depart from the facts of his source, the critics do well to question the validity of his Ring metaphor, his theme, and his characters. But the more effective the criticism the less significant the poem should become, and this conclusion many Browning scholars seem reluctant to draw. A. K. Cook, for example, has written:

The facts of the book were the jeweller's ore; the poet's fancy was the jeweller's alloy; his fancy mixed with the facts—the poet's poem—was the jeweller's ring. Perhaps the admirable metaphor was pressed too hard. Browning tells us repeatedly that just as, when the jeweller's art has been exercised upon his ring, he disengages the alloy, so, when the poet has fashioned his poem, he will disengage his fancy from it. But he does not disengage it, there is no 'restitution'; unlike the jeweller's alloy, the poet's fancy does not 'fly in fume', it cannot (happily) be 'unfastened' from the facts.¹

J. E. Shaw has recorded similar observations:

It cannot be denied that the personages, in Browning's great poem, *The Ring and the Book*, are of the poet's own making, and he himself would have been the first to acknowledge them as his own creatures. On the other hand, his repeated assertions that, in mingling his fancy with the material derived from the *Old Yellow Book*, he has not misinterpreted the facts contained in his source, and the insistence upon the poet's historical fidelity by the editor of the "Book" and other critics, have been regarded with suspicion. Indeed, the question has recently been raised whether *The Ring and the Book* is not a glorious misinterpretation of the *Old Yellow Book*.

My own belief is that it is a glorious misinterpretation, but at the same time that the interpreter is sincere; . . .²

And recently Robert Langbaum has observed: "Another sign of relativism is that Browning counted it such a virtue for his poem to be based on 'pure crude fact.' . . . His truth had to be taken seriously, which meant in a positivist age that it had to have the facts behind it, had to emerge from the facts."³ But when Mr. Langbaum comes to the use Browning's characters make of fact, he concludes: "The Pope does not weigh argument against argument, fact against fact, but cuts right through the facts to a sympathetic apprehension of the motives and essential moral qualities behind the deeds. . . . All the morally significant characters of the poem cut through facts in the same way."⁴

Characterizing much of the analysis of *The Ring and the Book*, this conflict between historical accuracy and poetic necessity imposes a limitation on the significance of the poem that other critics have tried to remove. These critics believe that Browning was fully conscious of the poetic use to which he put his raw material, and they have sought by interpretation of the poet's Ring metaphor to show that the conflict between "fact and fancy" may be due to misunderstanding of a complicated figure of speech and to certain ambiguous statements from the poem. No one, however, has elaborated on Browning's dual use of the word "truth" to suggest that a second misunderstanding may have added to the confusion into which the Ring metaphor and the interpretation of the poem have fallen. Yet it can be advanced that Browning's practice, which entails the use of the word "truth" on almost every page of the poem with recurrent textual analyses, is intended as an application of the metaphor as well as a preparation for the concluding and possibly thematic passage which begins:

. . . our human speech is nought,
Our human testimony false, our fame
And human estimation words and wind. (XII. 833-35)⁵

In Book I of the poem Browning seems to use "truth" generally in the sense of "fact" or factual evidence. At line 145 he begins a brief summary of the narrative of the *Old Yellow Book*, with which he concludes: "This is the bookful; thus far take the truth [fact], / The untampered gold [fact], the fact untampered with, / The mere ring-metal [fact] ere the ring [poem] be made!" (I.364-66) Then the poet asks, "What has hitherto come of it?" (I.367) "Was this truth of force? / Able to take its own part as truth should, / Sufficient, self-sustaining?" (I.372-74) "If so," Browning adds, "into the fire goes my book and what the loss, since you know the tale [facts] already?" (I.374-77) "If not," he proposes, "may I ask, rather than relate, who were Guido and Pompilia? What manner of man and woman were they; and what do you think of this or that? What do you think of the young, frank, handsome, courtly Caponsacchi who was the declared lover of Pompilia and precipitator, through his elopement with her, of the tragedy? Was his strange course right or wrong or both? Was the old couple justly slaughtered? Do you know Gaetano, and can you answer if Guido killed his wife for bearing him a son?" (I.377-409) Presumably Browning thought that these questions could not be answered with factual evidence from the historical source. So he continued:

Well, British Public, ye . . .
 will have your-proper laugh
At the dark question, laugh it! I laugh first.
Truth [fact] must prevail, the proverb vows; and truth [fact]
—Here is it all I' the book at last, as first
There it was all I' the heads and hearts of Rome . . .
 Yet a little while,
The passage of a century or so,
Decads [sic] thrice five, and here's time paid his tax,
Oblivion gone home with her harvesting,
And all left smooth again as scythe could shave. (I.410-21)

The "truth" about which Browning has thus far spoken suggests statement of fact or alleged fact. To contend that Browning would doubt the self-sufficiency and force of truth in a sense other than that of factual truth, or that he would say that truth in a sense other than that of factual truth was in a book or the head of a human being, is, it appears to me, to run counter to the many pronouncements on truth to be found in his other poetry. Nor, except in the sense of fact or alleged fact, does the disappearance of truth after the "passage of a century or so" seem to conform to Browning's general faith in an ultimate truth.

Concluding that his questions could not be answered by London folk, though they knew the "facts," and that away from the scene of action the story had long been forgotten, Browning took his book to Rome to try "truth's [fact's] power on likely people" (I.423). "Have you met such names? Is

a tradition extant of such facts?" (I.424-25) (Notice that "facts" and "names" are readily exchanged for "truth's".) The Romans answer: "Why, you'll waste your pains—'on names and facts thus old'—and end as wise as you began, if you search for records; but thanks in the meantime for the story, long and strong, a pretty piece of narrative enough. Do you tell the story straight from the book? Or do you vault it through the loose and large, hanging to a hint? Or is there book at all and aren't you dealing in poetry, make-believe, and the white lies it sounds like?" (I.427-56) The poet replies to the Romans:

Yes and no!
From the book, yes; thence bit by bit I dug
The lingot truth ["pure crude fact"], that memorable day,
Assayed [analyzed] and knew my piecemeal gain was gold
 ["fact untampered with"].—
Yes; BUT FROM SOMETHING ELSE SURPASSING THAT,
SOMETHING OF MINE WHICH, MIXED UP WITH THE MASS [FACTS],
Made it bear hammer and be firm to file.
Fancy with fact is just one fact the more;
To-wit, that fancy has informed [formed, animated],
 transpierced [penetrated],
Thridded [threaded] and so thrown fast the facts else free,
As right through ring and ring runs the djereed [wooden
 javelin c. 5 ft. long]
I fused my live soul and that inert stuff [facts],
Before attempting smithcraft, on the night
After the day when,—truth [fact] thus grasped and gained,—
The book was shut and done with. . . (I.457-72)

Browning's explanation includes three specific acts: first, he accumulated the facts of the book; secondly, he bound them together as one binds together a series of rings by placing them on one rod; and thirdly, he brought the facts back to life by fusing them and his "live soul." To this point in the explanation of his function as a poet, Browning has referred to his imaginative contribution as "alloy," "fancy," "something else surpassing," "something of mine," and "live soul"; in the remainder of Book I he also calls it "such substance of me interfused," "motions of mine," and "surplusage of soul." Believing that man, the creature, in attempting "to grow" repeats God's process in man's due degree, Browning continues:

Man . . .
Creates, no, but resuscitates, perhaps. . . .
May so project his surplusage of soul
In search of body, so add self to self
By owning what lay ownerless before,—
So find, so fill full, so appropriate forms—
That, although nothing which had never life
Shall get life from him, be, not having been,
Yet, something dead may get to live again, . . . (I.712-29)

This quotation, I believe, may be accepted as typical of Browning's thought concerning poetic creation. Such a conception is prominently displayed in "Abt Vogler," the famous passages in "Fra Lippo Lippi" are of a similar bent, and, though less well known, lines 17-107, Book IX, of *The Ring and the Book* offer the most complete representation of Browning's attitude on creativity available. Many poets have chosen to adopt a comparable imagery to illuminate the creative process, and some have expressed it in almost the same language used by Browning. Swinburne, in the prelude to *Tristram of Lyonesse*, would ". . . give / Out of my life to make their dead life live / Some day of mine, and blow my breath / Between the deep lips of forgotten death." And Shakespeare, probably when thinking of his own dramatic creativeness, leads Prospero to say: "Graves at my command / Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let 'em forth / By my so potent art." Since Browning's revivifying force, which he describes as a spirit (I.776-78) lighting his eye and letting him have his will with the dead, is considered by Browning himself to be of value surpassing that of fact, one may hesitate to accept Mr. Langbaum's re-emphasis of the belief "that Browning counted it such a virtue for his poem to be based on 'pure crude fact'."⁶ To be sure, as long as the emphasis is placed on "fact" in "pure crude fact," the interpreter has every reason to believe that Browning thought "it necessary to justify a liberty of interpretation which has always been granted poets."⁶ But by shifting the

emphasis from "fact" to "pure" and "crude," as the poet so often seems to direct, one may find himself in agreement with the poet and in disagreement with those who believe that Browning pledged absolute fidelity to fact. Emphasis on "pure" and "crude," moreover, permits the reader to believe that instead of emerging from the facts, Browning's poem restores to life the facts long dead and long forgotten.

Without wishing to lessen the prospector's exultation in finding "gold," the rare metal with which Browning in a ring metaphor would naturally compare the facts of the *Old Yellow Book*, one may also question Mr. Langbaum's statement that "It is impossible to overemphasize the importance Browning attached to . . . 'pure crude fact'." ⁷ Browning's insistence upon the figure of "the gold" and his long preoccupation with Pompilia's plight prove that he valued the facts of the *Old Yellow Book* over less compelling facts, but perhaps not, as several critics have thought, ⁸ for their quality of being *precious*. Through qualifying words or contextual meaning in Book I, Browning seems to direct an even greater emphasis to the *pristine* quality of gold: for example, "silvers of pure [unmixed] gold . . . Virgin," "Gold as it was . . . Prime nature," "untempered gold," and "as the ingot . . . lay gold, (beseech you, hold that figure fast!)." The parenthetic entreaty seems to lay stress on a fear by the poet himself that gold would not be thought of as pristine metal; that Browning's imaginative contribution, the alloy, would not be considered more valuable than the pristine facts. Without violating metaphorical usage, Browning could have regarded the facts of the old volume as the "pure gold [fact]" surface of the completed poem; the facts, in turn, would have been supported beneath with his alloy which remained hidden in the poem [gold ring] to give it durability and fixed shape. This reading, at least, conforms to the demands of ring-making, and in Browning's recorded visits to the shop of an artificer he may have watched the final act of ring-making in which a spurt of acid removes all surface alloy and leaves a film of pure gold. If all of the alloy is removed, the gold again becomes soft and not subject to tempering and the ring becomes a spongy mass of pure gold less serviceable or permanently shaped than solid gold. ⁹

Other examples of Browning's use of the word "truth" to mean "dead truth ['fanciless fact']" (I. 696-97, 143-44) may be selected from the poem. One of the best is in Book I, lines 838-81. As a stone falls on the surface of the water, so "any fact" (I.840) falls on the "smooth surface of things." Like an observer who guesses by the splash and vibrations and who feels after the vanished stone, the world in Browning's poem crowds the bank of the pool and guesses at what were figure and substance by the splash and "by vibration in the general mind, at depth of deed already out of reach." Consequently, Browning says, the world fails to find truth [fact], that deceptive speck, at the bottom. Browning's illustration receives its force from the universal operation of the laws of refraction. Half-Rome feels after the vanished truth [fact], but his finger falls wide of the mark, simply because of this law. If he is standing directly over the fact, Browning continues, he reaches in the right direction, but not far enough. If he is standing at an angle from the fact, he not only fails to reach far enough; he also reaches in the wrong direction. Thus the world reaches, swerving back and forth in "over-belief" and in under-belief, but never far enough and seldom in the right direction for the truth [fact]. Half-Rome, Other Half-Rome, *Tertium Quid*, representing the world's guesses; Guido, Pompilia, Caponsacchi, the Pope, representing the actors' guesses—each in turn reaches and misses, though each attempts it "all for truth's sake, mere truth, nothing else" (I. 881). Because Browning started his figure with "any fact," and used "truth" and "fact" synonymously throughout the figure, it would seem that he meant at the end of it, "all for truth's [fact's] sake."

Browning's method then is to call up voices which, in speaking, will represent many different points of view. Half-Rome's voice expresses the opinion that Guido is more right than wrong; Other Half-Rome thinks Pompilia less wrong than right; and *Tertium Quid* believes a "reasoned statement of the case, something bred of both," is the intelligent verdict. Then rises Guido's voice, "ripe for declaring truth [fact]" (I. 953), because with the Vigil-torture "they were wont to tease the truth [fact] out of loth witness" (I. 981), though Religion started up and said, "Henceforth find truth [fact] by milder means" (I. 1009). Guido soon reveals that truth [fact] fails to satisfy his obtuser sense (I. 957ff) and temporarily chooses to rationalize his defense. Was his not a perfect case of *causa honoris*, and was he not thereby protected by the written law?

While life was graspable and gainable
And bird-like buzzed her wings round Guido's brow
Not much truth [fact] stiffened out the web of words
He wove to catch her; when away she flew
And death came, Death's breath ravelled [shrivelled] up the lies,
Left bare the metal thread, the fibre fine
Of truth [fact], i' the spinning: the true [factual]
words shone last. (I. 1275-81)

Following Guido's are the voices of Caponsacchi and Pompilia, after which the lawyers search out truth [fact] with their "patent truth-extracting [fact-extracting] process" (I. 1114). When the words of prosecutor and defense lawyer—men who must rely on the letter of the law—have died away, the voice of the Pope is heard. Although sufficient facts have been presented to him to condemn Guido, the Pope discloses his mistrust of facts and bases his ultimate judgment upon the spirit of the law, an application he may make since he is "called of God." "From the other world he feels impress at time" (I. 1224) when "he is wont to do God's work on earth" (I. 1234).

Browning has revealed that in *The Ring and the Book* his "business was to explain fact," ¹⁰ but he would have been hard pressed indeed to find a uniformly acceptable interpretation of the contradictory facts of the *Old Yellow Book*. Even J. M. Gest's legal account of the story, though a historical not a poetical version, provides matters of opinion which are subject to dispute. Quite naturally Browning wanted the individual reader of the poem to believe that the final judgment rests with the reader. Nevertheless, Browning frankly admitted that his characters are idealized, ¹¹ and that the wickedness of Guido—"that prodigy of evil"—shall rise to the limit conceivable. ¹² Just as frankly Browning elaborated on a prophetic guidance which imposes itself on all final decisions. He thought of himself as a prophet of Elisha's stature, entitled to interpret the world anew in the light of divine truth as revealed through love. He also thought of himself as a high priest, giving utterance to the needs and aspirations, the fears and faith of mankind. "He dedicated himself," Stopford Brooke says, "to the picturing of humanity; and he came to think a Power beyond ours had accepted this dedication, and directed his work. . . . He believed that he had certain God-given qualities which fitted him for this work." ¹³ Near the beginning of the poem Browning claims divine guidance when he describes the discovery of the *Old Yellow Book*: "(Mark the predestination!) when a Hand always above my shoulder pushed me" (I. 40-41). In the old book itself, under his name, Browning inscribed: "For me the Muse in her might hath in store her strongest shaft." On the day he found the book, the tragic story of Pompilia was enabled to act itself "over again once more," because "the life in me abolishes the death of things, deep calling unto deep" (I. 520-21). And when comparing his own resuscitation of the characters of the book with Elisha's resuscitation of the Shunammite's child, he adds, "'Tis a credible feat with the right man and way" (I. 771-72). Browning accepted this high function as his "due to God" (I. 1403-04), the discharge of which would "save the soul" (XII. 867).

Browning's belief in his high calling is closely related to the reason for his intense agnosticism concerning knowledge. The belief that total or final truth is unattainable in this world was a stronghold of his faith. ¹⁴ In *The Ring and the Book*, however, the entire distrust of intellectual knowledge and the complete reliance upon the heart evinced in Browning's later poems, had not reached an absolute division. Both Pompilia and the Pope are conscious of the value of knowledge as well as of its inadequacy to represent the infinite. The difference between *The Ring and the Book* and later poems is that Browning was, in the former, in the process of scuttling knowledge, but had as yet insisted only upon the limits of knowledge. He felt that mankind's use of knowledge was narrowly limited and that only the artist, with his keener sensitivity and divine assistance, could make profitable use of knowledge. Although art too is denied the use of knowledge in the later poems, in *The Ring and the Book* it is engaged in presenting the truth through intellectual as well as intuitional and inspirational means. "No dose of purer truth than man digests, / But truth with falsehood, milk ¹⁵ that feeds him now, / Not strong meat ¹⁵ he may get to bear some day" (I. 830-32). Consequently the heart or the soul is the only reliable source of truth for mankind. As the heart is schooled in "things pertaining to God," so will it be weaned gradually from the "milk of truth." Not even the Pope, as I read Browning, had been completely prepared for the "meat of truth." ¹⁶ In their search for truth [fact] all characters of the poem missed the one agent which might have revealed the total truth. Because they were still relying upon knowledge, *looking for facts*, they were unable to *feel* truth. Browning, no doubt, thought the Pope's judgment the most satisfactory, and he makes it evident that this satisfaction was reached through an appeal, finally, to the heart.

Browning's second use of the word "truth," I therefore suggest, is based on his distrust of man's splintered and incomplete knowledge, that is, *fact*; on his idealistic attitude toward life; and on his acceptance of a calling as highly held as that of ancient priest or prophet. Wherever the particular and the general, the individual and the universal, are in conflict, Browning seems to reveal a consistent distrust of the particular and the individual. Perhaps this is what Stopford Brooke meant when he wrote: "[Browning] hated the withering of the individual, nor did he believe that by that the world grew more and more." ¹⁷ Supporting passages from *The Ring and the Book* which cling like a burr in the mind are not easily dismissed:

. . . who trusts
 To human testimony for a fact
 Gets this sole fact—himself is proved a fool;
 Man's speech being false, if but by consequence
 That only strength is true! while man is weak,
 And, SINCE TRUTH SEEMS RESERVED FOR HEAVEN NOT EARTH,
 Plagued here by earth's prerogative of lies,
 Should learn to love and long for what, one day,
 Approved by life's probation, he may speak. (XII. 601-09)

What does the world, told truth, but lie the more? (X. 673)
 Truth, rare and real, not transcripts, fact and false. (IX. 107)

Expect nor question nor reply
 At what we figure as God's judgment-bar!
 None of this vile way by the barren words
 Which, more than any deed, characterize
 Man as made subject to a curse: . . .
 But when man walks the garden of this world
 For his own solace, and, unchecked by law,
 Speaks or keeps silence as himself sees fit,
 Without the least incumbency to lie,
 —Why, can he tell you what a rose is like,
 Or how the birds fly, and not slip to false
 Though truth serve better? . . .
 Therefore these filthy rags of speech, this coil
 Of statement, comment, query and response,
 Tatters all too contaminate for use,
 Having no renewing: HE, THE TRUTH, IS, TOO,
 THE WORD. We men, in our degree, may know
 There, simply, instantaneously. . . . (X. 347-78)

Browning's recognized dissatisfaction with the lawyers and his unsympathetic treatment of minor characters and speakers may result from the dependence of these individuals upon individual fact, upon their own individual smallness. Truth [fact], on which Browning lavishes unnecessary derision in the above passages, seems subjected to belittlement wherever it appears in the poem. The contrast of truth ["fanciless fact"] with truth [fanciful fact] which seemingly runs throughout *The Ring and the Book* may find its culmination in:

. . . our human speech is nought
 Our human testimony false, our fame
 And human estimation words and wind.
 Why take the artistic way to prove so much?
 Because, it is the glory and good of Art,
 That Art remains the one way possible
 Of speaking truth, to mouths like mine at least. . . .
 But Art,—wherein man nowise speaks to men,
 Only to mankind,—Art may tell a truth
 Obliquely, do the thing shall breed the thought
 Nor wrong the thought, missing the mediate word. . . .
 SO WRITE A BOOK SHALL MEAN BEYOND THE FACTS, . . . (XII. 838-66)

To say that Browning "adds nothing to the truth"¹⁸ of the *Old Yellow Book* seems to leave in doubt or to consider as nonessential the poet's preconceived plan to "write a book shall mean beyond the facts." To believe that Browning reprinted, or thought that he reprinted, himself out of the poem divulges a rather faulty knowledge of ring-making¹⁹ and suggests that Browning did not understand the creative process through which, in *The Ring and the Book*, he worked for eight years. With the exception of God's truth, which is signalized in "He, the Truth, is, too, the Word," the word "truth" in the poem seems always to refer either to "fact-facts" or to a result accomplished by talents uncommon to man and attributable to the influx of divine guidance. Whereas Browning recognizes only a weak relation at best between man's speech—facts—and God's truth, he underscores heavily the power of certain men to apprehend in part God's truth. Like Wordsworth, Browning looked

upon a poet as a man "endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind." Here is the way Browning expresses it:

Why did the mage say,—feeling as we are wont
 For truth [total or final], and stopping midway short of truth,
 And resting on a lie,—"I raise a ghost?"
 "Because," he taught adepts, "man makes not man.
 "Yet by a special gift, an art of arts,
 "MORE INSIGHT AND MORE OUTSIGHT AND MUCH MORE
 "WILL TO USE BOTH OF THESE THAN BOAST MY MATES,
 "I can detach from me, commission forth
 "Half of my soul; which in its pilgrimage
 "O'er old unwandered waste ways of the world
 "MAY CHANCE UPON SOME FRAGMENT OF A WHOLE, . . ." (I. 742-52)

Expressions such as "since truth seems reserved for heaven," "He, the Truth, is, too, the Word," and "some fragment of a whole" are as familiar to Browning's poetry as the "star" image or the monastery folding itself in for a night of rest. Unequivocal conviction of the instability and fragmentary nature of man-conceived truth seems to have propelled Browning's loyalty beyond the external truth of fact to an essential truth.

Browning or his character often repeats that this or that is a truth [fact], but Browning, I think, avoids saying that he believes it to be a finally trustworthy fact. His purpose was to present the facts in as many different ways as they could be presented. Through frequent reminder by the poet or the speaker that the statement at hand is a truth [fact], Browning apparently chose to justify whatever distortion the facts suffered while passing through his own mind. He must have realized that however greatly he "wrenched" the facts, they could not be disfigured as much as the witnesses and the lawyers had disfigured them. Presumably an abiding distrust of truth [fact] caused Browning to accentuate so many times a word in conflict with his attitude toward life. One can never stop with the facts, he seems to emphasize, and "save the soul." The apology²⁰ in "For how else know we save by worth of word?" (I. 837) becomes more meaningful in this context. During frequent visits to the courtrooms of London Browning observed the way of the courts with fact and evidently developed a warm aversion to the "patent truth [fact]-extracting process." As the contradictory truths [facts] of all trials come to the surface, Browning could have reasoned with his Ring metaphor in mind, so do the contradictory truths [facts] of *The Ring and the Book* come to the surface. Although it probably does not matter how many, A. K. Cook says, "Browning squeezed almost every drop of fact or alleged fact that they [the pamphlets] could yield."²¹ But it is not alone Browning's adaptation of innumerable facts or his practice of adding, changing, or deleting facts which accounts for the broad scope of his presentation. More than either or both of these, it is the imaginative contribution in the creation of character and in the interpretation of motive, all of which the poet called "alloy" and, like the ring-maker or courtroom judge, he may plausibly have considered hidden from obvious sight.

Critics have sometimes noticed that Browning did not know all the facts of the *Old Yellow Book*. Other-Half Rome, for example, says that Pompilia died "in the long white Lazar-house . . . Saint Anna's (III. 35-37); and the Pope (X. 1504-06) and his Bottini (XII. 676) say that she died in the Monastery (of St. Mary Magdalene) of the Convertites. Mr. Cook, in his comment upon this situation, writes: "The first identification was the merest guess, and if Sir Frederick Treves is right in saying that 'no such house [as a hospital of Saint Anna] had any existence' (Treves, p. 76) it was not a happy one."²² Both the insistence on Browning's mastery of fact and the observation that Browning did not know all the facts originate, at least in part, with "I had mastered the contents, knew the whole truth" (I. 107), words Browning spoke about his first or at most second reading of the *Old Yellow Book* on the day he found it. Browning must have meant that, as anyone may read a book and say he knows it, he had read all of this book and knew it. In the poem different speakers say whatever they wish, or in any case one speaker says that Pompilia was not carried to the hospital of St. Anna and another says that she was carried to St. Ann's. Speakers throughout the poem add, distort, ignore, "wrench and falsify," all turning the facts to their own purposes. This characteristically true-to-life conduct is one of the fundamental portrayals of *The Ring and the Book*. Although characters sometimes speak for the poet, save for the first and part of the last, each book of the poem contains the evidence of persons connected in some way with the trial, giving evidence as they see it, often crippling it as witnesses are prone to do.

Used as evidence to substantiate Browning's assertion that he "had mastered the contents, knew the whole truth," a statement Browning made to the Reverend John W. Chadwick has become quite well known. Browning said to him in answer to the query, "If it did not make him very happy to have created such a woman as Pompilia": "I assure you I found her in the book just as she speaks and acts in my poem."²³ At least two serious objections may be raised against using these words as evidence that Browning thought and said he was faithful to the facts of the *Old Yellow Book*. Dowden best expresses the first objection: "The truth is that he found in the book whatever he needed and desired to find. Another reader of the documents might fail to discover the Pompilia of Browning."²⁴ The second objection rises from a conversation of Browning's recorded by Rossetti: "Browning talked about an article in the *Temple Bar*, saying that he, as shown in the *Ring and Book*, is an analyst, not a creator of character. This, [Browning] very truly says, is not applicable; because he has had to create, out of the mass of almost equally balanced evidence, the characters of the book as he conceives them, and it is only after that process that the analyzing method can come into play."²⁵

With the potential qualities before him, Browning enhanced the character of Pompilia until she became a symbol of Virtue in distress (IX.1002), but in no place I can find did he assert that another person must see in his Pompilia the Pompilia of his source. Since so many other readers of the *Old Yellow Book* have quickly determined that the evidence of the case is almost equally balanced, it would be odd if Browning had not made the same discovery. Near the time Browning finished his poem, Carlyle, who had been reading the old book, concluded that the "real story is plain enough on looking into it; the girl and the handsome young priest were lovers."²⁶ Hodell, at a later date, completed an intensive study of the book with the belief that "No one can read these [Celestino's and his associates' oaths] without an absolute conviction of her saintly purity and patience."²⁷ In 1920 A. K. Cook compiled a scholarly commentary upon the book and the poem. With reference to the poet's attitude, he wrote that Browning possessed "an assured conviction that the charge of misconduct brought against Caponsacchi and Pompilia was for the most part a deliberately false concoction."²⁸ To which he added: "In spite of the contradictions which I have noticed [discrepancies in Caponsacchi's and Pompilia's depositions] most readers of the Book will share that conviction." Four years later, after having translated the *Old Yellow Book*, Judge J. M. Gest stated that "it seems quite clearly established that Pompilia was guilty of adultery with Caponsacchi."²⁹ The oaths of ten witnesses; the execution of Guido, resulting from a trial of which Judge Gest himself says: "The defense that the homicides were committed *ex causa honoris* runs throughout all the arguments, and this of course turned on the innocence or guilt of Pompilia, which may naturally be regarded as the central fact of the case";³⁰ the decision of a court and lawyers in whom Judge Gest reveals the strongest faith; and a definite court vindication of Pompilia's fidelity to her marriage vows—all of these truths [facts]³¹ are insufficient evidence to convince Judge Gest of Pompilia's innocence.

Convinced of the probability of Pompilia's innocence but also aware of the almost equally balanced evidence of her trial, Browning could hardly have chosen a theme more appropriate than the vanity of human speech or a poetic figure more applicable than the metaphor of the Ring. For as pristine gold without alloy is soft and unsuited to tempering, so the contradictory truths [facts] of Browning's testimony were soft and unsuited to tempering without the poet's interpretative alloy. To correct their weakness in taking fixed and durable shape, Browning's poetic alloy is added to give substance to the "pure" and "crude" facts of his source as metallic alloy is added by the ring-maker to give substance and practical value to the pristine gold. Strengthening each other in the analogy of pristine gold and man's truth [fact], the gold surface of the ring and the factual surface of the poem are further strengthened by a courtroom analogy in which lawyers and judges search beneath the superficial surface of verbal witnessing for a composite truth. Where a pledge to absolute fidelity to fact leaves Browning with a poem whose theme, pervading imagery, and characters are not representative of his intent, a distrust of truth [fact] by the poet provides grounds for the valid portrayal of his Ring metaphor, his theme, and his characters. We seem invited to believe that Browning appropriated the contradictory truths [facts] of the *Old Yellow Book* in order to "chance upon some fragment of a whole."

Butler University, Indianapolis

Paul A. Cundiff

FOOTNOTES

- ¹A. K. Cook, *Commentary upon The Ring and the Book* (1920), p. 2.
- ²J. E. Shaw, "The 'Donna Angelicata' in *The Ring and the Book*," *PMLA*, XLI (March, 1926), 55.
- ³Robert Langbaum, "*The Ring and the Book: A Relativist Poem*," *PMLA*, LXXI (March, 1956), 131.
- ⁴Langbaum, p. 141.
- ⁵*The Works of Robert Browning* (Centenary Edition, London, 1912), Vols. V and VI.
- ⁶Langbaum, p. 131.
- ⁷Langbaum, p. 150.
- ⁸Charles W. Hodell, *Old Yellow Book* (1908), p. 231; *The Ring and the Book*, ed. Dowden (Oxford Edition, 1912), p. ix; Cook, p. 2; John Marshall Gest, *Old Yellow Book* (1925), p. 2.
- ⁹Paul A. Cundiff, "The Clarity of Browning's Ring Metaphor," *PMLA*, LXIII (1948), 1276-82. In a letter of May 19, 1863, Browning says of a mutual acquaintance, "... for he wants the proper alloy which should stiffen the gold in him & keep him from bumps and bruises" (*Letters of Robert Browning to Miss Isa Blagden*, 1923, p. 90). Mrs. Browning suggests that Browning had been instructed in ring-making (*The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, ed. Kenyon, 1897, II, 354-55), and Browning confirms it: "(Craftsmen instruct me)" (I.9).
- ¹⁰Robert Browning and Julia Wedgwood, *Their Letters*, ed. Curle (1937), pp. 143-44, 183.
- ¹¹Wedgwood *Letters*, p. 163.
- ¹²Wedgwood *Letters*, p. 153.
- ¹³Stopford A. Brooke, *The Poetry of Browning* (1902), p. 402.
- ¹⁴See especially Browning's "Saul," lines 245-53, and, though the speaker is the Pope, not Browning, one of the most effective images in Browning's verse: X.1307-27.
- ¹⁵Hebrews v.11-14.
- ¹⁶The Pope indeed wavered between faith and facts. Examples of the Pope's indecision: He read the chroniclers (X.198ff); spent the day on the court documents (X.210ff); questioned man's wit when he should have known it was fallible (X.238-41); suspected an "acuter wit" than his might sound the documents deeper and reach through guilt to innocence (X.261-63); stood on his integrity (X.276).
- ¹⁷Brooke, p. 404.
- ¹⁸Langbaum, p. 151.
- ¹⁹Cundiff, pp. 1277-81.
- ²⁰Other lines the interpreter should not overlook: "Whose care is lest men see too much at once. / He made the sign, such God-glimpse must suffice" (I.595-96); "... indisputably fact, . . . / Dwindled into no bigger than a book" (I.665-71); "(Which take at best imperfect cognizance, / Since, how heart moves brain, and how both move hand, / What mortal ever in entirety saw?)" (I.826-28); "(So universal is its plague of squint)" (I.879).
- ²¹Cook, p. xix.
- ²²Cook, p. 281.
- ²³John W. Chadwick, *The Christian Register*, January 19, 1888.
- ²⁴*The Ring and the Book*, ed. Dowden, p. xii.
- ²⁵W. M. Rossetti, *Rossetti Papers* (1903), p. 401.
- ²⁶William Allingham, *A Diary*, ed. H. Allingham and D. Radford (1907), pp. 127-28.
- ²⁷Hodell, p. 281.
- ²⁸Cook, p. 293.
- ²⁹Gest, p. 610.
- ³⁰Gest, p. 600.
- ³¹By this identical evidence Mrs. Sutherland Orr was convinced of Pompilia's Christian gentleness and absolute maiden modesty (*Handbook to Robert Browning's Works*, 1930, p. 87). Writing in 1927, Mrs. F. T. Russell can say only that Pompilia was "in an equivocal position, . . . finally destroyed by a terrific penalty either wholly undeserved or partly the meed of her own folly" (*One Word More on Browning*, 1927, p. 121). J. E. Shaw thinks: "She is not a bad girl made into a good girl; the testimony of Fra Celestino, in the *Book*, represents her as innocent, modest, and forgiving, dying like a saint" (Shaw, p. 43). A point of view different from Mr. Shaw's is advanced by Paul E. Beichner, "Fra Celestino's Affidavit and *The Ring and the Book*," *MLN*, LVIII (May, 1943), 335-40. Mr. Beichner argues that Celestino's affidavit is inadmissible under the Seal of Confession.

11. PAPERS READ AT THE MLA MEETING (New York)

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MATRIX OF *GREAT EXPECTATIONS*

Critical opinion of Dickens in recent years has focused more and more insistently upon what Professor Lionel Stevenson has called "the dark novels" of his later life, novels that most of Dickens's contemporaries regarded as inferior to his earlier work. The publication in the late 1930's of the first new facts about Dickens since Forster, in the Nonesuch edition of the letters and in the biographies of Thomas Wright and Gladys Storey, led Edmund Wilson and others to a reevaluation of Dickens's work, especially the novels from *Little Dorrit* on. The focus on the maturer vision of these later novels has in large measure been, therefore, a focus on the autobiographical elements in them.

John Forster records that Dickens himself looked upon *Great Expectations* as a return to the autobiographical materials out of which he had drawn the young David Copperfield. And in *Great Expectations* Dickens made his one return to the first-person narrative. But few critics have done much with Forster's hint. The outward events of Pip's life do not follow those of the author's as many of David's do. Pip's, however, is a story of what happens inside Pip, and Dickens's probe into the hidden springs of his behavior, and into the painful process of his growth from a nobody to a manufactured gentleman and, finally, to a man, offers a challenge to critics who talk about Dickens's inability to portray characters who are shaped by their experience.

If, then, Pip's story is autobiographical, as both Forster and Dickens testify, the transposed autobiographical experiences are not those of the blacking-house, the press gallery, and the struggles of a young author, as in *Copperfield*, but the desires, humiliations, insecurities, frustrations that Dickens found in the well of his own conscience. The exploration of such elements in the novel is, therefore, full of traps for the unwary. Speculation, unrelated to such biographical fact as is available, leads the over-imaginative critic to place before his reader more of a Rorschach blueprint of his own id than of his subject's. Dickens has had his share of this kind of criticism, and I shall try to avoid adding to it. My thesis is that a close reading of the several thousand letters of Dickens, especially the unpublished ones, and of the diaries, memoirs, and letters of his contemporaries, supplies strong evidence that the probing into Pip's soul records Dickens's conscious and unconscious probing into his own soul to a degree not approximated in his other works. The novel can be seen to be the record of a brutal self-appraisal which centers on the three obsessive passions of his own life—his passion for social status, his passion for money, and his passion for Ellen Ternan.

In their studies of *Great Expectations* critics have done more with the last of these three passions—that for Ellen Ternan—than with the other two; but even here I do not believe that certain of the autobiographical implications have been sufficiently emphasized. The novel does more than translate into fiction Dickens's middle-aged infatuation with and eighteen-year-old actress. A sensitive reader cannot fail to recognize that although Dickens uses no clinical vocabulary, *Great Expectations* is a novel about sex. The anguish of Pip's fateful attraction to Estella is not David's adolescent love, but the deeply disturbing physical desire of a mature man. As Pip in the midst of his agony exclaims:

According to my experience, the conventional notion of a lover cannot be always true. The unqualified truth is, that when I loved Estella with the love of a man, I loved her simply because I found her irresistible. . . . I knew to my sorrow, often and often, if not always, that I loved her against reason, against promise, against peace, against hope, against happiness, against all discouragement that could be. (Chap. xxix)

Now that more and more has been pieced together of the story of Dickens's tragic love for Ellen, the descriptions of the torture of frustrated desire found in *Great Expectations* hint at more than the biographers have chosen to tell us about these years. Some of the statements in his letters at the time his "irresistible" attraction to Ellen threatened to tear his life apart seem written with the same penful of ink that wrote of Pip's anguish, and would make interesting parallels if we had time to quote them all here. As Professor Edgar Johnson has pointed out, all the later novels contain similar echoes. It may be, as some think, that Ellen was cool and calculating and clever at playing hard-to-get, like Estella; or a poor girl desperately sick of poverty and willing to pay any price for financial security, like Bella Wilfer. We don't know because we know very little about Ellen.

But what we do know is that these heroines bear little resemblance to those of the early novels—Dickens's "femininities" as one critic called them. And what is inescapable is that the unromanticized realities of emotional experience are more powerfully drawn in these later novels than in any of Dickens's earlier work.

The other passions, those for money and social status, in Pip's case stemmed from the instigating attraction to Estella. No sensible person, of course, would insist upon absolute consistency in an artist's use of his experience. He naturally adapts such materials to his creative purpose. The words, "When I loved Estella with the love of a man," are important. The Estella who made fun of the boy Pip, and rejected him because he was "common," is more likely Maria Beadnell, Dickens's first love, who led him on but rejected him as an unpromising suitor. Certainly, in Dickens's own case, his passion for money had its origin in his passion to rise out of the shabby gentility of his lower middle-class circumstances, his passion to be somebody.

But for Dickens there was no call from Juggers. Dickens's Magwitch became the adoring public which poured its middle-class shillings into his pockets and made him as much a manufactured gentleman as the adoring convict made Pip. But while Pip's was an unknown benefactor, Dickens was well aware that his social position depended upon the continued shilling-favor of his public. His letters are filled with references to money made and money needed, to his elation when sales records rise, his panic when they drop. Henry James, comparing Balzac and Dickens, objected that both men "treated their extraordinary imaginative force as a matter of business; they worked it as a gold-mine, violently and brutally; overworked and ravaged it."¹ Dickens's eternal quarrels with publisher after publisher are well known. Other glimpses of Dickens the business man occur in the letters. When, for example, he began reading from his novels for charity, Dickens generally insisted upon the reservation of a large section for inexpensive, working-class seats; but later, when he gave programs for his own benefit, he urged his manager to "stem the shilling tide."² Again, visiting Preston during a strike, when half the mills were closed, Dickens expressed great concern—not for the unemployed, but for the effect of the strike upon the ticket sale.³ It is also sometimes a shock to listen as England's great social reformer, keeping a weather-eye on reforms people wanted to hear about, advises contributors to his magazine according to the sales barometer at his editorial elbow.

Such instances are not introduced here to cavil about the propriety of a literary man's being also a man of business, nor to make a hypocrite out of Dickens, but simply to point up how the analyses in all his later novels of the corrosive effects of money upon human character and personality may have owed as much to an examination of his conscience as to his examination of society. It is ironic that Dickens's plans for the publication of *Great Expectations* itself were changed at the last moment so that he could save his magazine, *All the Year Round* (a "property... far too valuable... to be... endangered,"⁴ as he wrote to Forster) from a threatened loss of subscribers, and that he violated his artistic principles by following what Gissing termed Bulwer-Lytton's "imbecile suggestion"⁵ that he alter the novel to satisfy a paying public's addiction to happy endings.

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But Dickens would have answered that he did need those thousands of pounds. His standard of living from the day of *Pickwick's* success was always several jumps ahead of his income. And he had a large family to support—not only his wife, ten children, a housemother sister-in-law, but his mother and father, and frequently his brothers and sisters and their families, his wife's relatives, and even Ellen's relatives. In his later life he had three establishments to keep going—his wife's, his own at Gad's Hill, and (presumably) Ellen Ternan's. Later yet, his grandchildren were added to the dole. He wrote Fields in 1868 after his son's business failure that Charley "staggers back, with a family of five children in the present and fifty in the future, on the parental shoulder. I am at my wits' end to know what to do."⁷

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To get that sum in a heap so soon is an immense consideration to me—my wife's income to pay—a very expensive position to hold—and my boys with a curse of limpness on them. You don't know what it is to look round the table and see reflected from every seat at it... some horribly well remembered expression of inadaptability to anything.⁸

The bitter reference to his family, whom he described about this same time to Collins as "the largest family ever known with the smallest disposition to do anything for themselves,"⁹ brings us to the third major autobiographical revelation in *Great Expectations*: that Dickens was ashamed of his shabby-genteel origins, of what he came to regard as his degraded childhood, ashamed of his ne'er-do-well father and housekeeper grandmother. As was dramatically disclosed by Forster, no one in Dickens's lifetime—not even his wife and children—knew much about his life up to a few years before the publication of *Pickwick*. It was harder to conceal the evidences of a lack of gentility in the actions of some of his immediate family. One brother deserted a blind wife and ran off to America with another woman. Another was divorced on charges of proven adultery. All seemed to be an irresponsible, incompetent, and embarrassingly demanding lot. Though some critics have taken such comments as that quoted about Dickens's disappointment in his children as an ungenerous putting of all the blame on Mrs. Dickens, it is more likely that Dickens saw in the faces of his children the faces of his father and brothers. This was their inheritance. Not all the money in the world could change it, and he came to recognize that neither could his own genius. He once remarked, "Copyright needs be hereditary, for genius isn't."¹⁰

The money with which Magwitch hoped to make Pip a gentleman made him a snob. With the money his many-headed Magwitch lavished upon him, Dickens, too, struggled to rise out of the class into which he was born, but as Edmund Wilson put it, ended by falling between the two and belonging to neither.¹¹ In English society there are barriers beyond which money or even fame rarely takes you. To the day Dickens died people did not forget he was "no gentleman." Contemporary sneers at "little Dickens" as Carlyle patronizingly called him are legion. Meredith (ironically ashamed of his own origins) called Dickens the "incarnation of Cockneydom."¹² Mill remarked that he reminded him of "Carlyle's picture of Camille Desmoulin and his 'face of dingy blackguardism irradiated with genius,'" adding that it was a "phenomenon [that] does not often appear in a lady's drawing-room."¹³ Public and private comments on the novelist's "low" taste in dress and jewelry were widely circulated—a taste that even bourgeois Americans found shocking. John Tulloch described his appearance as "a mixture of the waiter and the actor,"¹⁴ and Thackeray often entertained his correspondents with such descriptions of his rival as his appearance "in geranium & ringlets,"¹⁵ and "beautiful as a butterfly, especially about the shirtfront."¹⁶ Mrs. Browning gossiped about Dickens's vulgar selection of famous people (his social superiors) as godparents to his many children.¹⁷ Francis Jeffrey was appalled that he sent a son to Eton, where, he scolded Dickens, "what is most surely learned... is the habit of wasteful expense, & in ordinary natures, a shame & contempt for plebeian parents."¹⁸ Others noted that Dickens often accepted invitations that did not include his wife, apparently insensitive to the inherent snub—the kind of snub best illustrated in the excuse Lord John Russell offered for inviting Dickens to one of his dinners: "Nothing so flat as the cream by itself."¹⁹

There can be little doubt that Dickens, acutely sensitive to the least criticism, stored away resentment of such sneers at his lack of breeding, many of which found their way into print. The charge is not one that can be thrown in the speaker's teeth with the words, "But I am a gentleman," especially when continuously embarrassed by members of your family—your father, for instance, who had once gone to debtor's prison and who persisted in a lifelong habit of borrowing money from your friends and business associates. Dickens's feelings about his father may be the particular well-spring of Pip's struggle with his old loyalties and new ambitions, as we see Pip devoted to Joe Gargery, then ashamed of him, and then ashamed of being ashamed. Tucked away in a grangerized volume of Forster's *Life* at the Dickens House in London is a letter from John Dickens to Chapman and Hall, Dickens's publishers, which seems to have escaped notice. In an incident reminiscent of Ralph Nickleby getting rid of his parents, Dickens in 1839 moved his protesting mother and father to suburban Lewisham with the determination to get them out of London and out of his hair. This letter from the prodigal father, written after four years of exile in suburbia, may justify Dickens's action, but it is at the same time a pathetic picture of the old man:

The Manor House
Lewisham
9 July 1842

Confidential.
My dear Sirs:

It would add greatly to my comfort if I could procure a

free transit ticket by the Watermen's Company for the year; the sum is Ten Guineas, but the drain upon me from other sources & my limited means for supplying them, are so great & numerous, I cannot myself accomplish it. I will not enter into family matters, further than to say, that in a more satisfactory arrangement of them in a pecuniary point of view, this point has been overlooked.

As I am to be an independent Gentleman, how am I to get rid of my time? Two or three hours a day, two or three days a week at the Museum, would be a great relief, but to walk to London & back to accomplish that object, is rather more than I can do with ease & Rheumatism at sixty. If you would be my surety to the Watermen, well & good, and I should be grateful, if not why then I must doze away the future,—who talks of future whose existence is already of the past,—in my arm chair in rereading the works of "Boz".

Always Yours & obliged
JOHN DICKENS

The wit of the closing remark is worthy of Micawber's original, and gives us an idea of how charming and at the same time exasperating such a man must have been. "For anything like the damnable shadow which this father of mine casts upon my face, there never was—except in a nightmare," wrote Dickens shortly after the above episode.²⁰ Ten years after his father's death, however, during the writing of *Great Expectations*, Dickens's treatment of his parents may have weighed on his conscience as he thought back on some of his failures as a son. It is hard for Americans, nurtured on the idealization of the log-cabin and the rough suspender, to sympathize with the acute misery of Dickens in a class-conscious society. Shaw even thought his generation in England missed much of the tragedy of Pip's struggle,²¹ though the recent furore over the U's and the non-U's and the rise of Britain's "angry young men" would seem to indicate that Shaw was premature in presiding at anything approaching the inquest on class feeling in England.

Chesterton described *Great Expectations* as a "study in human weakness and the slow human surrender."²² This paper has been able to do little more than suggest that the novel is tied in with Dickens's own weaknesses and surrender in a way that no one has yet adequately explored. The documentation presented here is only a fraction of that which could be brought forward. Biographers in recent years have unearthed a mass of new information about Dickens. The sensitive critic who reads the novels against the solid background of such biographical fact should be able to illuminate the darkness that remains in much of the life and work of Dickens—the "shadows, clouds, and darkness" that Forster spoke of as hanging over the tragic later years of Dickens's life.²³

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FOOTNOTES:

¹French Poets and Novelists (London, 1884), p. 147.

²Nonesuch Letters, III, 467; letter to Georgina Hogarth, April 17, 1866.

³Ibid., III, 267; letter to W. H. Wills, December 13, 1861.

⁴Nonesuch, III, 183 (October 6, 1860).

⁵Charles Dickens: a Critical Study (London, 1903), p. 60.

⁶Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson (Boston, 1883), II, 256.

⁷Huntington ms., July 7, 1868.

⁸Letter to Wills, June 6, 1867; Huntington ms.

⁹October 4, 1866; Morgan ms.

¹⁰Nonesuch, I, 192.

¹¹The Wound and the Bow (New York, 1941), pp. 49 f.

¹²Edward Clodd, "George Meredith: Some Recollections," *Fortnightly Review*, n.s., LXXXVI (1909), 27.

¹³Letter to John Robertson, July 11, 1837; Philadelphia Free Library ms.

¹⁴Margaret Oliphant, *Nemoir of the Life of John Fulloch* (Edinburgh, 1888), p. 125.

¹⁵Letter to his mother; *Letters* (ed., Gordon N. Ray), II, 110.

¹⁶William Thompson Price, *Life of William Charles Macready* (New York, 1894), p. 195.

¹⁷*The Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning* (New York, 1926), II, 135.

¹⁸Henry Thomas Cockburn, *Life of Lord Jeffrey* (Philadelphia, 1852), II, 367.

¹⁹Spencer Walpole, *The Life of Lord John Russell* (London, 1889), II, 145.

²⁰Letter to Thomas Mitton, February 14, 1844; Huntington ms.

²¹Preface to *Great Expectations*, Limited Editions Club (Edinburgh, 1937), p. xx.

²²*Criticisms and Appreciations* (London, 1911), p. 199.

²³Letter to Longfellow, May 7, 1873; Victoria and Albert Museum ms.

THE HERO-VILLAIN OF *OLIVER TWIST*

Oliver Twist is not one of Dickens's major works, and it is not surprising that it has received relatively little critical attention. Yet it stands out from the other early novels in one interesting respect. It is the first novel of Dickens which has a plot structure, an imaginative as well as a narrative organization.¹ To be sure this structure is very amateurish, and the coincidences out of which Dickens manufactures his plot have provoked the condescension of critics from the first appearance of the book to the present.² Yet however absurd the means which Dickens used may be, the final effect is far from silly. Its very exaggerations and coincidences have a dreamlike importance. We can read the book as a whole and feel that an imaginative statement of some seriousness is being made, a statement which, indeed, transcends the reformist intentions of its author. As Dickens said in defence of Nancy's character in his own preface, *Oliver Twist* "involves the best and the worst shades of our common nature; much of its ugliest hues, and something of its most beautiful; it is a contradiction, an anomaly, an apparent impossibility, but it is a truth."³ My paper is an essay in pursuit of this truth.

The handiest thread to follow in such an inquiry is Oliver himself. As a human being he is incredible. Though he has lived all his life in baby farms and workhouses he speaks literary English, and the purity of his character is as amazing as the refinement of his vocabulary. Yet this extremity of purity is something the reader is obliged to accept in order to make sense of the comic scenes which first place Oliver in his world:

The board were sitting in solemn conclave, when Mr. Bumble rushed into the room in great excitement, and addressing the gentleman in the high chair, said,

"Mr. Limbkins, I beg your pardon, Sir! Oliver Twist has asked for more!"

There was a general start. Horror was depicted on every countenance.

"For more!" said Mr. Limbkins. "Compose yourself, Bumble, and answer me distinctly. Do I understand that he asked for more, after he had eaten the supper allotted by the dietary?"

"He did, Sir," replied Bumble.

"That boy will be hung," said the gentleman in the white waistcoat.

"I know that boy will be hung." (Ch. II)

There is nothing out of the way about the comic apparatus here; we identify the theatricality, the rhythmic repetition, the exaggerated response of the puppet-like characters as "typically" Dickensian. The ground of the joke is more interesting. It consists of the suggestion that though Oliver is perfect, he seems to his world to be very wicked; that is how, in his world, perfection appears. The nature of Oliver's request and the quality of his accusers make this misconception merely funny and pathetic. Is this, perhaps, a loss? The humor may lead us to neglect the light the scene indirectly throws on Oliver's place in the economy of the novel.

Consider another scene of the same kind: "Oh, you little wretch!" screamed Charlotte; seizing Oliver with her utmost force, which was about equal to that of a moderately strong man in particularly good training, "Oh, you little un-grate-ful mur-de-rous hor-rid villain!" And between every syllable, Charlotte gave Oliver a blow with all her might: accompanying it with a scream, for the benefit of society." (Ch. VI) It requires something of an effort to avoid entering the comic universe here; Oliver is so evidently not a murderer, and Charlotte, far from being his victim, is no mean villain in her own right. Yet by attending to the context we may deliberately refuse to see the joke, and so perhaps, catch the outline of another meaning. Oliver has just been badgered by Noah Claypole about his mother, who, we learn in the first pages of the book, died in childbirth. Noah has reminded Oliver that his mother would not have found herself dying in the workhouse if she were not a "regular right-down bad 'un." This attack rouses Oliver to a display of chivalric courage which astonishes his tormentor. He fells Noah to the ground. Charlotte comes to her sweetheart's rescue. When she and Mrs. Sowerberry are through suppressing Oliver's display of spirit, they fall back exhausted. "Mrs. Sowerberry sank into a chair, and burst into tears.

'Bless her, she's going off!' said Charlotte. 'A glass of water, Noah dear. Make haste.'

'Oh! Charlotte,' said Mrs. Sowerberry: speaking as well as she could, through a deficiency of breath, and a sufficiency of cold water, which Noah had poured over her head and shoulders. 'Oh! Charlotte, what a mercy we have not all been murdered in our beds!'"

Is there a hint here of another Oliver, a figure who conceals beneath an appearance of ostentatious weakness an excess of real power? The mock murder, we notice, is stimulated by a coarse reference to the real death of a female in bed, a death for which Oliver is actually, though not morally, responsible; for by merely being born, he killed his mother. The gentleman in the white waistcoat overhears Noah's wails and repeats his prediction that Oliver will come to be hung. Oliver escapes from the Sowerberry household an accused murderer of his foster family, fleeing his deserved punishment. But, of course, he is not. He is only an ill-used child.

Such false identifications of Oliver as a villain for comic effect may lead us to recall Fagin's endeavor to corrupt Oliver, to make a real villain of him. Let Oliver participate in crime, Fagin thinks, and he must recognize his responsibility for the whole of the evil which goes on about him. Let him be, even once, a thief's helper, and he *might as well* be a murderer: "Once let him feel that he is one of us; once fill his mind with the idea that he has been a thief; and he's ours! Ours for life!" (Ch. XIX) Oliver comes nearest yielding when he reads a book on the lives of great criminals:

Here, too, he read of men who, lying in their beds at dead of night, had been tempted (as they said) and led on, by their own bad thoughts, to such dreadful bloodshed as it made the flesh creep, and the limbs quail, to think of.

The terrible descriptions were so real and vivid, that the sallow pages seemed to turn red with gore; and the words upon them, to be sounded in his ears, as if they were whispered, in hollow murmurs, by the spirits of the dead. (Ch. XX.)

The pressure of Dickens's language here expresses the special quality of Oliver's reaction; these stories are frightening because they evoke a desire for violence from within. They are a kind of pornography: "In a paroxysm of fear, the boy closed the book, and thrust it from him. Then, falling on his knees, he prayed heaven to spare him from such deeds; and rather to will that he should die at once, than be reserved for crimes, so fearful and appalling."

Oliver's actual participation in crime is equally suggestive. His first enterprise is the attack by the Dodger and Master Bates on Mr. Brownlow's pocket handkerchief. Oliver stands appalled while his associates do the work; but when the crime is discovered, it is Oliver who runs as if he were guilty. The whole street agrees to make him the criminal, and he fails to suffer the legal consequences of his presumed crime only because the victim pities him and intervenes. The more elaborate housekeeping episode follows the same pattern. A crime is planned and nearly carried out in which Oliver is a forced participant. When the plan miscarries the real culprits escape. Oliver receives the bullet they deserve. In both episodes we are asked to see it as pathetic that a child should suffer for evils he did not commit. But it is worth noticing that Oliver *does* suffer. Even the false appearance of guilt evokes punishment in Oliver's world, a punishment extending to the borders of death. Oliver's near-extinction after the attempted burglary is followed by the extreme sickness of Rose Maylie. She too recovers. This repetition may remind us that one of Oliver's earliest experiences in the Sowerberry menage is the funeral of a young woman dead of starvation. We have already recalled that Oliver's mother died while still young. The figure of the child is linked with the figure of the young girl; the illness and death of the one involves the fate of the other.⁴

The continued stress on Oliver's false identity as a villain and a murderer, and the link between himself and the death, actual or potential, of young women, provides a curious context for the one crime in the book which is successfully consummated. When Nancy is killed, she herself plays Oliver's role of innocent victim: "Tell me what I have done!" (Ch. XLVII) she cries. As with Oliver before, appearances are against her, but she has not betrayed Sikes. She is to be sure a prostitute, and her death, like that of Oliver's mother, is in some sense retribution for sexual looseness. Sikes however is not Providence, and his act is itself a crime for which he must in turn be punished.

The murder scene and the subsequent flight of Sikes is the literary center of the book, and the episode that meant the most to Dickens himself. The extraordinary excitement the murder generated in him when he made it into the most vivid of his readings is a familiar topic for students of Dickens's later years. By the time he composed the reading, the weight of Dickens's identification had shifted from the victim to the criminal, as his letters amply confirm. Yet the possibility of the shift of sympathy from victim to murderer is already implicit in the novel. Thin strands link Sikes with Oliver. Fagin sees Oliver as a rival lover for Nancy: "The man against the child," (Ch. XX) he says, fearing the power of both to work him harm. Like Oliver, Sikes falls ill, and is nursed by his mistress "as if you had been a child..." (Ch. XL) The chase of Sikes can be seen as an enormous elaboration of Oliver's flight from the mob in the

pickpocketing episode. The prediction of the gentleman in the white waistcoat, repeated by Fagin, is not fulfilled with respect to Oliver, but Sikes is hanged. Will such small hints suffice to bear the speculation that Sikes and Oliver are counterparts, the perfectly bad man matched against the perfectly good child? Sikes's deed of blood places in a new light the episodes in which Oliver's false identity as a criminal, a murderer, even a murderer of women, is presented as a comic misapprehension, a misapprehension from which, we have noticed, Oliver suffers as if he were really guilty. If so, the structure of the book expresses the coexistence of the motive of aggression against the young virgin-mother and the counter-motive of guilt and self-repudiation by separating the wish to kill and the wish for innocence into distinct characters with contrasting fates. One's willingness to explain the relation between Sikes and Oliver in such a way is reinforced by the presence of other counterparts in the book. Thus Mr. Brownlow can stand for all that is loving and protecting in fatherhood because Fagin is there to represent the father as a vicious tryant; and Rose can be virtuous because Nancy is a whore. Oliver's extreme purity is precariously credible because the aggressive elements abstracted from Oliver are centered in Sikes.

The housekeeping episode illustrates their curious relationship. Oliver is brought along to be an extension of Sikes's body; he is small enough to be squeezed through a window too narrow to admit an adult. The incident is almost too easy to read symbolically, particularly when we recall that the house is inhabited by Oliver's female relatives. The burglary is also a rape, an act of violence in which Sikes and Oliver act as a single being. The murder of Nancy, with its heavily sexual overtones, in effect dramatizes the motives symbolized by the lesser crime.

Behind Nancy's murder stands the death of Oliver's mother, who gave the child life at the cost of her own death; a life and death both due to her sexual fault. The two sides of her image reappear as Nancy and Rose. The wish to destroy the mother, or rather the conviction that she was willfully destroyed, may find a vicarious re-expression through Sikes's act, and the associated guilt may be purged in Sikes's punishment. The counterwish to have the mother back may find its fruition in the recovery of Rose and Oliver's establishment as the "son" of a new household. From this point of view the burglary may be read as a reversal of the act of birth; Oliver is forced back into the "house" from which he came. This crime, like Oliver's other criminal experiences, represents elements of the original "crime" of seizing life at the expense of his mother's death. He is obliged to suffer over and over until he finds a counterpart of himself, a grown man, to act out his crime and the full punishment in literal detail. When Sikes fulfills the prophecy, the interior drama is ended, and Oliver is free to escape into the idyll of his new family.

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FOOTNOTES

¹Sylvere Monod, *Dickens Romancier* (Paris, 1953), pp. 112-113. In this respect *Oliver Twist* is something of a sport among the early novels, for in *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Old Curiosity Shop* Dickens returned to the loose form with which, in *Pickwick Papers*, he had started.

²See Una Pope-Hennessy, *Charles Dickens* (London, 1945), pp. 137-138. *The Quarterly Review* used these coincidences as a stick to beat the book with on its first appearance in volume form: "In a word, each crime he witnesses is the making of him, and all robbed by his companions of the Clan Fagin are the only people connected with his past history and future fortunes." (See volume LXIV [June, 1839], 96).

³It would be inconvenient to give page references for a book like *Oliver Twist*; I have provided chapter references for direct quotations.

⁴This is, in part, the argument of Ernest Boll, "Charles Dickens in *Oliver Twist*," *The Psychoanalytic Review*, XXVII (April, 1940), 139-141. Mr. Boll notices that the two figures conflate in Little Nell, who is at once a child and a young girl.

DANIEL DERONDA AND THE QUESTION OF UNITY IN FICTION

I wish to call attention to a discrepancy between the definition of "unity" in current theory and the demonstration of "unity" in current critical practice, and to suggest that the practice makes assumptions about the nature of literature which are different and less acceptable than those made by the theory. I shall use George Eliot's last novel, *Daniel Deronda*, as a case in point.

Most critics agree in theory about the kind of unity a play, novel, or poem should have—

the kind often called "organic." Most of those who use that critical metaphor—substituting "play" or "novel" for "poem"—would find little to quarrel with in Brooks and Warren's popular description of organic unity:

a poem . . . is a piece of writing which gives us a certain effect . . . This is very different from considering a poem as a group of mechanically combined elements . . . which are put together to make a poem as bricks are put together to make a wall . . . If we should compare a poem to the make-up of some physical object, it ought not to be a wall but something organic like a plant.¹

Current critical practice begins with this acceptable definition, but in the process of demonstrating unity gradually reduces "effect" in the above passage to "theme," so that a novel is virtually redefined as "a piece of writing which gives us a certain theme." This new definition is reinforced by the customary treatment of images as always having allegorical and paraphrasable "meaning" which relates them to each other and to the theme. Ferreting out theme and thematic image patterns—illuminating when properly limited and judiciously applied—has become a method in itself, and their presence even in so complex and "impure" a genre as the novel, is thought to demonstrate conclusively organic unity.

Let us see how the method applies to *Daniel Deronda*, since the unity of that novel has lately been the subject of critical discussion.

The first and until recently perhaps the only critic to attempt to demonstrate the unity of *Daniel Deronda* was Rabbi David Kaufman. He suggested that its two stories are, in effect, contrasts—the one all shade, the other light—and he stressed the contrasting pairs of characters—Gwendolen and Mirah, Grandcourt and Deronda, "The one . . . selfishness incarnate—the other, the archetype of self-negation."² George Eliot, who said she "meant everything in the novel to be related to everything else,"³ wrote Kaufman praising his "clear perception of the relation between . . . the Jewish elements and those of English social life."⁴

Using systematic theme-and-image analysis, Maurice Beebe has recently made a more thorough and subtle defence of the unity of *Daniel Deronda*. He sees the two stories as complementary contrasts: "Gwendolen's story takes her to [the] moment of renunciation [of the self]; Deronda's story begins in renunciation and ends in the self-realization that comes through submission to a higher purpose in life."⁵ The theme is thus essentially that of *Wilhelm Meister*, Beebe says, but what Goethe handles chronologically through the career of one character, George Eliot handles more economically through the simultaneous careers of two characters, each bearing half the theme. Moreover, he says, George Eliot uses the same devices to link her stories that Goethe used to link the parts of his theme: characters who are dramatic opposites; repeated images of one's seeing oneself outside oneself; and images which characters see in dreams and previsions.

Mrs. Barbara Hardy also finds that recurrent images in *Daniel Deronda* (and in George Eliot's other late novels) act "as a mnemonic which helps the reader to see the book as a whole, binding together past and present in anticipation and echo, and weaving the separate actions by unmistakable but oblique cross references . . . which have also the function of thematic emphasis."⁶ One of the images she discovers and discusses as it affects the unity of *Romola* and *Adam Bede*⁷ also appears in both stories of *Daniel Deronda*. This image, which occurs throughout George Eliot's work, contains these elements: a character, stripped of illusions, looks about him and sees the world in, literally, a different light—often morning light; if the moment of disillusion is at the same time an awakening, he looks out a window, sometimes seeing familiar objects with new meanings, or a human figure, often that of a workman.

Mrs. Hardy indicates four such moments in Gwendolen's moral progress but none in the *Deronda* portion of the novel, though both Mirah and Daniel have experiences which are at least obliquely related to Gwendolen's. When Mirah feels all hope of finding her mother illusory, she says, "I despaired. This morning, when the light came, I felt as if one word kept sounding within me—Never! Never!"⁸ When Daniel, as a young man, began to think Sir Hugo was his natural father rather than his kindly guardian, he saw:

the dear old home and everything within it . . . with a certain difference of light on the objects. The altarpiece was no longer miraculously perfect, painted under infallible guidance, but the human hand discerned in the work was appealing to a reverent tenderness safer from the gusts of discovery (I, 267).

Disillusion and awakening to sympathy for others parallels Beebe's theme of the renunciation or the dying of the self and the rebirth into society or the higher purpose. Since Gwendolen's moments of disillusion take place during the course of the action, but Daniel's has taken place before the action of the novel begins, Beebe's contention that Daniel's moral career begins where Gwendolen's leaves off is in some measure confirmed by this recurrent thematic image. And the "oblique cross-reference" of the image from one part of the novel to the other may be said to "help the reader see the book as a whole."

Thus there is a convincing case for the thematic unity of *Daniel Deronda*, reinforced by recurrent thematic imagery. According to present-day critical practices, the unity, even the "organic unity" of the novel may be said to have been demonstrated.

Why is it then that almost every reader's response to the novel confirms that which eighty years of critical opinion agreed upon: that "*Daniel Deronda* . . . falls inevitably into two unwelded parts—the Gwendolen story . . . and the Deronda story?"⁹

Demonstrating the thematic unity of *Daniel Deronda* involves reducing, distorting, and disproportioning certain elements in the novel—Beebe admits (p. 177), for example, that Gwendolen at the end of the novel is not exactly at the same point at which Daniel began as the diagrammatic theme would require, and instances of such necessary wrenchings of the text could be multiplied.¹⁰ Such wrenching does not indicate that *Daniel Deronda* lacks thematic unity but that good novels cannot be reduced to thematic outlines without fundamental distortion, i.e., that a novel is not merely an intellectual construct designed to "give us a certain theme."

If a novel were such a construct, everything in it would be subordinate to the theme and all its parts would be related through their ideational content; recurrent images in a unified context would thus form a consistent intellectual pattern which would unite and enrich the meaning of the narrative. Let us now test the truth of this assumption by examining a sequence of images entirely within the Gwendolen story. Since that story is unquestionably unified, if the assumption is valid the recurrent images will form the expected intellectual pattern.

Most of the characters in *Daniel Deronda* are associated with a repeated animal metaphor: Gwendolen Harleth with a spirited horse, Grandcourt with a lizard, Mirah a bird, Lush a dog. This device is used most simply and most consistently, perhaps, in the case of Mrs. Glasher, Grandcourt's mistress and mother of his four children, who, on the night Gwendolen weds Grandcourt, sends her Grandcourt's diamonds with a note cursing the marriage.

Mrs. Glasher is insistently associated with a snake and her curse with poison. She is compared to a viper (III, 93); there is reference to her "fangs" (II, 261) and to her "venom" (II, 96 & 97). Sometimes, however, it is the curse itself which is the serpent: Mrs. Glasher's note lies on the jewels like an adder (II, 122) and the diamonds later seemed to have "horrible words clinging and crawling about them" (II, 227). On one occasion Mrs. Glasher's reptilianism is mythologized: she is a "Medusa-apparition" (III, 93). Sometimes, though still venomous, she is not a snake but has "the poisoning skill of a sorceress" (III, 16) or is the sorceress Medea (II, 237). Still poisonous, she once seems like a native of the jungle: she gets "savage glory" in "a secret darting of venom" (II, 106). She is not always a poisoner—sorceress, savage, or snake—however: she has sent "deep suckers" into Grandcourt's life (II, 110)—apparently a leech image—and is even referred to as a bird (II, 238), an image usually reserved for Mirah. Other characters share her other metaphors: Daniel's mother is said to resemble a sorceress (III, 174) and Gwendolen a "young witch" (I, 110); Grandcourt is once a "dangerous serpent" (III, 193), and Gwendolen is reptilian throughout the early pages of the novel, having "a sort of Lamia beauty" and being "got . . . up as a sort of serpent" (I, 11).

The repeated snake image does not reduce Mrs. Glasher to mere "snakiness"—she does not have scaly skin, beady eyes, slithering movements. Nor do the images describing her achieve a consistent visual pattern: she cannot be seen simultaneously as a snake and Medusa with snake-hair and a sorceress who uses snakes or poison; she cannot be at once snake, leech, and bird. Neither does the snake image unite Mrs. Glasher with some larger pattern of allegorical meaning: a snake-like character introducing Gwendolen to the Knowledge of Evil in a setting very like a garden may have mythic reverberations, but references to Gwendolen and Grandcourt as well as other inconsistencies make the allegory improbable—too many snakes, it seems, spoil the myth. The repeated images do not form a consistent verbal, visual, or intellectual pattern running parallel to the text and imposing unity, richness, and meaning upon it. Rather, it is Mrs. Glasher, who, in her particularity, in her character, situation, speech, and actions, reconciles poisonous snake and bird, sorceress and a jilted mistress with four illegitimate children.

If a novel is not merely an elaborated theme and organic unity not merely thematic consistency, and if repeated images even in an effectively unified context are not necessarily allegorically or intellectually consistent, we need somewhat more searching tests of unity than those presently being employed. If a novel is a piece of writing that, instead of merely providing a theme, gives us a certain effect, I can say without hesitation *Daniel Deronda* is not unified because it does not give me a unified effect: it splits into two stories which give quite different effects. Not even those critics who defend its unity claim that it has affective as well as intellectual unity.

That which produces the effect upon the reader is the quality of the text, and it is precisely the difference in quality between the Gwendolen and Daniel stories which most critics—and notably F. R. Leavis¹¹—have painstakingly defined and which has never been contradicted: Beebe himself admits that “the Gwendolen story is artistically superior to the other” (p. 166).

If we apprehend a novel through its thematic statement, we experience it through its narrative particularity. Here again *Daniel Deronda* splits in two; again Beebe admits the division—“there is no necessary two-way link between the stories,” he says (pp. 167-8). The narrative methods in the two halves also differ: the Gwendolen portion is particularized and fully realized, but George Eliot seems to have had difficulty in imagining convincing action to substantiate what she tells us about Daniel: in the first thirty-one chapters—almost half the novel—he performs only two dramatized actions—he redeems Gwendolen's necklace and rescues Mirah. The first of these seems presumptuous and is in any case soon overwhelmed by the richly dramatized detail of the Gwendolen story that follows; the second is smothered in summary.

Finally, the worlds of the two stories do not exist on the same plane of reality. Gwendolen's actions and their consequences are credible: if we accept the conditions of her character and circumstances all the rest follows logically, even inevitably. Daniel's career is incredible. We can accept as conditions his uncertain parentage and his rescue of a Jewess, but the timely and fortuitous discovery that he is a Jew and free to love Mirah nudges our suspended disbelief; and our disbelief is jarred awake when we are asked to believe that Daniel finds Mirah's brother, whose real name is Ezra Cohen, at the home of a pawnbroker whose name is Ezra Cohen but who is not Mirah's brother who now goes under the name Mordecai, and that Mordecai, despite the contradictions of all appearances, recognizes in Daniel the Jewish disciple he has dreamed of.

Beebe tries to justify these melodramatic coincidences on the grounds that coincidences appear in the Gwendolen story also—e.g., she is inordinately affected by a painting showing a dead man's upturned face and later sees in actuality the upturned face of her drowning husband¹²—and that these coincidences are thematically relevant. The working out of Gwendolen's destiny, however—if such it is—does not depend upon the painting, nor does each step depend upon a coincidence which depends upon another coincidence; whereas Deronda must find Mirah and Mordecai, his mission and his Jewish heritage, or he has no destiny at all, and he can do so only by means of a chain of coincidences. That the theme depends upon such coincidences does not so much justify them as it does demonstrate once more that the theme and narrative are not successfully fused, that there is, in fact, no organic unity in *Daniel Deronda*.

The analytic critic is best equipped to deal with extricable and intellectual elements and relationships. When he can assume the affective unity of a work, he can use his method profitably to show such relationships in theme and image. By examination of theme and image alone, however, he cannot prove the existence of unity in its highest sense. Therefore, when he comes to a novel like *Daniel Deronda* in which the intellectual connections are present but are unrealized and unsynthesized in the work, unless he keeps the assumptions and limitations of his method clearly in mind, he is apt to mistake the cogency of the outline, for the achieved unity of the work.

Henry James has perhaps best defined the organic nature of the novel:

A novel is a living thing, all one and continuous like any other organism, and in proportion as it lives will it be found . . . that in each of the parts there is something of each of the other parts.

And in the same passage he warns us of the dangers of distortion by analysis:

The critic who over the close texture of a finished work shall pretend to trace a geography of items will make some frontiers as artificial . . . as any that have been known to history.

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Jerome Beaty

FOOTNOTES

- ¹Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, *Understanding Poetry* (New York, 1938), pp. 18-19.
- ²David Kaufman, *George Eliot and Judaism*, tr. J. W. Ferrier (Edinburgh, 1877), pp. 45-57.
- ³Gordon B. Haight, ed., *The George Eliot Letters* (New Haven, 1955-56), VI, 290.
- ⁴Haight, VI, 379.
- ⁵Maurice Beebe, "Visions are Creators': The Unity of *Daniel Deronda*," *BUSE*, I (Autumn, 1955), 167.
- ⁶Barbara Hardy, "Imagery in George Eliot's Last Novels," *MLR*, L (January, 1955), 6.
- ⁷Barbara Hardy, "The Moment of Disenchantment in George Eliot's Novels," *RES*, V, n.s. (July, 1954), 256-64.
- ⁸George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, Cabinet Ed. (Edinburgh, n.d.), I, 290. All references to the text are to this edition.
- ⁹S. L. Bethel, "The Novels of George Eliot," *The Criterion*, XVIII (October, 1938), 52.
- ¹⁰For example, Beebe finds counterparts for Daniel's "isolation from society" and "sense of injury" in Gwendolen's situation. They may be said to be there—if we stretch matters a little—but they certainly are not as central as they are in the *Deronda* story. More important, to suggest that because the ego must see itself as part of a larger whole it must "accept its role in society" is a dangerous oversimplification; to George Eliot, the larger whole to which one owes a duty is not "society" but "humanity"—the opposite of "misdirected" is not "over-directed."
- ¹¹P. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition* (New York, n.d.), pp. 79-125.
- ¹²The coincidence is somewhat undercut by the lack of real correspondence: in the background of the painting there is a fleeing figure; Gwendolen, frozen by her desire for Grandcourt's death, does not flee but stands still, making no attempt to rescue her husband until it is too late. The moral implications of this vision also seem quite different from the implications in Mordecai's prevision of Daniel as his disciple: it is one thing to say that we are morally responsible for our visions and that to some degree they determine our later actions, and quite another to say that if we dream hard enough our dreams will come true—this, however, may be a flaw in the novel rather than in the case for its unity.

III. REVIEWS

A BOOK OF VERSES...

FitzGerald's Rubáiyát, edited by Carl J. Weber, Centennial Edition, Colby College Press, 1959.

The Centennial Edition of the *Rubáiyát*, introduced and lightly annotated by Carl J. Weber, is a most attractive volume, beautifully printed on fine paper, well bound and elegantly boxed. From first to last a labor of love, it is designed above all as a tribute to Edward FitzGerald, whose achievement as creative "translator" has never, Professor Weber believes, been adequately acknowledged. By new title on box, spine and cover, the book is now distinctly *FitzGerald's*. Moreover, a second new title-page, which precedes the text of the first edition (the only one here reproduced), actually ventures to rename the poem nearer to the editor's taste: "*Nearer to the Heart's Desire*" / *An Eclogue by* / EDWARD FITZGERALD. In the same spirit, the notes that follow each stanza, though they also indicate some of the many changes in the later versions, constitute in effect a garland of tributes to FitzGerald rather than, as the editor alleges, "a harvesting of pertinent critical commentary"—for the estimates are on the whole as uncritical as the superlatives of a publisher's announcement. Professor Weber begins his introduction somewhat more soberly. He describes the public failure of the *Rubáiyát* in 1859 and then proceeds to trace in some detail "the propagation of the poem," its "discovery" by the now almost forgotten Whitley Stokes, the enthusiasm of Rossetti and Swinburne, and at last the coming of first editions to American libraries (all of this illustrated by an elaborate table of "prologators"). But when he comes to the poem itself, he refuses to let any trace of academic restraint qualify his enthusiasm. "It is not at all unlikely," he writes, "that posterity may judge FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát* to be the most important literary product of the Victorian era." And whether or not it will eventually prove the foremost work in all Victorian literature, the time has already come, he intimates, to think of it (in J. W. Beach's words) "as the crowning glory of Victorian poetry."

A centenary jubilee perhaps warrants some extravagance; and the felicity of FitzGerald's language, the concentration of his wit, and the vigor of his nostalgia deserve in any case our respect. But we may seriously question whether unreserved eulogy of the poem serves best to deepen our sense of its ultimate value. For all its beauties, the *Rubáiyát* is not a unified work of art. The sequence of the quatrains is at best arbitrary; and FitzGerald, quite aware of the fact, could continue, as long as he lived, to add, subtract and rearrange without destroying or greatly enhancing the effect of its separate units. The looseness of the structure is of course one of

the sources of its enduring popularity; the individual quatrains invite detachment and quotation as small self-contained lyrics, aphorisms on the sadness and brevity of life, set to a strange yet strangely soothing music. But the sentiments appeal only if we look to the verses for a confirmation of kindred feelings within ourselves. The poem begs rather than compels our sympathy; it does not create a new world of vision or experience in which we may for the moment suspend our disbelief and transcend our own preconceptions of reality. In this respect it does not approach other "glories" of Victorian poetry: *In Memoriam*, for instance, *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, *Andrea del Sarto*, *Modern Love*; it cannot match the sustained passion of *Laus Veneris*, which borrows the *Rubáiyát* stanza, nor the intensity of *The City of Dreadful Night*, which gives Omar's despair (or is it FitzGerald's?) an ampler yet more distinctly realized setting. Fortunately for its persistence beyond its first century, it deals in a recurrent mood which has its origin in human frailty; it memorably reworks the ancient *carpe diem* motif, and with irony and grace it reminds us of time's bitter logic. It therefore retains its place as securely as Gray's *Elegy*, which likewise lends familiar misgivings the dignity of eloquence. In addition, it endures as a landmark in the history of Victorian culture; for coming as it did in 1859, it anticipates the aesthetic sensibility of the late nineteenth century, the skepticism of a generation shaken loose from old orthodoxies, the desperate hedonism of the Decadence. Professor Weber has accomplished his primary purpose; he has given us a text for which all admirers of the *Rubáiyát* must be grateful, and he has provided an impressively full bibliography of the extensive Colby collection. But the task of critical appraisal remains. As Professor Terhune (FitzGerald's biographer) indicates (in *The Victorian Poets: a Guide to Research*), "FitzGerald, like most of the lesser figures of the period, still requires fresh analysis and criticism."

Columbia University

Jerome H. Buckley

THE GREATEST VICTORIAN?

Norman St. John-Stevas, *Walter Bagehot: A Study of His Life and Thought, Together with a Selection from His Political Writings*, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1959.

In 1937, the year after his *Victorian England*, G. M. Young marked the centenary of Victoria's step to the throne by again looking back, this time to determine who best qualified as "The Greatest Victorian." The possibilities he naturally found extensive, their claims formidable; and then to the astonishment of virtually everyone, he bypassed such obvious worthies as Tennyson, Arnold, Ruskin, and George Eliot for a decided dark-horse—Walter Bagehot. A reprint of this article, coming after an enthusiastic reading of *The English Constitution* and a curiosity about a man so often referred to and quoted, led Norman St. John-Stevas to the nine-volume edition of Bagehot's writings issued in 1915 by his sister-in-law, Mrs. Russell Barrington. And this immersion led in turn to the present book, the first devoted solely to Bagehot since Professor William Irvine's study appeared in 1939.

The intent of this work is twofold: to offer, on the one hand, a study of Bagehot's life and thought, and on the other, a fairly generous selection from his political writings. Though more of and about Bagehot is surely to be welcomed, one must regret that Mr. St. John-Stevas found it necessary to provide both within the limits of a single volume. For to keep that volume manageable, he has had unfortunately to skimp, to choose not only amongst his subject's many words, but between them and his own. The result is a book that falls into two uneven parts, with about three-fourths given to the selections and the rest to the study. Neither section proves totally satisfying, the study, limited as it is, rather less so than the sampling.

Perhaps the main difficulty is that we are given to expect considerably more than, with one important exception, we ever get. All of the "study" of Bagehot's life, for example, is managed within twenty-four pages. The first twenty consist of a tightly woven redaction of material already accessible in the opening chapters of Professor Irvine's work, in Mrs. Barrington's official *Life*, and in R. H. Hutton's two *Memoirs* of Bagehot; the remaining four, on "Bagehot's Character," do little more than restate the familiar generalities offered by most of his previous commentators, from Leslie Stephen and Woodrow Wilson to, recently, Jacques Barzun—on Bagehot's wit, delight in the business life, great imaginativeness, commonsense, and the like. The reader who waits for the promised study, expecting it to throw new light, waits in vain. The general accounting he receives will have its proper use as an introduction to established facts and events of Bagehot's life and to what passes as the flavor of his mind; otherwise it is disappointing.

Much the same complaint may be made about the first two, and to a lesser extent the third, of the four studies of Bagehot's thought that follow. The six pages permitted his religious views contribute nothing to the discussions in Hutton and Irvine, except in the negative sense of eliminating—on no new evidence—what was at least a possibility for them, that Bagehot's views underwent some change in the 1860's. And yet it is here probably that a fruitful reevaluation may be attempted: what was the effect on Bagehot of what Hutton terms the "rather antagonistic influence of the able, scientific group of men [Darwin, Wallace, Huxley] from whom he learned so much?" I find a marked difference between the author of the "Emotion of Conviction" (1870), with its strict subordination of emotional to intellectual assent, and the man who wrote in "Bishop Butler" (1854) that "We must believe our heart and conscience, or we shall believe nothing"; between the premises underlying *Physics and Politics* (especially as they relate to free will and to the nature and origins of morality) and those on which, with the help of Kant, Bagehot constructed his youthful "transcendental" metaphysic. It is significant that St. John-Stevas cites none of Bagehot's writings after 1862 to illuminate his religious views.

Not much can be said of the six pages that deal with Bagehot as "Writer and Literary Critic." They provide just enough room to comment on such qualities of his style as its "freshness" and "striking phrases"; to note that his method was "that of a literary psychologist" and that his "lack of scientific scholarship, and a narrowness of reading . . . led him to repeat points which had been made elsewhere"; and to indicate, by reference to the essay on "Pure, Ornate, and Grotesque Art," that when "theorizing Bagehot was not at his best." This easy handling seems hardly commensurate with the more than six-hundred pages of Bagehot's literary criticism. And surely the reader is entitled to some idea of how Bagehot's critical effort—its aims, character, assumptions—relates to what was being done by his contemporaries.

Though the treatment of Bagehot as an economist again amounts to something less than a study, it does afford a clear statement of the highly practical bent of his work. His early career as a banker, and then his editorship for over sixteen years of the *Economist* (begun by his father-in-law, James Wilson, in the heat of the Corn-Law agitation) gave him vivid, firsthand impressions of what he liked to call the "concrete realities" of the economic scene; and these he preferred to, and employed frequently to correct, the abstract theories of his day. Thus the excellence (and readability) of *Lombard Street* is that its impulse derived not from theory but from the immediacy of contact: it is the best brief record we have of the mechanics of the mid-Victorian money market; its suggested reforms for the Bank of England were so much ahead of their time that they were not implemented for the next fifty years or so—and now are commonplaces. The same sense of the realities both sanctioned and softened his preachments on *laissez-faire*. Though a confirmed free-trader throughout his life, he saw the need for, and actively pressed for, governmental regulation in certain areas, favoring, for instance, the Factory Acts as a necessary humane gesture and the central control of paper money as a necessary financial one. In all, his contemporary influence was large and went well beyond the *Economist's* weekly audience—to Gladstone, for one, who often consulted with him on budgetary matters.

The final study, of Bagehot's political thought, is the longest of the four, and for its fresh approach to the *English Constitution* undoubtedly the best. To be sure, there is nothing surprising in the image of Bagehot that emerges: "neither a doctrinaire nor an enthusiast, but essentially a man of the centre." However, in creating this image St. John-Stevas utilizes a substantial amount of detail, allows Bagehot frequently to speak in his own behalf, and at the same time manages a good general summary of Bagehot's main ideas—on reform, democracy, and the qualities of statesmanship. My one qualification relates to the view that Bagehot's conservative strain derived from "reverence for the past." Fortunately, though this is tossed out, it remains peripheral to most of the discussion in this section. The truth is (as St. John-Stevas establishes on virtually every page) that what Bagehot truly revered was the present, to which he was totally committed and for whose very sake, indeed, he turned, as in *Physics and Politics*, to the past.

Bagehot captured an important aspect of that present in his *English Constitution*, and it is in appraising that book that St. John-Stevas is most original. He tells us not only what is in it, but also how far its analyses corresponded to the actual circumstances as we are now able to reconstruct them and, moreover, to what extent the Constitution has altered since Bagehot's writing. It is good to report that if Bagehot somewhat underestimated Victoria's power, his observations usually correlated closely with the reality; and that if his prophetic powers were limited by his fear of the lower classes, his concept of the Constitution, as a perpetually adaptive and accommodating entity, has been sustained by later historical developments.

The selections are effective in that they convey what St. John-Stevas intended: the

"essentials" of Bagehot's political thought and a "picture of nineteenth century political life as seen through his eyes." That the *Constitution* would be well represented here was to be expected: It is Bagehot's classic, and St. John-Steuvas treats it so extensively. Still, one may question the wisdom of giving it in its entirety, at the expense of about two-thirds of the space allowed the selections. This is hardly to rescue essays "until now buried in the collected works, or entombed in the pages of some forgotten magazine." The remaining pieces are taken from the standard *Works* and should prove variously familiar to students of the nineteenth century. They range from full-length critiques of Peel and Brougham and two brief estimates of Disraeli to excerpts from Gladstone and selection from *Physics and Politics*.

This is not, then, the book on Bagehot one might have hoped for. Its appeal will be to those who have perhaps heard of Bagehot but who come to him here pretty much for the first time. The Victorian specialist must wait another try.

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Robert A. Greenberg

PETER J. STANLIS, *EDMUND BURKE AND THE NATURAL LAW*

University of Michigan Press, 1958

Edmund Burke and the Natural Law is a disinterested and thorough book with much to recommend it to the student of nineteenth-century thought. With a better understanding of Burke, one realizes that the young and old Carlyle is a wild-eyed radical, that Arnold owes much to Burke, that Newman, although he probably knew little of Burke himself, uses many of the same sources and comes to conclusions much like Burke's. Stanlis demolishes Victorian (and most twentieth-century) interpretation of Burke as an early utilitarian. And, in elucidating Burke's ideas and attaching him firmly to the Natural Law, Stanlis shows the relevance and use of a tradition that continues, through Burke's influence if none other, among the Victorians.

In the first paragraph of his book, Stanlis notes the difficulty of writing about a Natural Law which rationalism, sentimentalism, utilitarianism, positivism, and Marxism have seemingly destroyed. Despite its adversaries, this organic view of society persists, and failure to understand it limits our grasp of Victorian writers. Burke is not blind when he speaks of chivalry and Marie Antoinette in the *Reflections*; he comprehends the suffering of the French peasants and their queen although he may see different values as the meaning of their suffering. Rather than puzzle the vacillation between thought and feeling, the blindness, or contradiction in a Victorian, we may read him to discover a world-view derived from a Natural Law which is, to us, buried under theories of individual right. Stanlis's book, in fact, suggests that a whole reevaluation of Victorian conservatism is needed, and it establishes a firm basis for such reevaluation.

Stanlis intends to show that "Burke was one of the most eloquent and profound defenders of Natural Law morality and politics in Western Civilization." The central principle of Natural Law, according to Stanlis's explanation, is that "God ruled the universe through an eternal and universal law." Natural Law is the best that has been thought and said about ordering human affairs by men who actively ordered them and by men who strove for a perception of God's law. Natural Law is not merely human thought, but the human effort to capture the revelation of the divine tactic in history. Clear, definite, or absolute expression of Natural Law is therefore impossible except at the risk of impiety. Natural "rights," on the other hand, are set down in constitutions or in a half-dozen intellectual propositions, but Natural Law is that which is working. Stanlis, consequently, has the problem of defining a term at the same time that he illustrates it.

Stanlis provides initially an exposition of the historic content of Natural Law. Before he can show Burke's relationship to this tradition, he must show the consistency of Burke's mind, a consistency not apparent to one who knows only the *Reflections* or the speeches on American affairs. The essential unity of his thought Stanlis finds in the Natural Law which Burke learned from Aristotle, Cicero, the Stoics, Bracton, Hooker, and Coke. Burke is inconsistent only when he is falsely read in the school of Hobbes and Locke.

With this consistency demonstrated, Stanlis explains Burke's use of the idea of prudence,

his opposition to natural rights, his comprehension of human nature, his understanding of the function of Church and State, and his defense of the sovereignty of Natural Law. From this discussion the reader sees the moral rather than the intellectual character of Burke's work—his passion to adjust civil to Natural Law rather than to formulate rights or propositions. A critic such as Robert Hutchins is at least partially right in deriding Burke's intellectual contribution to political science; Burke makes a moralist's contribution.

Stanlis properly avoids calling Burke a liberal or a conservative. It would help to have Burke as a standard, especially since he contributed so much to later ideas of the reason and function of political parties, but there are doctrines of both liberal and conservative parties amenable to Natural Law. Stanlis abandons party terms, so bound to the particular context in which they are used, to employ a more philosophical distinction. Therefore his book happily lacks the stridency and commitment of other recent discussions of Burke. He neither defends nor attacks; he presents sympathetically, thoroughly, and critically a nearly unknown Burke.

In one sense the intention of showing Burke as "the most eloquent and profound" defender of Natural Law is incomplete. Only the quotations from Burke demonstrate his eloquence; although the vigor of Stanlis's exposition contributes to our understanding of it, he ignores its qualities. Burke's structure is not always apparent, but it is often extremely effective in his argument. His style, despite Arnold's objections to lapses in taste, has a nervous energy and striking forcefulness. Occasionally he gives to English the epigrammatic aptness of French. He adjusts subtly and effectively to the audience for which a particular speech, tract, or letter was written. In this area, almost totally ignored by Burke's critics, Stanlis does not support his judgment.

Stanlis's book fulfills a need not only by his placement of Burke in the tradition of Natural Law but also by his thorough exposition of Burke. Placing Burke in the tradition of Natural Law does not label him, but it does explain the marvelous consistency of a mind that could conceive of Utopia as hell. It is the Burke participating in and contributing to a viable tradition—existing in the nineteenth century despite the attempts of Buckle and Morley to make its English exponent a utilitarian—which will interest students of Victorian life and thought.

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Richard C. Tobias

IV. ARTICLES AND BRIEF NOTES

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH: A PORTRAIT RETOUCHE

In his discussion of the rapid growth in prestige of the Victorian period among scholars and critics, Lionel Stevenson cites as one reason for this rise the perspective of time that was necessary before Victorian literature could be discussed "dispassionately and with a due sense of proportion."¹ That proportion and perspective were sadly lacking in many instances of Victorian criticism is well illustrated by the critical tradition that still surrounds Arthur Hugh Clough, a tradition that owes much to Strachey, who was anything but dispassionate in his criticism. After presenting the portrait that one gets of Clough from reading *Eminent Victorians*—that of a "halting, timid, over-patient man, carrying in no definite direction a pack of petty scruples and vain regrets," Desmond MacCarthy rightly insists: "Much requires correcting in this portrait, and still more needs to be painted in."² Yet, up to now, there has been very little correcting done; today, more than ever, and despite new editions of Clough's poetry and letters,³ the Stracheyan view of Clough still persists.

A glance at different studies of Clough reveals the extent to which this view was hardened into an accepted critical tradition. One writer finds him "first and always, the doubter, . . . until his death a perplexed spirit."⁴ A second calls him "the impersonation of an age when religious doubt was . . . a crippling, even a fatal malady."⁵ A third sees him as one who, having resigned Oxford, "resigned himself," who "persistently searched for some definite ideas or cause in which his whole being could find its scope, but without success."⁶ A fourth, writing more recently than those already cited, finds that Clough was like one of his own characters, "nothing flat."⁷ Even the editor of Clough's *Correspondence*, F. L. Mulhauser, who is obviously sympathetic to his subject, states in the introduction to the letters that for much of his life Clough was "a man unsure of what was valid and true in himself and therefore unsure of his relations with

others" (*Corr.*, I, xviii). It is indeed difficult not to see the Stracheyan influence present in all of these portraits.

What seems especially to disturb most of the critics is Clough's apparent lack of vitality and achievement during his last years. Taking their cue from Arnold's "Thyrsis," a poem Arnold himself said represented only "one side" of Clough's personality, the critics agree in varying degrees that Thyrsis's "piping took a troubled sound" and nevermore regained its harmony. They point to his last years as unprofitable, wasted ones, spent in an atmosphere of "real failure," (Woodward, p. 177) occupied with his plodding along at his tasks in the Education Office or checking time-tables and tying up brown-paper parcels for Florence Nightingale. "He found it easier to drift or 'submit' than to throw himself into active living and writing,"⁸ is the way Kingsbury Badger has expressed this idea, a statement that might serve very well as a summary of this negative view of Clough's later life and work.

To take this negative attitude, however, not only distorts the portrait of Clough, but also denies him his fundamental honesty and his mature social theory, which was based mainly on the concept of work or duty as service. One of the influences on Clough was the work of Thomas Carlyle, and one of the reasons why Clough was so impressed by Carlyle's writings was the latter's emphasis on the concrete rather than the abstract in his social criticism. He was drawn to Carlyle by Carlyle's preference for what one writer calls his "sociological realism." Carlyle, says Buckley, was by his own definition "a bringer back to reality,"⁹ and this quality in Carlyle appealed strongly to Clough, particularly during his Oxford years and right after, when he was searching for positive ideas in the face of the loss of most of his former orthodox beliefs. Clough's readings in Carlyle helped him to see that the crucial problem was not necessarily one of establishing a satisfactory relationship with God through a formal religious creed; rather, it was one of first establishing a satisfactory relationship with his fellow-men, with society, and of finding his own place in society.¹⁰ The here-and-now, not the hereafter, was important. Hence his interest in those areas of Carlyle's social thought that were the most pertinent to this realistic position: his concern with the ownership and use of property and wealth, his attitude towards the aristocracy, his condemnation of *laissez-faire*, and his concept of liberty as finding one's rightful work in society. With these practical concerns, Carlyle helped to lead his friend out of the comparative peace and quiet of theory into the wilderness of reality. He was able to indicate to Clough the errors of his early thought and to point the general direction that Clough should take to overcome these errors.

The criticism that emphasizes Clough's supposed failure has made much of the famous anecdote of Clough's telling Emerson that "Carlyle led us out into the wilderness and left us there"¹¹; but what needs to be stressed in this connection is that the wilderness was, for Clough, the first step towards the mature social theory that he came to have, and that eventually, even though he was not able to help others out of the wilderness, as Emerson had commissioned him, he was able to find his own way out. Characteristically, he was able to do this by becoming even more of a "sociological realist" than Carlyle himself was. While agreeing with Carlyle that true liberty consists in the individual's finding the work that he is best fitted to do, Clough felt the need for something still more concrete. For him, the general statement that one should do the duty that lies nearest him was still too abstract. For him, it was necessary to specify that the work one does should be of service to others, not, as Carlyle seemed to imply; simply labor *per se*. The critics either have not recognized or have not stressed enough Clough's independence from Carlyle on this particular point; and this is unfortunate, for their failure has contributed not only to the tradition that sees Clough as a frustrated disciple of Carlyle,¹² but it has also served to strengthen the distorted Stracheyan portrait that represents Clough as the symbol *par excellence* of the Victorian doubter. The recognition of this concept of work or duty as service as one of the positive principles by which Clough overcame his early doubts and guided his later life will do much to give us a truer portrait of him.

Its essential realism was the attraction that this principle of service held for Clough. From the time of his resignation from Oxford, his entire social outlook was molded by his desire to escape from theory to reality, from other-worldliness to this-worldliness. Rather than worry over abstract theological problems, he came to believe that facts are facts and that try as we may we cannot change them. The protagonist of *Amours de Voyage*, reflecting Clough's concern with reality rather than speculation, writes to his friend: "I will look straight out, see things, not try to evade them; / Fact shall be fact for me, and the Truth the Truth as ever." (Canto V, ll. 100-101) In *Dipsychus* the sensitive hero states: "But play no tricks upon thy soul, O man; / Let fact be fact, and life the thing it can." (Scene IV, ll. 100-101) In 1850 Clough wrote to his friend J. C. Shairp, urging contact with the world and the people in it:

"Enter into the arena of your brethren and go not to your grave without knowing what common merchants and sollicitors [sic], much more sailors and coalheavers, are well acquainted with. Ignorance is a poor kind of innocence. . . . Let us not sit in a corner and mope and think ourselves clever for our comfort, while the room is full of dancing and cheerfulness" (*Corr.*, I, 284).

Insistence on duty as service is strikingly apparent in the letters, poems, and essays of the years after he left Oxford. In the *Bothie* he has Philip, the hero, praise occupations of service, such as teaching and nursing (Canto IX, 25-39). In his poem "Last Words. Napoleon and Wellington" (1835), Wellington is praised not for gallant deeds but for the service he has performed:

Not stirring words, nor gallant deeds alone,
Plain patient work fulfilled that length of life;
Duty, not glory—Service, not a throne,
Inspired his effort, set for him the strife.

* * *

"That humble simple duty of the day
Perform," he bids; "ask not if small or great:
Serve in thy post; be faithful, and obey;
Who serves her truly, sometimes saves the State."
(*Poems*, pp. 94-95)

Perhaps the most concise statement of his later realism, lines that sum up admirably his belief in helping others here in this world rather than worrying about the next, occurs in *Dipsychus*, where Clough has the hero utter his realistic social belief: "It seems his newer will / We should not think of Him at all, but trudge it, / And of the world He has assigned us make / What best we can" (Scene IX, ll. 11-14). The fullest statement, however, is found in his review of C. E. Norton's *Considerations on Some Recent Social Theories*, written for the *North American Review* (July, 1853): "Let it not be forgotten," he cautions, "that the object of human society is not the mere 'culinary' one of securing equal apportionments of meat and drink to all its members. Men combine for some higher object; and to that higher object it is, in their social capacity, the *privilege* and real happiness of individuals to sacrifice themselves. The highest political watchword is not Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, nor yet Solidarity, but Service."¹³

Fittingly enough, Clough's faith in "humble simple duty" did not stop with his writing about it; he put his social principles into action in his own daily living. Of his attempts to live according to his principles, the best examples are his work in the Education Office and his important, if not especially glamorous, efforts in the cause of Miss Nightingale. Both of these, as I have indicated above, are often cited as tasks that Clough unwillingly carried out, finding it easier to "drift" or "submit" than to throw himself into active living. To Clough, however, these duties were nothing less than the concrete affirmation of his social beliefs, and any portrait of him which omits this idea is one that is incomplete.

His duties in the Education Office took up most of his time in his later years. He began working there in July, 1853, and continued until 1859, when ill health forced him to leave. Although his duties consisted of doing detailed, often tedious, work, he seldom complained. "Serve in thy most," he had written, and he felt that by his participation in this work he was doing a real service for others. All his life he believed that education was a necessary and important part of life; his faith in education had been one of the reasons he had reluctantly signed the Thirty-nine Articles and remained at Oxford longer than his conscience had prompted (*Corr.*, I, 140). His duties in the Education Office, then, were directly in accord with his social beliefs; by helping the educational process, he was helping to serve his fellow-men.

His work with Florence Nightingale was also in accord with his social views. Clough, who met Miss Nightingale through his wife, her cousin, sincerely admired her and became devoted to her service. She was just then beginning her famous career in nursing, and Clough was soon spending every possible spare moment away from the Education Office in aiding her nursing efforts and public health work. When she and her group of nurses left London on October 21, 1854, to go to the Crimea, Clough went to Calais to see them off. He helped in all possible ways until his death, particularly with her various writings. Although some critics have made sarcastic remarks concerning what they consider Clough's mental tasks for her, she herself realized the intense satisfaction that he received from it. "My idea of a friend," she wrote in one of her letters, "is one who will and can join you in work the sole purpose of which is to serve God. . . . And so extraordinarily blessed have I been that I have had three such friends."¹⁴ Clough, of course,

was one of these, and Miss Nightingale understood exactly his purpose in helping her. Here was some practical duty that was of help to mankind. By helping her cause, he was putting theory into practice. Duty, not glory, inspired his effort, one might say of Clough, as he did of Wellington.

Perhaps it is Clough's determination to avoid eccentricity or controversy and to carry on in a quiet, unostentatious manner that has been responsible for the lack of understanding on the part of the critics as to exactly what he was attempting to do in his last years. "Do we not work best by digging deepest? By avoiding polemics, and searching to display the real thing?" he wrote to Tom Arnold (*Corr.*, I, 274). A fitting corollary to his quiet but purposeful action, and an important clue to his thoughts, is his rather consistent use of one type of image—that of a hidden object or cause which is responsible for something far more beautiful or useful than itself. By each object—a budding plant, a seed, a hidden root or foundation—Clough demonstrates his belief that appearances are often not the entire story, that the worth of the deed is not always determined by the clamor accompanying it. The most concise example of this type of image and the philosophy behind it is found in Sonnet VII of his "Sonnets on Death," written in 1851:

Our happy hopes, so happy and so good,
Are not mere idle motions of the blood;
And when they seem most baseless, most are not.
A seed there must have been [up] on the spot
Where the flowers grow, without it ne'er they could. (*Poems*, p. 399)

The same type of image is found in "I give thee joy! O worthy word!"; "O land of Empire, art and love!"; "Dance on, dance on, we see, we see"; "The grasses green of sweet content"; and "Truth is a golden thread, seen here and there." Of these poems, the greatest contrast between source and result is found in "O land of Empire, art and love!":

So is it: in all ages so,
And in all places man can know,
From homely roots unseen below
In forest-shade in woodland bower
The stem that bears the ethereal flower
Derives that emanative power;
From mixtures fetid foul and sour
Drains juices that those petals fill. (*Poems*, p. 65)

The image most directly applicable to Clough's own belief that the value of one's service is not to be measured merely in terms of external appearance is found in the last stanza of his lyric "The grasses green of sweet content":

Each in its place, as each was sent,
Just nature [ranges] side by side,
Alike the oak tree's lofty pride
And grasses green of sweet content. (*Poems*, p. 392)

"Serve in thy post; be faithful, and obey," Clough's Wellington had said; these may not be words which lead to heroic deeds, but they certainly do not smack of failure either.

"Much requires correcting in this portrait," MacCarthy wrote, "and still more needs to be painted in." Certainly the critical tradition that labels Clough a failure, one whose last years were spent in doing meaningless work and activity, has not recognized the positive nature of his mature thought. Rather than meaningless activity, his last years were filled with the active carrying out of his concrete ideas. Realistically facing the facts, Clough concluded that when one looked upon the "solid, somewhat dirty earth around," the logical approach lay in doing one's best to help others, not indulging in meaningless theorizing. He believed, like Carlyle, in doing the duty that lay nearest one; but unlike Carlyle, who seemed to go only half-way in his belief that the duty might be any duty, so long as it was work of some kind, Clough felt that duty had to be of service to one's fellow-men. Carlyle led him part of the way, but it was Clough himself who independently fought his way out of the Center of Indifference in which he had found himself for a time at Oxford. Characteristically, too, he took what he felt to be the logical step: he tried to live his own life by this guiding principle. That he succeeded in this attempt—notably in his work in the Education Office and in his aid to Miss Nightingale—serves to refute the tradition that labels him a failure, that sees him as one who is "always associated with failure" (Woodward, p. 175). When the portrait of Clough receives the necessary filling in and retouching, he is seen not as a failure, but as one who, within the pale of his own realistic social theory of service, achieved his own "Everlasting Yea."

FOOTNOTES

- ¹Lionel Stevenson, "The Victorian Period," in *Contemporary Literary Scholarship*, ed. Lewis Leary (New York, 1958), p. 139.
- ²Desmond MacCarthy, *Portraits* (New York, 1932), p. 63.
- ³I refer to *The Poems of Arthur Hugh Clough*, ed. H. F. Lowry, A. L. P. Norrington, and F. L. Mulhauser (Oxford, 1951)—hereafter cited as *Poems*—and *The Correspondence of Arthur Hugh Clough*, 2 vols., ed. F. L. Mulhauser (Oxford, 1957)—hereafter cited as *Corr.*
- ⁴S. T. Williams, "Clough's Prose," *Studies in Victorian Literature* (London, 1924), p. 238.
- ⁵F. L. Lucas, *Eight Victorian Poets* (Cambridge, 1930), p. 73.
- ⁶H. V. Routh, *Towards the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1937), p. 170.
- ⁷Frances Woodward, *The Doctor's Disciples* (London, 1954), p. 175.
- ⁸Kingsbury Badger, "Arthur Hugh Clough as Dipsychus," *Modern Language Quarterly*, XII (March, 1951), 54.
- ⁹J. H. Buckley, *The Victorian Temper* (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), p. 37.
- ¹⁰A full discussion of Clough's religious ideas may be seen in my article "The 'True Creed' of Arthur Hugh Clough," to be published shortly in *MLQ*.
- ¹¹Ralph L. Rusk, *The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York, 1949), p. 357.
- ¹²See, for instance, James I. Osborne, *Arthur Hugh Clough* (New York, 1920), p. 65ff., and Williams, p. 247.
- ¹³*The Poems and Prose Remains of Arthur Hugh Clough*, ed. Blanche Smith Clough (London, 1869), I, 416.
- ¹⁴Sir Edward Cook, *The Life of Florence Nightingale* (London, 1913), II, 10-11.

 DARWIN IN THE OZARKS

The centennial of *Origin of Species* could have begun no more auspiciously than it did when, on January 19, 1959, the following resolution was introduced in the Missouri General Assembly by a representative from Ozark County.

 AN ACT

Relating to textbooks in state schools, and providing penalties for violations thereof.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:

- Section 1. 1. No textbook containing any reference to,
 2 or attempting to convey knowledge of, a theory that the
 3 human race descended from lower forms of life, such theory
 4 being commonly known as evolution, shall be used in any
 5 public school, state college or university.
 6 2. Any person violating the provisions of this section is
 7 guilty of a misdemeanor; and any person instructing student
 8 bodies in any public school, state college or university
 9 that the theory of evolution is factual is subject to dismissal.
- Section 2. Any person selling in this state, for use in
 2 public schools, or state colleges or universities, any textbook
 3 described in section 1 of this act is guilty of a misdemeanor.

In response to a question as to whether the resolution had received any support in the press, the sponsor of the bill wrote: "My chief disappointment is that I find many so called christians who are not lending any support to this bill. For instance the Missouri council of churches has taken no stand either way."

St. Louis University

Charles T. Dougherty

 THE ENTITLEMENT OF MEREDITH'S "LOVE IN THE VALLEY"

In his *The Ordeal of George Meredith*, Lionel Stevenson rejects the notion that "Love in the Valley" was inspired by Meredith's wooing of Mary Ellen Nicolls. He says: "All evidence points to memories of a Boyish episode as the source of the ecstatic note in these poems." There

is possibly an additional source for this poem which has not previously been mentioned, a source which might also have provided Meredith with the title. That source is "Come Down, O Maid" from Tennyson's *The Princess*.

This song, published just two years before "Love in the Valley" was written, begins with the lines

Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height.
 What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang),
 In height and cold, the splendor of the hills?
 But cease to move so near the heavens, and cease
 To glide the sunbeam by the blasted pine,
 To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;
 And come, for *Love is of the valley*, come,
 For *love is of the valley*, come thou down
 And find him... [The italics are mine.]

Tennyson develops his plea with his descriptions of where love can be found ("...by the happy threshold...with plenty in the maize...fox-like in the vine...") with descriptions of where love cannot be found ("...on the Silver Horns...the white ravine...upon the firths of ice...") and with the pleas of the residents of the valley ("...the vales/Await thee...the children call, and I..."). But the heights, in Tennyson's descriptions, are as splendidly appealing as the valley. And the truly positive part of the argument—the description of the *pleasures* awaiting the princess—is entirely absent.

It is this missing subject which is the whole subject of "Love in the Valley." Meredith's poem is, thus, the logical complement of "Come Down, O Maid."

"Love in the Valley" was written during the summer of 1850 while Meredith lived in the Surrey neighborhood. That the laureate poet was an active influence on Meredith at this time is clear from the Tennysonian echoes which Professor Stevenson has observed in "The Olive Branch," "The Sleeping City," and "Sorrows and Joys."

If Meredith did, in fact, attempt to write the positive half of the argument in "Come Down, O Maid," he must have felt the very presence of the comic spirit when Tennyson wrote him that in the 1851 poems there was one, "Love in the Valley," which Tennyson himself could wish to have written. Perhaps he felt that wish as early as 1848 while composing *The Princess*.

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Virgil A. Peterson

FORGOTTEN BASTARDS: A NOTE ON DANIEL DERONDA

Rather a curious discrepancy has appeared in two modern studies of George Eliot as to the number of bastards Grandcourt, in *Daniel Deronda*, has fathered. Gerald Bullett, in *George Eliot, Her Life and Books* (New Haven, 1948), claims three (p. 288). Joan Bennett, in *George Eliot, Her Mind and Art* (Cambridge, Eng., 1948), states that there are two (p. 193). Actually there are four; and there is not, so far as I can discover, any confusion about the number in the mind of George Eliot.

In chapter xiii, when Lush questions Lydia Glasher about the wisdom of her bringing two of her children to her meeting with Gwendolen, she replies: "Why should I not bring all four if I liked?" And in the next chapter, Lydia again indicates the number of Grandcourt's children: "Those two are his, and we have two others—girls—who are older." There can be no mistake that all four are Grandcourt's, for she has just explained that she left her husband *and her first child* for Grandcourt nine years earlier.

This matter of the bastards is significant, I believe, as an indication of Grandcourt's passionate nature, and it illustrates the tangential manner in which sex was handled by a perceptive but discreet Victorian. The number of Grandcourt's children supplements the evidence of his unfortunately passionate nature found in chapter xlvi, where Eliot shows us that among the horrors of Gwendolen's marriage was the physical tyranny of her husband.

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A NOTE ON SOME EMENDATIONS IN JUDE THE OBSCURE

There is reason to believe that Thomas Hardy was attentive to textual quibbles raised by

reviewers of *Jude the Obscure*. In the case of at least one review, a comparison of the first and second editions reveals that Hardy made a few changes apparently inspired by the demands of his critic.

In the *Fortnightly Review* for June 1, 1896, R. Y. Tyrell made a ferocious attack on *Jude the Obscure*. As usual, his main objections were directed against Hardy's inferred views of marriage and his free treatment of the sexual problems dealt with in the book. But Tyrell did not fail to invoke also that terrible and famous weapon of the British reviewer, the attack grammatical. There is nothing so destructive to the prestige of a new work as the discovery that on page 412 there appears an indubitable solecism.

Mr. Tyrell found one certain mistake and four or five quibbles. The mistake he notes appears on page 116 of the first edition (Osgood & McIlvaine, London, 1896), and it is an inexact transliteration of the Greek, *All hemin eis Theos ho Pater*. In the second edition (Harper), we find *eis* changed to *heis*, which is presumably the correct form. Tyrell also notices two instances of the use of *unpredictable*. Thus:

page 220: *Her actions were always unpredictable.*

page 280: *She was beginning to be so puzzling and unpredictable.*

Mr. Tyrell terms this usage of *unpredictable* a "vulgar error," an affected evasion of the common *unpredictable*. In the second edition we find the first item changed to:

Her actions were always unpredictable.

And the second: *She was beginning to be so puzzling and unstateable.*

In the first case, Hardy apparently agreed with his critic and in the second he was sufficiently impressed to translate *unpredictable* into a form that would not invite comparison with *unpredictable*.

Finally, Mr. Tyrell notes Jude's expression on page 4: "Aunt hev got a great fuel house." He adds that the naiveté of this is inconsistent with the eloquence and sophistication of the lines delivered by the same boy on the glories of far-off Christminster, a passage occurring only a few pages further on. The second edition alters the contested line to read: "Aunt have got a great fuel house."

Perhaps, these four changes would have been made without the agency of the diligent Mr. Tyrell. The mistake in transliteration would almost certainly have been called to Hardy's attention. We can imagine also that many readers might complain of the confusing affinity between *unpredictable* and *unpredictable*. "Hev" may have been altered to "have" simply because Harper, publishing simultaneously in London and New York, did not wish to puzzle its American readers. Nevertheless, the fact that there are four such items as these would seem to lend weight to a theory of genuine reviewer influence. It might be worthwhile to make a thorough check of the contemporary criticism of *Jude* and follow this up with a collation of the first and second editions. Perhaps it could then be established definitely that Hardy did indeed heed his critics in these small matters.

For the benefit of any interested reader, I append a brief list of the most important contemporary criticism of *Jude the Obscure*:

Academy, February 15, 1896. *Idler*, February, 1896. *Literary World*, January 11, 1896. *Nation* (N.Y.), February 6, 1896. *Athenaeum*, November 23, 1896. *Saturday Review*, February 8, 1896. *Fortnightly Review*, January 1, 1896. *Blackwood's Magazine*, January, 1896.

Hofstra College

Robert Hurley

REPORT FROM THE WELLESLEY INDEX

In order to set up a first objective that could be accomplished within a reasonable time, the editors of *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals, 1824-1900*, have decided to limit the project, for the present, to about 50 leading quarterlies and monthlies, postponing the weeklies for later treatment, and including only critical articles (though the term is being broadly interpreted to mean everything that is not poetry or "pure" fiction). Two volumes and three indexes are being prepared.

Volume I will be an index of all books reviewed in these periodicals, whether at length or in short notices. The arrangement will be by author and, when the book is anonymous, by title, with the identification of the author wherever possible. References will be to periodical, year,

month, and inclusive pagination. For the *writers* of the reviews, so far as they can be determined (fairly well for the long reviews, rarely for the notices), the scholar will have to consult Volume II, but otherwise Volume I will be an independent unit. At the present time, we have a list of the books reviewed in the *Edinburgh* and the *Westminster* from 1824 to 1850.

Volume II will be a list of all the articles, arranged chronologically within each periodical in turn, from *Blackwood's* to the *Westminster*. Each entry will bear an item number, the title or running-title, inclusive pagination, the name of the author (most of the time, it is hoped), and the evidence for the attribution. This evidence is to be "factual" or objective. Characteristics of style or thought are always uncertain, and in any event require both careful reading and specialized knowledge of the writer, requisites one can scarcely command for so large a project. The volume will conclude with an "Index to Contributors," listing each man's essays by periodical initials and item number. This will amount, in effect, to an extensive bibliography of the quarterly and monthly writings of over a thousand Victorians. It will contain many articles that are not now known to be by their writers; indeed, we have already uncovered two "new" essays by major authors, and a good many by men like W. R. Greg, Abraham Hayward, or Herman Merivale who have not been closely studied. In Volume II, then, the scholar wishing to know who wrote a particular article and the scholar wishing to know what articles a particular author wrote, will both find what they want—at least in theory.

To date we have a card for every article in the *British and Foreign Review*, the *British Critic*, the *British Quarterly Review*, the *Dublin Review* (not quite finished), the *Edinburgh*, *Fraser's Magazine*, the *Foreign Review*, the *Foreign Quarterly*, the *Foreign and Colonial Quarterly*, the *London* (1835-1836), the *National* (1855-1864), the *New Quarterly* (1844-1846), the *North British*, the *Prospective*, the *Quarterly*, and the *Westminster*. Thanks to the kindness of Sir John Murray and of Mr. C. C. Blagden at Longmans, we have an almost complete list of contributors to the *Quarterly* from 1824 to 1900, and to the *Edinburgh* from 1847 to 1900. For the rest, we have identified so far the authors of perhaps twenty-five percent of the articles.

This report of progress will suggest what inquiries we may be able to answer at the moment and the particular journals on which at present we are eager to receive assistance. It cannot be stated too emphatically that if the second volume is to be a success, we must have the help of many Victorian scholars, here and abroad, who have information about either a particular periodical or a particular author; or who would be kind enough to spend an hour or two looking over copies of the above journals in their college libraries to see if they are marked (in the Table of Contents, or at the start or end of the articles, checking the volumes at five-year intervals). In themselves, of course, marked files are untrustworthy, but they provide hypotheses that can then be tested; and we have found that while librarians are willing to examine a particular periodical, they cannot supply this service for their whole collection.

Scholars may feel that we are asking a good deal when we ask for information which they have discovered and which may be of professional value to them. In reply we can say that we plan to acknowledge contributions by name, both currently in our *VS* and *VNL* reports (see below), and later in the published *Index*; and that since Volume II cannot possibly appear before 1967, this gives a contributor ample time, in the meanwhile, to publish an ascription or a bibliography he has sent us. We could, of course, agree, if so instructed, not to disclose the information given us, but as our plan is to provide a scholarly service, we are reluctant to adopt any general policy that might seriously curtail it. Members of Group X and our fellow "Victorians" in England are invited to comment, if they like, on these arrangements. After all, they are the people for whom and, to a large extent, by whom this *Index* is being compiled.

To date, we wish to express our grateful appreciation for either advice or information to R. D. Altick of Ohio State, Jerome Beaty of Washington, Myron Brightfield of California, R. A. Colby of Queens College, Helen Grant Cushing of the New York Public Library, F. W. Fetter of Northwestern, K. J. Fielding of the Cheshire County Training College (Staffordshire), D. B. Green of Bryn Mawr, Charles Kerby-Miller of Wellesley, E. C. Mack of City College (New York), R. B. Martin of Princeton, Oscar Maurer of Texas, Arnold Ricks of Harvard, H. W. Rudman of City College, Hill Shine of Kentucky, A. K. Stevens of Michigan, A. L. Strout of Texas Tech., R. H. Tener, now at Birkbeck College (London), Mrs. Rosemary VanArsdal of Seattle, and Jacob Viner of Princeton.

The *Index* is under the general editorship of Walter E. Houghton of Wellesley. The other editors are Miss Eileen Curran of Colby, Mrs. Esther Rhoads Houghton, and Michael Wolff of Indiana.

Wellesley College

Walter Houghton

SERIOUSLY . . .

"Odds and ends of Victoriana in everything from short squibs to full-length books pour from the British press, mostly worthless for the serious study of literature." From American presses, by implication, and in sober truth, it is serious studies that proliferate. Besides the more general periodicals put out by universities, libraries, and other learned bodies, there are now at least four that specialize in the literature of, roughly, the Victorian age. *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (formerly the *Trollopian*) comes from Berkeley, California; *Modern Fiction Studies* ("a modern novelist is one who wrote fiction after 1864 . . .") from Lafayette, Indiana; *Victorian Studies* ("approximately from 1830 to 1914") from Bloomington, Indiana; and the *Victorian Newsletter* (*VNL* "A medium for the exchange of news and opinions relating to the study of Victorian literature") from the Victorian group of the Modern Language Association of America, with headquarters in New York.

It is from a back-issue of the last-named that we quote the dig at British odd-and-endism. In another issue another writer—both are professors at one university—names a few "promising subjects" for biographies as yet unwritten: men such as Henry Morley, Mark Lemon, H. F. Chorley and Churton Collins. As these were journalists or dons and not creative writers, he says, no highly refined techniques would be needed: "a workmanlike life in the older, non-psychological mode, would do very well." And so it would. Yet a teasing doubt remains whether the workmanlike is to be equated with the worthwhile, and whether even a squib may not sometimes have a creative value of its own.

VNL, nevertheless, when not being Victorianly sententious, or merely providing yet another vehicle for reviews of books already widely reviewed, performs at least one most useful service. In recent issues a number of specialists have put on record the whereabouts of some of the "research materials" concerning some of the more eminent Victorians. Where, outside Haworth and the Fitzwilliam, must the scholar seek Brontë letters and papers? where Dickens outside the Victoria and Albert? or Newman, outside the Oratory at Birmingham? Less than twenty years ago a distinguished British scholar wove an elaborate fabric on the assumption—made in good faith and on authority—that none of Anthony Trollope's novels had survived in manuscript: *VNL* has located forty Trollope manuscripts, including thirty novels, in fifteen public and private British and American libraries.

Collections of letters and papers, as Mr. K. J. Fielding, the British representative of *VNL*, remarks in this context, are not the only kinds of research material that needs study. Contemporary newspapers and magazines, often as rare to find and even harder to assess when found, can be indispensable aids to the understanding of writers and thinkers in relation to the time and society in which they lived. An ancillary service provided by *VNL* is to assemble from other organs (including the correspondence of this *Literary Supplement*) odds and ends of news concerning projects in Victorian scholarship. One such project that the latest issue announces, and that deserves especial mention, is "The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals." This, if fed by sufficient researchers in sufficient fields, will not only catalogue the contents of all the great nineteenth-century reviews, and some less great, but will also, it is hoped, break down the anonymity of much critical writing.

The proliferation of scholarly periodicals in our day is only now beginning to be followed up by the establishment of central agencies of information. A notable example, lately welcomed in these columns, is the *Select Check Lists of Bibliographical Scholarship, 1949-1955*, published in Charlottesville, Virginia. A newsletter that blazed a trail towards a consolidation of all available news of the manuscripts and letters of the creative Victorians—a kind of union catalogue of public and private holdings—would indeed be making a serious contribution to Victorian studies.

V. ENGLISH X NEWS

Officers:

Chairman, Lionel Stevenson, *Duke University*; Secretary, Carl R. Woodring, *University of Wisconsin*.

Advisory and Nominating Committee: Chairman, Austin Wright, *Carnegie Institute of Technology* (1959); Lionel Stevenson (*ex officio*); Bernard Schilling, Francis G. Townsend (1958-59); A. Dwight Culler, Ada Nisbet (1959-60); William E. Buckler, John T. Fain (1960-61).

Bibliography Committee: Chairman, Robert C. Slack, *Carnegie Institute of Technology*; Oscar Maurer, Robert A. Donovan, Charles T. Dougherty, Donald J. Gray, Richard C. Tobias, Ronald E. Freeman.

Editor, *The Victorian Newsletter*: William E. Buckler, *New York University*.

1959 Program Committee: George H. Ford, *University of Rochester*, Chairman.

Program, 1959:

Professor Ford writes: "The program for 1959 will be an open one and not restricted to any one category such as fiction, poetry, or prose. To establish some thread of connection between the three papers, it is hoped that each may relate to some of the books published in 1859. Although preference will be given to such submissions, papers unrelated to Victorian publications of 1859 will also be welcome and will be given careful consideration."

Victorian Luncheon, 1959:

Reservations should be made through Professor Martin J. Svaglic, Loyola University, Chicago.

VI. RECENT PUBLICATIONS: A SELECTED LIST

SEPTEMBER, 1958 - FEBRUARY, 1959

GENERAL

- ART AND THEATRE. Beatrice Forbes-Robertson, "Memories of Henry Irving and Ellen Terry." *Listener*, Oct. 23, pp. 645-646.
- Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Architecture; Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Penguin. 498 pp.
- P. G. Hurst, *The Age of Jean de Resaie*. Johnson. Opera in England 1874 ff.
- John Rothenstein, *The Tate Gallery*. Thames and Hudson.
- CRITICISM AND LITERARY HISTORY. Boris Ford, ed., *From Dickens to Hardy*. Penguin. 511 pp. A volume in the *Pelican Guide to English Literature*. See a review ("Victorians Under Fire") in *FLS*, Oct. 31, p. 626.
- Norman Friedman, "Criticism and the Novel." *Antioch Review*, Fall 1958, pp. 343-370. Includes discussions of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *The Rigger of the "Narcissus"*.
- Clyde de L. Ryals, "Towards a Definition of Decadent as Applied to British Literature of the Nineteenth Century." *Journal of Aesthetics*, September, pp. 85-92.
- "Seriously..." *FLS*, January 23, p. 47. A "leading article" on Victorian studies (and *VVL*), noting the need for information about the location of mss., letters, etc. [See above, p. 32.]
- Donald T. Torchiana, "Victorian and Modern Fiction: A Rejoinder." *College English*, December, pp. 140-143. A reply to Wayne Burns's "The Genuine and Counterfeit" (*College English*, December, 1956).
- ECONOMICS AND POLITICS. Maurice Cranston, "Robert Owen: Socialist Visionary." *Listener*, November 27, pp. 877-878.
- W. H. Oliver, "Robert Owen and the English Working-Class Movement." *History Today*, November, pp. 789-796.
- Margaret Hewitt, *Wives and Mothers in Victorian Industry*. Rockliff. Rev. *FLS*, January 16, p. 31.
- Charles Singer et al, eds., *A History of Technology*, Vol. V. Clarendon Press. This volume deals with the second half of the nineteenth century.
- HISTORY. Asa Briggs, *The Age of Improvement*. Longmans. Movement of ideas, social structure, and political affairs, 1783-1867.
- G. P. Gooch, *Under Six Reigns*. Longmans. Reminiscences by a notable historian, from the eighties to the present.
- Robert Rhodes James, "Lord Randolph Resigns." *History Today*, November-December, pp. 762-769, 864-870. A sensational parliamentary episode.
- Roy Jenkins, *Sir Charles Dilke*. Collins. Biography of an influential Radical Statesman (and owner of the *Athenaeum*) whose career was cut short by scandal.
- David C. March, *The Changing Social Structure of England and Wales: 1871-1951*. Routledge.
- Norman McCloud, *The Anti-Corn Law League, 1838-1846*. Allen and Unwin.

- Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950*. Chatto and Windus. Includes discussions of Arnold, Ruskin, Mill, Maurice, Mallock, Pugin, Morris, and others.
- RELIGION. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *The Nineteenth Century in Europe: Background and the Roman Catholic Phase*. Harper. The first volume of *Christianity in a Revolutionary Age: A History of Christianity in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*.
- PUBLISHING AND JOURNALISM. Harold Herd, *A Press Gallery*. Fleet Publications. Includes sketches of William Gifford and of Henry Cust (*Pall Mall Gazette*, 1893-1896).
- RELATIONS WITH THE CONTINENT. Eileen B. Pryme, "Zola's Plays in England, 1870-1900." *French Studies*, January, pp. 28-38.
- H. G. Wright, *Boccaccio in England, from Chaucer to Tennyson*. Athlone Press.
- SOCIAL. Dorothy Henley, *Rosalind Howard, Countess of Carlisle*. Introduction by Bertrand Russell. Hogarth Press. Biography of a memorable late Victorian peeress, by her daughter.
- Roger Mortimer, *The Jockey Club*. Cassell. A history of this influential and aristocratic institution, with emphasis on its Victorian years.
- Viscountess Ridley, ed., *The Life and Letters of Cecilia Ridley, 1819-1845*. Hart-Davis. Diary and letters of an early Victorian young lady.
- Pierre Sichel, *The Jersey Lily*. W. H. Allen. On Mrs. Langtry and her friendship with the Prince of Wales.

INDIVIDUAL AUTHORS

- ARNOLD. Kenneth Allott, "Matthew Arnold's Reading-Lists in Three Early Diaries." *VS*, March, pp. 254-266. Significant lists in pocket-diaries for 1845-1847, hitherto unpublished, show especially the extent of Arnold's reading in philosophy during these years.
- V. S. Seturanam, "The Scholar Gipsy and Oriental Wisdom." *RES*, November, pp. 411-413. Further defense of the poem against the charge of "escapism."
- BAGEHOT. Norman St. John-Stevias, *Walter Bagehot: A Study of His Life and Thought, Together with a Selection from His Political Writings*. Eyre and Spottiswoode. Rev. by Herbert Read in *Listener*, February 12, p. 297. [See pp. 21-23, above.]
- BEERHOHM. *Max's Nineties*. Introduction by Osbert Lancaster. Hart-Davis. Caricatures, of which several are here first reproduced.
- BENTHAM. Maurice Cranston, "On Writing a 'Life' of Jeremy Bentham." *Listener*, Oct. 2, pp. 503-505.
- BRONTË. Jacques Blondel, "Emily Brontë: Récentes Explorations." *Études Anglaises*, October, pp. 323-330.
- James Hatley, "The Villain in *Wuthering Heights*." *NCP*, December, pp. 199-215. Nelly Dean as the villain of the novel, and "one of the consummate villains in English literature."
- Annette B. Hopkins, *The Father of the Brontës*. John Hopkins University Press. Rev. by Phyllis Bentley in *Listener*, December 4, pp. 952-953.
- BROWNING. Park Honan, "Browning's Poetic Laboratory: The Use of *Sordello*." *MP*, February, pp. 162-166. In *Sordello* Browning experimented with techniques later perfected in the mature dramatic monologues.
- Charlotte Crawford Watkins, "Browning's 'Fame Within these Four Years.'" *NLR*, October, pp. 492-500. The "revaluation" by reviewers of Browning's work in the sixties.
- BULWER-LYTTON. James F. Marshall, "Alfred de Vigny and William Charles Macready." *PMLA*, March, pp. 98-101. On Macready's attempts to modify, under De Vigny's influence, Bulwer-Lytton's characterization of Richelieu.
- CARLYLE. Hyder E. Rollins, "Charles Eliot Norton and Proude." *JEGP*, October, pp. 651-664. Unpublished letters on the controversy over Proude's *Carlyles*.
- C. R. Sanders, "Carlyle's Letters to Ruskin: A Finding List with Some Unpublished Letters and Comments." *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, September, pp. 208-238.
- DARWIN. The Spring issue of the *Antioch Review* is a special number entitled "The Origin of Species - 100 Years Later." It contains six articles on various aspects of evolutionary thought.
- Bert James Lowenberg, *Darwin, Wallace, and the Theory of Natural Selection: Including the Linnean Society Papers*. Taplinger.
- DICKENS. K. J. Fielding, *Charles Dickens: A Critical Introduction*. Longmans. Rev. by Hesketh Pearson in *Listener*, December 18, pp. 1045-1046.
- John M. Raleigh, "Dickens and the Sense of Time." *NCP*, September, pp. 127-137.
- Harry Stone, "Dickens and the Jews." *VS*, March, pp. 223-253. Richly illustrated reply to Lauriat Lane ("Dickens' Archetypal Jew," *PMLA*, March, 1958).
- KENELM DIGBY. A. G. Hill, "A Medieval Victorian." *FLS*, September 5, p. 504.
- ELIOT. R. N. Currey, "Joseph Liggins: A Slight Case of Literary Identity." *FLS*, Dec. 26, p. 753. On the alleged author of *Scenes from Clerical Life* and *Adam Bede*.
- W. J. Harvey, "George Eliot and the Omniscient Author Convention." *NCP*, September, pp. 81-108.

- ELLIS. Arthur Calder-Marshall, *Havelock Ellis*. Hart-Davis.
John Stewart Collis, *An Artist of Life: The Life and Work of Havelock Ellis*. Cassell. Two centennial biographies, reviewed by Herbert Read in *Listener*, January 29, p. 218.
- RICHARD FORD. W. G. Hoskins, "The Finest Travel-book in English." *Listener*, September 4, pp. 337-339. On Ford's *Handbook for Travellers in Spain*, 1845.
W. G. Hoskins, "Richard Ford." *Quarterly Review*, January, pp. 73-83. On Ford's work for the *Quarterly*, for which he reviewed *Oliver Twist*, *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, etc., 1838-1858.
- GILBERT. Robert A. Hall, Jr., "The Satire of *The Yeoman of the Guard*." *MLN*, November, pp. 492-497. Contends that in this opera Gilbert is satirizing his own topsy-turvy tradition.
- GISSING. Morley Roberts, *The Private Life of Henry Maitland*. Ed. by Murchard Bishop. Richards Press. The characters in Roberts's roman à clef are identified in this new edition.
- HARDY. J. O. Bailey, "Hardy's Visions of the Self." *SP*, January, pp. 74-101. Argues that Hardy's characters called themselves victims of circumstance more often than they were so.
William J. Hyde, "Hardy's View of Realism: A Key to the Rustic Characters." *VS*, September, pp. 45-59.
Sam Hynes, "Hardy and Barnes: Notes on Literary Influence." *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Winter 1959, pp. 44-54. The influence of William Barnes on Hardy's poetry, and the transition from "High Victorian" to twentieth-century poetic diction.
- HARRIS. Vincent Brome, *Frank Harris*. Cassell. Rev. by Evelyn Waugh (an attack on Harris) in *Spectator*, February 20, p. 268; see a reply by Michael Foot, February 27, pp. 297-298.
- HOPKINS. *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Ed. by Humphry House. Completed by Graham Storey. Oxford Univ. Press.
The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Ed. with an Introduction by Christopher Devlin, S.J. Oxford Univ. Press. The materials presented in these books are discussed by Graham Storey in "The Notebooks and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins: A New Edition." *Month*, November, pp. 273-281.
Alan Heuser, *The Shaping Vision of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Oxford Univ. Press.
John C. Kelly, "G. M. Hopkins: Piety vs. Poetry." *Studies* (Dublin), XLVII (1958), 421-430.
- HUXLEY. Cyril Bibby, "Thomas Henry Huxley and University Development." *VS*, December, pp. 97-116.
- KIPLING. T. S. Eliot, "Rudyard Kipling." *Mercure de France*, January, pp. 5-15. French translation of an address by Eliot on being elected (in place of Kipling) to the Académie Septentrionale, October, 1958.
Paul Fussell, Jr., "Irony, Freemasonry, and Humane Ethics in Kipling's 'The Man Who Would Be King.'" *ELH*, September, pp. 216-233.
- LOCKER-LAMPSON. Madison C. Batex. "That Delightful Man': A Study of Frederick Locker." *Harvard Library Bulletin*, XIII (1959), 92-113 (to be continued).
- NEWMAN. E. E. Reynolds, *Three Cardinals: Newman, Wiseman, Manning*. Burns and Oates. Rev. *TLS*, November 28, p. 693.
- ROSSETTI. Arthur A. Adrian, "The Browning-Rossetti Friendship: Some Unpublished Letters." *PMLA*, December, pp. 538-544.
Lona Mosk Packer, "Symbol and Reality in Christina Rossetti's 'Goblin Market.'" *PMLA*, September, pp. 375-385.
- RUSKIN. Van Akin Burd, "Ruskin's Defense of Turner: The Imitative Phase." *PQ*, October, pp. 465-483. On the early unpublished essay (1836) and its derivative aesthetic.
- SHORTHOUSE. Murchard Bishop, "John Inglesant and its Author." *Essays by Divers Hands*, Royal Society of Literature, XXIX (1958), 73-86.
- SMILES. *Self-Help, with Illustrations of Conduct and Perseverance*. Murray. A centenary edition, with introduction by Asa Briggs.
- SPENCER. W. J. Burrow, "Herbert Spencer: The Philosopher of Evolution." *History Today*, October, pp. 676-683.
- STEVENSON. J. A. Bramley, "The Courage of Robert Louis Stevenson." *Hibbert Journal*, January, pp. 171-176. An attempt to fix Stevenson's place in literature.
George L. McKay, *Some Notes on Robert Louis Stevenson, his Finances and his Agents and Publishers*. Yale Univ. Library.

- SURTEES. Cyril Ray, "A Master of Life." *Spectator*, October 31, pp. 573-574.
- SWINBURNE. Cecil Y. Lang, "Swinburne's Lost Love." *PMLA*, March, pp. 123-130. Maintains that Swinburne was in love with his cousin Mary Gordon, and that his grief at her marriage is expressed in "The Triumph of Time," "Les Noyades," and other poems.
- TENNYSON. Walker Gibson, "Behind the Veil: A Distinction between Poetic and Scientific Language in Tennyson, Lyell, and Darwin." *VS*, September, pp. 60-68.
 E. D. H. Johnson, "'In Memoriam': The Way of a Poet." *VS*, December, pp. 139-148.
 John Killham, *Tennyson and "The Princess."* Athlone Press. Rev. *TLS*, December 5, p. 699.
 John Killham, "Tennyson and the Sinful Queen—A Corrected Impression." *Notes and Queries*, December, pp. 507-511. A reply to Betty Miller (see *Twentieth Century*, 1955).
 Charles Tennyson, "Tennyson's Conversation." *Twentieth Century*, January, pp. 34-44. Revealing passages from a notebook in which Hallam Tennyson kept notes of his father's conversation, 1867-1870
- THACKERAY. K. J. Fielding, "Thackeray and the Dignity of Literature.'" *TLS*, September 19 and 26, pp. 536, 552. Thackeray's controversy with Forster and Dickens on the social status of authorship.
- THOMPSON. Myrtle Philman Pope, "A Critical Bibliography of Works by and about Francis Thompson." *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, November, pp. 571-576; January, pp. 40-49 (to be continued).
- WILDE. *The Portrait of Mr. W. H.* Ed. by Vyvyan Holland. Methuen.

PROJECTS

- MRS. PATRICK CAMPBELL. Alan Dent is preparing a biography. *TLS*, October 31, p. 625.
- DISRAELI. Robert Blake (Christ Church, Oxford) is engaged on a biography. *TLS*, November 21, p. 673.
- EDMUND GOSSE. Paul F. Mattheisen is preparing a biography and asks for letters, etc. *TLS*, December 12, p. 721.
- ABRAHAM HAYWARD. Brian Roberts is working on a biography. *TLS*, December 19, p. 737.
- FELICIA HEMANS. Olga Phillips hopes to garner information for a biography. *TLS*, January 2, p. 7.
- JOHN KEBLE. Georgina Battiscombe is working on a biography. *TLS*, October 31, p. 625.
- MRS. LYNN LINTON. H. Van Thal will publish a biography. *TLS*, November 21, p. 673.
- ARTHUR MACHEN. Aidan Reynolds and William Charlton are collecting materials for a biography. *TLS*, September 12, p. 513.
- ERNEST JAMES OLDMEADOW. Arthur P. Zeigler, Jr. (3031 Windermere Avenue, Pittsburgh 16, Pa.) is "especially interested in discovering pseudonyms he used and letters which he wrote." Oldmeadow is remembered for his association with the Unicorn Press.
- CHRISTINA ROSSETTI. Lona Mask Packer is working on a biography, and asks help in finding an early group of seventeen MS. notebooks, 1850-1856. *TLS*, December 19, p. 744.
- WALTER RICHARD SICKERT. John Russell will publish a book of letters and recollections of Sickert in 1960. *TLS*, October 17, p. 593.
- SWINBURNE. Cecil Y. Lang will edit and publish more than 1500 of Swinburne's letters. *PMLA*, March, p. 129.
- THREE VICTORIAN NOVELISTS. Pamela A. Rose is collecting material for biographical and critical studies of Lady Georgiana Fullerton, Mrs. Lynn Linton, and Pearl Craigie ("John Oliver Hobbes"). *TLS*, December 26, p. 756.

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Oscar Maurer

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