



Edited for the English X Group of MLA by William E. Buckler  
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## I. PAPERS READ AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF MLA

### THE CRITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN *THE WAY OF ALL FLESH*

There has been no satisfactory explanation for a critical fact that most readers of *The Way of All Flesh* perceive at once: the book is extraordinarily uneven. There are perfect scenes in it—like Theobald and Christina driving away together just after being married, Theobald insisting that the terrified Christina will order his supper at the inn; or like George Pontifex arriving for his grandson Ernest's christening with some of his not-quite-finest wines and water from the river Jordan which he had spilled and then sponged up from the floor of his wine cellar. These are master scenes; they are dramatically presented, and they contain a complex, delicate mixture of satire and human understanding. But there are scenes that are as bad as these are good—like Ernest's return to his father at Battersby, gloating over having inherited his aunt's money; or Ernest's self-satisfied dismissal of Ellen, his alcoholic wife, and then of his tiresome children. In these scenes (which occur mainly in the last third of the book) it is not merely that Ernest's actions are distasteful, or even that Butler obviously approves them; it is that the scenes themselves are artistically bad: in them a flat, sermon-like quality replaces what was before a finely controlled play of intelligence. The characters do not move and speak dramatically; they serve only to illustrate some tediously argued analogy between evolutionary theory and everyday life.

The general explanation of this unevenness in *The Way of All Flesh* is that Butler wrote it over a period of eleven years, from 1873 to 1884,<sup>1</sup> a period during which his conception of it changed radically. In 1873, when he conceived and wrote the first third of it, two circumstances combined to allow him to write at the highest artistic level he ever attained. First, after a long and largely unconscious search among various literary forms, he found, in the autobiographical novel, precisely the form which could give expression to what he had wanted to say but had not been able to say in two earlier books, *Erewhon* and *The Fair Haven*. Second, his life in 1873 provided him with the external stimulus which he needed for everything he ever wrote, a personal stimulus, which in this case was particularly appropriate to the personal novel he was about to write.

Butler's work on *The Way of All Flesh* is clearer, however, if seen as part of a pattern that begins with his writing of *Erewhon*. At first glance, *Erewhon* and his next book, *The Fair Haven*, seem sharply different from *The Way of All Flesh*. One takes place in a utopia—"nowhere" spelled backwards—and the other consists largely of impersonal, debate-like argument about the historical accuracy of the Gospels; but the way in which they were written forecasts the autobiographical novel to come.

In 1870, when Butler began the revision of some of his earlier essays that became *Erewhon*, his letters to his close friends show that he was most concerned with evaluating his past and in exposing in some way the hypocrisy of the society he had known as a young man. But he was reluctant to make his charges personally, to write about himself. For one thing, he was aware that his father controlled a substantial inheritance, and that he was easily angered; but still more important was the fact that Butler was psychologically unable to offend his family without suffering

excessively himself: despite the bravado he displayed among his friends, he had no taste whatsoever for an open break with his father. Thus *Erewhon* became an unsatisfactory resolution of his contradictory impulses, to expose the hypocrisy in his childhood and yet not speak directly about himself and his family. In it, he submerged his personal antagonism beneath what looked like impersonal, intellectual subject matter; after all, he told himself, the book was not about himself, but about abstract ideas and fictitious characters; his intention was only to explore the effect of a belief in the evolution of machines upon an imaginary society. But as he created the society of *Erewhon* a strange thing happened: it assumed a life of its own that did not at all proceed from its stated belief in the evolution of machines; instead it took shape as a satirical projection of the world Butler had known as a young man, and the theory of machines from which it ostensibly grew was neatly locked up in two quite separate chapters; but in 1870 Butler was not yet ready to acknowledge even to himself that *he* was the real subject matter of his writing and that his personal indignation was the energy behind it.

Just after *Erewhon* was published, Butler wrote to Miss Savage expressing his dissatisfaction with the obliqueness of the book and telling her that he was doubtful about writing any other novel: "I know I should regard it, as I did *Erewhon*," he wrote, "i. e. as a mere peg on which to hang anything that I had a mind to say."<sup>2</sup> He still believed then that what he had a mind to say—his attack upon the world he had known—was not suitable subject matter. Thus he did not begin another novel, but instead began to write *The Fair Haven*, which he considered a further working out of another one of his early essays, this one unpromisingly entitled, "The Evidences for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as Given by the Four Evangelists, Critically Examined." Again the apparent intellectual structure of the book stood apart from its real content, which was personal: the long ironic discussion of the Gospels is introduced by the subtly drawn character of John Owen, but there is only the slightest connection between the discussion and the character, and by far the more interesting is the character, who shares his creator's sudden and thereafter all-embracing perception that the world is full of hypocrisy. The rationalistic discussion of the Gospels, which is attributed to Owen, is in fact just tacked on, just as the theory of machines was tacked on to the society of *Erewhon*.

In detail, however, John Owen is much more autobiographical than Higgs in *Erewhon*, and one reason for this is the correlation between Butler's writing and the events in his life at this time. Though he began *The Fair Haven* unenthusiastically, depressed by what he considered the partial failure of *Erewhon*, he brightened considerably when he began to create the character of John Owen—and his invention of John Owen coincided exactly with the first real quarrel he had had with his father since he refused to enter the church fourteen years earlier. Late in the spring of 1872, he wrote to ask his father's approval of his plan to reveal his authorship of *Erewhon*, and his father's sharp refusal began a heated exchange which finally ended with Butler's being forbidden to visit his family ever again.<sup>3</sup> It was then that he became so interested in what was previously a dull book on the Gospels. He told Miss Savage that he could "never be quiet till I have carried out the scheme that is in my head."<sup>4</sup> That was in June, 1872; in July, speaking about John Owen again, he told her that his writing was then a "genuine thing, done not because someone wants me to do it, but because I am bursting with it."<sup>5</sup> By itself, this coincidence of his quarrel with his father and his enthusiastic creation of a more obviously autobiographical character might mean nothing, but it fits into a total pattern that carries over to his work on *The Way of All Flesh*.

After he finished *The Fair Haven*, Butler again found himself at odds and ends. "I do not want to write anything in particular," he told Miss Savage, "and shall paint until an idea strikes me which I must work out or die, like *The Fair Haven*. I shall do nothing well unless *con amore*, and under diabolical inspiration."<sup>6</sup> At this time he had learned that he worked best under "diabolical inspiration," but curiously he was still looking for an "idea" for his next book. He began to turn through still other old essays, but three months later he not only had the inspiration he needed, but also the appropriate form for what he wanted to say, the autobiographical novel. It all came about because Butler was called to his mother's side when she was dying in April, 1873—the first time he had visited his family since his father forbade him to do so. At this time, his father told him flatly that *he* was responsible for her death because he had published *Erewhon* and *The Fair Haven*. Butler returned to London after the funeral, full of grief and indignation, and found that it was no longer necessary to scratch around in his old essays for an *idea*; he found that what he wanted to say could be said most effectively in a book about himself; he began it that spring,<sup>7</sup> and on August 16 he considered the first fifteen pages of *The Way of All Flesh* ready for Miss Savage's criticism.<sup>8</sup> Seven months later, when he had to abandon his writing to go to Canada, he had written the first and best third of it—through Ernest's entrance at Roughborough<sup>9</sup>—and thus had all but completed the subtle portraits of Theobald and Christina in relation to the young Ernest.

By the time he was forced to stop writing in 1874, Butler had realized and admitted to himself that his novel was inspired by an antagonism towards his father, but while he was in Canada his relations with his father were so peaceful, even cordial, that though he hoped to carry on with his

novel he felt that it would be necessary for him to change its tone. "[Now] it must be quite innocent," he wrote to Miss Savage, "for I am now reconciled to my father, and must be careful not to go beyond scepticism of the mildest kind. I shall have to change the scheme but shall try to keep the earlier chapters."<sup>10</sup> For the next four years, however, he found himself unable to "change the scheme" or to write "scepticism of the mildest kind." He lacked the diabolical inspiration he had had, and unable to work on his novel, he once again looked around for impersonal ideas. In January, 1876 he told Miss Savage that he had found "a very dry, but exceedingly (to me) interesting subject, something like the machines in *Erewhon*..."<sup>11</sup> He found the writing of this book, *Life and Habit*, very dull indeed, and within a few months of beginning it he threw it aside and in desperation asked Miss Savage to collaborate with him on a novel.<sup>12</sup> She refused—graciously and wisely—and there was nothing for him to do but push on with *Life and Habit*, which he finally published in December, 1877. Afterwards, as late as February, 1878, he had not found a subject for his next book. "I am not writing a line now," he told Miss Savage, "but painting pretty hard—and doing a little watercolour landscape."<sup>13</sup>

In March, 1878 Butler was confident enough of his father's good graces to ask once again for his approval of his work<sup>14</sup>—this time of his work on evolution. And the same pattern repeats itself: his father's sharply worded reply touched off the first serious quarrel between them in four years; and immediately thereafter, not having touched his novel since March, 1874, he was able to work on it once more. He polished some of the early chapters, enjoyed working on Theobald again, and then carried the story forward to Ernest's unfortunate interview with Miss Maitland in Chapter 60.<sup>15</sup>

At this point, July, 1878, the pattern which extends from *Erewhon* through *The Fair Haven* to the first two-thirds of *The Way of All Flesh* is broken, for the novel had progressed so far that Butler found that the issues which previously had never failed to stir him—the tyranny of parents, the hypocrisy of churchmen and educators—were now not relevant to Ernest, who was, since he was about to go to prison, freed of the demands of conventional society, and quite apart from his parents. The problem for Butler was not to present Ernest in reaction, but Ernest living by his own positive values, and he found that even a major quarrel with his father (about his allowance to Pauli) did not inspire him at all; it was simply not relevant to the mature Ernest. Finally, three years after he had written the Miss Maitland episode, he forced himself to try to finish his novel; and after three more years of desultory work he completed it in 1884. But devoid of his earlier enthusiasm, he made use of a gaudy plot: Ernest marries Ellen, a fallen woman who turns out to be an alcoholic (as well as a thoroughly unconvincing character); he meets John the footman who turns out luckily to be Ellen's real husband, and soon he finds a way of buying Ellen off to America and his children off to a bargeman's family so that he can become what amounts to a cardboard projection of Butler himself: a bachelor, a hardworking writer, unread by his own generation, but aggressively content. What began as a subtle novel with finely developed insights into human nature became merely an outline of a novel; and at least one of the reasons for its poor quality is the lack of inspiration with which Butler wrote it. Henry Festing Jones unwittingly gives us an insight into the dogged and spiritless way his friend worked. He "never went to prison," Jones writes, "[a fact] which he used to regret when he was approaching this part of the book, for he did not see how he was ever going to make it plausible. In the end he paid a visit to [the prison in] Coldbath Fields, was most politely received, stated his difficulty, and obtained all the information he required."<sup>16</sup>

Butler was himself acutely conscious that there was a great difference in quality between the parts of *The Way of All Flesh* that deal with Ernest's life up to his imprisonment—the parts he wrote in 1873 and 1878—and the last third of the book which he struggled through between 1881 and 1884. He often resolved to revise the later sections, but he was never able to bring himself to do so. Just five months before he died in 1902 he wrote: "I have never looked at my novel since I got it back from Miss Savage [in January, 1884]. I know that it wanted a great deal not only of rewriting but of reconstruction. I hope to take to it again very shortly and do the best I can with it."<sup>17</sup> He did not take to it again, and it has come down to us with the several different Butlers in it unreconciled to each other. (Incidentally, though there is no direct evidence available, it is pretty clear that Butler never published the novel while he lived *not* because it might offend his sisters, as is generally supposed, but simply because he did not consider it finished.)

Of the three sections of the novel which he wrote at different times, the most perfect artistically is the one he wrote in 1873 dealing with Ernest as a child. This section fulfills rather grandly what he promised by implication in his earlier books; the worst is the one written in the 1880's by a man who had lost the ability to portray characters with delicate emotional ambivalence; for in the eighties Butler grew more and more settled and sure, anxious to state rather than to dramatize, and unfortunately during this time, when he was writing the last third of the book, he lacked the self-restraint to refrain from imposing himself in added bits upon an earlier and finer artist.

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## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>The beginning of Butler's work on *The Way of All Flesh* in 1873 is discussed later in this essay. He inserted his final revisions on the manuscript (now in the British Museum) in a distinctive ink, and on the last page he dated them April 28, 1884.
- <sup>2</sup>*Letters Between Samuel Butler and Miss E. M. A. Savage*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes and Brian Hill (London, 1935), p. 27.
- <sup>3</sup>Letters between Butler and his father in the British Museum.
- <sup>4</sup>*Butler-Savage Letters*, p. 28.
- <sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 29.
- <sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 38.
- <sup>7</sup>Butler's letter to Charles Darwin dated April 15, 1873, printed in Henry Festing Jones, *Samuel Butler: A Memoir* (London, 1919), I, 189. Also evident in this letter (written nine days after his mother's death) is Butler's extreme concern about the effect that his books might have had upon her health.
- <sup>8</sup>*Butler-Savage Letters*, p. 62.
- <sup>9</sup>The evidence of the manuscript and Butler's remarks in his letters to Miss Savage (pp. 78, 182) indicate that he had completed Volume I (i.e. Chapters 1-31 in the available printed edition) before he left for Canada on March 12, 1874. Though he later revised this volume, he does not seem to have changed its basic form and substance.
- <sup>10</sup>*Butler-Savage Letters*, p. 93.
- <sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 115.
- <sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 123.
- <sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 174.
- <sup>14</sup>Letters in the British Museum.
- <sup>15</sup>"No—I won't send you any more—it is so much less readable than I yet see my way to making it—and it is full of little contradictions—I having intended at one time to turn the thing in one way, and having then turned it in another—I have however just finished the second volume [i.e. through Chapter 60], and got my hero into his worst scrape." Butler to Miss Savage, July 2, 1878. (*Butler-Savage Letters*, p. 188.)
- <sup>16</sup>Jones, *Memoir*, II, 11.
- <sup>17</sup>Butler's note (dated January 15, 1902) on a letter from Miss Savage written January 14, 1884. (*Butler-Savage Letters*, p. 318.)

## THE RUBÁIYÁT'S NEGLECTED REVIEWER: A CENTENNIAL RECOVERY

Edward FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* has been 1959's second most celebrated literary centenary (second that is to Darwin's *Origin of Species*). There have been two attractive reprints of the first edition of the *Rubáiyát*, one by Professor A. J. Arberry of Cambridge, the other by Professor Carl J. Weber of Colby or, if I may say so, of the Victorian Group of the Modern Language Association. But, of the books which survived, the *Rubáiyát* was the least celebrated in 1859. Of twenty-five influential book-reviewing journals of the day, twenty-three reviewed Darwin's book and twenty-two Tennyson's first four *Idylls of the King*; twenty reviewed *Adam Bede*; there were sixteen reviews of Mill's *On Liberty*, eleven of Ruskin's *Two Paths*, nine of *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, and eight of Smiles's *Self-Help* (Wolff, "Victorian Reviewers and Cultural Responsibility," 1859, p. 283). Even Arnold's little pamphlet, *England and the Italian Question*, had four notices, and comments on the various part-issues of *A Tale of Two Cities* and *The Virginians* appeared regularly among the miscellaneous items in the literary gossip columns.

How was FitzGerald's poem received? According to Professor Weber it "dropped into the world of 1859 with no more sound than that of a feather falling into the Grand Canyon" (p. 12). According to Professor Arberry it was "freezingly disregarded" (p. 28). The story of the poem and its narrow escape from oblivion can be easily summarized. FitzGerald had been interested in Omar's verses since 1857. In early 1858 he had sent thirty-five quatrains to *Fraser's Magazine* in answer to a request for a contribution. Not hearing from *Fraser's*, he retrieved them about a year later, added more stanzas, and asked Quaritch, the bookseller, to get them privately printed. Most of the 250 copies were put on sale in spring 1859. About two years later, after the price had been reduced, one copy was bought and that chain of interest soon to become world-wide was started. Whitley Stokes, Rossetti, Swinburne, Burne-Jones were links in that chain. So was Charles Eliot Norton, who reviewed FitzGerald's second version of his poem for the *North American Review* in October 1869. This review has hitherto been considered the first public recognition of the poem (Arberry, p. 17), and it led in turn to a review in the June 1870 *Fraser's*, thought of as the first English review. Ten years has always seemed to literary historians a long time for a poem like the *Rubáiyát* to have had to wait for acknowledgment, and we might briefly state what has been recorded of the circumstances immediately surrounding the poem's publication.

On the last day of March 1859 FitzGerald asked Quaritch to advertise the *Rubáiyát* in "the *Athenaeum* & any other Paper you think good: sending Copies of course to the *Spectator* &c." A few days later he sent money to pay for advertisements in "the *Saturday Review*, the *Athenaeum*, & any

other Weekly Paper you like." Quaritch had already sent a copy to the British Museum under the provisions of the Copyright Act, and advertisements duly appeared on 9 April 1859 in all the papers mentioned by FitzGerald. These have been thought to be, as Professor Arberry puts it, "the only Press notices that the *Rubáiyát* enjoyed for many years" (pp. 13, 23-24).

But more happened to the *Rubáiyát* in 1859 than has been previously recorded. In the first place, Quaritch placed advertisements not only in the *Athenaeum* and the *Saturday Review* but also in the *Examiner* and the *Spectator*. Moreover, there are some additional facts which show that, despite its apparent neglect, the book was afforded the routine treatment of a new publication. Both important trade journals, the *Publishers' Circular* and the *Bookseller*, listed the *Rubáiyát* in their April numbers. That Quaritch actually distributed copies is indicated by the claim of the editor of *Publishers' Circular* that his records were accurate because "the books themselves passed through our hands" (1 March 1859). However, the first evidence that review copies were sent out is the appearance of the hitherto unrecorded notice, under the heading "Our Library Table," in the 11 June *Athenaeum*, where the *Rubáiyát* was briefly credited with "an abundance of gorgeous imagery" and "an excellent biographical introduction." But most important of all, and the topic of this paper, is an almost three-column review in the *Library Gazette* for 1 October 1859. So, although notices in the *Athenaeum* and the *Literary Gazette* were late in coming, it seems clear that all the major reviewing organs were probably given an opportunity to notice the poem. Nevertheless, only one magazine actually reviewed the *Rubáiyát* and that was the *Literary Gazette*.

What was the standing of the *Literary Gazette* in 1859? It had only three years to run, having long since lost the eminence it had attained under William Jerdan in the 1830's; its circulation seems to have been only one-third that of the *Spectator*, one-tenth that of the *Athenaeum*, and one-fifteenth that of the *Saturday Review* (Ellegård, *Readership of the Periodical Press in Mid-Victorian Britain*, p. 22). On the other hand, it still carried more advertising than any of the other papers except the *Athenaeum*, and it was, according to an official list published in 1859, along with the *Athenaeum* and the *Saturday Review*, one of the only three weeklies taken in the Reading Room of the British Museum. Also in 1859, the *Bookseller* devoted the first two of a series of articles called "Our Literary Journals" to the *Literary Gazette*, so we can hardly call a review even in the pages of its latest volumes obscure. The *Bookseller's* article for 1 March mentioned the efforts of its new proprietors, Bradbury and Evans (also publishers of *Punch*), and its new editor, Shirley Brooks (later editor of *Punch*), to revive its flagging circulation. Brooks gave up in May 1859 and was succeeded by, to quote the *Bookseller* for 25 May, "the Rev. Professor [Henry] Christmas, F.S.A., F.R.S., F.R.S.A., &c., a gentleman of cyclopaedic information." When we couple this change in personnel with the *Literary Gazette's* announcement in December that it had again changed owners (though not editors) and that after the end of the year a new feature would be the publication of "important ecclesiastical intelligence," we may conjecture that the *Literary Gazette* under Christmas's editorship would not attempt to build circulation but rather intellectual prestige. Perhaps a recondite pamphlet like the *Rubáiyát* did not appeal to an editor of Brooks' rather light-hearted inclinations, but was later taken down from some shelf by the new editor or by one of his new staff-members.

The critique of the *Rubáiyát* in the *Literary Gazette* is worthy of resurrection, not only as, to date, the first critical treatment of the *Rubáiyát* (and probably the only one of the first edition) but for the insight shown by the reviewer. Internal evidence gives us no clue as to his identity, but he deserves his niche in literary history for the tolerance and taste which enabled him, while contemptuous of the creed of the *Rubáiyát*, to praise the beauty of the poetry unreservedly. That he was no Orientalist is indicated by one of his first remarks that "if the astronomer-poet of Persia appears as well in his native garb as he appears in English, it was certainly high time that he should be brought out of his obscurity." He may possibly have been familiar with other Persian poetry but all the details in the review about the life and beliefs of Omar, as well as some descriptive criticism, are taken from FitzGerald's preface, nor is there any realization of FitzGerald's role in manipulating his original. In the light of this relative ignorance, the reviewer's perceptive admiration is quite remarkable, especially since the fatalism of the poem meets, as we might expect, with his thoroughly confident disapproval. It was perhaps easy enough for "advanced" circles such as Rossetti's to appreciate the wonder of FitzGerald's verses. Sympathy with the thought, personal recognition of the mood of sophisticated and quiet cynicism, would naturally lead them to cherish the plangent harmonies of the poetry. The reviewer had no such sympathies: he talks of "crushing fatalism," of "the Gospel of Despair," of "repulsive theories." But his honesty even permits him to praise the poem's sceptical tone, leading him to say that "few poets, ancient or modern, have given fuller utterance to the subtlest speculations with which the human intellect can be occupied." How easily these words could have been applied in 1859 to FitzGerald's friend, the Tennyson of *In Memoriam*; how narrow the dividing line at this time between the respectable poetry of questioning faith and the suspect poetry of speculative doubt!

The reviewer willingly acknowledges that, among the Persian poets of whom he has heard, none has written "so earnestly, or with so much poignancy, and richness and depth of feeling," communicating so effectively "expressions of life-long habitudes of thought," and the reviewer's careful balance of praise and blame shows itself clearly in his comments that "nothing can be more dreary than the merriment in which he seeks to drown his despair, and nothing more beautiful than the manner in which he discourses of both. What could be better expressed than the following?" he continues, citing the four stanzas beginning

Think, in this batter'd Caravanserai  
Whose Doorways are alternate Night and Day,  
How Sultan after Sultan with his Pomp  
Abode his Hour or two, and went his way.

His longest extract is the famous eight-stanza section called by FitzGerald, though only in the first edition, "Kuzá-Nama" or "The Epistle of the Pots," of which perhaps the best-remembered is the following:

And, strange to tell, among the Earthen Lot  
Some could articulate, while others not:  
And suddenly one more impatient cried --  
"Who is the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?"

Aptly he summarizes the thought of the poem: "Everywhere the same crushing fatalism presents itself. The poet maintains that man must be unaccountable, because he has not the choice of his actions; his volitions are but the subordinate pulsations of an invisible Destiny; . . ."

And that inverted Bowl we call the Sky,  
Whereunder crawling coop't we live and die,  
Lift not thy hands to It for help -- for It  
Rolls impotently on as Thou and I.

In the light of what we now know of FitzGerald's role in organizing and adapting his original material, it is intriguing to read as the conclusion of this review that "Never was the Gospel of Despair preached more fervently than it is in the pages of Khayyam, and few of our modern fatalists could express their convictions with so much terse vigour, or deck their repulsive theories with so many quaint beauties as this Eastern poet and sage." For FitzGerald himself the reviewer had a word of gratitude: "We must thank the modest translator of this powerful and original poet for the valuable contribution . . . which he has made to our current literature." We can surely be excused for finding in this review an instinctive awareness that (had the full story been known) FitzGerald, though himself a *modern* fatalist, was in fact a powerful and original poet.

Perhaps this review does not really alter the history of the *Rubáiyát's* reception, but its existence is a testimony to the alertness of at least one member of the reviewing fraternity. The *Rubáiyát* was not entirely ignored; and the notice it received was not entirely unworthy of it.

I hope that my contribution to a centennial program lies not alone in my ostensible topic, but in the implication of my paper that, for 1859, in literary studies, the gap between the significance of the documents and the productive research of scholars is greatest in the field of journalism, for if my instance has been at all representative, it will reinforce the emerging view that Victorian periodicals are neglected far out of proportion to their importance. We have perhaps a sound sense, as we have considerable knowledge, of the writers of that year whom we still read. The poets, the novelists, the essayists, the scientists, the theologians, of 1859; Tennyson and FitzGerald; Dickens, Eliot, Meredith, Reade, Thackeray, and Trollope; Arnold, Mill, Ruskin; Darwin and Huxley; F. D. Maurice and J. H. Newman receive their approximate due. But the journalists are relatively ignored; so today I have introduced the anonymous reviewer of the *Rubáiyát*, the first to discuss in print a masterpiece which had to wait for ten years -- and a new version in a new edition -- for its next public recognition.

Indiana University

Michael Wolff

*Editorial Note:* Professor Jacob Korg (*University of Washington*) also read a paper at this meeting entitled "Browning's View of Art: A Lie Like Truth." Unfortunately, the editor was unable to locate this paper for *VNL*.

## II. A BROWNING SYMPOSIUM CONCLUDED

*Editorial Note:* In Number 15 of *VNL* (Spring, 1959), Professor Paul A. Cundiff (*Butler University*) published an article entitled "Robert Browning: 'Our Human Speech,'" in which he entered into the knotty problem of

Browning's view of fact in *The Ring and the Book*. In the next issue (Fall, 1959), Professor Donald Smalley (*University of Illinois*) took exception to certain of Professor Cundiff's emphases and broadened the discussion to include comments on the point of view taken by Robert Langbaum in *The Poetry of Experience*. The rebuttals by Professors Cundiff and Langbaum conclude this symposium.

### ROBERT BROWNING: "INDISPUTABLY FACT"

In reply<sup>1</sup> to "Robert Browning: 'Our Human Speech'"<sup>2</sup> Donald Smalley has declined to accept my interpretation of *The Ring and the Book*, choosing rather an interpretation which asks the most of two opposing views (Browning did, Browning did not *create* the poem) and the least of the celebrated *Ring* metaphor. Yet each of us knows that Browning was a poet, and this knowledge happily frees us from the long-standing debate on faithfulness to fact. Indeed, though our terminology and emphases vary considerably, the only serious breach in our conclusions is that I believe Browning *knew* and *said* he was explaining, interpreting, idealizing the facts of the *Old Yellow Book*, "enhancing" or creating the characters of the poem; whereas Professor Smalley believes that Browning "provides us with a 'glorious misinterpretation'"<sup>3</sup> despite the poet's intent "to assert that 'he has not misinterpreted the fact'."<sup>3</sup> Both he and I believe, nonetheless, that Browning at once revealed and interpreted the facts of his sources, and our common belief makes the poem we discuss quite different from the poetic anomaly in which Browning was thought to be, or at least asserted he was, a historian in his treatment of fact and a poet in his treatment of truth.

It is tempting to think at this point, therefore, that the breach between Smalley and Cundiff could be closed in his acceptance of my interpretation of the *Ring* metaphor. But such is not the case! While in the metaphor I find Browning's own cognizance of rather broad interpretive privileges, Professor Smalley sees, first, an "admirable *Ring* metaphor [pressed] farther than logic would allow Browning to go";<sup>3</sup> and second, if interpreted my way, a denial both of Browning's reported assertion that he found Pompilia "in the book just as she speaks and acts in my poem,"<sup>4</sup> and of the poet's inordinate use of source material. Quite by necessity, Professor Smalley's position leads to conflicting ideas: (a) in his own thought, (b) between his thought and the thought he attributes to Browning, (c) between his thought and Browning's own thought. (a) When, for example, he encounters the words of Robert Langbaum,<sup>5</sup> who obviously places too much emphasis on fact, Professor Smalley insists: "Browning's is the view of a profoundly creative artist unobsessed with facts in any way that is connoted by 'facts and figures' . . ." But when he encounters my statement, "Browning frankly admitted that his characters are idealized,"<sup>7</sup> he becomes less insistent: "Browning employs *idealization*, I think, only in the sense of getting at the essence of character, rather than in the sense of creating character that improves upon reality."<sup>8</sup> (b) In one place Professor Smalley may be found stating, ". . . [Browning] read into the facts of the *Old Yellow Book*, a largely unhistorical spiritual drama"; in another, "There is a good deal to show . . . that Browning believed . . . he had indeed explained the truth of his objective data."<sup>10</sup> (c) Professor Smalley thinks: "Such 'idealization' as this seems compatible with Browning's assurances to the Reverend John W. Chadwick that he had found Pompilia in the *Old Yellow Book* 'just as she speaks and acts in my poem'."<sup>8</sup> Whereas Browning thinks: "From the book, yes; thence bit by bit I dug/The lingot truth ["pure crude fact"], that memorable day, . . . But from something else surpassing that, /Something of mine which, mixed up with the mass, /Made it bear hammer and be firm to file." Professor Smalley's position is hardly more comfortable than Charles W. Hodell's,<sup>11</sup> and Professor Smalley does not seem to strengthen it in his initial appeal to "ambiguity." Like him, I recognize ambiguity in poetry as an essential ingredient, but unlike him, I could not expand the meaning of ambiguity to include rather clearly expressed but diametrically opposed ideas. So in the *Ring* metaphor, also an essential ingredient since it dominates the whole poem, I thought I saw a way out of Professor Smalley's present dilemma in the metaphorical difference Browning seems to establish between surface gold (unalloyed fact) and submerged gold (alloyed fact).

What appears, however, to be the heart of Professor Smalley's objection to my interpretation deals with the thorny subject of "fact" in which I am thought to contend "that Browning belittles the importance of the concrete fact of the *Old Yellow Book*."<sup>14</sup> Not to distinguish—and Professor Smalley has not distinguished—between *demonstrable* and *indemonstrable* fact is a serious error since "statement of fact or alleged fact,"<sup>12</sup> "fact" and factual evidence,<sup>12</sup> weigh so heavily in *The Ring and the Book*. For this indivisible use of "fact" permits him to write: "In Cundiff's view, Browning . . . [displays] throughout the poem a scorn of the idea that factual knowledge<sup>13</sup> is of any great value."<sup>14</sup> Of the many quotations I present to reveal the belittlement to which Browning habitually subjects truth(fact), I think not one example concerns *demonstrable* fact. This ever-expanding evidence, moreover, seems to provide the key to Browning's frequent assertions on human testimony as well as substantial proof that the poem's theme may be "the vanity of human speech." Of the many quotations

Professor Smalley presents to reveal the great store Browning set by his source material, not one, I think, is concerned with *indemonstrable* fact. As one might expect therefore, Professor Smalley, like Browning, delights in the indisputable fact of an old yellow book, while I delight in the poet's "... indisputably fact [indemonstrable and ironic], ... / Dwindled into no bigger than a book" (I.665-71).<sup>15</sup> While Professor Smalley lingers over "Browning's pleasure, keen as it obviously is," in the actual sand that dried the ink and the actual creased sheets folded double for more commodious use, I linger over the many alleged but indemonstrable facts, "(So universal is [the world's] plague of squint)" (I.879). What "fact-facts," we may properly ask, do demonstrate that Pompilia actually did or did not flirt with Caponsacchi? That Girolamo, Guido's brother, did or did not attempt to seduce Pompilia? That Pompilia did or did not ink over the letter allegedly written by her to Abate Paolo? Demonstrably the yellow book Browning enjoyed tossing into the air and calling his "four-years'-intimate" is a fact. Undeniably Browning made a tremendous effort "to transcribe the truth [demonstrable fact] of small details from his sources."<sup>16</sup> But as most critics would surely concede, this act of transcribing demonstrable fact is the smallest part of his accomplishment.

Professor Smalley may have had good reason for asking that "truth [fact]" be further subdivided, but he does me an injustice in concluding that I think Browning would belittle demonstrable fact any more than he would belittle "God's truth" or his own artistic truth in *The Ring and the Book*. (I trust that he approves the constant emphasis I have placed on Browning's truth of Art.) The title of my essay, alone—"Robert Browning: 'Our Human Speech'"—should have forestalled a questionable point of departure to which a large number of Professor Smalley's observations may be traced. For example, he abruptly "parts company" with me when he assumes that I say: "... Browning ... avowed through his Ring metaphor that he meant to create characters of his own without the intention of keeping faithful to the essential truth of the characters of his source."<sup>16</sup> Of course I do not so much as imply that Browning does anything without intention, but I can understand how Professor Smalley might read these words into his understanding of my use of "fact." The closest I come to this ascribed but untenable position may be determined by the following: "... it is the imaginative contribution in the creation of character and in the interpretation of motive, ..." <sup>17</sup> Surely Professor Smalley has pushed me too far away from any legitimate interpretation a reader may give to the "alloy" of Browning's mind. I consider *The Ring and the Book*, in W. C. DeVane's cogent phrase, "an idealized reading of life";<sup>18</sup> and though I believe one may conclude that Browning created beyond the probability of the facts before him—the anachronistic Pope, the love divine Caponsacchi and Pompilia bore each other, the analogic if not implied immaculate conception of Gaetano—I like to believe that Browning created both his poem and his characters within the realm of possibility.

If I have erred egregiously, as Professor Smalley suggests, in holding too close to textual analysis, he seems to have erred in considering the composition of *The Ring and the Book* a rather minor chapter in Browning's poetic life. For in depreciating the biographical and artistic inclusiveness of an almost nine-year preoccupation by the poet,<sup>19</sup> Professor Smalley has allowed himself, I believe, to misread the textual quotation on which he bases a more nearly proper approach to the poem, "one that is less liable to lead to equivocal results":

... But Browning does not profess to offer in his poem 'live fact' but rather

voices we call evidence

Up roar in the echo, live fact deadened down. ... (I.833-4)

... Browning intends, as I see it, to give a synthesis of fact—"live fact deadened down"—rather than live concrete fact itself.<sup>20</sup>

The "live fact deadened down" here spoken of must be the fact of Pompilia's life which had been forgotten or "deadened down" by an unconcerned world, but which was now to be restored to life by Browning's Art. Else how shall we account for

Lovers of dead truth, did ye fare the worse?

Lovers of live truth, found ye false my tale?

(I.696-97)

How title I the dead alive once more?

(I.779)

The life in me abolished the death of things, ...

(I.520)

I fused my live soul and that inert stuff, ...

(I.469)

or, the poignant analogy between Browning's poetic task and Prophet Elisha's miracle:

Man, ...

Creates, no, but resuscitates, perhaps. ...

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)

or, to return to Professor Smalley's essay itself for illustration, statements of his own such as "Browning meant to revive the truth of the *Old Yellow Book*"<sup>20</sup> and "Browning intended to call the essential Pompilia ... back to life?"<sup>20</sup> It is regrettable that this apparent flaw is allowed to enter Professor Smalley's thought in an essay in which he makes a notable contribution to criticism of *The Ring and the Book*. Others have hinted at the conclusion he reaches, but such observations as "to re-enact the essential story of the *Old Yellow Book*"<sup>20</sup> and "the circumstances he chose afforded a faithful interpretation of, or synthesis of, the essential truth of personality"<sup>20</sup> have never been conveyed in more succinct or persuasive language. And the consistency of his belief is continued in other effective words: "Browning has attempted to keep faithful to the essence of the facts."<sup>20</sup> "Browning believed he was presenting in Book VII the essential Pompilia of the *Old Yellow Book*."<sup>20</sup> Browning had "confidence in his power to interpret the essential truth beneath the surface of fact."<sup>21</sup> I only hope that the insight of the last quotation may be recognized, though slenderly, in my words: "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."<sup>22</sup>

It is the more difficult, therefore, to pursue a difference of opinion which seems to be based solely on whether or not Browning "pressed too hard" his admirable metaphor. Professor Smalley refers to *The Ring and the Book* as "a creative work,"<sup>23</sup> the product of Browning's "creative imagination,"<sup>23</sup> and to Browning as "a profoundly creative artist," but he seems unyieldingly opposed to my considering the poem a creative endeavor. For example, he writes: "... Cundiff also points out ... passages ... capable of being interpreted as evidence that Browning felt free to give his Fancy a quite loose rein in creating portions of his poem."<sup>24</sup> This denial to me and affirmation by Professor Smalley of evidence of creativity is doubly conflicting, since I am also represented as allowing Browning to "scoorn" both demonstrable and indemonstrable fact, while Professor Smalley represents himself always as accepting Browning's offhand assertion that his Pompilia is the Pompilia of his sources. Nevertheless the denial to me affords Professor Smalley an enthusiasm of language, focused in "a quite loose rein," which must be disavowed. Denying Pompilia the latitude, in my words, of being a potential historical character, "enhanced"<sup>25</sup> by Browning's Art, Professor Smalley nonetheless accepts, in Browning's thoughts, "a permissible heightening of thought and dialogue of the sort Shakespeare practised."<sup>26</sup> And in reply to my choice of evidence from Browning's letters on "idealized characters"—"Guido, whose wickedness does ... or rather, by the end, shall ... rise to the limit conceivable"<sup>27</sup>—Professor Smalley prefers "up to the general bettering and intended tone of the whole composition—what one calls, idealization of the characters."<sup>28</sup> Conclusions of this nature might suggest only differences in degree, were it not that they run markedly counter, it seems to me, to Professor Smalley's final words: "Browning does, I believe, intend to assert that 'he has not misinterpreted the facts' at the same time that he provides us with a 'glorious misinterpretation'."<sup>29</sup>

The following words of mine, when quoted without context, appear innocent enough on the surface: "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."<sup>30</sup> To Professor Smalley, however, these words reveal me as arguing

... (If I understand him) that Browning therefore believed there was no way of arriving at a reliable reading of the truth behind the evidence of the *Old Yellow Book*. But this is to assume that Browning viewed the *Old Yellow Book* and the possibility of getting at the essential truth latent in its factual data in much the same way as another person might view them.<sup>31</sup>

And to show that I have misunderstood Browning's special talent at reading facts, Professor Smalley illustrates the more likely method Browning would have used to arrive "at the characters of his poem":

Browning tells us ... that he has arrived at his reading [ 'a mass of evidence ... full of ambiguities and contradictions' ]<sup>31</sup> of Chatterton's life by 'balancing conflicting statements, interpreting doubtful passages, and reconciling discrepant utterances.' The words sound curiously like those William Michael Rossetti reported Browning as employing to describe his work on *The Ring and the Book*. ... a 'mass of almost equally balanced evidence,' pondering which he was able to arrive at the characters of his poem.<sup>31</sup>

The one difficulty Professor Smalley may have in maintaining this dual interpretation of "reading facts" is that my statement refers exclusively to Rossetti's words: "... 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, ..." <sup>33</sup> For his purposes, Professor Smalley interprets the passage to which we both refer as meaning that Browning arrived at a satisfactory reading of the contradictory facts of the *Old Yellow Book*; for my purposes, as meaning that

Browning saw "no way of arriving at a reliable reading of the truth behind the evidence of the *Old Yellow Book*." If a somewhat similar latitude may be allowed Browning, both Professor Smalley and I are carrying coals to Newcastle.

Professor Smalley's tendency to utilize comparable statements, which when attributed to himself are acceptable, when attributed to me are unacceptable, may be compared with his tendency to read additional meaning rather freely into another's words. Take, for example, part of his summary of my general position on *The Ring and the Book*:

... Browning, in Cundiff's opinion, was aware that he was in large measure creating by means of his Fancy a new personality for the heroine of his poem rather than resuscitating<sup>33</sup> the Pompilia who figures in the *Old Yellow Book*:

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.

In Cundiff's view, Browning not only felt free on principle to alter the facts of the *Old Yellow Book* when these hampered him in the creation of character; . . .<sup>34</sup>

To approximate my intended meaning, Professor Smalley's first sentence would have to read:

"Browning, in Cundiff's opinion, was aware that he was creating by means of his Fancy an idealized heroine." I have nowhere written of "a new personality"; nor do I wish to accept "in large measure." Perhaps I should have been more cautious in the wording of "in no place I can find did he assert that another person must see in his Pompilia the Pompilia of his source." But surely my thought differs only in brevity from that of Professor Smalley: "Browning's explanations of fact . . . differ widely . . . from the sort of conclusions other people were likely to reach on the basis of the same evidence . . . he read high spiritual drama into materials that seem to the uninstructed eye largely composed of baser stuff."<sup>35</sup> And though I gladly accept the essential meaning of "Browning . . . felt free on principle to alter the facts of the *Old Yellow Book* when they hampered him in the creation of character," it should be reported that I published the words which provide this paraphrase in 1948 and that I prefer the restraint of the original words. "They," I wrote of a particular group of critics who did not believe Browning's "fancy" disappeared with the renovating wash, "are familiar with [Browning's] method of using the material of the old book in a free manner, never allowing it to hamper his invention; they know that it is impossible for a poet's imaginative contribution to be isolated and expelled from his poetry."<sup>36</sup> To me if not to Professor Smalley, the latter part of this quotation constitutes a most compelling reason for "a pronouncement that will settle the matter [interpretation of the poem] once and for all."<sup>37</sup>

Professor Smalley's reading *The Ring and the Book* outside the framework of a possibly consistent Ring metaphor may enable him to follow the "general contours"<sup>38</sup> of interpretations similar to those of A. K. Cook and J. E. Shaw. But he should be sure, in his preference, that he is including the full significance of Professor Shaw's words, since the following statement by Professor Shaw indicates that Smalley and Cundiff are much closer together in their insistence upon Browning's probable loyalty to essential truth:

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.<sup>39</sup>

Recognizing the excellence of all that Professor Shaw has to say on the development of Pompilia's character, I have been unable to accept, because of its internal contradiction and its external derogation of Browning's talent, his now famous phrase, "glorious misinterpretation." Consequently, I have never gone so far as to suggest that Browning's poem and characters are his own creation and his own creatures. On the last statement, Professor Smalley and I seem to be in agreement. But then he cannot believe that Browning, by conscious design, "appropriated" (I. 726) the contradictory truths (facts) of the *Old Yellow Book* in order to "chance upon some fragment of a whole."

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#### FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Browning's View of Fact in *The Ring and the Book*, *VNL*, No. 16 (Fall, 1959), pp. 1-9.
- <sup>2</sup>Robert Browning: 'Our Human Speech', *VNL*, No. 15 (Spring, 1959), pp. 1-9.
- <sup>3</sup>Smalley, p. 8.
- <sup>4</sup>John W. Chadwick, *The Christian Register*, January 19, 1888.
- <sup>5</sup>*The Poetry of Experience* (New York: Random House, 1957), pp. 109-36.
- <sup>6</sup>Smalley, p. 3.
- <sup>7</sup>Cundiff, p. 5.
- <sup>8</sup>Smalley, p. 6.

<sup>9</sup>Smalley, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup>Smalley, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup>*The Old Yellow Book* (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1908).

<sup>12</sup>Cundiff, p. 2. See also, for what I considered a distinguishing feature: "finally trustworthy fact" (p. 7); "man's splintered and incomplete knowledge" (p. 5); and "man's speech—facts" (p. 6).

<sup>13</sup>Professor Smalley's "scorn of . . . factual knowledge" grows, apparently, out of my "Truth [fact], on which Browning lavishes unnecessary derision" (p. 6) and "distrust of truth [fact]" (p. 7). For greater clarity of my position, his statement might also be traced to my "his distrust of man's splintered and incomplete knowledge, that is, fact" (p. 5). Holding to the reading of Henry Jones (*Browning as a Philosophical and Religious Teacher*, London, 1896), who has sounded deepest Browning's almost life-long agnosticism concerning human knowledge, I wish to reaffirm my belief that, in *The Ring and the Book*, Browning was "in the process of scuttling knowledge" but "as yet insisted only upon the limits of knowledge" (p. 5); that "Both Pompilia and the Pope are conscious of the value of knowledge as well as of its inadequacy to represent the infinite" (p. 5); that Browning's Art "is engaged in presenting the truth through intellectual as well as intuitional and inspirational means" (p. 5).

<sup>14</sup>Smalley, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup>*The Works of Robert Browning* (Centenary Edition, London, 1912), Vols. V-VI.

<sup>16</sup>Smalley, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup>Cundiff, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup>*Browning Handbook*, Second Edition (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1955), p. 346.

<sup>19</sup>As Dean DeVane has sympathetically written: "It must have seemed to Browning that a large portion of his life had gone into making the poem" (pp. 324-25); "All the knowledge of Italy and of the Italian Renaissance, stored in him through many years of unconscious preparation, rushed to his aid" (p. 338).

<sup>20</sup>Smalley, p. 6.

<sup>21</sup>Smalley, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup>Smalley, p. 5.

<sup>24</sup>Smalley, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup>Smalley, p. 6.

<sup>27</sup>Cundiff, p. 5.

<sup>29</sup>Smalley, p. 8.

<sup>30</sup>Cundiff, p. 8.

<sup>32</sup>Cundiff, p. 8.

<sup>33</sup>"rather than resuscitating"; Much of my essay, to the contrary, is devoted to "resuscitation" the reader is referred especially to two long paragraphs, pp. 3-4. See also, "And when comparing his own resuscitation of the characters of the book . . ." (p. 5).

<sup>34</sup>Smalley, pp. 1-2.

<sup>35</sup>Smalley, p. 7.

<sup>36</sup>"The Clarity of Browning's Ring Metaphor," *PMLA*, LXIII (1948), 1276.

<sup>37</sup>Smalley, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup>Smalley, p. 8.

<sup>39</sup>"The 'Donna Angelicata' in *The Ring and the Book*," *PMLA*, XLI (March, 1926), p. 55.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF FACT IN "THE RING AND THE BOOK"

I have followed with great interest the exchange in *VNL* between Professors Paul Cundiff<sup>1</sup> and Donald Smalley<sup>2</sup> on the question of Browning's fidelity in *The Ring and the Book* to his source, the *Old Yellow Book*. Since my name figures in both articles, with on both sides some misunderstanding of my position, I should like first of all to clarify my position and explain certain disputed statements of mine.<sup>3</sup> I should also like to contribute what little I can to a discussion which has been going on ever since the poem came out.

There are actually two questions at issue: one, whether Browning really did stick to the facts of the *Old Yellow Book*; two, whether he intended to stick to the facts. Mr. Cundiff thinks that Browning did not stick to the facts and did not intend to; that he had indeed contempt for the facts and introduced the whole elaborate mechanism of factuality just to dispel it, to set it at naught as a means for arriving at the truth of the poem. Mr. Smalley thinks that Browning both intended to and did go a long way toward sticking to the facts, but that he interpreted and intended to interpret the facts. Mr. Cundiff's is the novel position (other critics, like Frances Theresa Russell and Judge Gest, who thought that Browning seriously departed from the facts, have scolded him for it as though he had committed a breach of contract). Mr. Smalley follows the main line of Browning criticism, and I would with some qualification associate myself with him. Both critics, however, impute to me the surprising position that Browning stuck entirely to the facts and claimed to stick entirely to the facts. I have obviously failed to make myself clear.

The misunderstanding comes I think from the fact that my chapter on *The Ring and the Book* belongs to a larger study of the dramatic monologue and the continuing tradition of nineteenth and twentieth-century poetry. I was not therefore concerned with the question whether Browning really did stick to the facts. It was enough for my purpose to show how Browning's claim to stick to the facts, or if we do not grant that claim how his introduction at least of the *Old Yellow Book* as a positive force within the poem, operates as an artistic strategy which helps establish the quality and meaning of the poem. Hence my emphasis on the importance of the *Old Yellow Book* within the poem.

In connection with the question of Browning's fidelity to his source, however, let me just

say that no one could read both the *Old Yellow Book* and *The Ring and the Book*, and suppose that they were the same. The very critics (Hodell, Cook, J. E. Shaw, and W. C. DeVane), who think Browning stuck amazingly close to his source give detailed accounts of the differences between the poem and its source. The characters of the lawyers—to take one outstanding example which I cite in my book—are pure invention, as are the private and dramatic settings of their pleas;<sup>4</sup> and Browning admits as much when he tells us in Book I that the lawyers submitted their pleas as documents (144-67).<sup>5</sup> The other characters are amplifications of the merest hints.

But these differences are not surprising if we remember that we are dealing after all with a poem. The amazing thing is the extent to which the other characters and almost everything in the poem—even touches which we might suppose were Browning's,—are based on some hint or other. Thus, Pompilia's saintliness has its source in Fra Celestino's testimony<sup>6</sup> (it hardly matters whether his testimony was, as Paul E. Beichner argues, inadmissible under the Seal of Confession, since there is no sign, as the author himself admits, that Browning knew this).<sup>7</sup> And Browning's references to Molinism, with just the connection he makes between the anti-Molinist and the pro-Guido position, has its source in the pro-Guido anonymous pamphlet 10.<sup>8</sup>

There is not, in other words, much disagreement over the first question, whether Browning really did stick to the facts. Everyone admits that he did not stick entirely to the facts. There remains the second question, whether he intended to stick entirely to the facts. Here again everyone reads the ring metaphor to mean that Browning intended to mix fancy with fact. When later in Book I he poses the rhetorical question, "Is fiction which makes fact alive, fact too?" (705), we must infer that he is claiming some license for interpretation and even for amplification and invention.

The issue then is over the importance of the facts. Mr. Cundiff thinks they are not important, and that Browning's poem can be read like any other poem, as simply a work of the imagination. Here I disagree and cite for evidence the present controversy, as to whether Browning intended to and did stick to the facts. Is it not odd that such a controversy should seem at all relevant, and that it should have begun as soon as the poem reached the hands of one of its first readers, Browning's friend, Julia Wedgwood? Where else, after all, does a real as opposed to a fictitious source play so conspicuous a part in the internal workings of a poem? And where else does a poet feel it necessary to explain that he is going to mix fancy with fact? Clearly Browning established certain novel conditions which did, as a matter of record, open his poem to historical judgment. I had these conditions in mind when I said in connection with the ring metaphor: "It is significant that Browning should have felt it necessary to justify a liberty of interpretation which has always been granted poets."<sup>9</sup> We are more impressed by the gold or fact in the ring metaphor than by the alloy or fancy. Gold has the advantage over alloy (though I do not think that was in Browning's mind); besides we expect fancy, it is the emphasis on fact which is new and accounts for the present controversy.

Such large and long standing impressions ought, as a matter of general critical procedure, to be given weight against any contrary argument, especially when the argument hangs on small details in a poem where details must, if they are to correspond to discernible effect, be dealt with in masses. It is no good for Mr. Cundiff to cite a word here and there to prove that Browning never intended us to consider the unworked gold precious. No poet could head against the connotation, indeed the denotation of preciousness in *gold* without taking many more pains than Browning did to dispel the word's usual meaning. Nor could I find in the words Mr. Cundiff cites any indication that gold is not precious. Take, for example,

Now, as the ingot, ere the ring was forged,  
Lay gold, (beseech you, hold that figure fast!)  
So, in this book lay absolutely truth,  
Fanciless fact, the documents indeed. (I. 141-44)<sup>10</sup>

Gold is worth as much in the ingot as in the ring, though the gold itself is not yet useful; so with the truth which lies, inaccessible, in the documents.

Mr. Smalley, in his reply to Mr. Cundiff, suggests that Mr. Cundiff must be reading as heavily ironical those many passages in which Browning professes "his enormous esteem for the *Old Yellow Book*." Mr. Smalley, himself, who on the question of the importance of the facts takes a position between Mr. Cundiff's and mine, reads these passages as lightly ironical, and implies that I read them at face value and therefore enthusiastically overstate the importance of the facts. He cites as an example of such an ironical passage the description of the used bric a brac among which Browning found the *Old Yellow Book* (I, 55-83).<sup>11</sup> I agree that the passage is lightly ironical, but I do not think that the irony is in the least directed against the *Old Yellow Book*. The ironic point, on the contrary, is that such a treasure should be found, with no external sign of its importance, in such unlikely surroundings. In the lines that precede and follow this passage, however, I can find no irony—playfulness, yes, but all exultation.

Do you see this square old yellow Book, I toss  
I' the air, and catch again, and twirl about  
By the crumpled vellum covers,—pure crude fact (33-35)

and again:

Here it is, this I toss and take again;  
Small-quarto size, part print part manuscript:  
A BOOK IN SHAPE BUT, REALLY, PURE CRUDE FACT  
SECRETED FROM MAN'S LIFE when hearts beat hard,  
And brains, high-blooded, ticked two centuries since.  
Give it me back! The thing's restorative  
I' the touch and sight. (84-90)

I do not see how you can overstate the enthusiasm of those lines.

But the book is a treasure only for the poet because, as the situation is dramatized in Book I,<sup>12</sup> he has found in it the subject of his magnum opus. To understand Browning's exultation, we must talk for a moment not about epistemology but about the subject matter of poetry. He is saying in the line I have capitalized that his source may be "a book in shape," but it is really life. He is not like other poets, especially epic poets, going to literature for his source, he is going to life. He elaborates this idea when he says later that the Pope made truth prevail for a while, separated that is good and evil; but then the two got mixed up again until "the memory of the thing,—/ The fact that, wolves or sheep, such creatures" existed at all,

DWINDLED INTO NO BIGGER THAN A BOOK,  
... and that little, left  
By the roadside, 'mid the ordure, shards and weeds.  
Until I haply, wandering that lone way,  
Kicked it up, turned it over, and recognized,  
For all the crumblement, this ABACUS  
This square old yellow book,—COULD CALCULATE  
BY THIS THE LOST PROPORTIONS OF THE STYLE. (I. 648-78)

"Ordure, shards and weeds" and "For all the crumblement" would seem to support my reading of the bric a brac passage. And the lines I have capitalized suggest that the book is merely an index to the much larger life situation.

It was Browning's emotion, his exultation at finding for his subject a real life situation that I had in mind when I spoke of his "naive wonder, as though he could hardly believe in his good fortune," and compared his "reverence and delight" to "the ordinary Philistine's devotion to his facts and figures."<sup>13</sup> The comparison was perhaps unfortunate since it led Mr. Smalley to suppose that I was calling Browning's epistemology naive. Browning did not of course think that facts could be picked up readymade like pebbles, or that they would lead just anybody to the truth; and I tried to indicate as much by showing how the Pope and the other admirable characters cut intuitively through the facts. Browning tells us that the perception of truth is a creative or imaginative act, and that fact is merely an index to the truth which is always much larger. Hence the line Mr. Cundiff quotes in support of his argument: "So write a book shall mean beyond the facts" (XII. 866).<sup>14</sup>

The line does not, however, lessen the importance of fact; nor does the passage in which it appears: "Our human speech is nought / Our human testimony false, our fame / And human estimation words and wind" (XII. 838-40). "The false testimony and estimation are facts in that they happened; and the disparity between truth and the false or inadequate expression of it is at the heart of what I have called the poem's relativism. But the reason for Browning's excitement over his real life subject is this: that without the jumble of true and false, good and bad, which are the raw stuff of life, there would be no meaning, no truth. If fact is important as an index to truth, truth itself cannot be known except through fact or material conditions. The point is made in *Fra Lippo Lippi*, and in *Rabbi Ben Ezra* ("nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!") which was written just before *The Ring and the Book*. The point is made in *The Ring and the Book*, as Browning explains in one of his letters to Julia Wedgwood. To Miss Wedgwood's objection that Browning gives more sordid details than are necessary to exhibit the truth of the poem, which she considers to be Pompilia's saintliness, Browning answers:

But remember, first that this is God's world, as he made it for reasons of his own, and that to change its conditions is not to account for them—as you will presently find me try to do. I was struck with the enormous wickedness and weakness of the main com-  
position of the piece, and with the incidental evolution of good thereby,—good to the priest, to the poor girl, to the Old Pope, who judges anon.<sup>15</sup>

It is only through the sordid events that Caponsacchi, Pompilia, and the Pope have been able to discover and exhibit the good in themselves.

In the next sentence Browning makes what is, I think, the large and fundamental answer to Mr. Cundiff's depreciation of fact.

The curious depth below depth of depravity here—in this chance lump taken as a sample of the soil—might well have warned another from spreading it out,—but I thought, since I could do it, and even liked to do it, my affair it was rather than another's.

And he goes on to remind her how unspeakably sordid the life situation really was. The passage shows us why Browning tossed the *Old Yellow Book* up into the air so joyfully—because it permits him to say, whatever your theories about how things are or ought to be, this really happened. "Why, I almost have you at an unfair disadvantage," he says in another letter to Miss Wedgwood, "in the fact that the whole story is true!"<sup>16</sup> (When I said, "the poet adds nothing to the truth,"<sup>17</sup> I meant the truth of what happened; also that he imposes, ostensibly at least, no preconceived theories, but more of that later.) Mainly, however, Browning is saying that he did after all choose this sordid story for his subject, and that the choice must account for most things about his poem. "Even if I still think that mine was the proper way to treat this particular subject,—the objection still holds, 'Why prefer this sort of subject?'—as my conscience lets me know I do."<sup>18</sup>

After convincing us in his *PMLA* article of 1948 that the alloy of the ring metaphor could not in the "restitution" have entirely disappeared or we would be back where we started, Mr. Cundiff reveals in his final paragraphs a disposition to have the ring all alloy.

It is not when Browning argues or presents facts that he proves, but when he sees as a poet sees, and conveys his vision through a poetic [immaterial?] medium. In poetry the fact itself is comparatively unimportant, since there is hardly any fact so insignificant that it does not grow poetic under the intensity of emotion. . . . his "fancy" was capable of "lifting to very heaven." From that transcendent point of vantage, he was capable of feeling truths no "mortal ever in entirety saw."<sup>19</sup>

The emphasis does not seem right for the poet who chose the Roman murder case as the subject for his *magnum opus*. Mr. Cundiff does not say what is being "lifted"; nor does he distinguish between the facts of the *Aeneid* or *Paradise Lost* and the facts of *The Ring and the Book*. There are poems as elevated and more elevated than Browning's, but there is no poem to my knowledge which tries to pull so much elevation out of such low events; and to miss this is to miss the distinctiveness of Browning's aim and achievement. G. K. Chesterton defines this distinctiveness in his paraphrase of Browning's aim: "I will show you the relations of man to heaven by telling you a story out of a dirty Italian book of criminal trials from which I select one of the meanest and most completely forgotten."<sup>20</sup> So does A. K. Cook when he says: "The poet's absorption in the minutest details of the Old Bailey story of his *Old Yellow Book* should convince his readers that if they are to understand and to share the zest with which he wrote they must not only rise (so far as they can) as he rose; they must stoop as he stooped."<sup>21</sup>

The question remains, however, whether Browning, if he was claiming as a matter of internal strategy to stick to the facts and to give the historically correct judgment of the events, has not failed—since even the critics who think he tried, and went a long way toward sticking to the facts, agree that *The Ring and the Book* is, in J. E. Shaw's words, "a glorious misinterpretation" though "the interpreter is sincere."<sup>22</sup> Mr. Cundiff has rendered us a great service by putting the question so sharply in his *VNL* article of last spring.

There is plenty of evidence in Book I that Browning is taking upon himself the historian's task, for he says many times (see the passages I have quoted above) that here was a real life situation that has been forgotten and that he is going to resurrect. "This is the bookful," he says after running through the story:

thus far take the truth,  
The untempered gold, the fact untempered with,  
The mere ring-metal ere the ring be made!  
And what has hitherto come of it? Who preserves  
The memory of this Guido, and his wife? (I. 364-68)

The interesting thing is that "the fact untempered with" contains a judgment (the Pope's) and the right one, which indicates that the judgment the poet is to arrive at is not arbitrarily imposed. Were this truth able to sustain itself in your memory, Browning goes on to say, I could throw my poem into the fire, for—"what the loss? / You know the tale already" (376-77)—I shall add nothing to the events. But in the series of ironical questions that follow, concerning motives and judgments, Browning says that we also need him to help us find the meaning in and through the confusion of the documentary evidence. I do not think he is saying, as Mr. Cundiff suggests, that "these questions could not be answered with factual evidence from the historical source,"<sup>23</sup> for the historical source is all he has to go by. I think he is offering to do the historian's job of restoring and interpreting the events.

When Browning tries to pursue his historical investigations in Rome, he finds again that the case has been completely forgotten. The Romans put to him just the questions we are now discussing. Do you stick entirely to the book, or do you simply take what you want "here and there"?

"Or is there book at all,  
And don't you deal in poetry, make-believe,  
And the white lies it sounds like?" (I. 451-56)

Browning's answer is sufficiently canny and complex to solve a good deal of our problem. "Yes and no!" he says.

From the book, yes; thence bit by bit I dug  
The lingot truth, that memorable day,  
Assayed and knew my piecemeal gain was gold.

*Assayed* means analyzed critically, it has special application to the testing of the purity of precious metals. Browning says that from the book he got the facts which he evaluated and found significant, much as the historian would. But he goes on to say that the perception of fact is a creative or imaginative act; we perceive the things we are prepared to perceive, we have to bring a principle of organization on which to hang the facts if they are to have any meaning.

Yes; but from something else surpassing that,  
Something of mine which, mixed up with the mass,  
Made it bear hammer and be firm to file.  
FANCY WITH FACT IS JUST ONE FACT THE MORE:  
To-wit, that fancy has informed, transpierced,  
Thridded and so thrown fast the facts else free,  
As right through ring and ring runs the djereed  
And binds the loose, one bar without a break.

The organized facts are "one fact the more." The principle of organization is inseparable from the facts because without it the facts would not be knowable. To *know* anything we must imagine it.

This process belongs not only to poetry but to all knowledge, certainly historical knowledge. "History," says Trevelyan in *Clio, A Muse*, is "an imaginative guess at the most likely generalizations. History is only in part a matter of 'fact.' Collect the 'facts' of the French Revolution! You must go down to Hell and up to Heaven to fetch them."<sup>24</sup> And he goes on to speak of the need for imagination among historians. The interesting thing is that Browning has not so far in this passage talked about the artistic question at all, but only about his method for ascertaining the truth of the case.

I fused my live soul and that inert stuff,  
BEFORE ATTEMPTING SMITHCRAFT, on the night  
After the day when,—truth thus grasped and gained,—  
The book was shut and done with. (I. 457-72)

It is after he has ascertained the truth—by the same method which we later find the Pope using juridically, and which we may infer the historian would use—that Browning turns to the question of communicating the truth. He follows the three steps which Trevelyan prescribes for the historian: first, the scientific, to "establish with reasonable certainty that such and such events occurred"; second, the imaginative or speculative, "to generalize and to guess as to cause and effect"; third, the literary, "the art of narrative."<sup>25</sup>

That night Browning stepped out on the terrace and visualized the story, reconstructing from "this abacus, / This square old yellow book . . . the lost proportions" of the real life situation (I. 676-78). But when he wrote the poem, he restored, as an artistic strategy, the look and proportions of the *Old Yellow Book*:

I disappeared; the book grew all in all;  
The lawyers' pleadings swelled back to their size,—  
Doubled in two, the crease upon them yet. (I. 678-89)

He decided, in other words, not to present the truth directly but to dramatize it by bringing back the lies and distortions and partial glimpses, thus giving us the experience of arriving at the truth as he arrived at it. The poem gains by this objectivity and verisimilitude, for it is through such inadequate signs that truth makes itself known. When later Browning says that his story will act itself out through just the mixture of "truth with falsehood" which is as much truth as we are used to in this world—through "voices we call evidence, / Uproar in the echo, live fact deadened down," he is saying again that he has deliberately distorted the "live fact" or truth. Yet these distortions are the only entry we have to truths: "For how else know we save by worth of word?" (I. 824-37).

As for the differences between the *Old Yellow Book* and *The Ring and the Book*, the "motions



of mine," the element of "fiction," these are, Browning suggests, "means to the end"—the end being to make us see the truth in and through the real life jumble of facts. "Fiction which makes fact alive," is "fact too" (I. 701-6); just as the organizing principle we bring to the facts is "one fact the more" (I. 464). The answer then to the questions posed by the Romans and by us is that the "Lovers of dead truth," the facts, and of "live truth," the meaning, ought both to be satisfied by the poem (I. 696-97). For the fiction is there just to make fully evident the truth which not every eye could find in the documents and in the life situation. But—and this is the point—Browning does not make his fiction arbitrarily, but in order to reveal the truth which he considers to be really there in the events.

"Before I die," he writes to Julia Wedgwood, "I hope to purely invent something,—here my pride was concerned to invent nothing: the minutest circumstance that denotes character is true: the black is so much—the white, no more."<sup>26</sup> Yet later he admits to a certain "idealization"<sup>27</sup> of his characters, and he grants that Miss Wedgwood is not likely to meet anyone so wicked as Guido or so good as Pompilia, though the sum total of good and evil corresponds, he insists, to what it would be in any "energetic deed" in life.<sup>28</sup> We can reconcile these two passages only if we understand Browning to be saying that the moral issue between absolute good and evil was really what he dramatizes it to be through his "idealization" of Pompilia and Guido, though to the ordinary eye the issues would have been diluted in the real life jumble of events.

Browning does then open his poem to a large measure of historical judgment. It does not matter that there are people who disagree with his interpretation and consider that he is bringing a theory to bear, for there are people who disagree with any history that has been written. Nor does it matter whether Browning saw in the events—as has been suggested by Mrs. Orr, J. E. Shaw, and W. C. DeVane—a St. George or Perseus-Andromeda myth to which he could bring recollections of his own rescue of Elizabeth Barrett; for we cannot really know, which is to say imagine, anything unless it strikes some chord within us. Every age reconstructs the past in its own image. I am not willing to grant that *The Ring and the Book* is a "glorious misinterpretation" unless somebody can tell me what the indisputably correct interpretation is. Browning's judgment is after all substantiated by the judgment of the courts. It is also substantiated by the manuscript account of the case, which was found after Browning's death in the Royal Casanatense Library in Rome. Since the manuscript is in an early eighteenth-century hand, it could represent the final impression left by the case.

Browning has, to be sure, got himself into a ticklish position esthetically by opening his poem to historical judgment. It is, however, the ticklish position of all those novels which try to look like something else—a history, an autobiography, a journal. The ambiguous line in the novel between fact and fiction makes for the kind of authenticity which modern taste demands; and it was that kind of authenticity that Browning was working for. Like many novelists, Browning was I think trying to make his art do what history does and more—trying to make it give, like history, the truth about the world of events, but also trying to make it give what history cannot give, or cannot give so well, the truth about the moral and spiritual world. In the final passage of *The Ring and the Book*, he opposes to the discursive or abstract statement of truth, which comes out merely as opinion, the concrete and dramatic method of art which presents truth within the material conditions that are its original habitations:

Art may tell a truth  
Obliquely, do the thing shall breed the thought,  
Nor wrong the thought, missing the mediate word,  
So may you paint your picture, TWICE SHOW TRUTH,

show, in other words, the material and spiritual truth, and "So write a book shall mean beyond the facts, / SUFFICE THE EYE and save the soul beside" (XII. 859-67). The capitalized phrases indicate that Browning does not abandon material truth for spiritual truth. That is what makes *The Ring and the Book* an important landmark of realistic art.

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#### FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Robert Browning: "Our Human Speech," *VNL*, No. 15 (Spring, 1959), pp. 1-9.
- <sup>2</sup>Browning's View of Fact in *The Ring and the Book*, *VNL*, No. 16 (Fall, 1959), pp. 1-9.
- <sup>3</sup>In *The Poetry of Experience: The Dramatic Monologue in Modern Literary Tradition* (1957), Chap. III, "The Ring and the Book: A Relativist Poem."
- <sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 119.
- <sup>5</sup>*The Works of Robert Browning* (Centenary Edition, 1912), Vols. V and VI.
- <sup>6</sup>C. W. Hodell, *The Old Yellow Book* (1908), pp. 45-6.
- <sup>7</sup>"Fra Celestino's Affidavit and *The Ring and the Book*," *MLN*, LVIII (May, 1943), pp. 335-40. See Footnote 6, p. 339.
- <sup>8</sup>Hodell, p. 120.

- <sup>9</sup>Langbaum, p. 109.
- <sup>10</sup>Cundiff, p. 4.
- <sup>11</sup>Smalley, p. 4.
- <sup>12</sup>For an account of the actual genesis and composition of the poem, see DeVane, *A Browning Handbook* (1955), pp. 319-25.
- <sup>13</sup>Langbaum, p. 132.
- <sup>14</sup>Cundiff, p. 6.
- <sup>15</sup>*Robert Browning and Julia Wedgwood, Their Letters*, ed. Curle (1937), pp. 144-45.
- <sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 175.
- <sup>17</sup>Langbaum, p. 133.
- <sup>18</sup>*Wedgwood Letters*, p. 143.
- <sup>19</sup>"The Clarity of Browning's Ring Metaphor," *PMLA*, LXIII (December, 1948), pp. 1261-62.
- <sup>20</sup>*Robert Browning* (1903), p. 164.
- <sup>21</sup>*Commentary Upon Browning's "The Ring and the Book"* (1920), pp. 5-6.
- <sup>22</sup>"The Donna Angelicata' in *The Ring and the Book*," *PMLA*, XLI (March, 1926), p. 55.
- <sup>23</sup>Cundiff, p. 2.
- <sup>24</sup>(1913), pp. 9-10.
- <sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.
- <sup>26</sup>*Wedgwood Letters*, p. 144.
- <sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 163.
- <sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 152-3.

### III. NOTES AND BRIEF ARTICLES

#### The Art of *Sartor Resartus*: Two Views

##### I. RELATIONSHIP OF STYLE AND DEVICE IN *SARTOR RESARTUS*

Because Carlyle's creative impulse manifested itself in a way nearly unique in our literature, we are sometimes at a loss how to read and evaluate or even to classify the dynamic and sometimes disconcerting volumes which came so flamingly alive from his hand. *The French Revolution*, for instance, may be read simply as history, as a somewhat dated and partially inaccurate historical account; but to approach it with such a pedestrian, limited, and really unsympathetic outlook is obviously to miss communion with the artist who speaks to us through its every page. To read and judge *Past and Present* simply as an analysis of the ills of nineteenth-century England is also perhaps to forget or to minimize the importance of the peculiar but capably executed narrative which fills a major portion of its pages. *Sartor Resartus* likewise demands to be approached as an imaginative work of art. But within the wide realm of imaginative literature it is difficult to find a definite place to fix the work and therefore difficult to evaluate it according to standards employed commonly in the evaluation of less elusive creations. The late Professor C. F. Harrold has pointed out, however, that the book should be grouped with and read in the same way as the great philosophical poetry of the world, that of Dante, Milton, Goethe, Hugo, Nietzsche, Whitman, and Lucretius. From a different but not contradictory point of view, *Sartor Resartus* belongs in the tradition of such works as *The Canterbury Tales* and *Gulliver's Travels*, works in which the artists have employed elaborate devices or frameworks on which to build and through which the forms of the works themselves take shape. Consequently, to come to a just evaluation of *Sartor Resartus* as a work of imaginative literature, we must look closely at the elaborate device which Carlyle employed; we must examine, in addition, how effectively Carlyle was able to manipulate his style according to the demands imposed by the device around which his book is built.

The basic plan of *Sartor Resartus* is inescapably evident throughout the course of the book: we are continually aware of Carlyle's invention of the imaginary Diogenes Teufelsdröckh and of his pretense of piecing together the hypothetical life and philosophy of the eccentric professor for the English public. This consistently employed device functions in a variety of ways.

It is surprising that the apparent chaos of *Sartor Resartus* should blind many readers to the organizing principle which gives the work its peculiar form. By assuming the pose of commentator on the life and fragmentary writings of the mythic Teufelsdröckh, Carlyle certainly allowed himself a wide freedom in the production of his work; but through the device of the pose we must remember that Carlyle did find a definite way to shape his material into an unconventional but nonetheless solid form. We must remember that although there is chaos in *Sartor Resartus*, it is a planned chaos for which Carlyle offers a most brilliant and detailed excuse, namely, Teufelsdröckh himself. Moreover, Carlyle establishes the character of his imaginary German professor with care and supplies his

character creation with a history rich in humorous incident. Though *Sartor* is not a novel by any means, the narrative passages (concentrated largely in Book II) may be read and appreciated for their independent value, for a value over and above the ideological or biographical. Closely related to this function of the device—related as an effect—is the fact that Carlyle's philosophizing is made more palatable by the intermixture of the entertaining characterization and narration. The whole hoax, from the autobiographical paper bags to the very phraseology of the "Philosophy of Clothes," certainly does not destroy the serious import of Carlyle's message; but the message, set as it is in at least a semi-dramatic context, becomes more effective for the very simple reason that it is not a bleakly expressed, dull, moralizing statement. Thus, the device serves the two important functions of organizing and enlivening. Thirdly, it is commonly recognized that Teufelsdröckh's history is at certain points the history of Carlyle; there is, in fact, a continual fusion and separation operating between the actual Carlyle and his imaginary philosopher. By partially spinning Teufelsdröckh out of his own thoughts and experiences Carlyle was thus able to stand outside himself and contemplate his own personality and ideas; he was able to offer, from the viewpoint of the editor, numerous self-evaluations, self-criticisms, and self-directed witticisms for his own and his readers' amusement. But even though we may recognize Carlyle's partial identification with Teufelsdröckh, it was essential to his basic plan that there should actually be two dramatic voices in his work, the voice of the philosopher and that of the biographer-editor-critic. To what extent, however, are there actually two recognizable voices speaking to us?

The famed, even notorious style of *Sartor Resartus* does not suffer from a rigid uniformity of dramatic and metaphorical crescendos which never relax into quieter and less cacophonous tones. Among all the stylistic extravagances, there are moments when the style is relatively direct and unadorned. There are, in fact, noticeable variations in Teufelsdröckh's style, which may vary from a simple and lucid discourse to furious and garbled rhetorical flashes. On one occasion Teufelsdröckh, with comparative simplicity, writes:

"The little green veil. . . I yet keep; still more inseparably the Name, Diogenes Teufelsdröckh. From the veil can nothing be inferred: a piece of now quite faded Persian silk, like thousands of others. On the Name I have many times meditated and conjectured; but neither in this lay there any clue. That it was my unknown Father's name I must hesitate to believe. To no purpose have I searched through all the Herald's Books, in and without the German Empire, and through all manner of Subscriber-Lists (*Pränumeranten*), Militia-Rolls, and other Name-catalogues; extraordinary names as we have in Germany, the name Teufelsdröckh, except as appended to my own person, nowhere occurs" (Book II, Ch. 11).

But during the dramatic stage of the "Everlasting No" we hear an aroused Teufelsdröckh exclaim:

"In the midst of their crowded streets and assemblages, I walked solitary; and (except as it was my own heart, not another's, that I kept devouring) savage also, as the tiger in his jungle. Some comfort it would have been, could I, like a Faust, have fancied myself tempted and tormented of the Devil; for a Hell, as I imagine, without Life, though only diabolic Life, were more frightful: but in our age of Down-pulling and Disbelief, the very Devil has been pulled down, you cannot so much as believe in a Devil. To me the Universe was all void of Life, of Purpose, of Volition, even of Hostility: it was one huge, dead, immeasurable Steam-engine, rolling on, in its dead indifference, to grind me limb from limb. O, the vast, gloomy, solitary Golgotha, and Mill of Death! Why was the Living banished thither companionless, conscious? Why, if there is no Devil; nay, unless the Devil is your God?" (Book II, Ch. vii)

In certain cases we may even find simple and brief sentences juxtaposed with others which, as Teufelsdröckh's editor remarks, "sprawl-out helplessly on all sides, quite broken-backed and dismembered":

"Nay, among wild people, we find tattooing and painting even prior to Clothes. The first spiritual want of a barbarous man is Decoration, as indeed we still see among the barbarous classes in civilised countries.

"Reader, the heaven-inspired melodious Singer; loftiest Serene Highness; nay thy own amber-locked, snow-and-rose-bloom Maiden, worthy to glide sylphlike almost on air, whom thou lovest, worshippest as a divine Presence, which, indeed, symbolically taken, she is—descended, like thyself, from that same hair-mantled, flint-hurling Aboriginal Anthropophagus!" (Book I, Ch. v)

Such an extraordinary difference, however, is not totally the result of sheer eccentricity. Teufelsdröckh drops his simple explanation and flashes out with a contorted but dynamic exclamation. The fluctuation in style quite naturally accompanies the fluctuation in temper. In fact, although

Teufelsdröckh is given the responsibility for much of the wayward rhetoric of the book, his style is regulated according to the emotional force of the moment.

Many of the editorial links which serve to patch together the opinions of Teufelsdröckh spoken in his own voice are necessarily of a summary and simple quality: frequently Carlyle introduces a quotation with no more ado than a "writes" or "observes the Professor." But in the cases where Carlyle pushes Teufelsdröckh aside to comment more extensively as editor, he draws freely on the elaborate and at times recondite metaphors which are characteristic of Teufelsdröckh's expression. In "Prospective," for instance, Carlyle elaborates on his editorial aim in the following metaphorical vein:

Daily and nightly does the Editor sit (with green spectacles) deciphering these unimaginable Documents from their perplexed *curstv-schrift*; collating them with the almost equally unimaginable Volume, which stands in legible print. Over such a universal medley of high and low, of hot, cold, moist and dry, is he here struggling (by union of like with like, which is Method) to build a firm Bridge for British travellers. Never perhaps since our first Bridge-builders, Sin and Death, built that stupendous Arch from Hell-gate to the Earth, did any Pontifex, or Pontiff, undertake such a task as the present Editor. For in this Arch too, leading, as we humbly presume, far otherwards than that grand primeval one, the materials are to be fished-up from the weltering deep, and down from the simmering air, here one mass, there another, and cunningly cemented, while the elements boil beneath: nor is there any supernatural force to do it with; but simply the Diligence and feeble thinking Faculty of an English Editor, endeavouring to evolve printed Creation out of a German printed and written Chaos, wherein, as he shoots to and fro in it, gathering, clutching, piecing the Why to the far-distant Wherefore, his whole Faculty and Self are like to be swallowed up (Book I, Ch. xi).

Later, in "Circumspicive," Carlyle picks up the same involved figure and develops it more extensively over a series of paragraphs. But sometimes the wayward rhetoric is toned down when Carlyle speaks in his own voice; however, in such instances, the resulting contrast is never definite enough to give the illusion of two distinct and individualistic voices. Also it must be remembered that Teufelsdröckh's style sometimes descends from its metaphorical and rhapsodic heights to more level planes. In short, if there is any control of the two voices, this control is fitful and in the majority of cases totally lacking. The principle which governs the variations of Teufelsdröckh's style operates generally throughout the book: the style is modulated according to the emotional force of the moment rather than according to the particular individuals through whom the comments are supposedly refracted. Professor Harrold, writing in the brilliant Introduction to his edition of *Sartor*, is therefore only partially correct when he says that Carlyle, "wherever he aims to reach the reader with important ideas. . . drops his wayward rhetoric, and speaks in clear if highly metaphorical language." The stylistically simpler passages of *Sartor Resartus* are not exclusively limited to the expression of the most important ideas, nor are they limited to a single speaker. Although there are supposedly several voices in *Sartor Resartus*, there is, in reality, a single voice which raises and lowers its tone as the occasion suits.

Carlyle's lack of a controlled discrimination is especially apparent when we observe the brief contribution which Hofrath Heuschrecke makes to the volume. In one place Carlyle introduces a letter from the Boswellian Heuschrecke by noting that he speaks "with an eloquence which, unless the words be purloined from Teufelsdröckh, or some trick of his, as we suspect, is well-nigh unaccountable." In part, Heuschrecke's letter reads:

"Did he [Teufelsdröckh] ever, in rapture and tears, clasp a friend's bosom to his; looks he also wistfully into the long burial-aisle of the Past, where only winds, and their low harsh moan, give inarticulate answer? Has he fought duels;—good Heaven! how did he comport himself when in Love? By what singular stair-steps, in short, and subterranean passages, and sloughs of Despair, and steep Pisgah hills, has he reached this wonderful prophetic Hebron (a true Old-Clothes Jewry) where he now dwells?" (Book I, Ch. xi)

The so-called "eloquence," for which Carlyle self-consciously offers an explanatory excuse, is unmistakably the same type of eloquence which appears throughout the book, sometimes issuing from the pen of Teufelsdröckh, sometimes from that of Carlyle. No doubt if Lieschen, Teufelsdröckh's aged and silent attendant whom we meet only momentarily, had been called on to express herself, she would have spoken in the same eloquent or, if you please, Carlylean tones. It is also informative to note here that Heuschrecke, though generally viewed by Carlyle as a humorous character whose opinions are unsound (see the amusing descriptive paragraphs which conclude Book I, Ch. iii and the opening of Book III, Ch. iv), is responsible for at least two remarks which well might have been spoken by the actual Thomas Carlyle with profound gravity. It is Heuschrecke who explains that "Biography is by nature the most universally profitable, universally pleasant of all things: especially Biography of

distinguished individuals'" (Book I, Ch. xi); and that the "Life-Philosophy" of Teufelsdröckh cannot attain its significance "till the Author's View of the World (*Weltansicht*), and how he actively and passively came by such view, are clear: in short till a Biography of him has been philosophico-poetically written, and philosophico-poetically read" (Book I, Ch. xi). Thus, it is through Heuschrecke that Carlyle expresses an idea which was later to give rise to *Heroes and Hero-Worship* and through him that a description of the method of composition in *Sartor Resartus* and even the vitally important plea for the method of reading are expressed. There is, then, not only a lack of appropriate stylistic variations, but also a lack of discrimination in the assignment of the ideas of the book to appropriate speakers.

Carlyle himself at least on two occasions in the course of the volume refers to the relationship of the two intended voices, once in "Circumspective," where he endeavors "to speak without metaphor, with which mode of utterance Teufelsdröckh unhappily has somewhat infected us . . ." And later in the concluding chapter he writes more expansively:

What a result, should this piebald, entangled, hyper-metaphorical style of writing, not to say of thinking, become general among our Literary men! As it might so easily do. Thus has not the Editor himself, working over Teufelsdröckh's German, lost much of his own English purity? Even as the smaller whirlpool is sucked into the larger, and made to whirl along with it, so has the lesser mind, in this instance, been forced to become portion of the greater, and, like it, see all things figuratively: which habit time and assiduous effort will be needed to eradicate.

Obviously Carlyle himself realized that he had not varied the style of his book according to the supposed speakers. He seems to anticipate criticism and to manufacture an excuse—just as he manufactures several others through the course of the volume—which harmoniously blends into the very pattern of the work. However, if we are to judge *Sartor* as a work of art, as a "philosophico-poetically written" creation set within an elaborate framework, this stylistic similarity constitutes a significant flaw. To judge the degree of the artistic failure one must recall the pains with which Carlyle developed his device and the importance of this device in giving the book its peculiar character and charm (that is, if one admits there is a charm). In failing to utilize the device in this further way, it seems that Carlyle thus failed to develop his elaborate plan to its logical completion. Certainly it is not suggested that Carlyle should have developed the device to a greater extent in the hopes of obtaining a thorough-going realism, that is, a belief in the whole Teufelsdröckh myth. But his mask would have been more effective, more dramatically realized, if the reader could recognize a controlled and appreciable difference in the very mode of expression of Diogenes Teufelsdröckh and of Thomas Carlyle. Indeed, the complexity, certainly the artistry of *Sartor Resartus* would have been enhanced if the work had been developed consistently with appropriate stylistic variations. Carlyle's excuse does not excuse him.

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## 2. THE ARTISTIC UNITY OF *SARTOR RESARTUS*

It would be absurd to claim to find the unity of a novel by James in the wonderful *olla podrida* that makes up *Sartor Resartus*, and yet I do believe the book displays artistic form, not only of theme and style but also, and even basically, of that sort of structure involving relationships between distinct characters participating in a series of actions demanded by a plot moving to a preconceived judgment about life. In short, *Sartor Resartus* deserves to be recognized as a true novel, and not just the sort of book we call a novel because no other term fits. But it is true that Carlyle discharged all of his gifts indiscriminately into the book in an access of bitterness at his failure to win literary recognition, as though he would create in spite of his inexperience and the indifference of the world,<sup>1</sup> so that the structural merit of the book may easily fail to strike the reader who first notices the bewildering mixture of philology, topical and universal satire, literary and historical allusion, philosophy, irony, humor, anger, and buffoonery.

James Joyce has recognized the similarity of his genius to Carlyle's with the compliment of a parody in *Ulysses*, and just as critics have found it helpful to recapitulate the action of *Ulysses* in order to prove its artistic scope, so we may begin with a simple summary of the elements in *Sartor Resartus* that distinguish it as a novel, leaving aside as we do so all considerations of style, digressions, and philosophic overtones except as they help define the unique form of the book.<sup>2</sup>

Baldly, then, *Sartor Resartus* is the story of an orphan reared in an idyllic natural setting by doting foster-parents, bred in the deadening traditions of a formalistic educational system, disappointed in love, disgusted with the demands of a materialistic society, undergoing a religious conversion and winning through all adversity to a renewed sense of purpose and service. Put so flatly, the story is much like many popular novels of the time for which *Sartor Resartus* may have helped

prepare the British public—*Great Expectations* and *Henry Esmond*, perhaps—and of course its immediate literary ancestors were *Werther* and *Meister*, which last Carlyle had already translated. *Sartor Resartus* may be a transitional medium for the *Bildungsroman* from German to English Romanticism, although it does clearly reflect Carlyle's love for Fielding and Smollett. Of course I am not the first to make these points, but they seem especially relevant in establishing the artistic unity, not to say conventionality, of *Sartor Resartus*.

But Carlyle's development of this traditional basis is not conventional and we must firmly relate the unusual development to the traditional basis if we are to see an artistic structure uniting the disparate elements of the book.

First, Carlyle adopts a disguise for his novel and pretends to be writing a straightforward biography, in this way winning room for inventive episodes, using the conventions of both forms<sup>3</sup> to create a unique form, a "special world" with "a most complex structure, having a logic of its own which governs feeling and speech. It is at once a way of looking at things, a way of feeling, and a way of speaking." I have said that Carlyle used the conventions of biography to disguise the fact that he was actually inventing a fictitious story; this conception of a disguise or a mask is absolutely essential to a full appreciation of the artistic integrity of the book. Carlyle himself confesses to it, putting into the mouth of his hero these words: "Alas, the panoply of Sarcasm was but as a buckram case, wherein I had striven to envelope myself; that so my own poor Person might live safe there, and in all friendliness, being no longer exasperated by wounds" (129).

The position in *Sartor Resartus* where these words occur is most important, and they would not mean so much if they appeared at any other place in the structure of the book. The words are spoken in retrospect by the mature Teufelsdröckh, and he is contemplating himself as a young man forced to make his own way before the indifference of the world, just out of the university and casting desperately about for some means of subsisting without compromising his ideals. The envelope of sarcasm around young Teufelsdröckh corresponds precisely to the unique form of *Sartor Resartus*, Carlyle deciding to invent it at the same stage in his career as the one at which Teufelsdröckh perfects his idiosyncratic personality in his own development.

In the structure of *Sartor Resartus*, those elements of the book based primarily on Carlyle's own life end with these words, almost exactly half-way through the story, and the rest of Teufelsdröckh's history becomes an explanation of his opinions, a record of religious and philosophical beliefs capable of comforting people in general as well as the individual who formed them. The chapters on religious conversion immediately succeeding these words about the envelope of sarcasm have given comfort to many generations of men, and represent also a climax in Carlyle's inner experience; his "way out of the Everlasting No was . . . by three paths: . . . the way of religion, the way of *Weltanschauung* and the way of prophecy."<sup>5</sup>

"*Weltanschauung*" came to be a basic conception in the function of the masking device Carlyle created in *Sartor Resartus*. As his chapter on "Symbols" makes clear, he regarded literature as "concealment and yet revelation . . . by Silence and Speech acting together, comes a double significance" (219). Just as literature represents the world, so the world represents the transcendent reality of the divine creative spirit, and Carlyle conceived of art as the sacred communication of divine intuitions about the dualism between creation and the substance created in the universe.<sup>6</sup> Literature was a pulpit, and traditional forms might be modified at need to express the baffling ambivalence to be seen at work in the world, both revealing and concealing Truth.<sup>7</sup>

Thus the disguising or masking function of the unique form of *Sartor Resartus* both answered a deep personal need for protection from the indifference of Carlyle's audience and also gave Carlyle the necessary freedom to exploit all the latent possibilities of "a truly useful and philosophic . . . *Essay on Metaphors*."<sup>8</sup>

To discuss Carlyle's unusual treatment of the material of fiction, we may note his use of the three salient features of a novel—character, plot, and scene. We may say of these what we have said of the autobiographical parts of the book—that they develop from fairly specific to general relevance. This general relevance is always to the transcendental theme of the work.

The main characters are Teufelsdröckh's editor—to be referred to as the Editor in order to distinguish him from Carlyle—and the Philosopher himself, Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, whose name symbolizes the ambivalence of the world as he presents it in his Clothes-Philosophy. The Clothes-Philosophy further develops the dualistic symbolism in the book by representing the created universe both masking and adumbrating its creator.

We never do actually meet the Philosopher, who always appears to us in the guise of his work, the Clothes-Philosophy, and then only as well as the Editor's imperfect sympathy allows. For this is the conflict of the novel, the imperfect sympathy of the Editor for his Philosopher, and the radical inability of the Philosopher to express himself in terms acceptable to his Editor.

Between these opposite poles the Clothes-Philosophy springs into being, drawing its force

from the struggle of Editor and Philosopher to understand their opposed world-views. Consequently, the relationship between the characters must deteriorate as their main ideas take over the book, and so it is; from a cozy *Bierstube*-atmosphere of a student revering a professor, the characters develop away from each other until at the end of the book only the Clothes-Philosophy is left on the stage.

Quite without paradox, then, I maintain that the Clothes-Philosophy, growing out of a conflict between characters, is fully fictive and dynamic, no mere construction of logic but a living symbol of Carlyle's attitude toward the world. I say "living symbol" because of course both Editor and Philosopher represent aspects of Carlyle, who is dramatizing an inner conflict of his own as well as staging a transcendental philosophy.

*Sartor Resartus* may have no plot in the conventional sense. The adventures of Teufelsdröckh constitute a story of some scope but they occupy only the second "book," the one allegedly composed of the Philosopher's memoirs, and a plot must implicate all of the main characters if a novel is to have unity. If we discard the usual idea of a plot, which limits it to a series of events in time and place, and attempt to conceive of a plot as the interrelationships entered into between characters because of their dispositions toward each other, then it may be that *Sartor Resartus* has a very strong plot indeed, one which like the characterization undergoes a complication from topical to general relevance.

The plot of *Sartor Resartus* has a pronounced rhythm caused by the alternation between the free speaking of each character and the contradiction determined by that free speech. This rhythm appears in full swing even in the smallest divisions of the book and rises to a series of climaxes as Editor and Philosopher clash.

First, the Editor is the main speaker in Book I, followed by Teufelsdröckh speaking through his memoirs in Book II; after full characterization, Book III is concerned with the central conflict, the meaning and exposition of the Clothes-Philosophy. Second, each "book" is a running argument between Editor and Philosopher, each character speaking in alternating chapters and the argument culminating in a striking affirmation from the Philosopher and a more or less qualified denial from the Editor; this arrangement is apparent even from a glance at the chapter-headings.

My final point about the plot should be stressed to counteract the idea of Carlyle that must arise of sad necessity from reading him in anthologies. The rhythmic development of the relationship between Editor and Philosopher assigns a subordinate and contributory rather than a central importance to the climax of Book II; after the religious conversion recounted in the middle of *Sartor Resartus*, there yet remains the climax of the work as a whole in Book III—those eloquent chapters entitled "The Phoenix," "Organic Filaments," and especially "Natural Supernaturalism" where for himself and the world Teufelsdröckh achieves his ultimate victory in vision and idea.

As for scene, the setting of *Sartor Resartus* is the world of the book itself. I think Carlyle has permitted us no doubt of his intentions here. The Clothes-Philosophy is the theme of the work and from the first it occupies all concerned. Not only do we never meet the Philosopher except through his work, but the Editor claims himself to be "insignificant . . . a voice publishing tidings of the Philosophy of Clothes; undoubtedly a Spirit addressing Spirits: whoso hath ears, let him hear" (13).

The setting of the book is an aural fantasy, a serendipitous internal consistency of the symbolic power of words. The autobiographical memoirs on which the Editor hopes to rely are fragmentary, visionary, disorganized, and as he comes to suspect at the end of Book II, "partly a mystification" (202) meant to "deceptively inlock both Editor and Hofrath [the general reader, as I interpret the role of the good 'counselor'] in the labyrinthic tortuosities and covered-ways" (202-203) of the Clothes-Philosophy.

Teufelsdröckh's "outward Biography, therefore, which . . . we saw churned utterly into spray-vapour, may hover in that conditions" (204), while the Editor and reader now devote themselves to the Clothes-Philosophy entirely in Book III. And in Book III the whole volume is made to depend on the validity of the Clothes-Philosophy alone when the Philosopher simply disappears from the knowledge of man—"Professor Teufelsdröckh, be it known, is no longer visibly present at Weissnichtwo, but again to all appearance lost in space!" (295)

The Philosopher is "again . . . lost in space" as he was once before when like Christ he wandered in the wilderness to seek within himself his purpose and work in the world (climax of Book II). Having brought his prophetic vision to completion in the Clothes-Philosophy, he may disappear, leaving as his memorial the work he had before disappeared to find.

The Philosopher, the Editor, the Hofrath or the reader inasmuch as he has become implicated in the meaning of the Clothes-Philosophy, all are marked by the common fate of man, a fate symbolized by the unexpected, sudden disappearance of Teufelsdröckh—an end Carlyle constantly stressed by his favorite quotation, with which he concluded the climax of *Sartor Resartus*:<sup>9</sup>

We are such stuff  
As dreams are made of, and our little Life  
Is rounded with a sleep!<sup>10</sup>

In the face of his world, which was much like ours in its quest for secure values, Carlyle was determined not to fade and leave not a wrack behind. *Sartor Resartus*, firm in its artistic unity, remains as the inspired vision of a magician whose labors now are ended.

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#### FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>The Creed promulgated on all these things . . . is mine, and firmly believed.—A letter to Fraser reprinted on pp. 303-304 of Charles Frederick Harrold's edition of *Sartor Resartus* (New York, The Odyssey Press, 1937). All references to the book are to this edition and will simply be shown by page numbers in parentheses in the text.
- <sup>2</sup>Consider the obvious parallels between *Ulysses* and *Sartor Resartus*—the moral education of a dispossessed young man raised in conflicting traditions, the organization of the book as a parody of established literary forms, the symbolic name of the hero and his progressive disillusionment, the ironical attempt to relate the tragic sense of life in comic terms.
- <sup>3</sup>See Carlisle Moore, *Carlyle and Fiction: 1822-1834* (Princeton, 1940), p. 159.
- <sup>4</sup>Ricardo Quintana, "Situational Satire: A Commentary on the Method of Swift," *UTQ*, XVII (1948), 132.
- <sup>5</sup>Carlisle Moore, "Sartor Resartus and the Problem of Carlyle's Conversion," *PMLA*, LXX (1955), 669.
- <sup>6</sup>Thomas Carlyle, *Two Notebooks*, ed. Charles Eliot Norton (New York, 1898), p. 215.
- <sup>7</sup>Now at last we have lived to see all manner of Poetics and Rhetorics and Sermonics, and one may say generally all manner of *Pulpits* for addressing mankind from, as good as broken and abolished . . . and so one . . . feels only that there is nothing sacred . . . but the *Speech of Man to believing men!*—Thomas Carlyle, *The Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1834-1872*, ed. Charles Eliot Norton (New York, 1883 and 1884), I, 22-23.
- <sup>8</sup>*Two Notebooks*, p. 142.
- <sup>9</sup>At the end of "Natural Supernaturalism."
- <sup>10</sup>Carlyle's italics, use of *of* rather than *on*, capitalization of the *l* in *life*, and exclamation point.

#### MILL, POETS, AND OTHER MEN

John Stuart Mill's second essay in poetic theory, entitled "The Two Kinds of Poetry," was published in the *Monthly Repository* for November, 1833. In it he proposes to explicate the true sense of the maxim "nascitur poeta." Although anyone who is suitably filled with emotion can write genuine poetry, and even become a full time poet by culture, still there are distinctively poetic natures, Mill holds. "But 'poet' is the name also of a variety of *man*, not solely of the author of a particular variety of book" (223).<sup>1</sup> Indeed, one need not actually write at all in order to establish one's claim to the title; Mill's definition contains no mention of literature.

Whom, then, shall we call poets? Those who are so constituted, that emotions are the links of association by which their ideas, both sensuous and spiritual, are connected together. . . . [This] peculiarity of association . . . is one of the consequences of intense sensibility . . . (223-224)

This, although clear enough in general import, is couched in the technical language of the associationist psychology, and to appreciate its significance in terms of Mill's intellectual development, some historical background is helpful.

In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (1820), the Scottish philosopher Thomas Brown, developing the theories of Hume and Hartley, holds that all suggestion by one idea of others depends on "prior coexistence" of the sensations which gave rise to them, but he amplifies this single *fundamental principle* "into three Primary Laws of Suggestion, namely, *resemblance*, *contrast*, and *nearness* in time and space."<sup>2</sup> Furthermore—his most important contribution—he draws up nine Secondary Laws of Association in which he lists factors which modify the operation of the three Primary Laws. Among these factors are frequency and intensity of the feelings, constitutional differences between individuals, and differences resulting from prior habits of life and thought.

James Mill published his *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind* in 1829. He proposes the following general law of the association of ideas—by which term he means simply (he writes) the order of occurrence of ideas: "Our ideas spring up, or exist, in the order in which the sensations existed of which they are copies."<sup>3</sup> This order can be either synchronous or successive. With this formulation Mill senior replaces the three laws of Hume (contiguity in time and place, resemblance, and causality) and of Brown (quoted above), analyzing them to show that they all break down to a question of the order of sensations. He admits degrees of strength in association, but the cause of such differences are all "resolvable into two: the vividness of the associated feelings, and the frequency of the association."<sup>4</sup> Still, his central contention is that the manner in which ideas occur to the mind is governed by the order of the originating sensations.

John Stuart Mill's *System of Logic* came out in 1843. In chapter four of Book VI, "Of the Laws of Mind," Mill presents his version of the laws of association, showing greater flexibility

than his father. He returns to a trinity of laws: Similarity, Contiguity (combined with Frequency), and Intensity. He offers no formulated secondary laws, but he does go on to speculate on how far the association process is modified by three kinds of individual peculiarity: first, "original and ultimate" difference of susceptibility; second, physical differences in the organism; and third, differences resulting from the previous mental history of the individual.<sup>5</sup> It is obvious that the first and second of these are Brown's "constitutional differences," and that the third is his "differences resulting from prior habits." Further, another of Brown's secondary laws, Intensity, has been advanced in importance to the rank of a primary law.

Returning now to Mill's definition of the poet, we can see that it may be rephrased to read that the poet is one whose constitutional differences are such that the most powerful if not the only primary law by which his associations are governed is that of Intensity.<sup>6</sup> What Mill has done in this definition of 1833 is to continue the general reaction against his father's ideas which he was going through subsequent to the mental crisis of 1826, and to revert instead to those of Brown in his attempt to square associationism with his experience. What was the experience which led him to suppose that poets were different in nature from other people? Why, the discovery that they were different in nature from him; they were emotional, he was not. We know from the *Autobiography* that in his first dejection after discovering this lack in himself he read Byron and probably other poets too; Byron is mentioned as an illustration of the remark that "I had before resorted to poetry with that hope,"<sup>7</sup> i. e., the hope of mental relief. But it was not until he read Wordsworth that he found a poet with whom he had any affinity. Therefore, in order to avoid the conclusion that he himself was in some disabling way different from all other men, particularly poets, in whom the emotions were strong, it was expedient to postulate that there were in fact two kinds of men, constitutionally different in their emotional capacities: ordinary men (with whom Mill belonged) and poets. It was the latter, if anybody, who should be considered odd. But of course neither merit nor blame attaches to the accident of being born with one kind of constitution rather than another.

Mill's definition could be defended as following popular usage. That the poet is a man who is "different" because of his intense sensibility is an idea which conforms both to widespread (and still current) notions of what a poet ought to be like, and also to common usage of the word "poet," e. g., in the phrase "a touch of the poet." But such a defense does not necessarily invalidate my suggestion of personal bias (whether conscious or not). After all, is it "correcting and regularizing" popular language, as Mill had defined the task of "philosophy carried to its highest point" (202), to divorce the word "poet" entirely from literature? But the alternative would have been to see and admit that lots of people had more or less intense sensibilities affecting their associations, that in fact it was the normal thing, and to confine the word "poet" to those who made poetry. This, however, was a line of thought involving an acceptance of his own nature as rather unusual, and Mill in 1833 was not prepared to follow it out. By 1843, though, a decline in the urgency of his interest in poetry, and no doubt also of his agonized introspection, had helped him develop in this direction, for now Intensity was given third place among the Primary Laws operating for everybody. And by 1865, when he covered the same associationist theory in his *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, his interest in poetry and emotion has so far been lost that he entirely drops Intensity as a law of association, and makes no further mention of constitutional differences.<sup>8</sup>

Mill illustrates his distinction between the poet by nature and the poet by culture by mentioning Wordsworth and Shelley. Shelley is "perhaps the most striking example ever known of the poetic temperament" (226), his ideas entirely governed by his emotions. Wordsworth, however, the man whom Mill had found in time of need to be apparently as normal in his intellectual processes as himself and yet capable of deep emotions, Wordsworth (not Mill) is anomalous, for he is the very type of the poet by culture. "In Wordsworth," Mill writes, "the poetry is almost always the mere setting of a thought. . . . [It] is never bounding, never ebullient: has little even of the appearance of spontaneousness: the well is never so full that it overflows" (226-227). This, as Abrams points out, with unconscious irony turns against its author the dictum that "poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions."<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, Wordsworth is praised far more highly than Shelley; he

has exercised, and continues to exercise, a powerful and mostly a highly beneficial influence over the formation and growth of not a few of the most cultivated and vigorous of the youthful minds of our time, over whose heads poetry of the opposite description would have flown, for want of an original organization, physical and mental, in sympathy with it. (227)

The different natures are thus independent of poetic merit, too, and in short the distinction functions less as a means of discriminating meaningfully among poets than as a means of discriminating reassuringly among men.<sup>10</sup>

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#### FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Numbers in parentheses give page references to John Stuart Mill, *Early Essays*, ed. J. W. M. Gibbs (London, 1897).
- <sup>2</sup>Howard C. Warren, *A History of the Association Psychology* (New York, 1921), p. 72.
- <sup>3</sup>Quoted in Warren, p. 84.
- <sup>4</sup>Quoted in Warren, p. 85.
- <sup>5</sup>John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic* (New York, 1874), p. 594.
- <sup>6</sup>Cf. "[poets], instead of seeming not themselves when they are uttering poetry, scarcely seem themselves when uttering anything to which poetry is foreign" (224).
- <sup>7</sup>*Autobiography* (New York, 1924), p. 103.
- <sup>8</sup>*An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* (New York, 1884), I, 234-235.
- <sup>9</sup>See M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* (New York, 1953), p. 24.
- <sup>10</sup>See Walter J. Ong, "J. S. Mill's Pariah Poet," *PQ*, XXIX (1950), 333-44, for a more general discussion of Mill's poetic theory and its philosophic backgrounds.

#### ART AND REALITY IN "MY LAST DUCHESS"

As Browning explained to a literary group, the Duke's "design" in mentioning Frà Pandolf at the beginning of "My Last Duchess" is "To have some occasion for telling the story, and illustrating part of it."<sup>1</sup> Although accurate when fully understood, his explanation is subtly misleading in that it permits commentators to dismiss the Duke's reference to the painter as an unimportant conversational gambit. A typical example is B. R. Jerman's recent suggestion that the "first mention of the artist is, as it were, bait. The envoy may have exclaimed, 'What a beautiful portrait! Who on earth did it?' 'Picasso, of course!' the Duke replies. The bait is out, and the Duke knows, from having stalked other prey, what questions such a man as the envoy would ask."<sup>2</sup>

I contend that the Duke's reference to the painter is part of his answer to a definite aesthetic question with which he is directly concerned in all but the last few lines of his monologue, and that if one simply dismisses it, he fails to appreciate (1) the Duke's ironic misunderstanding of the proper relationship between reality and art, (2) the rationale of his attack on the Duchess, and (3) the degree to which, as W. C. DeVane says, he "reduces his Duchess to an object of art."<sup>3</sup>

In the first place, whether he actually states it or simply implies it by his reaction, the envoy apparently poses his question after the Duke's first mention of Frà Pandolf, not before. The Duke and his visitor, on a tour of the palace, pause in one of the upper galleries while the Duke draws a curtain to reveal the fresco portrait of a woman. Identifying it as his "last Duchess," he remarks that he considers it "a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands / Worked busily a day, and there she stands." Either at this point or immediately after he has been invited to "sit and look at her," the envoy asks "How such a glance came there." If he questions the glance before the Duke begins to speak, the first four lines of the poem would be almost garrulously beside the point, but if he does so after the brief introductory remarks, the Duke's next sentence is perfectly apposite. "I mentioned Frà Pandolf on purpose," he says, "because every stranger who has been permitted to see this portrait has asked me (at least by the implications of his attitude) precisely the same question which you have just asked." What Mr. Jerman calls "the bait," then, would seem to be the portrait itself, and the identification of the painter a part of the Duke's answer to a question which he has fully anticipated and is perhaps eager to discuss.

But the question is not "Who painted it?" It is "What accounts for this expression?" We must recognize that no matter what our conception of the living Duchess may be, the Duchess of the portrait is not laughing or even smiling. Her expression is specifically described as an "earnest" (i. e., serious) look revealing "depth and passion" set off by only a "spot / Of joy" in the "cheek."<sup>4</sup> And it is as the Duke describes it. Phelps' argument that his description is "intense irony, in ridicule of the conventional remarks made by previous visitors"<sup>5</sup> is clearly contradicted by the evidence. Every stranger who had seen the portrait was moved not merely to comment on it, but to question it, and always in the same way. If they were all merely uttering conventional praise or inquiring about the painter, why should they be afraid to speak, as the Duke says they were? There must be something doubtful that a simple smile, or indeed anything less than the complex expression which the Duke describes, would be sufficient to do so in every instance. Even if one were to argue that the question is a strategic one manufactured by the Duke and imputed by him to the strangers and the envoy, the fact remains that he, at least, considers the glance remarkable enough to justify explanation.

As the Duke fully understands, the question stimulated by this intriguing glance involves

not only the relationship between the portrait and the living woman, but certain conscious or unconscious assumptions about that relationship. In asking "How such a glance came there," the strangers and the envoy show that they take the portrait to be a reflection of the Duchess' total personality, of her reaction to some specific circumstance, or of both at once. They further reveal that they do not consider the portrait an end in itself: they assume (since they are, significantly, strangers who did not know her) that the living Duchess was more interesting and perhaps even more complex than her portrait suggests. Having anticipated this question, the Duke had begun in his first remarks to the envoy to expound what he apparently considers a remarkable irony: there was nothing in the situation nor in the living Duchess' personality to correspond to the complexity of her painted expression. He mentioned Fra Pandolf because the painter was solely responsible for whatever is of interest in the Duchess' expression. That is why he considers the portrait "a wonder."

What has heretofore escaped notice is that his entire indictment of the Duchess is not a gratuitous attack, but the logical, fully developed continuation of this answer. Sexual jealousy and fierce, even psychotic possessiveness may well be his fundamental motivation, but his primary, conscious motive is to explain the contrast between the portrait and the living model. To argue that he denounces the Duchess because of "the depth and passion of her earnest glance" is to obscure the richest irony of his lecture.<sup>6</sup> He is able to maintain his tone of chillingly casual objectivity because he is convinced that the living Duchess was quite unlike the portrait. The situation to which she was reacting was no more than a few trivial compliments ("stuff") uttered by the painter. She was not "deep" but excessively shallow and indiscriminating: "She had / A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad, / Too easily impressed: she liked whate'er / She looked on, and her looks went everywhere. / Sir, 'twas all one!" This is proved to his satisfaction by her ranking of art, "My favour at her breast," with what he considers trivial natural delights—sunset, a "bough of cherries," a ride on a white mule. And he is perhaps more contemptuous of her taste than jealous of her person when he remarks that "she ranked / My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name / With anybody's gift." As for her "earnest glance" in the portrait, that too was Fra Pandolf's work: the living Duchess, he insists, was a fatuously good natured woman who smiled at everyone who passed. She missed and exceeded "the mark" in so many ways that the Duke found her, as he says, disgusting.

It is needless to comment on the more obvious irony of this indictment. For most readers, the Duchess emerges as an innocent, admirable woman while the Duke unconsciously reveals his own shocking arrogance, cruelty, and emptiness. Not so obvious is the bearing of his answer on the problem of possessiveness itself—the degree to which he is successful in reducing the Duchess (or as he seems to think, elevating her) to the level of a work of art. The key to this question, kept by Fra Pandolf, opens up two alternative answers. While we cannot know the portrait except in the Duke's description of it, we can legitimately ask whether it is a "good" or a "bad" likeness on the same grounds that we ask about the true nature of the Duchess. That is, has Fra Pandolf given the admirably ingenuous Duchess a conventional "depth and passion"? Or has he perceived in her a depth which was really there but which the Duke was unaware of?

If we accept the first hypothesis, arguing that the work is a typical court painting cynically calculated to please the Duke and perhaps flatter the Duchess, then the Duke's possession of her is more complete than anyone has realized. Since he has given "commands" which apparently led to her death, she continues to exist only as an artifact which he controls with a curtain. But most important, he (or at least his agent Fra Pandolf) has altered her nature to make her conform to the characteristics which the Duke values. In this, his taste is less than admirable: he places a higher valuation on an essentially unrealistic court painting than he does on living reality, and he regards a painting as "a wonder" simply because it flatters his prejudices. We have only to refer to the later Fra Lippo Lippi's remarks on the Prior to understand what Browning thought of this approach to art. The other alternative, that Fra Pandolf perceived and caught the Duchess' true "depth and passion," may have equal support in the poem. In the course of the Duke's remarks, we become convinced that the Duchess was not really shallow and fatuous, and it is not difficult to believe her capable of the depth which the portrait reveals. At least one "officious fool" admired her, and it may be that Fra Pandolf also admired and meant it when he said that art could never hope to do justice to her beauty. Above all, the painting is apparently good enough to call forth an intense reaction from everyone who sees it. This may suggest a genuine masterpiece which satisfies Fra Lippo Lippi's requirements in that it reveals both beauty and soul, leading us to "love / First when we see them painted, things we have passed / Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see" (Fra Lippo Lippi, ll. 300-302). If it is indeed a true likeness in this sense, the Duchess escapes the Duke in the painting as she escapes the charges of his indictment. Her real depth of soul, caught in the portrait, is revealed to everyone but the Duke, and he, admiring the painting for its expression but failing to see that art in this instance truly reflects reality, is again convicted of tastelessness and lack of discrimination.

In "My Last Duchess," then, the Duke's reference to Fra Pandolf is "an occasion for telling the story" in that it introduces a topic which the Duke wants to expound, and it is a means of "illustrating" his thesis that reality, the living Duchess, was infinitely less admirable and less complicated than the Duchess "painted on the wall." Others, particularly Hiram Corson, have noticed that "the Duke values his wife's picture wholly as a picture, not as the...reminder of a sweet and lovely woman,"<sup>8</sup> but they have failed to perceive either the full implications and rationale of this choice or the extent of its contribution to the characterization and structure of the poem. Whatever else the monologue may reveal about character, motive, and action, it is presented as the Duke's fluent answer to an aesthetic question involving the relationship between art and reality.

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## FOOTNOTES

1. A. A. Brockington, *Browning and the Twentieth Century* (London, 1932), p. 117.
2. B. R. Jerman, "Browning's Witless Duke," *PMLA*, LXXII (1957), 490.
3. W. C. DeVane, *A Browning Handbook* (rev. ed., New York, 1955), p. 109.
4. Mrs. Sutherland Orr, *A Handbook to the Works of Robert Browning* (London, 1907), p. 251 avoids the issue by calling it "that earnest, impassioned, and yet smiling glance [which] went alike to everyone." Such an expression is difficult to imagine. Mr. Jerman (p. 491) is apparently unaware of any contrast between earnestness and smiling.
5. W. L. Phelps, *Robert Browning and How to Know Him* (Indianapolis, 1915), p. 175.
6. Four representatives of this widespread view are: Ethel C. Mayne, *Browning's Heroines* (London, 1913), p. 170; Edward Berdoe, *The Browning Encyclopaedia* (London, 1931), p. 281; Cleath Brooks, John T. Purser, and Robert Penn Warren, *An Approach to Literature* (New York, 1952), p. 292; Eugene P. Zanzwail, "Christian Symbolism in 'My Last Duchess,'" *MLQ*, V (1958), 446.
7. See Lionel Stevenson, "My Last Duchess and *Parisisina*," *MLN*, LXXIV (1959), 489-92 for interesting new light on this point.
8. Hiram Corson, *An Introduction to the Study of Robert Browning's Poetry* (Boston, 1889), p. 90.

## RITUAL IN "THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB"

Mr. Roma King's searching analysis of Browning's "The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church" (in *The Bow and the Lyre*, Ann Arbor, 1957) represents a critical ground-breaking long overdue. It is a tribute to the incredible complexity of this poem (and, certainly, no reflection on Mr. King's acumen) to point out that the analysis leaves untouched a number of approaches which will enrich a reading of the poem. One strand of imagery, not only important but crucial, is that which relates to the church and the sacrament of Holy Communion, anticipated in the image of "fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse" (30).

Scattered throughout the poem are utterances by which the Bishop seeks to hold the wandering attention of his sons—particularly "Draw round my bed" (2), "Draw close" (34), "There, leave me, there!" (113), "Well, go! I bless ye" (119). The movement in toward and then away from his bed provides a kind of dramatic framework within the context of which the Bishop imparts various matters to his sons. It is the imagery of ritual which seems to me to make this movement symbolic.

The egotism of the Bishop is manifested by his desire to be the center of attention. His sons, gathered around his bed, are implicitly compared to "those nine columns round me, two and two, / The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands..." (27-28)—the columns which the Bishop hopes will surround his last resting-place, this being anticipated by the bed. In 80 ff., a second identification is made: the bed becomes an altar, and the Bishop, who has not hesitated to compare himself with God in a purely descriptive sense (47-48), now very nearly suggests himself as a possible object of worship:

And then how I shall lie thro' centuries,  
And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,  
And see God made and eaten all day long;  
And feel the steady candle-flame; and taste  
Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke!  
For as I lie here hours of the dead night,  
Dying in state and by such slow degrees,  
I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook,  
And stretch my feet forth straight as stone can point,  
And let the bedclothes, for a mortcloth, drop  
Into great laps and folds of sculptor's-work:  
And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange thoughts  
Grow, with a certain humming in my ears,  
About the life before I lived this life. . . . (80-93)

Here the Bishop sees himself not only immortalized as a shepherd (87), but as one who has already participated in a type of pagan reincarnation (93). While he lies "dying by degrees" (11), the physical erosion of his body in a temporal scheme is contrasted with the spiritual breaking and eating of the sacramental bread, of, in fact, God's body, in an eternal scheme. This contrast is extended in the gradual diminishing of the candles around the bed (91) which, in the ritual of the Mass, remain "steady" (83). It is interesting to note that these lines are among the most regular in the poem, where the calm repetitive use of the introductory conjunction "and" suggests the reiterated ceremony of which the Bishop hopes to be a continual witness, and in which the ceremony of eating the bread is not only an eternalization but an arresting of his own present state of gradual, irrevocable decay. This present decay, in the Bishop's eyes, is hastened by the maltreatment of him by his sons, whom he regards as almost Satanic:

.....Will ye ever eat my heart?  
Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick,  
They glitter like your mother's for my soul. . . .  
(103-105)

And at their hands he feels himself undergoing a pagan sacrifice: "For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude / To death. . ." (114-115).

But the Bishop, before reverting to the final outburst against Gandolf, brings this odd ritual to a close. He orders a portion of the candles to be extinguished ("Fewer tapers there," 119) and commands his sons to go, giving them his blessing, and saying, "...going, turn your backs /—Ay, like departing altar-ministrants" (120-121). The Bishop has indeed become, in his own eyes, the object of worship. The approach and departures of his sons takes on, or so he would wish, an overtly religious, priestly significance. The reality of his failure to hold their attention is contrasted with the idealization of their function. This, together with the fusing of the images of bed, tomb, and altar, of pagan and Christian imagery, the contrast of religious and pagan "eating" (82, 103), and the transference of the sacramental imagery to a specific human situation, constitutes the core of the poem. In Christian terms—though I would not suggest that the poem is concerned with presenting a Christian message—the Bishop's failure is a failure to realize this ultimate disparity: that he is himself only the shadow of an enduring substance.

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Lawrence Poston, III

#### "MY DEAR SUMNER": THREE LETTERS FROM MATTHEW ARNOLD

In 1945 the Boston Public Library acquired three letters from Matthew Arnold to a correspondent whom he greeted as "My dear Sumner."<sup>1</sup> The acquisition was noted, with a few extracts from the letters, by E[velyn] G[rantham] in "Arnold and the Oxford Poetry Chair," *More Books: The Bulletin of the Boston Public Librury*, XXI (June 1945), 287-288. The letters are now printed in full for the first time, and the identity of Sumner is suggested.

Like the recently published letter of April 16, 1857, to the Reverend William Henry Lucas,<sup>2</sup> the letters to Sumner record Arnold's enthusiastic participation in the canvassing for his election, and they supplement the one subdued reference to that event retained in G. W. Russell's edition of Arnold's letters.<sup>3</sup> Arnold's apprehension and his delighted satisfaction in his success in the election at the Oxford Convocation of May 5, 1857, as the new Professor of Poetry are also reflected in the letter to his mother that Mrs. Humphry Ward preserved in *A Writer's Recollections*:

"Kebble voted for me after all. He told the Coleridges he was so much pleased with my letter (to the electors) that he could not refrain. . . . I had support from all sides. Archdeacon Denison voted for me, also Sir John Yarde Buller, and Henley, of the high Tory party. It was an immense victory—some 200 more voted than have ever, it is said, voted in a Professorship election before. It was a great lesson to Christ Church, which was rather disposed to imagine it could carry everything by its great numbers."<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps the large number that participated in the election of 1857 was in some measure due to the "double contest," as *The Times* called it,<sup>5</sup> for the Professorships of Political Economy and of Poetry on the same afternoon. Nevertheless, the interest in the Poetry Professorship was greater, for 641 votes were cast in that election as against a total of 452 in the other. Arnold's opponent was, of course, the Reverend John Ernest Bode.<sup>6</sup> As the following letters to "My dear Sumner" show, Arnold himself and some of his contemporaries at Balliol worked hard to encourage non-resident members to go down to Oxford to vote.

The first letter is written on stationery bearing the embossed seal of the Athenaeum. The second bears the embossed crest of Judge Wightman's house at Hampton.

I

April 11th, 1857.

My dear Sumner

I should be extremely glad if I could prevail upon you to go down to Oxford to give me a vote, as to an old acquaintance and Balliol man, for the Poetry Professorship. The election is on the 5th of May. I am half ashamed to ask you or any one else to take so much trouble on my account: but the Christ Church people are making a very active ship for their candidate, Bode, and their numbers will overpower me unless I can persuade a good many of the non-resident members of Convocation to go down and support me.

Pray do what you can for me, and believe me,

My dear Sumner,  
ever sincerely yours

M. Arnold. -

My address is -  
St. Albans Bank  
Hampton  
Middlesex.

II

Hampton  
April 25. 1857

My dear Sumner

Very many thanks for your hint—but I had written to your cousin the day before I heard from you. Some of the Balliol Fellows had undertaken to canvass the Balliol men for me—all but four or five of my own contemporaries, like you, to whom I wished to write myself: but when I saw that your cousin's name was not on the list which Lake<sup>7</sup> sent me of those Balliol men who had promised to go and vote, I wrote to him myself, as I am tolerably well acquainted with him.

It would be a real pleasure to me to see you again, but as decorum forbids my being at Oxford on the 5th of May, I shall lose, I am sorry to say, that opportunity of seeing both you and many other old friends.

I am ever, my dear Sumner,  
most sincerely yours,

M. Arnold. -

P.S.

Pray do not neglect any occasion of securing a vote which may present itself to you—for Ch. Ch. is horribly strong and the censors are appealing to their non-residents "in the name of the College" to come up.

III

Hampton. May 11<sup>th</sup> 1857

My dear Sumner

A thousand thanks for your support before the victory and for your congratulations after it. As one seems destined never to see ones'old acquaintances it is the more pleasant to find on such occasions as this that they have not forgotten one. I consider that I am indebted for the splendid triumph I had above all to the faithful support of the Balliol men. I am told I had nearly 70 votes from the dear old College.

Remember me kindly to Charles Coneybeare when you meet him, who will not I am sure be sorry for my success so far as I personally am concerned, though of course he did not wish his college to be defeated. I hear they fully expected to win.

Every most truly yours  
M. Arnold. -

The identity of "My dear Sumner," like that of the cousin referred to in the second letter, is attended with some, though I think little, uncertainty. The probability is that the addressee is George Henry Sumner (1825-1886), and the cousin Robert George Moncrieff Sumner (1825-1885). In support of this suggestion, I give the following data.

John Bird Sumner (1780-1862), Archbishop of Canterbury, had two sons; his younger brother

Charles Richard Sumner (1790-1874), Bishop of Winchester, had four. All six matriculated at Balliol College. The sons of the Archbishop were John Henry Robertson Sumner (1822-1910) and Robert George Moncrieff Sumner (1825-1885). The former matriculated at Balliol on May 16, 1839, but he took no degree at Oxford, and *Crockford's Clerical Directory for 1860* records him as holding the degree of B.A. (1843) and M.A. (1846) from University College, Durham. Not being the holder of a degree from Oxford, he could not have participated in the election of 1857.<sup>8</sup> His younger brother Robert is, therefore, either the addressee of Arnold's letters, or, more probably, the cousin alluded to in the second of them. He matriculated at Balliol College on March 30, 1843, taking his B.A. degree in 1846, his M.A. in 1851, and proceeding to the Inner Temple where he became a barrister in 1853. The period of his being together with Arnold at Oxford was limited, for Arnold matriculated November 28, 1840, and received his B.A. in 1844.

Of the sons of the Bishop of Winchester, John Maunoir Sumner (1817-1886) matriculated at Balliol on April 10, 1835 (B.A. 1838, M.A. 1841), Charles Sumner (1819-1885) on May 11, 1837 (B.A. 1840, M.S. 1843), Robert Sumner (1821-1858) on March 28, 1838 (B.A. 1841, M.A. 1844), and George Henry Sumner on May 14, 1842 (B.A. 1845, M.A. 1848). John Maunoir's undergraduate career ended before Arnold's began, and Charles's overlapped with Arnold's during but a few months. Since the second letter speaks of Sumner as a contemporary and old friend, neither of these brothers appears likely to be the addressee. Both Robert and George Henry, however, were Arnold's contemporaries, the latter for the longer period. George matriculated at Balliol only two months after Arnold's close friend Walrond, and he graduated in the same year as Patrick Cumin, another of Arnold's Oxford friends and later a colleague in the Education Department. In 1857 Robert Sumner was rector of Brightwell, Berkshire; George Henry Sumner was rector of Old Alresford, Hampshire.

While both these brothers resided in 1857 within easy reach of Oxford, the probability that George Henry Sumner is the addressee is increased by the allusion to Charles Conybeare. In the third of the letters Arnold sent greetings to Conybeare, whose name he misspelled. Charles Ranken Conybeare (1821-1885), a Rugby student, entered Christ Church in 1839 (B.A. 1843, M.A. 1846).<sup>10</sup> He was vicar of Pyrton, Oxfordshire, from 1852 until early 1857. An entry in the Act Book of the Bishop of Winchester shows that on April 24, 1857, Conybeare was instituted to the Rectory of Abbotstone with the Vicarage of Itchinstoke, Hampshire, as successor to Richard Chevenix Trench.<sup>11</sup> Just about the time of the Oxford convocation, then, Conybeare had come to live within a few miles of George Henry Sumner, the classmate of two of Arnold's undergraduate friends, the most nearly contemporary of all the Sumners with both Arnold and himself, and the one of them whom, from the recent transfer between parishes, Conybeare was likely to "meet" soon after the May elections.

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Fraser Neiman

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>I wish to thank the Boston Public Library for its kind permission to print these letters.

<sup>2</sup>Kenneth Allott, "Matthew Arnold: Two Unpublished Letters," *Notes and Queries*, new series, II (August 1955), 356-357.

<sup>3</sup>*Letters of Matthew Arnold, 1848-1888*, 2 vols. (London, 1895), II, 65.

<sup>4</sup>2 vols. (New York and London, 1918), I, 76. The parenthetical "to the electors" may be Mrs. Ward's addition. For an interesting account of John Keble's attitude toward his own responsibilities as Professor of Poetry at Oxford, especially his aversion to the use of English for the lectures, see Sir John Taylor Coleridge, *A Memoir of the Rev. John Keble*, 2 vols. (Oxford and London, 1869), I, 208. Sir John Coleridge, a friend of Dr. Thomas Arnold, was the father of Arnold's Balliol friend John Duke Coleridge, afterwards Lord Chief Justice. Henry James Coleridge, the latter's brother, was a graduate of Trinity College, Oxford, but like Arnold, a fellow of Oriel (1845-1852).

<sup>5</sup>George Anthony Denison (1805-1896), Archdeacon of Taunton, was a graduate of Christ Church and fellow of Oriel. Sir John Buller Yarde-Buller (b. 1799), a Balliol man, was Conservative M.P. for Devonshire (South). The Right Honourable Joseph Warner Henley (1793-1884), a graduate of Magdalen and D.C.L. from Oxford (1854), was Conservative M.P. for Oxfordshire from 1851 to 1878.

<sup>6</sup>"University Intelligence," May 6, 1857, page 12, column c.

<sup>7</sup>See Allott, "Matthew Arnold: Two Unpublished Letters," page 356, and R. H. Super, "Arnold's Oxford Lectures on Poetry," *Modern Language Notes*, LXX (December 1955), 583.

<sup>8</sup>Matthew Arnold and his wife discreetly came up to London from Judge Wightman's house in Middlesex to receive by telegraph news of the Oxford polling. Arnold wrote to his mother: "We went first to the telegraph station at Charing Cross. Then, about 4, we got a message from Walrond—nothing certain is known, but it is rumored that you are ahead" (Mrs. Humphry Ward, *A Writer's Recollections*, I, 74).

<sup>9</sup>William Charles Lake (1817-1897), Dean of Durham, was educated at Rugby and Oxford, where he matriculated at Balliol College in November 1834. From 1842 to 1857 he was a tutor at Balliol. For their friendship at Balliol, see Katherine Lake, *Memorials of William Charles Lake, Dean of Durham 1855-1894* (London, 1901), page 72.

<sup>10</sup>G. R. M. Ward, *Oxford University Statutes*, 2 vols. (London, 1845-1851), I, 132.

<sup>11</sup>Joseph Poster, *Alumni Oxoniensis* (London, 1886), page 1372.

<sup>12</sup>*Alumni Oxoniensis*, page 325.

<sup>13</sup>Bishop's Act Book, Diocese of Winchester, sub "Abbotstone R with Itchinstoke V," 24th April 1857. This information has been furnished me by the Registrar of the Diocese.

## THE GENESIS OF HOPKINS' "HEAVEN-HAVEN"

Students of Gerard Manley Hopkins owe much to Mr. W. H. Gardner for the work he has done on that poet. Although we may find occasion to disagree from time to time with his conclusions, we must admire the generally high quality of his work as critic, biographer, and interpreter of Hopkins. It is to one of these occasions for disagreement—his account of the genesis of "Heaven-Haven"—that I would like to draw attention in this paper.

Mr. Gardner notes that of the four stanzas (six, if we count the variants of what would be stanzas two and four, were they numbered) entered in Hopkins' notebook under the title "Rest," the first two were later revised and given the title "Heaven-Haven, or a Nun takes the Veil."<sup>1</sup> The last two stanzas form no part of this revision and are now printed in *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (1948 ed.) under "Unfinished Poems, Fragments, Light Verse, Etc." as No. 78, "I must hunt down the prize." It will be seen that Mr. Gardner's account raises two problems: the first is the relationship of the first two stanzas, destined to become "Heaven-Haven," to the last two, destined to become "No. 78"; the second is the source of inspiration for these verses. Implicit is still a third problem: the full relationship of "Rest" to "Heaven-Haven." Let us examine the problems in order.

Concerning the last two stanzas, Gardner writes that "although obviously belonging to the same emotional idea, [they] were judiciously omitted in the revised version. The subtitle of *Heaven-Haven* is a nun takes the veil, and the additional stanzas were apparently intended to symbolize the dangers and hardships of the religious vocation." This position rests, however, upon the assumption that from the time of its conception "Rest" was intended to describe the thoughts and emotions of a young girl about to take the veil. That this was probably not the case, I hope to demonstrate shortly. For the moment let me say only that I find it difficult to understand how the pendent stanzas can be called part of "the same emotional idea"; the tone, the imagery, and the action in these pendent stanzas seem to me totally inappropriate, even symbolically, for the life of a nun. A second objection is the fact that the violent action described in these stanzas is utterly incompatible with the title "Rest." This inconsistency both in content and in mood leads me to conjecture that the last stanzas are merely further exercises in the meter of "Rest" and by no means a part of the "same emotional idea" or poem.

An examination of the second problem—the source of inspiration for "Rest" and, subsequently, "Heaven-Haven"—casts further light on the first. Gardner writes:

... as Mr. R. G. Haworth of Sydney has pointed out, *Rest* and its pendent stanzas may owe their conception to the last lines of that address to Fortune which (according to Roper) Sir Thomas More composed while awaiting execution:

Trust shall I God, to enter in a while  
His haven of heaven sure and uniforme.  
Ever after thy calme, looke I for a storme.

The ultimate original of both More's verses and *Rest* was probably the "storm-calm-haven" passage in Psalm CVII (29-30).<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Gardner's error here is that he fails to distinguish at all times "Rest" from "Heaven-Haven." It is, of course, quite possible that the Psalmist or St. Thomas More provided Hopkins with the title "Heaven-Haven," but a comparison of these "sources" with "Rest" fails to disclose any close relationship. In fact, a much stronger case can be made out for the influence of Tennyson's "Morte D' Arthur," especially lines 240-264.<sup>4</sup>

In these lines the wounded king, waiting to be taken to Avalon, speaks to Bedevere on the efficacy of prayer and concludes with this description of his intended destination:

I am going a long way  
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—  
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)  
To the island-valley of Avilion;  
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies  
Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard-lawns  
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea  
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.<sup>5</sup>

These lines bear comparison with "Rest," which, since it may not be readily at hand, is quoted here in full with my own numbering of the stanzas.



## Rest

## I

I have desired to go  
Where springs not fail  
To fields where flies not the unbridled hail,  
And a few lilies blow.

## II

I have desired to be  
Where havens are dumb;  
Where the green water-heads may never come  
As in the unloved sea.

## III

I must hunt down the prize  
Where my heart lists.  
Must see the eagle's bulk, render'd in mists  
Hang of a treble size.

## IV

Must see the water roll  
Where the seas set  
Towards wastes where round the ice-blocks  
tilt and fret  
Not so far from the pole.

## OR

## IIa

I have desired to be  
Where greens not come  
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb  
And sunder'd from the sea.

## OR

## IVa

Must see the green seas roll  
Where waters set  
Towards those wastes where the ice-blocks  
tilt and fret  
Not so far from the pole.

Stanzas I, II, and IIa are those with which we are most immediately concerned. The verbal and phrasal parallels between these stanzas of "Rest" and the lines quoted from "Morte D'Arthur" are close. The most obvious one is that between "To the island valley... / Where falls not hail" and "To fields where flies not the unbridled hail," in which even the word order is almost identical. "Unbridled hail" condenses the fury of the elements described in lines 260-261 of Tennyson's poem, and Hopkins' lily-blown field recalls the deep-meadowed island-valley, with its orchard-lawns and bowery hollows. Further, the step from a crown of summer sea (grass) to the "green water-heads" is not a long one. Again, "dumb havens" and "where gales not come" are close to "Nor ever wind blows loudly," the last two even employing negative constructions.

Beyond these verbal resemblances is a similarity of circumstances: Arthur intends a retreat from the world; so too the speaker in "Rest." Arthur hopes for rest and healing in Avalon; the title of Hopkins' poem reveals the speaker's motive sufficiently. Arthur is weary of his long struggle in the world; if not already weary, the speaker in "Rest" is at least seeking a spot where the struggle will be less severe.

The two poems also betray a similarity of tone, a tone I should call one of peaceful anticipation, tempered by the events which have called forth the statements of purpose. There is no note of mere resignation in Arthur's last words; similarly, the speaker in "Rest" has made a willing choice: "I have desired to go."

That the pendent stanzas were suppressed in "Heaven-Haven" does not affect adversely, but perhaps even enhances, the argument here set forth, for these stanzas describe a life of strenuous, masculine activity. Gardner comments that "these images of rigorous manly adventure were hardly congruous with the quiet tenour of a nun's life."<sup>6</sup> This is true, but there is no implication whatever in "Rest" that a nun is the speaker or that any spiritual repose is sought. The images evoked later in "Heaven-Haven" concerning convent life are brought into being by the new title and sub-title affixed to the revised poem. That these rejected stanzas would have been more appropriate if applied to Arthur is plain, although in the final version, with its shift of emphasis to the young religious, they are doubtless better omitted.

Secondary evidence does no damage to this case for the influence of "Morte D'Arthur." Quotations from and references to Tennyson abound in Hopkins' notebooks, diaries, and letters. A letter of September 10, 1864, to A. W. H. Baillie will serve as an illustration. In this letter Hopkins admits to his college friend that he has "begun to doubt Tennyson" and that he "is meditating an essay... on some points of poetical criticism, and it is with reference to this a little that I have composed my thoughts on Tennyson."<sup>7</sup> While composing his thoughts, Hopkins was, probably re-reading his Tennyson. A further clue is an entry Hopkins made in his diary a year later, listing Malory's *La Morte D'Arthur* among "Books to be read."<sup>8</sup>

One further point: Lines 240-264 of Tennyson's poem might have appealed especially to Hopkins for theological reasons. Emphasizing as they do the value of prayers for one another, the opening

lines of this passage were quite un-protestant for mid-nineteenth century England. And for Hopkins, whose natural bent was already leading him along the road to Rome, these Catholic sentiments would have had a special attraction.

There remains the third problem: the ultimate relationship of "Rest" to "Heaven-Haven." Although Gardner is correct in showing that every change Hopkins made in these poems was a striking improvement, it seems that more than verbal revision is involved for neither "Rest" nor the pendent stanzas contain positive indications of the central theme of "Heaven-Haven." If we accept, however, the probability that "Rest" was inspired by the conclusion of Tennyson's poem, we can attempt to reconstruct the genesis of "Heaven-Haven" with hope of at least partial success. This is a plausible account: Some time after reading "Morte D'Arthur" Hopkins consciously or unconsciously adopted the theme of retreat and molded the first stanzas of "Rest." The pendent stanzas were then composed probably not as a part of "Rest" but either as a further experiment with the same verse form or perhaps as an attempt to contrast an active life with the passive one of the first stanzas. This latter conjecture is attractive in that it opens up the possibility that Hopkins was engaging in a typically Tennysonian occupation: surveying and contrasting ways of life open to a man. In either case, it is probable that the idea of the nun was not yet in Hopkins' mind.

Then, some time between the writing of "Rest" and its final revision, the poet connected the retreat from the world with the entrance of a nun into convent life and attached to it the haven-of-heaven image. From this final version Hopkins naturally excluded the pendent stanzas because they obviously had even less to do with his revised conception than they had with his original one.

As I have noted above, this account has the virtue of plausibility, although we can be sure that it is not complete (perhaps not even completely accurate as far as it goes) in its details. But the study of the genesis of a good poem is always worthwhile, and we can hope that further evidence will be added to complement or correct this account of the writing of one of Hopkins' best.

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## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Gerard Manley Hopkins, II (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949), p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> The version of 1842 is referred to. The revision of "Morte D'Arthur" meant to fit the scheme of Tennyson's *Idylls* was published in 1869, some five years too late to have affected Hopkins' poem.

<sup>5</sup> *Selections from Tennyson*, ed. William Clyde and Mabel Phillips DeVane (New York: F. S. Crofts, 1940), p. 57.

<sup>6</sup> *Notebooks and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Humphrey House (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 27.

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 73.

<sup>8</sup> *Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. C. C. Abbott (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), pp. 68-69.

<sup>9</sup> *Note-Books and Papers*, p. 40.

## THE SPECTATOR RECORDS, 1874-1897

Despite the fact that the *Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals* as now constituted is not concerned with weekly publications, scholars working on problems connected with the last quarter of the nineteenth century will be interested to hear that it is possible to identify many of the contributors to the *Spectator* during the famous partnership of Townsend and Hutton.

Meredith White Townsend bought the *Spectator* early in 1861 and in June of that year engaged Richard Holt Hutton as co-proprietor and literary editor. For thirty-six years they conducted a journal whose influence became increasingly more powerful. On 26 June 1897, however, Hutton made his final contribution, and his share in the paper was sold to J. St. Loe Strachey. Townsend retained his editorial chair for a few months after Hutton's death on 9 September 1897, but then gave up his proprietorship to Strachey, though he continued to contribute to the *Spectator's* pages. Townsend wrote of Hutton's death that it terminated "an unbroken friendship of thirty-six years, and a literary alliance which, at one in its duration and completeness, is probably without a precedent."<sup>1</sup>

In the course of my researches on Hutton I have learned through the courtesy of the present editor of the *Spectator* of the discovery a few years ago among the editorial files of seven notebooks which record the names of scores of contributors during the Townsend-Hutton regime. With the editor's generous permission I am able to give here an indication of what the notebooks disclose.<sup>2</sup>

The first *Record of Articles*—the title Hutton himself gave the notebooks—begins with 14 November 1874, and ends with 10 November 1877. There is then a three-year gap, and the second surviving *Record* commences with 20 November 1880. The entries are thereafter continuous, each notebook covering about three years, with the seventh *Record* beginning at 2 January 1897, and concluding with 30 December 1899, more than two years after Hutton's death. (Additional records cover subsequent years down to the present day.) Except during his holidays and illnesses, Hutton kept the *Records* himself up to May 1895.

The *Records* make known the authors of all the leading articles, subleaders, letters, and reviews for nearly twenty of the thirty-six years of the great partnership. The writers of the "News of

the Week" paragraphs, however, and of the short reviews in "Current Literature" are only occasionally identified in any specific fashion. Nevertheless, the bulk of the contributors to the *Spectator* during the Townsend-Hutton regime are now identifiable. The present article aims at making known the more important contributors revealed by the *Records* up to the termination of the famous alliance. And since Sir William Beach Thomas in *The Story of the Spectator 1828-1928* does not link contributors with contributions,<sup>3</sup> some attempt at providing a characteristic sampling will now be made.

First, the famous names among the contributors. Six of these—H. H. Asquith, Thomas Hughes, J. M. Ludlow, Mrs. Oliphant, Wilfrid Ward, and Julia Wedgwood—wrote a substantial amount. Asquith, who contributed nearly four dozen articles, began with "Aristotle's Ethics and Politics," on 18 December 1875, and concluded with a leading article, "Mr. Courtney at Liskeard," 11 October 1884. That is, at first he was chiefly a reviewer of books, but by the autumn of 1881 most of his articles were on political subjects, and took the place of those of one or the other of the vacationing editors. His high opinion of Townsend and Hutton is expressed in his autobiography.<sup>4</sup>

Thomas Hughes has long been known as the author of the 'Vacuus Viator' papers which ran in the *Spectator* between 1862 and 1895. But of his seventy-odd contributions listed in the *Records* nearly half were unsigned and have never been reprinted. Many of these are book reviews, such as "Fears for Democracy in America," 15 January 1876; "Thoreau, His Life and Aims," 20 October 1877; "Emigrant Life in Kansas," 10 July 1886; "Hosea Biglow's Latest Words," 21 April 1888; and "William Dampier," 20 July 1889. But Hughes also contributed such leading articles as "Metropolitan Pauper Schools," 4 March 1876; "Co-operation on its Trial," 9 August 1884; and "The Individualism of 'The Masses,'" 21 December 1889. And in view of the fact that the portrait of Arthur in *Tom Brown's School Days* is said to be based in part on Theodore Walrond, it is interesting to learn that Hughes wrote the obituary subleader on Walrond for 25 June 1887.

J. M. Ludlow contributed more than fifty articles during the period covered by the *Records*. Like Hughes, he had begun contributing heavily during the early sixties, his signed review, "Dr. Lempriere on the American Crisis," 14 September 1861, probably being his first. Since neither this review nor the first one listed as his in the *Records* ("Bancroft's History of the United States," 21 November 1874) is mentioned in Ludlow's manuscript bibliography in the Cambridge University Library, scholars interested in this Christian Socialist would do well to examine both the *Spectator* and its *Records* with some care.

Mrs. Oliphant dedicated her collection of short stories, *Neighbours on the Green* (1889), to R. H. Hutton. Of her forty-three identifiable *Spectator* writings, one—"Alfred Tennyson," 15 October 1892—is a poem. The bulk of the remainder is made up of her well-known series, "A Commentary in an Easy Chair," which ran from 7 December 1889 to 8 November 1890. But she also wrote reviews ("Memorials of a Quiet Life," 8 July 1876), and subleaders ("Principal Tulloch," 20 February 1886).

Wilfrid Ward was one of several Catholic contributors to the, then, Wellington Street journal. He began with a review, "Phases of Musical England," 20 May 1882. Many of the forty articles he published in the *Spectator* were appraisals of theological or philosophical volumes: "The Service of Man," 5 March 1887; "Cardinal Manning," 28 May 1892; "Mr. Huxley's Essays," 10 September 1892; "M. Renan," 5 August 1893; "Life of Dr. Pusey," 21 and 28 October 1893; "Life of Dean Stanley," 27 January and 3 February 1894. Some of Ward's articles were literary: "Tennyson's Works," 6 February 1892, and "Becket" at the Lyceum," 25 February 1893.

Julia Wedgwood wrote nearly seventy articles. Although she later reprinted some of them (there are eleven in *Nineteenth Century Teachers*), most of the *Spectator* writings of this blue-stocking ex-friend of Robert Browning lie buried in the pages that once gave them life. Her range was formidable: she reviewed Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, 13 and 20 March 1875; English and German biographies of Carlyle, 12 November 1881; Asa Gray on evolution, 22 April 1882; Darwin's *Life* (third notice), 10 December 1887; and a history of vivisection legislation, 9 March 1889. She wrote subleaders on social, literary, philosophical, and religious problems: "Reserve," 20 November 1880; "Moral Purpose in Fiction," 25 March 1882; "The Relation of History to Politics," 8 July 1882; "The Misleading Character of Law as an Index to Morals," 29 September 1883; "Shakespeare as a Historian," 20 February 1892; and "The Church in Danger," 13 August 1892. Occasionally, she contributed leading articles: "Democracy and Justice," 12 April 1890; "Women and Politics," 17 May 1890; and "Experimental Legislation," 12 March 1892.

Well-known Victorians who contributed only a handful of articles to the *Spectator* include A. V. Dicey, E. A. Freeman, Edmund Gosse, Frank Harris, George Moore, and William Watson. Dicey reviewed Stephen's *Digest of the Law of Evidence*, 23 September 1876; appraised Holmes's *Common Law*, 3 June 1882; wrote two articles on Pollocks's *Law of Torts*, 1 and 8 December 1888; and produced a valuable assessment of T. H. Green, "A Great Oxford Teacher," 14 March 1896. Freeman reviewed three volumes: Friedmann's *Anne Boleyn*, 27 December 1884 and 3 January 1885; Upton-on-Severn, 21 March 1885; and Hodgkin's *Cassiodorus*, 14 August 1886.

Edmund Gosse, according to a letter in Charteris's biography of the critic, first introduced Ibsen's name to the English public by means of a review of *Digte* in the *Spectator* (16 March 1872, not 1870 or 1873 as is variously suggested in Charteris).<sup>6</sup> Gosse's eight articles listed in the *Records*

include "Oehlenschlaeger's 'Earl Hakon,'" 23 January 1875; "Ibsen's Jubilee," 27 March 1875; "Miss Otte's Scandinavian History," 12 June 1875; "The Vikings of the Baltic," 17 July 1875; "Three Northern Love Stories," 21 August 1875; and "A Book about Finland," 15 July 1876, his last contribution.

Frank Harris is not known for autobiographical reliability. *Frank Harris, His Life and Adventures* states that he wrote for the *Spectator* at least one article a week and frequently two.<sup>7</sup> The *Records* reveal a different story: Harris's first article, "Mr. Freeman on the American," was published on 7 July 1883; his last, "Coleridge as Thinker and Critic," on 29 December of the same year. Only nine other articles are his, one of them a review of Seeley's *Expansion of England* (22 December 1883).

George Moore is quoted by his biographer, Joseph Hone, as having had two poems and seven or eight reviews published in the Townsend-Hutton journal. Hone identifies only his first contribution, a poem, "The Love of the Past" (not "Sweetness of the Past" as given in Hone), 11 December 1880.<sup>8</sup> The second poem is "Looking Back," 15 October 1881. The reviews, the number of which Moore exaggerated, are, "Mr. Swinburne's 'Studies in Song,'" 5 March 1881; "The New Playground," 7 May 1881; and "A Mediaeval Poet," 24 December 1881.

William Watson, who contributed a good deal of verse to the *Spectator*, was the paper's candidate for the laureateship after Tennyson's death. Watson's eight articles include "Mr. Lowell's Serious Poetry," 22 August 1891; "The Poets of the Century," 2 January 1892; "The Study of English Literature," 5 March 1892; "The Poet as Dreamer and Seer," 2 July 1892; "Mr. Hosken's Dramas," 13 August 1892; and "The Poetesses of the Century," 20 August 1892.

Six eminent Victorians contributed only one article each. The Dean of St. Paul's, R. W. Church, wrote "The Text of the 'Divina Commedia,'" 23 November 1889. Lionel Johnson reviewed two studies of Laud on 23 March 1895. Benjamin Jowett provided an obituary subleader, "The Late Duke of Bedford," 7 March 1891. Coventry Patmore wrote "Swinburne's 'Chapman,'" 20 March 1875. Karl Pearson reviewed *The Story of the Heavens* on 22 May 1886. And J. C. Shairp contributed the obituary subleader, "In Memoriam.—Dr. John Brown," 20 May 1882.

Many of the writers mentioned above contributed to "Letters to the Editor," particularly J. M. Ludlow, Julia Wedgwood, and Thomas Hughes. Some of their letters were anonymous. The disclosure of the names of two further correspondents shows that the *Records* have some value in this connection. The letter on the automaton theory, signed "A Physiologist," on 28 November 1874, is by G. H. Lewes. And the 17 December 1887 one signed "E." concerning Julia Wedgwood's Darwin review of the previous week is by E. Darwin (thus giving us a glimpse of a dispute between relatives).

As one would expect, the *Records* make known the names of numerous obscure contributors, many of them far more prolific than any yet mentioned. For instance, though Beach Thomas lists Mrs. Cashel Hoey in his *Story of the Spectator*, he fails to state that she was one of the most frequent writers of reviews during the 1870's and 1880's. This is also true of John Dennis and George Hooper. Beach Thomas does not mention John Hutton at all. A brother of the literary editor, John Hutton was a prolific reviewer of minor novelists during this period. In the 1880's and 1890's P. V. Dickens, T. Clayton, A. F. Leach, J. F. Boyes, William Wallace, W. Hubbard, and Talbot Baines were among the steadiest of the more obscure contributors not recorded in Beach Thomas's pages.

But very much more important than any of the names yet mentioned as far as quantity of contribution is concerned are the names of the two editors themselves. Week after week for the better part of a generation half the *Spectator* was written by Townsend and Hutton. They wrote most of the paragraphs in the three-page "News of the Week" section, and their combined share of the longer articles (leaders, subleaders, and reviews) compared with that of other contributors typically stood at the ratio of eight to nine. Townsend, the senior proprietor, was the political editor. Normally, he wrote three leading articles a week, usually on European and Asian affairs, and a subleader. Frequently he wrote the reviews of the magazines. His partner, Hutton, the literary editor, averaged two leading articles on home politics, a subleader, and a book review. Occasionally he published short notices in "Current Literature." All told, Hutton contributed something like 3,500 articles during the period covered by the *Records*.

Although Hutton had very much more of a hand in Townsend's department of the *Spectator* than Townsend had in Hutton's, Townsend did sometimes provide literary reviews for the "Books" section. In his *Autobiography* Anthony Trollope revealed that Hutton had reviewed *Nina Balatka*, and declared him to have been of all the critics of his novels "the most observant, and generally the most eulogistic." Later in a footnote (which glances so pointedly at Hutton that the editor of the Oxford edition of the *Autobiography* indexes the passage as referring to him) Trollope states that he was especially hurt by the *Spectator's* criticism of *The Prime Minister* (22 July 1876).<sup>9</sup> The *Records* show that it was no. Hutton at all who wrote that review; Townsend was the reviewer, as he was of *The Way We Live Now* (26 June 1875) and of *Mr. Scarborough's Family* (12 May 1883).

But the *Records* identify more than six hundred literary articles by Hutton not hitherto known to be his. I now give nearly sixty concerning four major poets and an equal number of novelists. Hutton reviewed many forgotten authors, and many minor ones. In the latter class belong such reviews

as "The New Republic," 28 April 1877, "Demos," 10 April 1886, and "The Black Arrow," 11 August 1888. But a list of his reviews of major figures is more useful, and is therefore appended here.

**Matthew Arnold:** "Mr. Arnold as a Moral and Religious Teacher," 11 November 1876; "Matthew Arnold's Poems," 14 July 1877; "Matthew Arnold in the United States," 20 October 1883; "Mr. Matthew Arnold's Retirement," 13 November 1886; "Matthew Arnold," 21 April 1888; "Matthew Arnold's Charm," 7 December 1895; and "The Popularity of Matthew Arnold," 6 June 1896.

**Robert Browning:** "Mr. Browning's New Work," 11 December 1875; "Startling Poetry," 17 March 1883; "Mr. Browning's Theology," 6 December 1884; "Mr. Browning's New Volume," 5 February 1887; "Mr. Browning's Last Poems," 25 January 1890; and "The Life of Browning," 6 June 1891.

**A. C. Swinburne:** "Mr. Swinburne's 'Erechtheus'," 1 January 1876; "Mr. Swinburne's Tristram," 12 August 1882; "Mr. Swinburne's 'Lochrine,'" 7 January 1888.

**Alfred Tennyson:** "Mr. Tennyson's Drama on the Stage," 22 April 1876; "Mr. Tennyson's 'Harold'," 23 December 1876; "The Poet-Laureate's New Ballads," 18 December 1880; "Tennyson as Dramatist," 18 November 1882; "The Parchment Tennyson," 17 March 1883; "The Tennyson Peerage," 8 December 1883; "Becket," 20 December 1884; "The Poet-Laureate's New Poem," 7 November 1885; "The Poet-Laureate's New Poems," 12 December 1885; "Tennyson's New Poems," 25 December 1886; "Lord Tennyson's Dramatic Works," 16 April 1887; "Tennyson's New Poems," 21 December 1889; "Lord Tennyson's Fancy," 2 April 1892; "The Genius of Tennyson," 15 October 1892; and "Was Tennyson either Gnostic or Agnostic?" 7 January 1893.

**George Eliot:** "Gwendolen Harleth," 29 January 1876; "George Eliot's Heroines," 12 February 1876; "Daniel Deronda," 8 April 1876; "The Hero of 'Daniel Drona'," 10 June 1876; "The Strong Side of 'Daniel Deronda,'" 29 July 1876; "Daniel Deronda," 9 September 1876; "The 'Church Quarterly' on George Eliot," 3 November 1877; "George Eliot," 28 April 1883; "George Eliot's Essays," 1 March 1884; "Mr. Bray on George Eliot," 10 January 1885; "George Eliot's Humour," 31 January 1885; "George Eliot," 31 January 1885; and "Mr. Oscar Browning's 'George Eliot,'" 8 February 1890.

**Thomas Hardy:** "Far from the Madding Crowd," 19 December 1874; "The Hand of Ethelberta," 22 April 1876; "The Mayor of Casterbridge," 5 June 1886; "The Woodlanders," 26 March 1887; and "Mr. Hardy's 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles,'" 23 January 1892.

**Henry James:** "Washington Square," 5 February 1881; "The Portrait of a Lady," 26 November 1881; "The Bostonians," 20 March 1886; "The Princess Casamassima," 1 January 1887; and "The Reverter," 4 August 1888.

**Anthony Trollope:** "Harry Heathcote of Gangoil," 20 February 1875; "The Fixed Period," 18 March 1882; "Mr. Trollope's Shorter Tales," 1 April 1882; "Mr. Anthony Trollope," 9 December 1882; "From Miss Austen to Mr. Trollope," 16 December 1882; "Mr. Trollope as Critic," 27 October 1883; and "Anthony Trollope's Autobiography," 27 October 1883.

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#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>"News of the Week," *Spectator*, 11 September 1897, p. 325.

<sup>2</sup>I am currently preparing a biographical and critical study of Hutton, which will be supplemented with a bibliography of his political, religious, and philosophical, as well as his literary, writings—more than 6,000 items in all.

<sup>3</sup>William Beach Thomas, *The Story of The Spectator 1828-1928* (London, 1928), pp. 231-7. It is plain that Thomas had no knowledge of the *Records* described in the present article.

<sup>4</sup>The Earl of Oxford and Asquith, *Memories and Reflections 1852-1927* (London, 1928), I, 67-9.

<sup>5</sup>Edward C. Mach and W. H. G. Armytage, *Thomas Hughes* (London, 1952), p. 94.

<sup>6</sup>Evan Charteris, *The Life and Letters of Sir Edmund Gosse* (London, 1931), pp. 39, 41, 223-4.

<sup>7</sup>Frank Harris *His Life and Adventures*, ed. Grant Richards (London, 1947), p. 217.

<sup>8</sup>Joseph Hone, *The Life of George Moore* (London, 1936), pp. 87, 91.

<sup>9</sup>Anthony Trollope, *An Autobiography*, ed. Frederick Page (Oxford, 1950), pp. 205, 360.

#### IV. REVIEWS

Carl J. Weber, *The Rise and Fall of James Ripley Osgood: A Biography*, Colby College Press, 1959.

James R. Osgood, a native of Maine and a graduate of Bowdoin College in the class of 1854, began his career as a publisher with Ticknor & Fields of Boston, the principal house of New England

specializing in the production of belles-lettres. In 1871 he became the principal partner of its successor, James R. Osgood & Co. but was soon forced by the need for capital to ally himself with Henry O. Houghton, a printer whose name still survives in that of a prominent publishing firm. A second revamping of Osgood's company lasted only a few years, and in 1885 he went to New York to work for the Harpers. His long experience in dealing with British authors naturally led to an assignment as London agent and in 1891 caused him to establish himself with Clarence McIlvaine as an independent publisher with headquarters in London. There he renewed and expanded his connections with a variety of English writers but was soon cut off by death, at the age of fifty-six. Thomas Hardy and William Black were among the chief mourners at his funeral in Kensall Green, and among the company there gathered were Bret Harte, Edwin Abbey, George du Maurier, and T. P. O'Connor.

Had Osgood been buried in Boston the assembly would doubtless have been more considerable, for few idees of the galaxy of New Englanders had failed to see at least one of their books published under his auspices—and indeed the same could be said of men like Whitman, Mark Twain, Howells, and even the author of Uncle Remus. Osgood's services to Tennyson, Browning, FitzGerald, and Dickens, for example, were almost as notable, for the various companies with which he was allied all featured British literature—almost always in authorized editions which paid royalties. Invariably, however, he seems to have run into financial grief in spite of the brilliance of his list—a fact which makes one somewhat suspicious of attempts to assign the difficulties to his partners or to Nemesis.

Mr. Weber's book is the first study to deal with its subject, and, compared with most biographies of British or American publishers of the period, is an eminent one. The scholar might have been better served if footnotes and a bibliography had been added to enhance the careful presentation of information. Objection might be raised also to the lack of proportion in detailing Osgood's relations with Kate Field, his adventures as a companion of Dickens on his second American tour, his abortive plan to publish a collected edition of Hardy, or his trip with Mark Twain down the Mississippi River, but the handicaps imposed by the paucity and reticence of the correspondence left by the publisher are explanation enough. There are in existence certain business records that might have added here and there to the record of Osgood's firm, but such material is likely to be dreary stuff. Mr. Weber, perforce, rounds out his book with anecdotes and details of the activities of famous authors, and when in distress over the lack of information on his subject's last days has Thomas Hardy to help him manufacture a silken purse.

Americana like the cost of a year at Bowdoin (\$157 in 1854) and a fairly substantial picture of the publishing practices of the time are valuable adjuncts to history, but Mr. Weber's chief contributions centers on the very important matter of author-publisher relations. From his study one gathers new evidence of the intimate relationship between American book trade and the Victorian poet or novelist—a relationship fostered not only by the avid demand and the excellent supply but also by the absence of an international copyright act prior to Congressional action in 1890. There was a very special reason why Hardy, Dickens, and Tennyson were more widely read in the United States than in England, and the biography of an intermediary like Osgood thus assumes an importance beyond that of the record of a pleasant business man whose literary reach exceeded his financial grasp.

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Thomas Flanagan, *The Irish Novelists 1800-1850*, Columbia University Press, 1959.

The title of Professor Thomas Flanagan's book—*The Irish Novelists 1800-1850*—is misleading because this is not a historical survey of a neatly-defined fifty-year period and because it deals with the work of only five novelists instead of the ten or eleven one might expect. Moreover, Professor Flanagan's sensitive and lively style, and his aptitude for appreciating the delightful ironies in the careers of the novelists he studies, make it unthinkable that he could have devised such an inelegant and inaccurate title. University press books operate against enough difficulties as it is without making life harder by giving them tasteless—and in this instance incorrect—titles to make sure that nobody but the specialists will read them. Actually *The Irish Novelists 1800-1850* is a perceptive and beautifully written critical study of the work of five interesting novelists—Maria Edgeworth, Lady Morgan, John Banim, Gerald Griffin, and William Carleton—and of the peculiar and complex world they lived in.

One of these five is the author of a masterpiece—*Castle Rackrent*—and needs neither eulogy nor eulogy. Lady Morgan and John Banim, on the other hand, are forgotten and not even Professor Flanagan's book is likely to resurrect them. Gerald Griffin's modest masterpiece—*The Collegians*, which inspired Boucicault's *The Colleen Bawn*—is still read in Ireland and its author has been the subject of a fairly recent study by Ethel Mannin. The last of the five is the most interesting and the one most likely to be studied, and we hope reprinted, if the current interest in Irish literary studies continues to broaden itself. William Carleton, whom Yeats praised elaborately to no avail,

had genius of a peculiarly Irish vintage, which is to say that he was a story-teller, born in rural Ireland where the Gaelic tradition was still alive and where story telling was thought of as essentially an oral art. It was Carleton's misfortune, however, to have the temperament of an artist without an artist's discipline and to have lived half a century before the right audience for his art had come into existence.

"Ireland of the nineteenth century," writes Professor Flanagan, "was a fragmented culture, a dismaying and complicated tangle of classes, creeds, loyalties, and aspirations." It was a country of more than eight million people—more than twice as many as live in Ireland today. For most of these people life during that period was frequently incisively tragic. The period, which was immediately preceded by the uprisings of 1798, began with the inglorious extinction of the Irish Parliament—Ireland henceforth to be represented at Westminster. After that it was revolution in 1803, agitation under O'Connell for the emancipation of the Roman Catholic majority and for the repeal of the Act of Union, the formation of Young Ireland and the revolution of 1848, and finally—the most terrible memory for all Irishmen—the great potato famine of the middle '40's, which killed a million people and sent three million more into exile to the new world.

Professor Flanagan might have selected other novelists—Maxwell, Lever, and Lover would have served his purpose well—but he could never have left out Carleton, that "great Irish historian" as Yeats called him. Carleton lived through the whole period and saw it all in a way that none of the other novelists Professor Flanagan selects saw it. Professor Flanagan's three chapters on Carleton show how well he has read and how shrewdly and justly he has estimated the uneven work of that natural genius. Carleton, he writes, was the product of "the lost, splendid, terrible world of the Celtic peasantry, and his life has the charm of his own enigmatic stories"—a splendid opening estimate. He was priest, scholar, and hedge poet all rolled into one and thus represented in his own person the three figures which dominate the landscape of rural Irish society of the period. He had grown up in the bosom of the Gaelic oral tradition and consequently his stories are about people who reveal themselves more by what they say than what they do. They have, as Professor Flanagan observes, "a sensuous delight in the thing said," because Carleton knew that this was basic to their character. His stories not only deal with every aspect of the miserable and the gay in the lives of the peasantry but achieve a cumulative effect on the reader by recreating a "swarming, tumultuous countryside."

Yet Professor Flanagan observes that Carleton was not himself a simple peasant but "deeply ambivalent," and that this ambivalence gives his work a dynamic quality so that one finds in it not only the life of its own time and place but the values that have exploded tragedy in modern Europe—class hatred, religious prejudice, and social injustice. Carleton worked under formidable handicaps in addition to poverty and the irregularity of his life. He lived in a society which insisted upon personal loyalty and demanded a literature with "a fixed, single vision of explicit commitment." This Carleton accepted because he had to, but it served to help him organize his experiences and the terrible things he had seen into the material of art. But it also forced him into an alliance which extracted its toll from his art—propaganda in the form of tedious moralizing to the point where his loosely structured novels nearly collapsed. His attempts to declare his independence from the "pseudo-patriots" were sporadic, ineffective, and eventually ceased altogether.

Professor Flanagan concedes that this is the great flaw in Carleton's art but at the same time, and by a perverse logic, he thinks that it makes Carleton a better writer than Synge, who didn't seem to know as Carleton did that "language had moral sources and moral consequences." Citing Carleton's weakness as the factor which makes him a "better writer" than Synge may be hard to swallow for some readers who may feel that the Playboy's exposure "of the villainy of Mayo and the fools is here" shows a more artful appreciation of the moral sources and consequences of language than anything one can find in Carleton. I find it harder, however, to argue with Professor Flanagan's judgment that Carleton's vision was essentially pagan, pantheistic, and that his "comparison of his people to the moorlands and meadows is something more than metaphor." Here is where Carleton may be compared more meaningfully with Synge and, to a lesser degree, with Yeats.

Professor Flanagan's judgments on Maria Edgeworth, Lady Morgan, John Banim, and Gerald Griffin are equally as probing and as valid as his treatment of Carleton. In the case of Lady Morgan they are a little too ingenious, but who has read enough of her to judge them? In three introductory chapters Professor Flanagan describes the historical background and describes the society his novelists lived in. Since his approach to each of the novelists is a comprehensive one, such preparation for the reader is vitally necessary. Finally, Professor Flanagan tries to define the forces which made the Irish novel of the period what it was before he turns to each of his five examples.

This book is not only a considerable critical achievement but a delight to read.

New York University

David H. Greene

Philip Appleman, William Madden, and Michael Wolff, eds. 1859: Entering An Age of Crisis, Indiana University Press, 1959.

1859: Entering An Age of Crisis (Indiana University Press) is a collection of essays covering

various aspects of British cultural and political life a century ago. The contributors include nine Americans, six Englishmen, and one Canadian. Their general purpose is to take a series of soundings at this point in the flow of history and thereby to measure the strength and direction of the currents. The book makes no claim to being an exhaustive study of mid-Victorian England; little is said about economic trends, the non-literary arts, scientific development (apart from the Darwinian theory), or the British place in world affairs. The essays deal mainly with literature and criticism, religious thought, the movement of ideas, and mid-Victorian politics. These subjects, however, are analyzed in considerable depth, and the book as a whole suggests various generalizations about nineteenth century culture and society.

1859 was, of course, an unusually significant year. It saw the publication not only of *Origin of Species* but also Mill's *On Liberty*, of major works by Tennyson, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, and Meredith, and of several influential, though more ephemeral, books of religious controversy. 1859 may be regarded, in fact, as marking the apogee of the Victorian mind. In political history the year was less important. Much of the fifties and sixties, in fact, was a period of relative political quiescence and considerable national complacency, symbolized by the figure of Palmerston, who became Prime Minister in 1859. The reforming energies of the generation responsible for the first Reform Bill had subsided, and those associated with Gladstonian liberalism had not yet acquired impetus. But the calmness of the political weather was conducive to cultural activity. The highest achievements of the Victorian mind occurred during this interlude of relative harmony and stability.

The editors of this book do not justify their subtitle. All ages of European history have been ages of crisis. Why should the period following 1859 be singled out as in some way peculiarly critical? In reality, the following half-century was probably both the most peaceful and the most progressive era that Europe has ever known. It is true that it ended in an age of world cataclysmism some of the causes of which can be traced back into the nineteenth century; but we cannot fairly consider the world wars and totalitarian states of the twentieth century as inevitable results of what the Victorians did or failed to do. Nor do any of the contributors of the book trace much connection between the Victorian achievement and the problems of 1959. They write, however, with an awareness of the direction of cultural change and with a recognition that some of these changes cannot be regarded as improvements.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of Victorian culture, as described in this book, is that men of learning and creative imagination could address themselves to an audience of cultivated general readers in the confidence that their works would be appreciated and understood. There was not yet any sense of mutual incomprehension and divorce between the intellectual class and the general public. The greatest scientific work of 1859 was written in lucid English prose, without any use of a technical vocabulary, and found a large audience. The novels that were most widely reviewed and appreciated in 1859 are those which still seem outstanding to the critics of 1959. With the exception of Fitzgerald's *Rubáiyát*, all the important works published in 1859 achieved immediate recognition. By contrast, the most striking and distinctive feature of the modern cultural situation is that scientists, scholars, and artists are no longer in communication with the general public. Most modern intellectuals in all fields now address themselves to each other, feeling that it is impossible to establish contact with a public whose tastes are either middle-brow or frankly illiterate. The great books of the twentieth century, unlike those of the nineteenth, have mostly been written for small coteries and have only gradually achieved any wider fame. While much might be said about the responsibility of the intellectual, the main causes for this change are, no doubt, on the one hand, a necessary growth of specialization owing to the advance of knowledge and, on the other hand, the lowering of audience standards through the extension of popular education, the application of democratic ideals to areas where they are inappropriate, and the consequent temptation of cultural commercialism.

If, however, we extend our observations to 1759 (as suggested by Michael Wolff in his essay on *Victorian Reviewers and Cultural Responsibility*), then we become aware that the changes which have occurred during the past century were already in operation during the previous century, though they had not yet produced overt results. The Victorian audience was already wider, more diversified, less disciplined, and less cultivated than the audience to which Dr. Johnson could address himself. The more obvious weaknesses of Victorian literature in general can, in fact, be ascribed to its attempt to cater to an extensive middle-class clientele with narrow moral standards, sentimental tastes and prejudices, and no coherent system of religious or philosophical beliefs. Writers such as Tennyson and Dickens, to cite the two most obvious examples, failed to achieve their full potentialities because they were partially corrupted by trying to meet the expectations of their readers. In consequence, the Victorian age cannot be ranked as one of the world's great literary periods, and its products have survived chiefly as sources of entertainment rather than of enlightenment.

Throughout past history mass audiences have usually been willing to support great art only

when it served religious functions, as in classical Greece and medieval Europe. Very rarely, the Elizabethan drama being the most notable example, a popular art form has been capable of achieving the highest distinction. These illustrations do not suggest that the dilemma of the modern intellectual is likely to find any easy solution. A study of artist-audience relations during the past hundred years might, however, do much to illuminate it.

New York University

H. B. Parkes

#### V. ENGLISH X NEWS

- \* The deadline for submission of papers for consideration for the 1960 program is June 1. The chairman of the Program Committee for 1960 is Professor G. Robert Stange, Department of English, University of Chicago, Chicago 37, Illinois.
- \* In the name of all subscribers to *VNL*, the editor wishes to express his deepest gratitude to Professor Oscar Maurer (*University of Texas*) for five years of faithful service as bibliographer of the *Victorian Newsletter*. His job has been a tasking one, which he has carried on with the meticulous efficiency with which his name is identified in Victorian studies. It is with regret that the editor accepts his resignation, but it is pleasant to know that his time will thus be freed for other, more exciting projects.
- \* According to word received from Professor Lionel Stevenson (*Duke University*), the Harvard University Press has expressed a wish to publish *Victorian Fiction: A Guide to Research* in a format similar to that of its predecessor, *The Victorian Poets*.
- \* Peak attendance at the English X meeting in Chicago was 270. Upwards of 50 were required to stand.
- \* Our congratulations to Professor Gordon N. Ray on his appointment as Associate Secretary General of the Guggenheim Foundation. We understand that Professor Ray will be leaving his present post as Vice President and Provost of the University of Illinois at the end of the current academic year and will take up residence in New York City.
- \* Miss Anthea Morrison (*The University, Edmund Street, Birmingham 3, England*) writes: "Can anyone give me information as to the location of the library of Edmund Clarence Stedman (1833-1908), the banker-poet of New York. I am anxious to find the copy of *Le Tambeau de Théophile Gautier* published by Lemerre, Paris, 1873, which A. C. Swinburne sent to Stedman on 23rd February 1874. I am editing the five Greek epigrams which Swinburne contributed to this volume. Swinburne had himself corrected some of the mispunctuations etc., which had occurred in the printing of his epigrams, in the copy he sent to Stedman."
- \* F. R. Leavis' *New Bearings in English Poetry* will join the growing list of Ann Arbor Paperbacks (*University of Michigan Press*) on March 25.
- \* Professor Sarah Youngblood (*University of Minnesota*) and Professor Donna Gerstenberger (*University of Colorado*) are preparing *A Yeats Handbook*. The book is intended to be a source of scholarly and critical information on all aspects of Yeats' work, and the authors would welcome any unpublished material or biographical information, especially information on performances, professional or amateur, of Yeats' plays.
- \* The Conference on Science-Fiction of the Modern Language Association has begun a newsletter — *Extrapolation: A Science-Fiction Newsletter*. Thomas D. Claerson (*The College of Wooster*) is editor. The first number appeared in December 1959 and contained "An Annotated Checklist of American Science-Fiction 1800-1915."
- \* John Hagan (*Wellesley College*) and Albert J. Fyfe (*Indiana State Teachers College, Terre Haute*) write as follows:

"After conducting a preliminary survey of existing resources, we have decided to prepare an annotated edition of all the writings of John Stuart Mill (exclusive of personal correspondence) which have never been collected and published in book form. We would therefore greatly appreciate hearing from anyone who can help us (a) identify any of Mill's published works not listed in existing bibliographies; (b) discover the whereabouts of any extant MSS. of Mill's works,

published and unpublished alike; and (c) locate obscure reprints of articles, speeches, official reports, and the like, which may have been issued under Mill's supervision. We are especially anxious to hear from persons who now own or know the whereabouts of any of the Mill papers (or copies of such) which were formerly in the possession of the late Professor Harold J. Laski."

#### ENGLISH X OFFICERS

- Chairman, Carl R. Woodring (*University of Wisconsin*) Secretary, George H. Ford (*University of Rochester*).
- Advisory and Nominating Committee: Ch., Lionel Stevenson (*Duke University*); Carl Woodring (*ex officio*); A. Dwight Culler, Ada Nisbet (1959-1960); William E. Buckler, John T. Fain (1960-1961).
- 1960 Program Committee: Ch., G. Robert Stange (*University of Minnesota*).
- Bibliography Committee: Ch., Robert C. Slack (*Carnegie Institute of Technology*), Oscar E. Maurer, Robert A. Donovan, Charles T. Dougherty, Donald J. Gray, Richard C. Tobias, Ronald E. Freeman.
- Editor, *Victorian Newsletter*: William E. Buckler (*New York University*).

#### VI. RECENT PUBLICATIONS: A SELECTED LIST

September, 1959 - February, 1960

##### I General

- BIBLIOGRAPHY.** Stange, G. Robert. "Reprints of Nineteenth-Century British Fiction." *College English*, December, pp. 178-183. A perceptive — and amusing — discussion of "educational" as opposed to "demimonde" reprints.
- CRITICISM AND LITERARY HISTORY.** Brightfield, Myron F. "America and the Americans, 1840 - 1860, as Depicted in English Novels of the Period." *American Literature*, November, pp. 309-324. Lack of familiarity with America prevented even the "realistic" Victorian novelists from dealing fully and fairly with Americans.
- Flanagan, Thomas. *The Irish Novelists, 1800 - 1850*. Columbia University Press. On Maria Edgeworth, Lady Morgan, John Banim, Gerald Griffin, and William Carleton.
- Nicoll, Allardyce. *A History of English Drama*. Vol. V: *Late Nineteenth-Century Drama, 1850 - 1900*. Cambridge University Press. A new edition, with supplementary notes and addenda to the hand-list of late nineteenth-century plays.
- Peters, Robert L. "Toward an 'Un-Definition' of Decadent as Applied to British Literature of the Nineteenth Century." *Journal of Aesthetics*, December, pp. 258-264. A critique of Clyde Ryals' article in the same journal, December, 1958.
- Stang, Richard. *The Theory of the Novel in England, 1850 - 1870*. Routledge. Based on criticism of fiction by Hutton, Lewes, Roscoe, and others. *Rev. TLS*, 20 Nov., p. 678.
- ECONOMICS AND POLITICS.** Gash, N. *Politics in the Age of Peel: A Study of the Techniques of Parliamentary Representation*. Longmans.
- Hanham, H. J. *Election and Party Management: Politics in the Time of Disraeli and Gladstone*. Longmans.
- HISTORY.** Briggs, Asa, ed. *Chartist Studies*. Macmillan. *Rev. TLS*, 18 Dec., p. 738.
- Gernsheim, Helmut and Alison. *Queen Victoria*. Longmans. A pictorial biography.
- McDowell, R. B. *British Conservatism, 1832-1914*. Faber.
- PUBLISHING AND JOURNALISM.** Blackie, Agnes A. C. *Blackie and Sons, 1809 - 1959*. Edinburgh: Blackie. Sesqui-centennial history of a notable publish house.

- "Enough of Blood." *TLS*, 4 Dec., supp. pp. i-ii. Sensational fore-runners of magazines for boys and girls.
- Lochhead, Marion. "Miss Rigby and *The Quarterly Review*: Pioneer Woman Journalist." *Quarterly Review*, January, pp. 59-69.  
On the author of the notorious review of *Jane Eyre*.
- SOCIAL. Bovill, E. W. *The England of Nimrod and Surtees*. Oxford.
- Halsted, D. G. *Doctor in the Nineties*. Christopher Johnson.
- Symonds, John. *Madame Blavatsky*. Odhams.

## II

## Individual Authors

- ARNOLD. Brooks, Roger L. "Matthew Arnold and his Contemporaries: A Check List of Unpublished and Published Letters." *SP*, October, pp. 647-653.  
Parrish, Stephen Maxfield, ed. *A Concordance to the Poems of Matthew Arnold*. Cornell University Press.
- BAGEHOT. Buchan, Alastair. *The Spare Chancellor: The Life of Walter Bagehot*. Chatto and Windus. Rev. *TLS*, 16 Oct., p. 594.  
McKenzie, Robert. "Bagehot and 'the Rule of Mere Numbers.'" *Listener*, 19 Nov., pp. 870-872.  
An articulate liberal's distrust of "mass democracy."
- BORROW. *The Bible in Spain*. Ed. by Peter Quennell. Macdonald.
- BRADLEY. Wollheim, Richard. *F. H. Bradley*. Pelican Books. A critical study of Bradley's philosophy. Rev. (very favorably) by Gilbert Ryle in *Spectator*, 15 Jan., p. 81.
- BRONTË. Brick, Allan R. "Wuthering Heights: Narrators, Audience, and Message." *College English*, November, pp. 80-86. Lockwood as "wedding guest" and the shifting points of view in the novel.
- BROUGHAM, JOHN. Ryan, Pat M., Jr. "John Brougham: The Gentle Satirist: A Critique, with Note and a Handlist and Census." *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, December, pp. 619-640. On a prolific contemporary of Boucicault, who spent most of his life as actor, producer, and playwright in America.
- BROWNING: Preyer, Robert. "Robert Browning: A Reading of the Early Narratives." *ELH*, December, pp. 531-548.  
A valuable study of Browning's shift from the subjective and personal to the dramatic.
- DARWIN. The flood of centennial books and articles continues: —  
Darlington, C. D. *Darwin's Place in History*. Blackwell.  
Huxley, Julian. "Darwin and the Idea of Evolution." *Hibbert Journal*, October, pp. 1-12.  
Raven, Charles E. "Darwinism: Past and Present." *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Autumn, pp. 568-571.  
Wynn-Tyson, Esme. "Darwinism and Spiritual Evolution." *Contemporary Review*, November, pp. 234-236.
- DICKENS. Aylmer, Felix. *Dickens Incognito*. Hart-Davis. Detective work, on Dickens' son by Ellen Ternan.  
Engel, Monroe. *The Maturity of Dickens*. Harvard University Press. A study of the later novels. Rev. *TLS*, 20 Nov., p. 678.
- ELIOT. Stump, Reva. *Movement and Vision in George Eliot's Novels*. University of Washington Press. Rev. *TLS*, 11 Sept., p. 520.  
Thale, Jerome. *The Novels of George Eliot*. Columbia University Press. Rev. *TLS*, 6 Nov., p. 638.  
Thomson, Fred C. "The Genesis of *Felix Holt*." *PMLA*, December, pp. 576-584. Based on a manuscript notebook.  
Welsh, Alexander. "George Eliot and the Romance." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, December, pp. 241-254. Anti-romantic elements superimposed on a typical situation and plot of romance, in *Will on the Floss*.
- FITZGERALD. Barth, Max. "Julilaum eines Buches." *Deutsche Rundschau*, November, pp. 1017-1024.  
Includes German translations of many of FitzGerald's quatrains.
- HARDY. Buckler, William E., ed. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Houghton Mifflin.  
Clifford, Emma. "Thomas Hardy and the Historians." *SP*, October, pp. 654-668.  
How Hardy used his historical sources in *The Dynasts*.  
Herman, William R. "Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*." *Explicator*, Vol. XVIII, Item 16.  
A perceptive note on the symbolic structure of the novel.
- HARRIS. *My Life and Adventures*. London: Arrow Books. A new edition.
- HOPKINS. Mellow, Elgin W. "Gerard Manley Hopkins and His Public, 1889-1918." *MP*, November, pp. 94-99.  
Stephenson, A. A. "G. M. Hopkins and John Donne." *Downside Review*, Summer-Autumn 1959, pp. 300-320.  
A Jesuit critic compares the devotional poetry of Hopkins and Donne.
- HOUSMAN. Carter, John. *A. E. Housman: A Centenary Exhibition*. London: University College.  
Walde, E. H. S., and Dorsch, T. S. "A. E. Housman and Matthew Arnold." *Boston University Studies in English*, Spring 1960, pp. 22-39.

- MACAULAY. Hartley, Anthony. "Lord Macaulay, 1800-1859." *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 31 Dec., p. 11.  
Sees Macaulay's life and work as "part of that nineteenth-century tradition of liberal thought to which we are increasingly returning [sic]."
- MALLOCK. Yarker, P. M. "W. H. Mallock's Other Novels." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, December, pp. 189-205.  
Seven novels by the author of *The New Republic* are "honest attempts to translate into fiction the greatest problems of the time."
- MILL. Levi, Albert William. "The Value of Freedom: Mill's *Liberty* (1859-1959)." *Ethics*, October, pp. 37-46.  
The sociological, ethical, metaphysical, and political grounds for Mill's belief that the power of society over the individual should be limited.
- MORRIS. Patrick, John M. "Morris and Froissart: 'Geffray Teste Noire' and 'The Haystack in the Floods.'" *Notes and Queries*, November 1958, pp. 425-427; "Morris and Froissart Again." *Notes and Queries*, September 1959, pp. 331-333.
- NEWMAN. Downside, Abbot of. "The Significance of Newman Today: The Theory of Development." *Dublin Review*, December, pp. 337-346. Newman's theory is a perilous one except to those who recognize in the Church a divinely given control.
- ROSSETTI. Packer, Lona Mosk. "Christina Rossetti's Correspondence with her Nephew: Some Unpublished Letters." *Notes and Queries*, December, pp. 425-432.
- RUSKIN. Evans, Joan, and Whitehouse, J. H., eds. *The Diaries of John Ruskin, Vol. III: 1874-1889*. Oxford University Press. This valuable series is now complete. Rev. *TLS*, 4 Dec., p. 702.  
Evans, Joan, ed. *The Lamp of Beauty: Writings on Art by John Ruskin*. Phaidon Press.
- STEVENSON. Balfour, Michael. "How the Biography of Robert Louis Stevenson Came to be Written." *TLS*, 15, 22 Jan., pp. 37, 52. On the origins of what Henley called a "barley-sugar" biography, by the biographer's son.
- SWINBURNE. Lang, Cecil Y., ed. *The Swinburne Letters, Vol. I: 1854-1869; Vol. II: 1869-1875*. Yale University Press. To be completed in six volumes. Rev. by Gordon Ray in *NYFRB*, 24 Jan., p. 22.

continued on page 44

## HARRIET MARTINEAU, A RADICAL VICTORIAN

By R. K. Webb

A biography of Harriet Martineau (1802-76), a dedicated reformer of Victorian times. A woman of many enthusiasms, Miss Martineau first became famous in 1832 with a series of tales popularizing the science of political economy. After visiting America in 1834-36, she wrote two highly controversial books about the social life of this country. She also wrote a few novels and a history of England. In telling the story of her life, the author answers two questions: what forces in the early nineteenth century formed and were reflected in this woman, and what can a study of her amazingly consistent attitudes tell us about early Victorian society?

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## THE THEORY OF THE NOVEL IN ENGLAND, 1850-1870

By Richard Stang

A valuable study of criticism of fiction in the mid-Victorian era. This important body of criticism has been generally neglected because most of it appeared in long-forgotten periodicals. In his book, Dr. Stang reveals and analyzes brilliant discussions of the techniques and subject matter of novels by such critics as W. C. Roscoe, R. H. Hutton, George Brinley, Walter Bagehot, and G. H. Lewes. He also sets forth the views of Dickens, George Eliot, Thackeray, Meredith, and Trollope on the requirements and accomplishments of the novel. In doing so, Dr. Stang has provided a much-needed missing chapter in English literary history.

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- THACKERAY. Brander, L. *Thackeray*. Longmans.  
 Essay and bibliography, in "Writers and their Work" series.  
 Tilford, John E., Jr. "The Degradation of Becky Sharp." *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Autumn, pp. 603-608.
- THOMPSON. *Francis Thompson Centenary, 1859-1959: Catalogue of Manuscripts, Letters, and Books in the Harris Public Library, Preston*. Preston Public Library.  
 Connolly, Terence L., ed. *The Real Robert Louis Stevenson and Other Critical Essays*. New York: University Publishers. A collection of Thompson's reviews and other articles.  
 Reid, J. C. *Francis Thompson: Man and Poet*. Routledge. A critical biography. Rev. in *TLS*, 1 Jan., p. 20.
- WILDE. Harris, Frank. *Oscar Wilde: His Life and Confessions*. Michigan State University Press.  
 Harris's wildly imaginative biography, first published in this form in 1916, is here reprinted.

### PROJECTS

- WALTER BAGEHOT. Norman St. John-Stevas is preparing a collected edition of Bagehot's writings, at the request of the *Economist*. He asks particularly for information as to the whereabouts of Bagehot's private papers. *TLS*, 2 Oct., p. 561.
- EDWARD CARPENTER. E. F. Carpenter is writing a biography. *TLS*, 15 Jan., p. 33.
- EDWARD FITZGERALD. Joanna Richardson has been commissioned to edit the letters. *TLS*, 22 Jan., p. 49.
- GARIBALDI. Peter de Polnay is engaged on a life. *TLS*, 22 Jan., p. 49.
- MARK LEMON. Arthur A. Adrian is gathering materials for a biography. *TLS*, 16 Oct., p. 593.
- CARDINAL WISEMAN. Brian Fothergill is preparing a biography and will make use of the Wiseman archives at Archbishop's House, Westminster. *TLS*, 6 Nov., p. 643.

University of Texas

Oscar Maurer

THE VICTORIAN NEWSLETTER is edited for the English X Group of the Modern Language Association by William E. Buckler, 737 East Building, New York University, New York 3, New York. Subscription rates in the United States and Canada are \$1.00 for one year and \$2.00 for three years. All checks should be made payable to William E. Buckler, personally, so that they may be easily negotiated. The subscription rates for the United Kingdom are 7/6 for one year and 15/ for three years. Checks should be made payable to K. J. Fielding, C. F. Mott Training College, Prescott., The Hazels, Lancs., England. Mr. Fielding is the British Representative of VNL.