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## Mrs. Gamp as the Great Mother: A Dickensian Use of the Archetype\*

Veronica M. S. Kennedy

IN THE YEAR AFTER the Dickens centennial, it seems hardly necessary to point out that ever since Edmund Wilson's essay "Dickens: The Two Scrooges" it has been a commonplace of Dickens scholarship and criticism to take his works immensely seriously; and, further, that since the rise of mythologically oriented criticism several studies of Dickens' darker, pathetic, and tragic creations have already appeared. This paper, however, is an attempt at an analysis of a lighter, comic creation, according to certain of Jung's studies of the personality, especially as they have been presented to us in Neumann's monumental analysis of the female archetype in *The Great Mother*.

Little criticism of Dickens' work can be attempted without some use of biographical material; this is perhaps especially relevant to the present study, for the female influences on Charles Dickens as infant, boy, and youth were in some respects unusual. All children are children of the goddess, but Dickens' mother embodied her in richly diverse forms. Until midnight on February 6, 1812, she danced at a ball: he was born in the early hours of February 7. A classicist might call him the son of the Muse Terpsichore. Later, this gay and pleasure-loving mother became one of his earliest teachers, still fulfilling one of the positive roles of the mother goddess. Also in early childhood, his relationship with his gifted sister Fanny was close and affectionate. His nursemaid, Mary Weller, too, and her often rather terrifying stories played an important part in the formation of Dickens' artistic imagination. Mingling delight and terror, such tales as the story of Captain Murderer, who, poisoned by his cannibal pie, "swell[ed] and turn[ed] blue . . . until he reached from floor to ceiling and from wall to wall,"<sup>1</sup> haunted Dickens to the end of his life, and he was to repeat Mary Weller's name (with variations) over and over again in his novels. His aunt, the widowed Mary Allen, was also important in the Dickens household, and it was through her son, James Lamert, that Dickens found his post in Warren's blacking factory; his experiences there were to give him the psychic wound that influenced, perhaps, his whole artistic life. But before his horrifying sojourn at Warren's, Dickens had become familiar with the goddess in many books, among them the *Tales of the Genii*, one of which tells the tale of the Merchant Abudah who was

nightly terrorized by a hag who rose from a box. Such tales of terror melded together with his childish fear that his father might agree with his wife to keep Charles at the blacking factory, even though his work had become financially unnecessary to the family; they melded, too, with Charles' jealousy of Fanny, who won her scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music at the very same time that he was degraded to the position of "a little labouring hind." All these influences worked together to plant in him by the age of twelve a complex image of the Great Mother in all her varied joy and terror. Later on, but still in his youth, Dickens was slightly rejected by Maria Beadnell and somewhat in pique married Catherine Hogarth, only to love Catherine and both her younger sisters, Mary and Georgina — a relationship, we might say, with the goddess in triad form.

Perhaps, then, if we may take it that the archetype of the Great Mother is deep in the human unconscious and that each person has his or her own experience of her, we may say that Dickens had certain unique preparations for his role as an artist, therefore as the interpreter of archetypes to the rest of humanity.

The feminine archetype is multiple: the Great Mother embodies circularity, polarity, transformation. Both preserver and destroyer, she has as many aspects as there are stages in psychohistory. How, then, may we select, from the bewildering variety of females created by Dickens to fill the world of his novels, one who embodies the Great Mother most fully and in the most Dickensian way? She should be multifarious and she should appear in one of his earlier novels — for one must come to terms with the anima before middle life — in order fully to embody the Great Mother, and she should be comic to be fully Dickensian: who better, then, than Mrs. Gamp?

Physically, spiritually, in language, in tastes, by association, and by occupation Mrs. Gamp is the eternal symbolic female, and she is in her own right a monstrously comic personage, whose richness so fills the pages of *Martin Chuzzlewit* that it comes as a shock to return to the novel and to discover that, in fact, she appears in only eight chapters out of fifty-four. To look at her as Dickens presented her is to see the comic depiction of the Great Mother,

\* This paper and the one that follows by Professor Sussman were read originally in December 1971 to Group Ten of the Modern Language Association.

1. "Nurses Stories," *The Uncommercial Traveller*, XV (1861). All quotations used in this paper are taken from *The Biographical Edition of the Works of Charles Dickens*, 19 vols., ed. Arthur W[augh] (London, 1902-1903).

delineated stroke by stroke, as the artist wrote her out of himself and so overpowered her. It will be readily apparent that the comic handling of any archetypal figure is not less significant than the tragic handling; laughter is strongly related to voracious, devouring power; by laughter a demonic presence may be exorcised.

Mrs. Gamp is physically very like some of the earliest representations of the female form known to us. She is shaped very like the Venus of Willendorf. But apart from this superficial likeness to those corpulent, semi-abstract depictions of maternity and earthy fertility, Mrs. Gamp shares many attributes with the primal goddess; these Dickens successively reveals, in a series of epiphanies.

In her positive aspect, the primordial goddess is she who gives birth or assists at birth: she is Ceres and Juno Lucina. Mrs. Gamp is both a mother and a midwife; she shows the utmost gusto in her work, which is both a profession and an avocation. But in her negative aspect, the primordial goddess is death and the grave itself: she is Atropos and Hela. Mrs. Gamp is a layer-out and washer of the dead. Significantly, in the first of her eight appearances (and eight is, on occasion, a magic number), Mrs. Gamp is seen to include the complete circle of the archetype as it is schematized by Neumann:

Mr. Pecksniff had been to the undertaker, and was now on his way to another officer in the train of mourning: a female functionary, a nurse and watcher, and performer of nameless offices about the persons of the dead. . . . Her name . . . was Gamp. . . .

This lady lodged at a bird-fancier's, next door but one to the celebrated mutton-pie shop, and directly opposite to the original cat's-meat warehouse. . . . Mrs. Gamp was in her highest walk of art, a monthly nurse, or, as her sign-board boldly had it, "Midwife." (ch. 19)

Here Mrs. Gamp is united not only with birth and death, those mysterious moments of passage, so hedged with ritual and mythic wonder, as well as natural dread, but she is firmly associated with various other aspects of the female archetype. The Great Mother is Lady of Plenty: Mrs. Gamp lives near "the celebrated mutton-pie shop." Thus she is early associated with food and is later said to be "very choice in her eating" and "very punctual and particular" in her drinking. The "bird-fancier's" and the "cats'-meat warehouse" remind us that, as Lady of Beasts, the goddess cares for, and yet destroys, wild creatures. Aphrodite is known to be surrounded by doves and sparrows, and yet, as Bast or Sekhmet, the goddess is one with the predatory cat and lioness. Further, in this first encounter, we learn that Mrs. Gamp is "in consequence of her great repute" called in to assist another midwife. The Great Mother is the source of much good wisdom and useful lore as well as of evil witchcraft. Outside Mrs. Gamp's lodgings many pregnant women gather, either female votaries or multiple pro-

jections of the goddess herself. Three of them address Mr. Pecksniff and berate him as a profaner of female mysteries, so that, for one moment, he seems to be on the verge of becoming a Victorian Orpheus or Pentheus, about to be torn apart by frantic women and thus to become a god. But Mrs. Gamp saves him by mistaking him for the husband of one of her clients, a "Mr. Whilks." Now, *whilks* is still a common Cockney mispronunciation of *whelks*, and any shellfish is closely associated with the goddess in myth and icon. Was not Aphrodite borne along on a seashell after she rose from the sea-foam near Cyprus? When at last she emerges, Mrs. Gamp carries her umbrella: russet for blood and death, blue for maternity and life. Some commentators regard an umbrella as a male symbol, but here perhaps it stands for the overshadowing, protective aspect of the goddess and also for her sceptered rule. Mrs. Gamp's black dress symbolizes death as does the blackness of Kali's skin; and perhaps Kali is the most dramatic of all the cruel embodiments of the female archetype. Mrs. Gamp's universality is suggested in Dickens' description of her "very fetch and ghost" (i.e., her old outfits, sold to secondhand dealers) hanging up in "at least a dozen" places. As she rides in the cab with Mr. Pecksniff, Mrs. Gamp tells him:

"When Gamp was summoned to his long home, and I see him a lying in Guy's Hospital with a penny-piece on each eye, and his wooden leg under his left arm, I thought I should have fainted away. But I bore up." (ch. 19)

The "wooden leg" suggests that, appropriately enough, Mrs. Gamp's spouse was the maimed king or lame god so often associated, especially in Near Eastern cults, with a mother goddess. We hear that the Gamps were "incompatibl[e] of temper in drink" and recall that the maimed king is often associated with drunkenness (cf. Noah) and that the goddess in her transfigurative aspect presides over the drunken; for, in inebriation, as in another form of trance, revelations of religious truths and mysteries may occur. Finally, in this first revelation, Mrs. Gamp speaks of her transcendent other self, Mrs. Harris, who gives sanction to her drinking and to her work as a layer-out of the dead: "If I could afford to lay all my fellow-creeturs out for nothink, I would gladly do it, sich is the love I bears them." Mrs. Harris is part of Mrs. Gamp's triad form in the novel; she stands for the tender mother, as Mercy Pecksniff — later Chuzzlewit — stands for the virgin bride and Betsey Prig for the devouring hag, all forms of the great goddess.

Mrs. Gamp's gnomic or sententious aspect is continually revealed; but perhaps never more strikingly than in her visit to Mould the undertaker and his family (ch. 25). Then she speaks of "this Piljian's Projiss of a mortial wale" and she quotes Mrs. Harris, "Years and our trials, Mrs. Gamp, sets marks upon us all." "Rich folks," says Mrs.

Gamp, "may ride on camels, but it ain't so easy for them to see out of the needle's eye." Here Mrs. Gamp (and her *alter ego*, Mrs. Harris) appears as the mother of wisdom. She smiles with fertility-bringing benevolence on the many Misses Mould and speaks, like the monstrous parody of Ceres that she is, of "the Blessing of a daughter":

"... which if we had had one, Gamp would certainly have drunk its little shoes right off its feet, as with our precious boy he did, and arterwards send the child a errand to sell his wooden leg for any money it would fetch as matches in the rough and bring it home in liquor; which was truly done beyond his years, for ev'ry indivigle penny that child lost at toss or buy for kidney ones; and come home arterwards quite bold, to break the news, and offering to drown himself if that would be a satisfaction to his parents." (ch. 25)

Mrs. Gamp's child is long dead; this calls to mind a parody of a *pietà* or of those archaic Sardinian images of goddesses who hold on their laps their dead divine sons. But the sorrowing mother turns into the death-bringer when, on hearing that she is to nurse a sick man, Mrs. Gamp promises to let his friends know of Mould when an undertaker is needed. Her visit ends with drinks; ought one say, with libations?

Mrs. Gamp's patient is, significantly, at the Bull Inn. In ancient Crete the mother goddess in the form of Pasiphae was associated with a bull god and their monstrous offspring, the Minotaur. The sick man is hidden away in a secret room at the very top of the house reached by labyrinthine passages. A hidden shrine is symbolic of the goddess herself. Once more we hear of food and drink. Betsey Prig, the goddess in her malign aspect, urges that Mrs. Gamp try the pickled salmon; the mother goddess is often associated with sacred fishpools. Here, too, we are reminded that she is universal and can move anywhere: "I'm glad to see a parapidge in case of fire, and lots of roofs and chimley-pots to walk upon." Mrs. Gamp looks at her patient or victim; he is dark, as the lover-victim of the goddess so often is: he is Attis to her Cybele. Soon after this, Mrs. Gamp lays him out, "pinn[ing] his wandering arms against his sides, to see how he would look if laid out as a dead man. . . . 'Ah,' said Mrs. Gamp, 'he'd make a lovely corpse.'" Here she is love-in-death. After ritually preparing the room for her vigil, Mrs. Gamp partakes of a sacred meal including herbs, fish, and gin. Then she prepares for bed in a sort of parody of arraying for the bridal. This activity culminates in her seeming to embody the sacred syzygy that Jung stresses, appropriate to the night, with all its terrors.

. . . she took out of her bundle a yellow night-cap, of prodigious size, in shape resembling a cabbage; which article of dress she fixed and tied on with the utmost care, previously divesting herself of a row of bald old

curls that could scarcely be called false, they were so very innocent of anything approaching deception. From the same repository she brought forth a night-jacket, in which she also attired herself. Finally, she produced a watch-man's coat, which she tied around her neck by the sleeves, so that she became two people; and looked, from behind, as if she were being in the act of being embraced by one of the old patrol.

After a horrendous night, in which she hears many secrets, Mrs. Gamp's parting words to her other self, Mrs. Prig, are: "Try the cowcubers, God bless you!" The Lady of the Plants urges her more savage aspect to devour the male symbol.

Soon after this she encounters Bailey Junior, formerly bootboy and general servant at Mrs. Todgers' boarding-house, now promoted to be groom or "tiger" of Tigg Montague. Bailey is with the eunuchoid "Poll" Sweedlepipe, the bird-fancier and barber, who is Mrs. Gamp's landlord. His name, "Poll," is at once a variant of Paul, a comic allusion to the misogynist saint, who thus momentarily takes a place among the eunuch followers of the Syrian Great Mother, and it is, of course, a name for a parrot — he is one with the birds he sells. But it is also a name dredged up from the darkest corner of Dickens' memory of the blacking factory. Mrs. Gamp greets Bailey graciously, for "It was a happy feature in [her] twofold profession, that it gave her an interest in everything that was young as well as in everything that was old" (ch. 26). The goddess tends to all. Later Bailey is to seem to die and then to reappear alive, thus embodying the theme of death and resurrection so intimately connected with the divine son-lover of the great goddess in Middle Eastern mythology. Close upon this, Kore the Maiden, now Persephone, bride of the God of Death, in the person of Mercy Chuzzlewit, formerly Pecksniff, appears, to be welcomed by Mrs. Gamp with mystic winks and fertility-bearing greetings, including the divinely cryptic utterance, "Gamp is my name, and Gamp my nater" (ch. 26). After which she departs, with her votary and keeper of the shrine, Poll Sweedlepipe, and the young son-lover, Bailey.

At their next meeting (ch. 29), Bailey salutes her as Lady of the Plants: "Sairah! . . . you're in full bloom. All a blowin' and a growin'!" She calls him "young sparrow." Mrs. Gamp begins to talk of the dark Lewsome, her patient at the Bull, for the role of the goddess is to play one votary or lover against the other. She again invokes Mrs. Harris to witness the hazards that the pregnant are exposed to:

Says Mrs. Harris, "You knows much betterer than me, with your experience, how little puts us out. A Punches' show . . . a chimbley sweep, a newfundlandog, or a drunkin man a comin round the corner sharp, may do it."

The Punch and Judy show, derived from the *commedia*

dell'arte and so ultimately from the ancient coarse comedy of the fertility rites of Greece and Rome; the dog, symbol of unbridled sexuality; the chimney sweep, the black man of so many still-surviving folk rites, and in Dickens' time the leader of a May Day procession, including the green man; and a drunken man, exulting in Dionysiac fury; all these are hazards to the woman under the special protection of the mother goddess as guardian of the source of human life. Mrs. Gamp begins to conclude this vatic interlude with more gloomy prognostications about Lewsome but ends with a clear allusion to rebirth: to baptism at the shrine of the misogynist saint, "at St. Polge's fontin."

Later, Mrs. Gamp and Mrs. Prig prepare Lewsome for an equivocal journey, that is, in fact, a return to life, by dressing him so that all his garments are wrongly fastened up. Thus they show their absolute power over him. He is a child in their hands, and we have a comic statement of an idea expressed seriously in antiquity of the pharaoh as the Horus child seated on the lap of Isis. This time our last sight of Mrs. Gamp shows her surrounded by most of the figures in her cult: Mr. and Mrs. Mould, Bailey, Mrs. Prig, and Poll who is full of admiration for Mrs. Prig's beard. Like Medusa the Gorgon, one of the most sinister mythic expressions of the anima, Mrs. Gamp's darkest aspect is bearded.

Dickens repeats the motif of the initiatory journey at Mrs. Gamp's next appearance (ch. 40) when she waits on the dock for "the Ankwords package." A boat is yet another symbol of the female. Mrs. Gamp speaks of fiery dragons and fiery engines and of their effect on the pregnant. She invokes the name of Harris and tells once more of her own wifely and maternal bereavements:

"My own . . . has fallen out of three-pair backs, and had damp doorsteps settled on their lungs, and one was turned up, smilin' in a bedstead, unbeknown. . . Mine is all gone. . . And as to husbands, there's a wooden leg gone likeways home to its account, which in its constancy of walkin' into wine vaults, and never comin' out till feteched by force, was quite as weak as flesh, if not weaker."

In this lament for her dead children and for the dead lamed god, Mrs. Gamp is a comic *mater dolorosa*. In her contrast with Jonas Chuzzlewit, the male death-bringer, who may be carrying Mercy off to disaster, as Ceres feared Pluto had carried Kore, Mrs. Gamp triumphantly asserts her role as protectress of women, threatening dire things to one who so much as "touch[es] a pipkin as belongs to me. . . Bless the babe, and save the mother, is my mortar, sir; but I make so free to add to that, Don't try no impogician with the Nuss, for she will not abear it!"

In Jonas' very stronghold Mrs. Gamp is triumphant in many aspects. She welcomes a numerous company to tea, presiding over a festive love feast, during which revelations

are made. Mrs. Gamp contrives to mention Mrs. Harris once more:

"I knows a lady, which her name, I'll not deceive you, is Harris, her husband's brother bein' six foot three, and marked with a mad bull in Wellington boots upon his left arm, on account of his precious mother havin' been worried by one into a shoemaker's shop, when in a sitiuation which blessed is the man as has his quiver full of sich." (ch. 46)

Apparently, Mrs. Harris has divine relatives (note the fine collocation of male symbols in the brother-in-law's birthmark). She is described as keenly aware of the value of amulets and of relics of the goddess:

". . . Gamp himself, . . . at one blow, being in liquor, struck out four [teeth], two single, and two double as was took by Mrs. Harris for a keepsake, and is carried in her pocket at this present hour, along with two cramp-bones, a bit o'ginger, and a grater like a blessed infant's shoe, in tin, with a little heel to put the nutmeg in. . ."

Yet in a moment Mrs. Gamp's benevolence turns into fury, as threatens the lunatic, Chuffey — hence under the special curse and also the protection of the goddess — with such horrible tortures as might be inflicted by Betsey Prig were he under her care; the Great Mother can threaten with her own dark aspect.

The climax of Dickens' comic revelation of the goddess occurs in the tea-party chapter, where Mrs. Gamp and Mrs. Prig quarrel over Mrs. Harris, a symbolic separation of various aspects of the archetype. First, Dickens minutely describes Mrs. Gamp's secret shrine. Her bed, itself symbolic of the goddess and her *hieros gamos*, is decorated with apples, fruit important in many myths as symbolic of her: the Hesperides guarded golden apples, Eve handed the apple to Adam, Eris threw a golden apple of discord among the Olympian gods, Avalon (apple land) is the Celtic paradise associated with three mystic queens. Mrs. Gamp's old clothes hang about the room like hanged women (in ancient Greece effigies of girls were hung on orchard trees to bring fertility) or guardian angels. The room is filled with boxes, chests, and other symbolic receptacles, among which the teapot, special vessel of Mrs. Gamp, has an honored place; and it is hung with images of persons important to Mrs. Gamp:

[Her room] was also embellished with three profiles; one, in colours, of Mrs. Gamp herself in early life; one, in bronze, of a lady in feathers supposed to be Mrs. Harris, as she appeared when dressed for a ball; and one, in black, of Mr. Gamp, deceased. The last was a full length, in order that the likeness might be rendered more obvious and forcible, by the introduction of the wooden leg. (ch. 49)

Before Mrs. Gamp can serve her two selves with a ritual

feast, including "two pounds of Newcastle salmon, intensely pickled," Poll announces the presumed death of Bailey, which Mrs. Gamp receives, as is fitting, with "philosophical coolness"; "He was born into a wale . . . and he lived in a wale; and he must take the consequences of sech a sitiwation." But Betsey Prig arrives, bearing a huge salad, an appropriate gift for the Lady of the Plants and drives Poll away. After a short preliminary skirmish the two partake of the feast and then begin to drink gin served in the sacred teapot. Their quarrel flares up again, after a highly symbolic account of the first confinement of Mrs. Harris:

"I have knowed that sweetest and best of women, ever since afore her First, which Mr. Harris who was dreadful timid went and stopped his ears in a empty dog-kennel, and never took his hands away or come out once till he was showed the baby, wen bein' took with fits, the doctor collared him, and laid him on his back upon the airy stones, and she was told to ease her mind, his owls was organs. And I have knowed her, Betsey Prig, when he has hurt her feelin' art by saying of his Ninth that it was one too many, if not two, while that dear innocent was cooin' in his face, which thrive it did though bandy. . . ." (ch. 49)

Here the word play seems to anticipate that of Joyce: for the interweaving of pun, symbol, and jest suggests at once the power of the dog, the owl who symbolizes Minerva's wisdom, yet who is a messenger of ill omen, the music of the spheres, the magic number nine, human fertility, and the bandy dwarf-god who is often a god of fertility, for instance, the Egyptian Bes. The evil other self is only driven out after an open quarrel in which Mrs. Gamp is bombarded, symbolically and ironically, with a shower of her own wooden apples. Afterwards she makes a rather cannibal restatement of the existence of the Harris family:

"Don't I know as that dear woman is expecting of me this very minnit . . . with little Tommy Harris in her arms, as calls me his own Gammy, and truly calls, for bless the mottled legs of that there darling child (like Canterbury brawn his own dear father says, which so they are) his own I have been, ever since I found him . . . with his small red worsted shoe a gurglin' in his throat, where he had put it in his play, a chick, wile they was a leavin' of him on the floor a lokking for it through the house and him a choakin' sweetly in the parlour! Oh, Betsey Prig, what wickedness you've showed this night, but never shall you darken Sairey's doors agen, you twining serpian!"

This is a splendid speech in more ways than one, not least in its comic restatement of the theme of death and rebirth and in its Thyestean overtones. The child chokes on the symbol of the goddess and is brought to life again by her

power. The episode ends at last with Mrs. Gamp's ritual hiding of her sacred vessel and by her robing for the two polar functions of the goddess, putting on "the snuffy black bonnet, the snuffy black shawl, the pattens, and [taking] the indispensable umbrella, without which neither a lying-in nor a laying-out could by any possibility be attempted."

Mrs. Gamp's last appearance (ch. 53) sums up all the rest: she is accompanied by her votary, Poll Sweedlepipe, and her now resurrected son-lover and still talks of them in comically mythic terms. She apologizes for Poll's overexcitement at the return of Bailey from the dead:

"Excuge the weakness of the man . . . and well I might expect it, as I should have knowd, and wishin' he was drowned in the Thames afore I had brought him here, which not a blessed hour ago he nearly shaved the noge of from the father of as lovely a family as ever . . . was born three sets of twins, and would have done it, only he see it a goin' in the glass and dodged the rager. . . ."

It is almost superfluous to point out the significance of cutting off the nose, death by drowning, and twins. But Mrs. Gamp's last long speech in the novel surpasses this and refers to Mrs. Harris:

"Mrs. Harris as has one sweet infant (though she do not wish it known) in her own family by the mother's side, kep in spirits in a bottle; and that sweet babe she see at Greenwich Fair a travelling in company with the pink-eyed lady, Prooshan dwarf, and livin' skeleton, which judge her feelings when the barrel organ played and she was shown her own dear sister's child, the same not bein' expected from the outside picter, where it was painted quite contrairey in a livin' state, a many sizes larger, and performing beautiful upon the Arp, which never did that dear child know or do: since breathe it never did, to speak on, in this wale!"

This final speech, filled with mythical monsters, angelic forms, and the parody of eternal life is perfectly appropriate to Mrs. Gamp's primordial symbolism, uniting as it does birth, death, and transformation.

Thus, aside from being a comic figure of tremendous zest and power, Mrs. Gamp is one of the finest expressions in nineteenth-century literature of the mother archetype in all its complexity. In making her comic Dickens perhaps exorcised his own demon; for, as the masks suggest, is not comedy simply the other face of tragedy? And do not the origins of both lie, like the archetypal Great Mother, far back in the infancy of the human race, in the myth and ritual of fertility, dormant, but ready for the artist to re-embody for his own generation?

*St. John's University*

## Rossetti's Changing Style: The Revisions of "My Sister's Sleep"

Herbert Sussman

CRITICAL DISCUSSION of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's poetry has focused on two interrelated issues — the problematical nature of religious belief in his work and the apparent opposition between the modes of detailed realism and religious symbolism.<sup>1</sup> A single poem, "My Sister's Sleep," has often provided a test case for these issues. But to see Rossetti as refusing to "chose between . . . a secular and a religious point of view"<sup>2</sup> is to raise false questions by failing to consider Rossetti's career in terms of its development. In the particular case of "My Sister's Sleep" there exist two versions, two poems entirely different in kind, written at different periods in his poetic career. There is the text published in *The Germ* (1850) and the later version, radically transformed by Rossetti for the edition of 1870. All critical discussions have been based upon the 1870 text.

Furthermore, these two versions provide a rare, specific instance of a Victorian poet rewriting an early work as what can best be called a modernist poem. The first version, published at midcentury, has a clear religious purpose. Here, there is no opposition between form and content, no conflict between realism and symbolism. Rather, Rossetti works within a consistent aesthetic in which realism becomes the means of showing God acting within the phenomenal world. The revisions, made some twenty years later, show Rossetti moving toward more modern modes. The specific stylistic changes move from the earlier pictorialism, the interest in the representation of visible appearances, to more symbolist methods of suggesting mental states. These specific changes are part of a more thoroughgoing transformation in which the formal principle is no longer composing phenomenal events into symbolic configurations manifesting the transcendent, but showing these events as wholly secular occurrences whose value lies in the intensity of the mental sensations they generate in the observer.

### I

"My Sister's Sleep" is one of Rossetti's earliest poems, written originally sometime before 1847 and published in the first issue of *The Germ*.<sup>3</sup> William Michael Rossetti says

of this version, "It will be observed that this poem was written long before the Pre-raphaelite movement began. None the less it shows in an eminent degree one of the influences which guided that movement: the intimate intertexture of a spiritual sense with a material form; small actualities made vocal of lofty meanings."<sup>4</sup> As William Michael acutely observes, the original poem follows the aesthetic of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Like Rossetti's paintings of this period, *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* (exhibited 1849) and *Ecce Ancilla Domini!* (exhibited 1850), the poem has the clear religious purpose of showing God's presence manifested in historical time by representing the "intimate intertexture of a spiritual sense with a material form." In more specific theological terms, the events of the poem are types or figures. Just as the historical events of the Old Testament are types or prefigurations of events in the life of Christ, so history after Christ continues to produce types or parallels to His life.<sup>5</sup> Here, the death of the girl on Christmas Eve and her new birth into heaven bears a real metaphysical correspondence to the birth of Christ on the same day of the year. And just as in the typological reading of the Biblical narrative there is no contradiction between the historicity of the event and its transcendental significance, in the mode used by Rossetti there is no contradiction between a domestic realism and religious symbolism. Rossetti uses precise naturalistic detail to create the sense of phenomenal or historical reality. He shows these real domestic events to be signs of divine providence by conceiving of his poem as a painting, by composing his materials into a pictorial correspondence with the traditional iconography of Western religious art.

As twelve strikes, bringing in Christmas morn, the mother rises, "Her needles, as she laid them down,/Met lightly" (10;8).<sup>6</sup> Within the pictorial conception, the needles on the table form a cross, just as in Rossetti's painting of *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* the palm and briar in the foreground are crossed and the vine-covered trellis in the background is given the shape of a cross. As in this figural painting, there is no contradiction between realism and

1. Harold L. Weatherby, "Problems of Form and Content in the Poetry of Dante Gabriel Rossetti," *VP*, II (1964), 11-19; Jerome J. McGann, "Rossetti's Significant Details," *VP*, VII (1969), 41-54; James G. Nelson, "Aesthetic Experience and Rossetti's 'My Sister's Sleep,'" *VP*, VII (1969), 154-58.  
2. McGann, pp. 42-43.

3. *The Germ: A Facsimile Reprint* (London, 1901), p. 18.  
4. William Michael Rossetti, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti as Designer and Writer* (London, 1889), p. 127.  
5. See Ian Fletcher, "Some Types and Emblems in Victorian Poetry," *The Listener*, 78 (May 25, 1967), 680.  
6. The first number in parenthesis gives the stanza number for the text in *The Germ*, the second the stanza number in the 1870 text.

symbolism. The needles are "real"; the correspondence to traditional symbols does not annul this actuality, just as in the figural reading of Scripture the symbolic significance of events in the life of Christ does not annul their historicity.

As the poem moves into Christmas morn, the scene is gradually composed into the traditional pictorial configuration of an Adoration. As the mother says, "Glory unto the Newly Born!" (11;9) and the brother silently repeats the words, there is an explicit suggestion of the supernatural, "Just then in the room over us/There was a pushing back of chairs" (14;10). As opposed as this reference to angels may be to the naturalism of the poem, its consistency lies in its furthering the correspondence with the conventional pictorial representation of an Adoration. Traditionally, angels are placed above, watching historical events in the manger below. In the center panel of Rossetti's own Llandaff Cathedral triptych angels watch from a loft above the manger.

The final tableau of the poem shows the mother and brother kneeling before the child. If the mother is likened earlier to an angel providing the traditional exclamation of joy at Christ's birth, "'Glory unto the Newly Born!'/So, as said angels, she did say" (11;9), the brother, who has not the almost preternatural knowledge of the mother, corresponds to the shepherd of the traditional scene. As in the Llandaff triptych, angel and shepherd, mother and brother kneel before the "newly born" (19;15), the Christ Child in swaddling clothes, the sister dressed in "all white" (18;14).

Rossetti's clear intention of representing domestic events typologically in order to demonstrate the workings of providence is reinforced by the explicit statements of the narrator giving clear religious explanations of these events, much as a typological gloss explains the symbolic significance of historical events in the Biblical narrative. Stanzas seven and eight of the *Germ* version, canceled in the 1870 text, read:

Silence was speaking at my side  
With an exceedingly clear voice:  
I knew the calm as of a choice  
Made in God for me, to abide.

I said, "Full knowledge does not grieve:  
This which upon the spirit dwells  
Perhaps would have been sorrow else:  
But I am glad 'tis Christmas Eve."

Here there is no suggestion of irony surrounding the narrator's statement that the moment of silence has brought a religious revelation, the "full knowledge" of transcendental

reality that "does not grieve" but sees the act of dying as being "newly born."

## II

In his introduction to a reprinting of *The Germ*, William Michael Rossetti says of "My Sister's Sleep," "In later years my brother viewed this early work with some distaste, and he only reluctantly reprinted it in his 'Poems,' 1870."<sup>7</sup> Rossetti's distaste for this early work suggests his sense of how far his own style had changed from the youthful religious manner of some twenty years earlier. He agreed to the publication of this early effort only after extensive revisions — the deletion of four stanzas and numerous verbal alterations in the remainder. These revisions create a second poem, wholly different in kind from the first. The pictorial methods, the concern with representing the appearance of the material world, gives way to language that tries to capture psychic reality, the feelings that the scene stimulates in a sensitive mind. These stylistic changes are part of a more basic transformation in which Rossetti moves from his earlier religious purposes of showing a sacramental world in which even domestic events manifest God's providence to create, in the later poem, an entirely secular world in which events operate not as symbols of transcendental realities but as stimuli for mental sensations.

The particular verbal changes all work to make the poem less descriptive of the external, visible world, more descriptive of the internal, psychic response to this world. Stanza one in *The Germ* reads:

She fell asleep on Christmas Eve.  
Upon her eyes' most patient calms  
The lids were shut; her uplaid arms  
Covered her bosom, I believe.

For the 1870 edition, the stanza was changed to:

She fell asleep on Christmas Eve.  
At length the long-ungranted shade  
Of weary eyelids overweigh'd  
The pain nought else might yet relieve.

If the first is a painter's description of the appearance of the sister in the conventional pictorial schema of a funeral effigy, the second is more inward, more empathetic. The 1870 text describes not how she looked but how she felt, with words such as "weary" and "pain."

Similarly, in stanza four, Rossetti changes the spatial, representational terms of a painter to language that evokes the sensations of the narrator. The contrasting stanzas read:

7. *The Germ: A Facsimile Reprint*, p. 18.



Without, there was a good moon up,  
Which left its shadows far within;  
The depth of light that it was in  
Seemed hollow like an altar-cup. (*Germ*)

\* \* \* \* \*

Without, there was a cold moon up,  
Of winter radiance sheer and thin;  
The hollow halo it was in  
Was like an icy crystal cup. (1870)

In the first, "good" refers to the size and shape of the moon. The second line describes how the moon operates as a source of illumination within the pictorial space. The third and fourth lines use the spatial terms "depth of light" and "hollow" to describe the moon as it might be painted in perspective framed by the window of the room. The 1870 version replaces many of these visual descriptions with verbal evocations of sensations. The moon is no longer "good" but "cold." The moonlight is described as "winter radiance." The light around the moon seems to the narrator "like an icy crystal cup." The later version, then, focuses not on a visible scene but on a mental impression, on the sense of coldness felt by the narrator. The subject is a sensation that can only be suggested, rather than a visual scene that can be painted.

The main indication of Rossetti's desire to transform the poem from a religious to an aesthetic work is his canceling of the four stanzas that explain the transcendental significance of the domestic events described in such precise detail. The early poem depends upon a figural or typological symbolism in which precisely rendered naturalistic events are simultaneously seen as both historically real and as signs of God's providence. Once the explanation of symbolic meaning is removed, the reader is left with the precisely rendered event itself. In each case, the elimination of the symbolic gloss focuses attention on the wholly secular, purely psychological moment. As mentioned earlier, stanzas seven and eight in *The Germ* show how the "silence" brings a moment of transcendental vision. When these explicitly religious stanzas are removed, silence becomes no longer a sign but a sensation to be savored. The narrator tells how his "tired mind . . . like a sharp strengthening wine . . . drank/The stillness and the broken lights" (6;6). With the original stanzas seven and eight removed, these lines are followed immediately by the words "Twelve struck" (9;7). Without the intervening stanzas describing religious experience, the sounds of the bell become merely sounds, mere

sensations rather than symbols of God's providence bringing a new day and a new birth.

Rossetti also canceled stanzas twelve and thirteen of the *Germ* text:

She stood a moment with her hands  
Kept in each other, praying much;  
A moment that the soul may touch  
But the heart only understands.

Almost unwittingly, my mind  
Repeated her words after her;  
Perhaps tho' my lips did not stir;  
It was scarce thought, or cause assign'd.

As in the case of the other pair of canceled stanzas, the omission of these lines transforms the mental activity of the narrator from religious to aesthetic experience. In these stanzas he finds in his mother's prayer a truly religious act in which, as if impelled by a power outside of himself, he must join. With these self-confessed moments of religious insight removed, the sensibility of the narrator becomes purely sensationalistic, drinking in the sound of silence, acutely aware of the distinct sounds made by his mother's needles and her settling gown (10;8).

Although Rossetti's desire to turn this early work from a religious to an aesthetic poem is clear, the transformation is not fully accomplished. In the *Germ* version, there is no disparity between form and content; the precisely rendered naturalistic detail is made to correspond with traditional iconography so as to show a domestic event as a type. But in the later version, for all the attempt to divorce natural events from symbolic meaning and to show a sensibility sensitive to sensation rather than transcendental revelation, the original correspondence of domestic details to traditional symbolic meanings remains. The central event of the narrative, the sister being "newly born" on the day of Christ's birth or the tableau of the Adoration at the end — correspondences that, in the early version, suggest God's providence acting in the phenomenal world — retain their strong religious suggestiveness in the later poem and thus contradict Rossetti's effort to show a wholly secular event as perceived by a sensitive mind. Rossetti's first impulse — to exclude the poem entirely from the collected edition — appears sound. The fusion of realism and symbolism that conveys religious meaning in the earlier work is a form inappropriate to the aesthetic, the psychological purposes of his later, modernist poetry.

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## The Sketch of the Three Masks in *Romola*

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IN AN EARLY CHAPTER of *Romola*, Nello the barber calls Tito's attention to a sketch by Piero di Cosimo: the picture shows three masks, of a satyr, a stoic, and a magdalen, lying "obliquely on the lap of a little child" (ch. 3). Although Piero's other works have drawn commentary from readers of *Romola*,<sup>1</sup> the sketch of the Three Masks has received surprisingly little attention. When noticed at all, it has been interpreted as reflecting, in a general way, "Piero's wide range of response to a society which produces a Spini, a Romola, a Bardo, a Tessa"<sup>2</sup>; or the picture has been said to suggest "a faint image of the faces of Tito, Romola, and Savonarola" with "the child, the hope, and the Golden Age" superadded and pointing toward the Epilogue of the novel.<sup>3</sup> Such readings of Piero's sketch, although they are helpful in a preliminary way, seem highly reductionistic. Although the sketch is tucked away unobtrusively enough in the first chapters of *Romola*, its thematic implications are similar to those of the novel itself, a fact that gives the picture far more than a local significance. Indeed, the complicated allegory of Piero's sketch is a kind of "visual" translation of both structure and theme in *Romola*, and, as such, it deserves close study.

Piero himself provides the first clue to the comprehensive nature of the sketch. Nello tells Tito:

"... if you ask Piero himself what he meant by it, he says his pictures are an appendix which Messer Domeneddio has been pleased to make to the universe, and if any man is in doubt what they mean, he had better inquire of Holy Church." (ch. 3)

Piero is clearly aware of the complexity of "the universe" — that is, his natural and social environment; and his function as choral commentator on the follies and vices of the Florentines is manifest in several scenes.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, when he makes his pictures an "appendix" to the universe, he suggests that they share its complexity and that they help to delineate it. The pictures are, quite literally, "additional or supplementary matter" that focuses on a single aspect of the whole. Given Piero's empirical principles, it is clear that the universe his pictures supplement is strictly bounded

in his own time and space — that is, they are appendixes to Renaissance Florence in all its contingent, but still extremely complex, reality. In the sketch of the Three Masks, Piero indicates that that reality is made up of human elements, both in their individual concreteness and in the interaction of various ideas and feelings. By refusing to interpret his picture, he imposes on the viewer the same responsibility that that viewer must assume vis-à-vis the universe itself. (Of course, the viewer may seek an intermediary, but Piero's low estimate of Holy Church and of "philosophers spinning lies to account for life" [ch. 18], suggest that that procedure would be at best a poor second.)

In thus presenting Piero's conception of his pictures as an amalgam of concreteness and complexity demanding individual response, George Eliot seems to be alerting the reader to the fact that the sketch of the Three Masks is not a simplistic allegory to be solved by assigning a single character in the novel to each of the masks in the picture, in a one-to-one and final equation. Such a procedure would be an oversimplification and could lead to serious misreading.<sup>5</sup> Rather, Eliot seems to be requiring that the reader apply the sketch to relevant ideas, scenes, and characters in the novel on an individual and local basis. The "meaning" of the picture exists only in the realization of its several meanings in the novel.

The dangers of oversimplification are best illustrated in the view that Piero's picture represents the conflicting forces at work in Renaissance Florence. On the simplest level, these forces have usually been designated as "pagan" and "Christian" or alternately as "sensual" and "ascetic." But the supposed contrasts in these paired categories do not really work — for two reasons: the categories are neither exclusive nor parallel. The mask of the satyr, for instance, is a reasonable representation of the grossness typified in the novel by Tito and Dolfo Spini, but the "pagan" rubric must be extended to cover the stoic "pagans" who also occur in *Romola* and who are anything but sensual. Furthermore, the mask of the magdalen may be said to typify the kind of Christianity practiced by Savonarola, Fra Luca,

1. See especially Barbara Hardy, *The Novels of George Eliot: A Study in Form* (1959; reprinted New York, 1963), pp. 171-75.

2. Lawrence Poston, "Setting and Theme in *Romola*," *NCF*, XX (1965), 358.

3. Hardy, p. 176.

4. See *Romola*, chs. 4, 22, 49.

5. This is, it seems, what happens in the readings given by both Poston and Hardy. Although neither writer explicitly sets up a one-to-one correspondence, both strongly imply such a reading. Poston's suggestion that the stoic's mask represents Bardo is plausible, but if he means to suggest that Tessa is

the "little child," the reading will need qualification. Mrs. Hardy, after an excellent discussion of Piero's other works, dismisses the sketch in two paragraphs and her interpretation is evasive: "There is no need to press the interpretation made by the story: Tito speaks of 'the gross, the sad, and the severe.' Tito is no satyr, Romola is no Magdalen, Savonarola no stoic, but the three masks, with the child, are a faint image of the three faces of Tito, Romola, and Savonarola" (*Novels*, p. 176). The passage sets up correlations at the same time as it denies them; and the suggestion that Savonarola is the stoic is untenable.

and the *Piagnoni*; but, in its espousal of self-denial, Savonarolean Christianity has obvious characteristics in common with stoicism, and thus it too overlaps the "pagan" motif. Finally, the Florentine Christians who take supper in the Rucellai Gardens indulge in a hedonism worthy of (and perhaps inspired by) Trimalchio himself (ch. 39). Even at this most accessible level of interpretation, then, the images represented in Piero's picture cannot be reduced, without distortion, to a "diagram."

Yet it is valid to say that the masks of the satyr and the magdalen do represent two extreme responses to existence, irrespective of the categories of "pagan" and "Christian." With certain differences, the antithesis between them is repeated in Romola's perception of "the satisfied strength and beauty" of Tito and the "worn anguish" of her brother Dino's face (ch. 17). Romola questions whether "any thought" could reconcile those extremes: "Or was there never any reconciling of them, but only a blind worship of clashing deities, first in mad joy and then in wailing?" (ch. 17). The tentative answer provided by Piero's picture is not a reconciliation at all but a third course of action: the stoical response to life — resignation and indifference. The mask of the stoic, then, is a potentially important key to interpreting both Piero's picture and *Romola* as a whole. But just as it is essentially misleading to assign a single character in *Romola* to the masks of the satyr and the magdalen, so the stoic's mask does not represent any one character in the novel but rather a *modus vivendi* shared and adumbrated by several characters, each of whom contributes to our understanding of the motif. It should be added here that stoicism as defined in *Romola* is a highly qualified concept: the stoical characters in the novel develop an indifference to pain and a resignation to the world's imperfections, but they never exhibit the complementary indifference to happiness or amelioration. And, although the mask in Piero's picture is described as "rigid" and "cold," the idea of stoicism in the novel is combined with the warmth of personal devotion and love.

Only one character, Romola's father Bardo, explicitly professes indifference to the slings and arrows of fortune. Romola tells him, echoing his own teaching: "Nevertheless, father, it is a great gift of the gods to be born with a hatred and contempt of all injustice and meanness. Yours is a higher lot, never to have lied and truckled, than to have shared honours won by dishonour. There is strength in scorn." Bardo's answer is full of noble indifference and strength: "And I indeed am not to be pierced by the shafts of Fortune. My armour is the *aes triplex* of a clear conscience, and a mind nourished by the precepts of philosophy" (ch. 5). But Bardo's words are not substantiated by his life and longings. His sustained grudge against his son Dino, his hopes for a burial "among the Florentines who

... deserved well" (ch. 20), his egocentric desire to have his memory perpetuated in a library bearing his name and preserving the integrity of his manuscript collection — each of these responses severely restricts, indeed each negates, Bardo's stoicism, making it a mere matter of utterance.

Romola's godfather, Bernardo del Nero, not only talks like a stoic, he lives and dies like one. Referring to their plans for her father's library, he tells Romola: "The times are cloudy now, but fish are caught by waiting. Who knows? When the wheel has turned often enough, I may be Gonfaloniere yet before I die" (ch. 31). The note of patience here is striking, as is the traditional image of fortune as a wheel continually turning. Whereas Bardo had seen fortune as a potentially malign force against which he must defend himself, Bernardo del Nero's "wheel" suggests a mind more truly at ease in shifting circumstances and in any weather. Later in the novel, when Romola comes to warn Bernardo of her vague fears for his life, he responds "with a slow shrug":

"As for warnings, they are of no use to me, child. I enter into no plots, but I never forsake my colours. If I march abreast with obstinate men, who will rush on guns and pikes, I must share the consequences. Let us say no more about that." (ch. 59)

It is Bernardo's loyalty to his party, like his devotion to Bardo's dying wish, that provides the motivating power for his resignation. At his public execution, Romola sees del Nero's "white head kept erect" while he speaks his last words: "It is but a short space of life that my fellow-citizens have taken from me" (ch. 60). By fashioning del Nero's stoicism as an amalgam of resignation and emotional sincerity, Eliot qualifies the coldness and rigidity of the stoic's mask in Piero's picture and reshapes the concept of stoicism as an operating principle in the novel. It seems clear that Bernardo del Nero embodies George Eliot's concept of stoicism more truly than Bardo and that Eliot deliberately plays these two "fathers" against each other for thematic illustration.

The contrast between real and artificial stoicism and the relationship between the two fathers and the sketch of the Three Masks is nowhere more clearly illustrated than in Chapter 20, "The Day of the Betrothal." For in the progress of the wedding party to the church of Santa Croce, Eliot repeats the formal organization of the masks with one slight, but important, variation. In the small procession, "Bernardo del Nero walked as a vanguard before Bardo, who was led on his right hand by Tito, while Romola held her father's other hand." As Tito and Romola go to receive their wedding rings ("the golden links of destiny"), Eliot echoes Piero's design. Del Nero, appropriately independent and leading the way, precedes the bogus stoic Bardo, who is led by the man who has not yet degenerated into a satyr

and by the woman who, because of the responsibilities of the contract about to be entered into, will eventually become a living magdalen. It is no coincidence that Piero di Cosimo's *Masque of Time*, with its correspondent implications of "destiny," and his "Bacchus and Ariadne," with Tito's falsification of myth,<sup>6</sup> both occur in this chapter, for each bears directly on the unobtrusive little "fancy" of the *Three Masks*: Time itself will convert the "*Bacco trionfante*" (ch. 25) and his Ariadne to a satyr and a magdalen.<sup>7</sup> Again in Book III, the formal arrangement of the masks is repeated in the efforts of Tito to betray and of Romola to save del Nero. Just as her godfather had literally "come between" Romola and Tito in opposing their marriage early in the novel, so toward the close he becomes the focus of their counterposed efforts for and against him. Carole Robinson writes that "del Nero seems to have been dragged back into the story at this point to precipitate an already impending break with Savonarola."<sup>8</sup> That complaint loses much of its force when del Nero is seen as part of a carefully planned formal and thematic pattern controlled by Piero's sketch.<sup>9</sup>

Although the concept of stoic indifference is obviously important in *Romola*, it only partly explains the thematic relevance of Piero's picture. In a letter to Barbara Bodichon in 1860, George Eliot noted that stoicism was not merely an end in itself but primarily a means to a higher human development. Commenting on organized religion, Eliot wrote:

As for the "forms and ceremonies," I feel no regret that any should turn to them for comfort, if they can find comfort in them: sympathetically, I enjoy them myself. But I have faith in the working-out of higher possibilities than the Catholic or any other church has presented, and those who have strength to wait and endure, are bound to accept no formula which their whole souls — their intellect as well as their emotions — do not embrace with entire reverence. The highest "calling and election" is to *do without opium* and live through all our pain with conscious clear-eyed endurance.<sup>10</sup>

This comment illuminates Piero's picture still more. It is evidence, first, for the fact that Eliot believed in a development from religion to some higher state, and, by implication, it suggests that religion itself is the historical outgrowth of paganism. (In *Romola* the emergence of Dino's crucifix from the triptych of Bacchus makes the same point.) The

*Three Masks*, then, though placed side by side and standing for the alternate pulls of sense and spirit and the indifference that rises above both, can also be seen as a representation of the three stages of human development. Secondly, Eliot's remarks indicate not only the centrality of stoicism as a holding position but its importance as a third step in that development. Finally (although Eliot's emphasis in her letter reverses the emphasis in *Romola*), the comment explicitly denies the efficacy of thought or feeling alone in achieving progress and insists that only a combination will suffice.

The three stages implicit in Eliot's letter correspond exactly with the *Three Masks* in Piero's picture, and Romola herself, in the course of the novel, passes through those three stages, wears each of the masks, and is even allowed a glimpse into the perfection of the ultimate development, represented by the "supernal promise in the gaze" of the child, when she enters the dream world of the plague-stricken village. In her individual life, Romola duplicates the experience of the race. In a commentary on Romola's confused vacillation between the natural exuberance of Tito and the worn anguish of her brother, Eliot writes: "it was an experience hardly longer than a sigh, for the eager theorizing of the ages is compressed, as in a seed, in the momentary want of a single mind" (ch. 17). The first level of Romola's development is really no more than a yearning for the sensual life as represented by Tito:

. . . now in the warm sunlight she saw that rich dark beauty which seemed to gather round it all images of joy — purple vines festooned between the elms, the strong corn perfecting itself under the vibrating heat, bright winged creatures hurrying and resting among the flowers, round limbs beating the earth in gladness with cymbals held aloft, light melodies chanted to the thrilling rhythm of strings — all objects and all sounds that tell of Nature revelling in her force. (ch. 17)

Romola's second stage of development, as one of Savonarola's *Piagnoni* in Book III, emphasizes her passage to conscious good works and willed benevolence to her fellowman. Finally, in the plague village, her unconscious activities — signified in the phrases, "she had not even reflected . . . she had simply lived" (ch. 69) — presage the development of "higher possibilities."

But her work in the plague village *only* presages those possibilities. Romola's life as a character in a realistic nar-

6. Edward T. Hurley, "Piero di Cosimo: An Alternate Analogy for George Eliot's Realism," *VN*, 31 (Spring 1967), 55.

7. Hardy, *Novels*, pp. 172-74.

8. "*Romola*: A Reading of the Novel," *VS*, VI (1962), 38.

9. As might be expected from the fact that the "good" characters in the novel are aligned with stoicism, Tito is presented as a mock stoic: "he was able to answer the questions of the young French envoy without showing signs of any other

feeling than that of sad resignation to State necessities" (ch. 40).

10. *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. Gordon S. Haight (New Haven, 1954-55), III, 366. The opening lines of Eliot's comment are similar to Piero's comment that anyone who does not understand his pictures should seek help from "Holy Church." Eliot's tone, however, is much more sympathetic than that of the "crusty" painter.

rative closes on a note of "conscious clear-eyed endurance." Whereas in Book I she had wondered whether "any thought" could reconcile the alternate pulls of the sensuous and the ascetic, toward the end of Book III she achieves an identification with Bernardo del Nero's patient resignation. At del Nero's public execution, Eliot writes that Romola

needed no arm to support her; she shed no tears. She felt that intensity of life which seems to transcend both grief and joy — in which the mind seems to itself akin to elder forces that wrought out existence before the birth of pleasure and pain. Since her godfather's fate had been decided, the previous struggle of feeling in her had given way to an identification of herself with him in these supreme moments. . . . Romola was feeling the full force of that sympathy with the individual lot that is continually opposing itself to the formulae by which actions and parties are judged. She was treading the way with her second father to the scaffold, and nerving herself to defy ignominy by the consciousness that it was not deserved. (ch. 60)

Del Nero's resignation, prompted by motives of individual loyalty ("that sympathy with the individual lot") to Bardo, to Romola, and, on a wider but still concrete scale, to the Medicean cause, becomes a pattern for Romola. When she first left Tito, Romola reflected that she had been used to endure because she loved (ch. 36). After the failure of the experiment with Christianity, she falls back again on endurance motivated by love, in this case for del Nero (later, it will be for Tessa, Monna Brigida, and Tito's children). Romola ends very much as she had begun: she returns to the individual sympathies that, understood intuitively with her father, she now practices with a conscious understanding of their import. She undergoes the fall and struggles toward the elementary values of the prelapsarian state.

Romola's identification with del Nero is really the climax of her development. George Eliot wrote to Sara Hennel in 1863 that "the 'Drifting away' and the Village with the plague . . . were by deliberate forecast adopted as romantic and symbolical elements."<sup>11</sup> That last symbolic section of *Romola* is best understood by reference to three works of art in the novel, in each of which Eliot postulates a state of perfection toward which her characters (and all humanity with them) ought to move. The first of these works is Giotto's campanile:

. . . as the campanile in all its harmonious variety of colour and form led the eyes upward, high into the clear air of this April morning, it seemed a prophetic symbol, telling that human life must somehow and some time shape itself into accord with that pure aspiring beauty. (ch. 3)

Toward the close of the novel, Eliot describes the frescoes

that Fra Angelico designed for St. Mark's, and she repeats the language of aspiration toward the state of perfection:

. . . Fra Angelico's frescoes, delicate as the rainbow on the melting cloud, startled the eye here and there, as if they had been sudden reflections cast from an ethereal world, where the Madonna set crowned in her radiant glory, and the Divine infant looked forth with perpetual promise. (ch. 64)

Eliot's descriptions of these historically real works are directly parallel to her description of the sketch of the Three Masks:

. . . the masks rested obliquely on the lap of a little child, whose cherub features rose above them with something of the supernal promise in the gaze which painters had by that time learned to give to the Divine Infant. (ch. 3)

The child in Piero's picture, the campanile in Florence, the frescoes in St. Mark's, and the village with the plague in *Romola* — each of these is deliberately unreal and dreamlike, deliberately symbolic, and each is a representation of a possible higher development. That development does not occur in *Romola*. The Epilogue to the novel represents, not "the Golden Age" as Mrs. Hardy would have it, but the wait, the long, long wait, in "conscious clear-eyed endurance," for "the working-out of higher possibilities." Eliot's introduction of the plague village in *Romola* is neither a desperate maneuver nor an evasion of the problems posed by the novel. It is, rather, a projection of the possibilities of human development beyond those problems — a projection introduced precisely because, given the nature of things, no solution was possible.

Piero's sketch will perhaps bear one last interpretation — as a self-portrait. The images represented in the Three Masks embody three important aspects of Piero's own character: the sensual, the ascetic, and the stoic. Piero's sensualism is not of the kind to make him a "drunken laughing Satyr," to be sure, but his delight in "form and colour," the inevitable characteristics of the painter, does indicate his rootedness in a physical world. At the Pyramid of Vanities, he defends "the immortal Messer Giovanni" Boccaccio and Petrarch's "heavenly Laura" against the puritanical zeal of the *Piagnoni* and against the strictures of Romola herself. When she suggests, tactfully, that Piero had once been indignant about the "rouge-pots and wigs," his response distinguishes carefully between the low and the more elevated aspects of physical beauty:

"What then? . . . I never said a woman should make a black patch of herself against the background. Va! Madonna Antigone, it's a shame for a woman with your hair and shoulders to run into such nonsense —

11. *Letters*, IV, 104.

leave it to women who are not worth painting. What! the most holy Virgin herself has always been dressed well; that's the doctrine of the Church: — talk of heresy, indeed!" (ch. 49)

The ascetic side of Piero's nature is perhaps best indicated by his spartan diet of hard-boiled eggs and his even more spartan apartment, in which, except for the tools of his trade, he keeps only a bed and a chest. Piero is no monk, of course, and his models, casts, pictures, easel, etc., easily fill up the empty spaces. But for his own personal and creature comforts, he apparently has very little concern.

But, most important, Piero is very much the same kind of stoic that Romola develops into. Granted he is vituperative and bitter against folly and vice; granted too that his grimacing to conceal emotion suggests an attempt to show stoical behavior if he cannot practice it; even so, he obviously has the stoic's indifference to flattery and gratitude (chs. 18, 28) and the kind of understanding of his world and resignation to things as they are that characterizes Bernardo del Nero. By contrast with Nello's talkative obsequiousness and by contrast with Tito's scheming ambition, Piero's independence and courage ("I should be a fool to

run after danger, but I could face it if it came to me" [ch. 29]) are striking indeed. And Piero's stoicism is, like Romola's, a combination of resignation and sympathy. His "sympathy with the individual lot" is exemplified by his finishing the portrait of Bardo for Romola, "stimulated to greater industry on her behalf by the fear that he might have been the cause of pain to her in the past week" (ch. 31); it is exemplified by his directing Baldassarre to the "hospital for poor travellers" and by his cutting of Baldassarre's cords (ch. 25); and it is exemplified best of all by his bringing flowers to Romola at the very end of the novel. As Piero and Nello come up the Borgo Pinti, Lillo comments: "How queer old Piero is. . . . He abuses you for dressing the altar, and thinking so much of Fra Girolamo, and yet he brings you the flowers" (Epilogue). What is paradoxical to Lillo is a clarification for the reader. Piero's sympathies extend to the individual being (in this case, to Romola) irrespective of theoretical disagreements. In that respect, he and Romola find common ground. And it is by such as these, George Eliot means to say, that the "supernal promise" will be fulfilled.

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## Tory-Radicalism and "The Two Nations" in Disraeli's *Sybil*

Patrick Brantlinger

DESPITE F. R. LEAVIS' PRAISE of Disraeli's neglected maturity in a footnote to *The Great Tradition*, there has been no revival of interest in his novels. And rightly so, if only because Disraeli's three most important novels, *Coningsby*, *Sybil*, and *Tancred*, espoused a cause that was more laughed at than respected even in the 1840s. "Young Hengland," as Thackeray's C. Jeames De La Pluche called it, was an attempt to bring people and aristocracy together under a single "Tory-Radical" banner; it was therefore open to censure by Tories, by Radicals, and of course also by Whigs. As Marx and Engels put it, the "feudal socialism" of Young England was "half lamentation, half lampoon," not to be taken seriously as a political theory.<sup>1</sup> Defending Disraeli against charges of slipperiness, egoism, and superficiality would be a thankless task. But even his weaknesses as a political thinker and as a novelist merit study, because they illuminate an age and the literature of "feudal socialism" generally, including the attitudes of Carlyle.

It was in *Sybil* that Disraeli went farthest in his attempt to weld Toryism and Radicalism together, for it was there that he focused on "the condition of the people" and recommended a political union of the working classes and the aristocracy against the middle classes. This union he tried to symbolize by the standard Victorian fictional strategy of an interclass marriage, joining his aristocratic hero, Egremont, with his working-class heroine, Sybil Gerard. As some of Disraeli's first readers noted, however, this symbolic union of "the two nations" of rich and poor turns into tommyrot when it is learned that Sybil isn't a working-class girl at all but an aristocrat. An equivalent turn of the screw, one imagines, might be changing Blake's tiger into Mehitabel. Monckton Milnes, himself associated with Young England, thought Sybil's metamorphosis was contradictory, and because of it John Lucas concludes that *Sybil* is "a mostly unintelligent, because badly muddled, piece of work."<sup>2</sup>

1. "Manifesto of the Communist Party," in Marx and Engels, *Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, ed. Lewis S. Feuer (New York, 1959), p. 30.  
2. Richard Monckton Milnes, "The Emancipation of the Jews,"

*Edinburgh Review* (July 1847), p. 75. John Lucas, "Mrs. Gaskell and Brotherhood," *Tradition and Tolerance in Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, ed. Howard, Lucas, and Goode (New York, 1967), p. 154.

Without disputing Lucas' condemnation of a typically histrionic lapse of logic on Disraeli's part, it is important to consider what he was getting at when he so marred his symbolic union of classes. Disraeli is contradictory, but he isn't stupid, and if Sybil is transmogrified from a Chartist working-class girl into a fine lady, it can't be in total violation of reason. Sybil's metamorphosis, in fact, is matched by a series of historical digressions that reveal Egremont's family to be less aristocratic than it claims. The antiquarian revelations that prove Sybil to be of noble ancestry are paralleled by Disraeli's accounts of the modern, felonious origins of the great Whig families. Of Egremont's family, Disraeli tells us that "the founder . . . had been a confidential domestic of one of the favourites of Henry VIII, and had contrived to be appointed one of the commissioners for 'visiting and taking the surrenders of divers religious houses'" (pp. 10-11).<sup>3</sup> Upon the basis of property pirated from the Church, "honest Baldwin Greymount" boosted his descendants into the peerage. Such are the histories, Disraeli tells us, of most of the "ancient" families who make up the "Venetian oligarchy" of the Whigs and the "pseudo-Tories" (that is, the Peelites). And such, too, is one basis for the Tory-Radical version of history that runs throughout Disraeli's novels and speeches, for the Church was the first victim of "the spirit of utility" and upon her former property modern liberalism sprang up, wresting power from the Stuarts along the way. By the same process of spoliation and fraud, the poor were losing their rights. Sybil claims that "the people" have been "driven from the soil" (p. 95) and Philip Warner, the handloom weaver, that he and the rest of the poor "have lost our estates" (p. 134). Although it seems to get Disraeli out of a jam, Sybil's metamorphosis also symbolizes the restoration of the rights and estates of the lower classes, many of whom are more truly aristocratic than the modern nobility. Not only is the family tree of Egremont and Lord Marney of dubious and recent origin but so are those of Lord de Mowbray (pp. 88-93), the Duke of Fitz-Aquitaine (pp. 146-47), and Lord Deloraine (pp. 239-40). On the other hand, as Millbank says in *Coningsby*:

The real old families of this country are to be found among the peasantry; the gentry, too, may lay some claim to old blood. I can point you out Saxon families in this country who can trace their pedigrees beyond the Conquest. (p. 169)

Walter Gerard, Mr. Trafford, Aubrey St. Lys, and even Sybil's bloodhound, Harold, are "of the ancient breed" (p. 139). Through the shoddy machinations of Baptist Hatton, the powerful quack antiquarian who "has made more peers

of the realm than our gracious Sovereign" (p. 273) and who elevates Sybil to a station of doubtful value, Disraeli ridicules the whole concept of the hereditary nobility. "There is no longer in fact an aristocracy in England, for the superiority of the animal man is an essential quality of aristocracy" (p. 123). To think in terms of class at all, an apparently Radical Disraeli implies, is nowadays absurd, for blue blood has become thin blood. A person ought to be judged by his talents and not by his birth — look at Disraeli as an example.

The trouble is that having satirized the hereditary basis of the class structure, Disraeli still insists on giving Sybil aristocratic status. Furthermore, while he is ridiculing the modern aristocracy out of one side of his mouth, out of the other issues nothing like the sympathy for the poor we expect from someone who claims to champion them. On the contrary, while Disraeli satirizes the Whigs and the Pseudo-Tories, he also satirizes the Radicals, the Chartists, and, perhaps unintentionally, the poor as a "nation." Parallel to the history of upperclass politics since 1832 that forms the subject of the whole Young England trilogy, *Sybil* contains a history of Chartism from its beginnings in 1838 through the Plug Plot riots in the summer of 1842. When the first Chartist petition was presented to the House of Commons in 1839, Disraeli had made a speech that, while arguing *against* its official consideration, argued *for* a sympathetic rejection of it.<sup>4</sup> It is typical of the wily ambiguities that appear in *Sybil*. This speech is echoed in *Sybil*, for the heroine discovers one day that the Charter has been defended in Parliament by an aristocrat:

Yes! there was one voice that had sounded in that proud Parliament, that, free from the slang of faction, had dared to express immortal truths: the voice of a noble, who without being a demagogue, had upheld the popular cause. . . . With . . . eyes suffused with tears, Sybil read the speech of Egremont. She ceased. . . . Before her stood the orator himself. (p. 337)

Besides this noteworthy piece of egotism, Disraeli's history of Chartism in *Sybil* shows its decline from the early, glowing idealism of Walter Gerard and his daughter through the failure of the first petition, the encroachments of factional strife, and the fiascoes of "physical force" — the riots in the Birmingham Bullring, the Newport Rising of 1839, and the Plug Plot violence of 1842. As Sybil sadly tells Stephen Morley, "I believed that we had on our side God and Truth."

"They know neither of them in the National Convention," said Morley. "Our career will be a vulgar caricature of the bad passions and the low intrigues, the

3. Quotations from *Coningsby* and *Sybil* are from the Hughenden Edition (London, 1881), IX and VII. Page numbers are given in parentheses.

4. *Hansard's Debates*, June 12, 1839, cols. 246-52.

factions and the failures, of our oppressors." (p. 289-90)

Walter Gerard's "moral force" idealism succumbs to the influence of "the party of violence," and this is seen as the tragedy of Chartism as a whole. Gerard takes part in a conspiracy aiming at a national insurrection, but this leads only to the abortive Newport Rising of 1839 and to his arrest along with numerous other leaders of the movement. By revealing the bankruptcy of both Chartism and Whiggery, of both the Radical and the Liberal political alternatives, Disraeli tries to demonstrate the need for a third alternative — the Tory-Radicalism of Young England.

But while Disraeli's presentation of Chartism is unsympathetic, his presentation of the nation of the poor generally is so riddled with irony that it is difficult to think of him as even approximately their champion. The failure of logic that leads to Sybil's transformation reveals itself again in the fact that there are two distinct kinds of poor people in the novel — the good ones (who are aristocrats anyway in the case of the Gerards), and the riffraff. Thus, while Gerard and his daughter both seem noble and are noble, the mobs of miners and mechanics who fill the background of the tale are hardly idealized. Like *Oliver Twist* in the clutches of Sikes and Fagin, the angelic Sybil is constantly forced to rub elbows with lower-class villains. At least as important symbolically as the union of Egremont and Sybil is the fact that Egremont snatches Sybil from the grasp of a lower-class mob during the Plug Plot riots:

One ruffian had grasped the arm of Sybil, another had clenched her garments, when an officer, covered with dust and gore, sabre in hand, jumped from the terrace, and hurried to the rescue. He cut down one man, thrust away another, and, placing his left arm round Sybil, he defended her with his sword. . . . Her assailants were routed, they made a staggering flight! The officer turned round and pressed Sybil to his heart.

"We will never part again," said Egremont.

"Never," murmured Sybil. (p. 484)

It is scenes like this that led Arnold Kettle to describe *Sybil* as "operatic"; he might have added that Disraeli, not Sybil, is the prima donna.<sup>5</sup> At any rate, if Sybil is presented to us as a "daughter of the people" who turns out to be blue-blooded, she is also brought into rough contact with "the people" at several points in the novel. Her terrifying venture into Seven Dials in search of her father presents us with a contrast between her unconscious gentility and the violence of the slum dwellers (pp. 362-66), and her nightmare after her arrest continues the pattern:

She woke . . . in terror from a dream in which she had been dragged through a mob, and carried before a tribunal. The coarse jeers, the brutal threats, still echoed in her ear. (pp. 382-83)

Before uniting Egremont and Sybil, Disraeli weans her from her "moral force" Chartism by showing her just how degraded, ignorant, and violent "the people" can be, giving her doses of revolutionary chaos and of the lower depths in order to teach her that the tenants in the social cellar need governors and not that they need to govern themselves.

Disraeli is not much interested in making us feel sorry for the poor; he is much more intent on proving the poor to be mistaken. Thus, the two chief factory workers in *Sybil*, Dandy Mick and Devilsdust, are shown to be adolescent malcontents with only the negligence of their superiors as a real motive for rebellion. They are well paid enough to entertain two girl friends with drinks and hot sausages in that swank gin palace, "The Cat and the Fiddle." Further, in sketching in their backgrounds, Disraeli avoids evidence that would support Lord Ashley's Ten Hours Bill, even though he voted for it in 1847. The story of Devilsdust's childhood does not present us with arguments for saving children from the horrors of the mill by passing the Ten Hours Bill, and in fact it weighs against that Bill. Abandoned by his mother and cared for only by a brutal "nurse" who sends him "out in the street to 'play,' in order to be run over," Devilsdust survives partly by miracle and partly by tenacity. Neglect is what almost kills him, and opposed to neglect is the order and the security of the factory system. His salvation comes when good luck guides him, still only an infant, through the gates of a factory and into a job. "A child was wanting in the Wadding Hole. . . . The nameless one was preferred to the vacant post, received even a salary, more than that, a name; for as he had none, he was christened on the spot DEVILSDUST" (p. 114). "Fortune had guided him." Disraeli suggests that the factories afford protection to children who would otherwise be neglected and abused by their working-class parents, an idea often expressed by the defenders of child labor.

The most startling scene among the poor occurs when the Owenite, Stephen Morley, travels to Wodgate in search of the antiquarian, Mr. Hatton. There he discovers Hatton's brother, who is the "Bishop" or head man of a town that, though a slough of filth and degradation, is an entirely independent community run by the workers themselves — proletarian blacksmiths and their apprentices.<sup>6</sup> The inhabitants of Wodgate are the most brutalized and violent characters whom Disraeli describes. From an apprentice,

5. Arnold Kettle, "The Early Victorian Social-Problem Novel," in *From Dickens to Hardy*, ed. Boris Ford (Baltimore, 1968), p. 176.

6. For the significance of the scene as well as its factual basis, see Sheila M. Smith, "Willenhall and Wodgate: Disraeli's Use of Blue Book Evidence," *RES*, XIII (November 1962), 368-84.



Thomas, Morley learns about the "Bishop" and at the same time he learns how illiterate and deprived some of the citizens of England are, for Thomas' fiancée believes in "our Lord and Saviour Pontius Pilate, who was crucified to save our sins" (pp. 192-93). Backward as the Wodgate metalworkers are, they are also, Disraeli stresses, free, for they are under the control of neither laissez-faire government nor upperclass capitalists but of masters like the Bishop who belong to their own class. They form a natural society, and they present Morley with two possible lessons, although he comes away from Wodgate as staunchly socialistic as ever. First, Morley might learn that the workers, if left to govern themselves, would increase rather than diminish their degradation. Disraeli exposes the neglect from which the poor suffer, but he also exposes their unfitness to manage their own affairs. Secondly, Morley might learn that, if left alone, the workers would form a government along aristocratic rather than democratic lines, for Wodgate is ruled by an aristocracy "by no means so unpopular as the aristocracy of most other places."

. . . it is a real aristocracy; it is privileged, but it does something for its privileges. It is distinguished from the main body not merely by name. It is the most knowing class at Wodgate; it possesses indeed in its way complete knowledge; and it imparts in its manner a certain quantity of it to those whom it guides. Thus it is an aristocracy that leads, and therefore a fact. (p. 188)

Between the misrule of Bishop Hatton and the misrule of Lord Marney, Disraeli sees a damnable similarity. Between either of these and an aristocracy as it ought to be — as Young England would make it or even as the "Captains of Industry" should make it — there is no similarity.

In the Wodgate episode, Disraeli's satire is both consistent and well-expressed. His first task all along has been to show the bankruptcy of all potential sources of governmental authority save one — a revitalized aristocracy led by Young England. By exposing the absurdity of Bishop Hatton's rule, he simultaneously exposes the neglect of the Church and of the governing classes. Chartism and trade unionism are also failures, but their very existence is symptomatic of the bungling of the Whigs and the pseudo-Tories. Having pointed out the inadequacy of all current political programs, Disraeli would suggest that there is a group of idealistic young social saviors waiting in the wings, led by an inscrutable Oriental prophet named Disraeli. The program of this saving remnant, however, remains cloudy, for instead of containing a pattern of genuine paradoxes leading to "Tory-Radicalism" as a climactic oxymoron *Sybil* contains

only a skein of contradictions, growing out of its conflicting plots of the educations of hero and heroine.

*Sybil* describes the disillusionment of its Chartist characters at the same time that it describes the introduction of Egremont to "the condition of England question." Even more than the discovery of Sybil's aristocratic lineage, it is this double plot that stirs up contradictions and causes consternation in its readers. As Egremont is acquiring some sympathy for the poor, Sybil is losing part of hers, and the Tory-Radical compromise that should exist between them does not materialize. Contradiction, in fact, arises where there should be compromise, and the most glaring instance is what happens to the central theme of the novel. This theme is that Queen Victoria rules over "two nations," "the rich and the poor." As Monypenny says, Disraeli's main purpose is to show the difference "between riches and poverty, luxury and suffering."<sup>7</sup> As a description of *Sybil*, this is perfectly reasonable as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough, for Disraeli's other main purpose is to show that the difference "between riches and poverty, luxury and suffering" is blown out of all proportion by Chartists and Radicals. The idea that the Queen rules over two distinct nations with a great gulf fixed between is one of Disraeli's arguments, but it is also an erroneous belief of Sybil's that she loses during the process of her disillusionment. It is significant that the idea of "the two nations" is first presented to Egremont and the reader, in the most famous "operatic" set-piece of the novel (pp. 76-77), by Stephen Morley, a godless socialist who later tries to murder Egremont out of jealousy. Disraeli treats the "two nations" theme as a paradox he hopes will startle his readers into some awareness of the problems of the poor, but he also treats it as a dangerous illusion and a cliché of radicals like Morley.

The idea of "the two nations" comes as a revelation to Egremont; it is the beginning of his acceptance of social responsibility as an aristocrat. On the other hand, the idea of "the two nations" is also an illusion from which Sybil must be won before she can find Egremont acceptable as a suitor. When Egremont undergoes his pastoral education in the humble abode of the Gerards, he conceals his social rank and adopts the democratic alias, "Mr. Franklin." He quickly discovers that disguise is necessary, for so thoroughly is Sybil a "daughter of the people" and a Chartist that, when she discovers who he is, she spurns him:

"The brother of Lord Marney!" repeated Sybil, with an air almost of stupor.

"Yes," said Egremont; "a member of that family of sacrilege, of those oppressors of the people, whom you

7. William F. Monypenny and G. E. Buckle, *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli* (London, 1929), I, 651.

have denounced to me with such withering scorn." (p. 284)

When Egremont pleads with Sybil not to cast him off because he is an aristocrat, she says, "haughtily": "I am one of those who believe the gulf is impassable. Yes . . . utterly impassable."

Disraeli's Prince cleans the hearth while Cinderella snubs him. It is a situation similar to one in *Coningsby*, wherein that young aristocrat falls in love with the daughter of the rich manufacturer Millbank, whose dislike for the "factitious" nobility makes marriage unthinkable. But just as Millbank eventually abandons his class prejudice, so Sybil learns that the gulf between rich and poor is not "impassable." Disraeli's irony is clever but also superficial, because it has never made sense to tell the oppressed (in this case, Chartist workers) that they should be more tolerant and less tyrannical toward their oppressors. That, however, is the lesson Disraeli teaches Sybil, while he is also making Egremont aware of the existence of the poor.

Sybil had led a sheltered and privileged life, and nothing has taught her to abandon the illusion of the "impassable gulf" between "the two nations" until she encounters two very different forces — handsome Egremont and working-class violence. "Educated in solitude and exchanging thoughts only with individuals of the same sympathies," Sybil has reached the view "that the world was divided only between the oppressors and the oppressed."

With her, to be one of the people was to be miserable and innocent; one of the privileged, a luxurious tyrant. In the cloister, in her garden . . . she had raised up two phantoms which with her represented human nature.

But the experience of the last few months had operated a great change in these impressions. She had seen enough to suspect that the world was a more complicated system than she had preconceived. . . . The characters were more various, the motives more mixed, the classes more blended, the elements of each more subtle and diversified, than she had imagined. (p. 335)

The two nations then, are no more than "two phantoms" of Sybil's imagination that do not describe society realistically, and Egremont is right when he taxes her with being "prejudiced" (p. 318).

Disraeli's contradictory attitude toward his theme affects the structure of his novel in at least two ways. First, it keeps him from offering a straightforward contrast between rich and poor and leads him instead into a series of ambiguous contrasts between a multiplicity of classes, in which factory workers and miners and farm laborers are juxtaposed, while manufacturers disagree with landlords and Chartists dis-

agree with each other. And second, it causes him to make odd, ambiguous assertions about each of the social groups he describes, like Millbank's claim that many of the poor have noble blood in their veins. Working perhaps more from blue books than from personal knowledge, Disraeli describes conditions among miners, farm workers, cotton operatives, handloom weavers, metalworkers, and the Irish poor of London, and he shows with some sympathy and much colorful detail the roots of social rebellion in those conditions. But in the process he demonstrates that the poor are not at all a unified "nation" confronting the rich. The poor are rather a congeries of quarreling factions, and the same is true of the rich, who split up into at least two major groups, landlords and manufacturers. And while it is true that there may be various classes in a society that is nevertheless divided between the haves and the have-nots, Disraeli points to the diversity of the class system as a refutation of "the two nations" theory held by his Chartist characters.

Disraeli's social panorama is remarkable for its range and its vividness; he often makes the dead bones of the blue books come to life. But it is marred repeatedly by spurious paradoxes and flashy riddles, and it is finally perhaps necessary to regard it as only a colorful "muddle," to use Stephen Blackpool's word. Walter Bagehot said of Disraeli that "nothing has really impeded his progress more than his efforts after originality," and this is exactly the trouble with *Sybil*.<sup>8</sup> Disraeli is so in love with irony that he allows it to undermine the central thesis of *Sybil*. He mocks even his own Young England comrades, as when Lord Everingham laughs at Lord Henry Sidney in *Coningsby* for his notion that "the people are to be fed by dancing round a Maypole." Disraeli offers the standard Burkean arguments about custom and faith as opposed to theory and reason and about society as an organism, and this gives his rhetoric a prophetic ring. But his portrait of social England reveals so many complexities and shatters so many clichés — not least of which is "the two nations" idea — that finally the only logical program appears to be the one described by the heroine:

"It sometimes seems to me," said Sybil despondingly, "that nothing short of the descent of angels can save the people of this kingdom." (p. 199)

When Disraeli beat Peel on the Corn Law issue and irreparably broke the old Tory party, one wonders how many astonished and grateful Saxons realized that the first of the angels had arrived among them.

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8. "Mr. Disraeli," in *Walter Bagehot*, ed. Norman St. John-Stevas (Bloomington, Ind., 1959), p. 411.

## Two Notes on Religion in *David Copperfield*

E. Pearlman

### I

ALTHOUGH *David Copperfield* is not a novel about religion, it is nevertheless infused with religious material. An important locus is the saintly character of Agnes Wickfield, in whom goodness and virtue achieve a dimension that borders on the allegorical. David's marriage to Agnes is domestic salvation, and the language that describes it is exalted. "Clasped in my embrace, I held the source of every worthy aspiration I had ever had; the centre of myself, the circle of my life, my own, my wife; my love of whom was founded on a rock!" (ch. 52). One commentator notes that

David's relation to Agnes is a late example of that transposition of religious language into the realm of romantic love which began with the poets of courtly love, and which finds its most elaborate Victorian expression in *Wuthering Heights*.<sup>1</sup>

The apparatus which connects Agnes with godhead at the conclusion of the novel is not afterthought, but is implicit in her presentation throughout. David first encounters her at the Wickfield home at Canterbury, and his first glance engenders a quasi-religious response:

I cannot call to mind where or when, in my childhood, I had seen a stained glass window in a church. Nor do I recollect the subject. But I know that when I saw her turn round, in the grave light of the old staircase, and wait for us, above, I thought of that window, and I associated something of its tranquil brightness with Agnes Wickfield ever afterwards. (ch. 15)

Agnes is depicted in a variety of static but symbolic attitudes. At Dora's death she appears "with solemn hand upraised towards Heaven" (ch. 53). She is several times encountered with her finger "pointing upwards" (most notably in the last sentence of the novel). The gesture seems to mean that God is in the sky and that we must all aspire. One recalls that in *Dombey and Son* (ch. 14) Christ in the picture on the staircase at Blimber's is in the same posture, and certainly the iconography is familiar. Agnes is therefore, at least in part, *agnus*. She also becomes, variously, "Hope embodied" (ch. 35), "Heavenly" (ch. 39), and a person toward whom even Micawber "does Homage." She is, in a good phrase, a "human goddess."<sup>2</sup> The reiterated motif introduced by Annie Strong — "my love was founded on a rock" — becomes the motto of David's

remarriage, and its Petrine associations are not irrelevant. Agnes is the rock on which David will build his sanctified marriage.

Agnes also participates in the morality play structure that operates intermittently in *David Copperfield*. She is the "Good Angel" — moral guide and externalized conscience. David, hero and wayfarer, encounters a variety of pitfalls as he struggles in his "fight with the world" (ch. 10). Although the allegory is generally subdued, it is occasionally emphatic. David, for example, is specifically identified as "Young Innocence" when Littimer is "Old Guilt" (ch. 32); like a hero of a Bunyan allegory he battles through the Forest of Difficulty (with a guitar case). The tradition is thoroughly exploited when Agnes warns David against the youth right fair who is his worsen angel. David:

"You are my good Angel. . . . Always my good Angel."  
"If I were, indeed, Trotwood," she returned, "there is one thing that I would set my heart on very much. . . . On warning you," said Agnes, with a steady glance, "against your bad Angel."  
"My dear Agnes," I began, "if you mean Steerforth —." (ch. 25)

Although Steerforth escapes simple definition, he earns a place in the allegory for villainy transparent except to the innocent hero, and also for his function as misleader of youth. To offset him, Agnes becomes a fixed point, a "centre," a constant source of social and moral correctness. At the conclusion of the novel she rescues David from a romantic equivalent of Despair; if this were genuine religious allegory she would be Grace.

In an even more oblique way Dora also fits the morality pattern. "I adore her with my whole soul" (ch. 35), we find David saying. And even more pointedly, "I loved Dora to idolatry" (ch. 38). The clear implication is that to prefer Dora to Agnes is to succumb to a false religion. The name Dora inverts the word "adore," and carries overtones of illegitimate worship. There is, therefore, more than hyperbolic irony in David's confession, "I was a captive and a slave" (ch. 26). The excesses of infatuation are treated with splendid comic deftness, but in terms of the domestic religion that informs the novel, David's lusting after strange goddesses is a crime terribly serious and morally wrong, and one that must be expiated.

Morality-play themes are a part of a larger structure of the novel — a division of characters and perhaps even

1. J. H. Miller, *Charles Dickens, The World of His Novels* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), p. 157.

2. Miller, p. 157.

places into an unfixed but suggestive Old Testament-New Testament opposition. The geography is not as precise as in *The Merchant of Venice*, where the commercial world is dominated by the wrath of Shylock and the fairy tale world of Belmont by the forgiveness and mercy of Portia, but there are glimmers of such an outline in *David Copperfield*. In a rough way, the center of Old Testament interest falls at Yarmouth-Blunderstone; the New Testament, of course, at Canterbury. London, the "modern Babylon" (ch. 36), is neutral ground.

A specific Old Testament allusion occurs in the description of the Peggotty home. "Did you give your son the name of Ham because you live in a sort of Ark?" David naïvely asks (ch. 3). The interior of the boat sustains the reference: "On the walls there were some common coloured pictures. . . . Abraham in red going to sacrifice Isaac in blue, and Daniel in yellow cast into a den of green lions." The illustrations do more than enhance the Old Testament atmosphere. "Daniel" assuredly refers to Dan'l Peggotty, who assumes the role of patriarch and prophet in the second half of the novel. Abraham and Isaac are a variant of the Murdstone-David relationship: the cruel father and the martyred, or potentially martyred, son. Murdstone himself is also an Old Testament figure. He is an unforgiving and wrathful father whose power is primeval and terrifying, perhaps Yahweh even more than Abraham. Like Shakespeare, whose Shylock is more a puritan than a Jew, and like the Puritans themselves, Dickens identifies the more extreme Calvinist position with Old Testament religion. He, or David, is therefore moved to remark (in a passage that contains one of the two references to Christ in the novel): "The gloomy theology of the Murdstones made all children out to be a swarm of little vipers (though there was a child once set in the midst of the Disciples)" (ch. 4). The Murdstones are defined as anti- (or *ante-*) Christ. It is reasonably clear that the father-son relationship of the first part of the novel reverberates with religious overtones. And it is surprising neither that Dickens was more attracted to the religion of the son than the religion of the father, nor that his understanding of Biblical history was so unsophisticated.

Another bad father is also a devotee of the Murdstone religion, though the passage that describes him as such was excised as "overmatter":

I hear that Mr. Creakle, on account of certain religious opinions he held, was one of the elect and chosen. . . . I hear that the man with the wooden leg had preached . . . and had frightened women into fits by raving about a Pit he said he saw, with I don't know how many thousands of billions and trillions of

pretty babies born for no other purpose than to be cast into it. I heard that Mr. Creakle's son doubted the clear-sightedness of the man with the wooden leg, and had once held some remonstrance with his father about the discipline of the school on an occasion of its being very cruelly exercised, and was supposed to have objected besides that the elect had no business to ill-use his mother. I heard that Mr. Creakle turned him out of doors in consequence, and that it had nearly broken Mrs. and Miss Creakle's heart.<sup>3</sup>

Apparently Dickens intended to duplicate the religious situation at Blunderstone but thought better of it. When this passage is eliminated, what remains of the episode at Salem is not so much anti-Christian as it is neutral in religious content. In order to achieve Agnes, David must sidestep paganism as well as false religion, and the school is pagan. The grounds are exotic: "the dusty playground . . . was such a desert in miniature, that I thought no one but a camel, or a dromedary, could have felt at home in it." David enters as "the young gentleman whose teeth are to be filed"; metaphorically, he is not only the outsider but a cannibal. Creakle proclaims himself a "Tartar"; his assistant, Tungay, whose name is appropriately non-European, is "an obstinate Barbarian." The returning schoolchildren, savages all, "dance about [David] like wild Indians" (ch. 6). The school is spiritually dry, and David must await his passage to Canterbury and Agnes to live in a regenerate world.

In Canterbury, at last, "that quiet influence which was inseparable in my mind from Agnes, seemed to pervade even the city where she dwelt" (ch. 39). David casts off his prior identity, which had been permeated with an inappropriate ethic, and is born again: first swathed in over-size clothes (bunting?) and then ritually adopted by new parents (ch. 14). He receives a new Christian name, Trotwood, which supersedes his former Old Testament praenomen. Dr. Strong's school is, ethically, the exact opposite of Creakle's. There, the first boy initially "seems to be a mighty creature, dwelling afar off" — a person whom David holds in "reverential aspect" (ch. 18). But soon Trotwood replaces the old first boy, whose name is Adams; he becomes the new Adams. He falls in love with a legitimate surrogate for the lamb Agnes, one "Miss Shepherd."

Christian virtues dominate at Canterbury, and are seen in the Wickfields, the Strongs, and collaterally at Dover with Betsey and Mr. Dick. Dr. Strong is, as Mr. Dick says, "humble, humble": "I have sent his name up on a scrap of paper, to the kite, along the string, when it has been in the sky, among the larks" (ch. 45). This premature apotheosis is in contrast to the characters who are intrusive at Canterbury: Mrs. Markleham, who is "a Turk" (ch. 45),

3. Cited from the edition of G. H. Ford (Boston, 1958), p. 674.

and Uriah Heep, who is not humble, but perversely "umble." Heep is parody-Christ: the scene in which David strikes him and knocks out his tooth is a burlesque of Christianity. Heep literally turns the other cheek, and refuses to take a tooth for a tooth. But his forgiveness is fraudulent and is designed rather to arrogate power to himself and to provoke guilt than as an exercise of charity. Heep is the serpent at Canterbury.

## II

Dickens' religion is theologically simple, and its virtue is not intelligence but bounteousness. The measure of goodness is the ability to forgive injuries, and Dickens' sympathetic characters dispense forgiveness as freely as the gentle raindrops from heaven. In this connection, the case of Mr. Peggotty is one of the most interesting in the novel, for while he evinces his humanity by his immediate pardoning of Emily, he withholds it, initially, from Martha Endell. His is therefore not a static goodness, but rather a humanity that grows and deepens with suffering. Martha is herself partly a symbolic figure infused with religious significance. Her surname (End-all) and her attempt to drown herself in the river identify her as despair. Her first name is certainly designed to recall the two sisters of Bethany, Mary and Martha. Perhaps in the back of Dickens' mind is an association with Mary Magdalen, the type of the repentant prostitute (Magdala, like Yarmouth, was a fishing village).<sup>4</sup> At first Mr. Peggotty participates in the general attitude toward Martha, that articulated by Ham: "[Martha is] a poor wurem" (Dickens, like Desdemona, cannot say "whore"), "the mowld o' the churchyard don't hold any that the folk shrink away from, more." Mr. Peggotty, we are told, couldn't bear to see Martha and Emily together "side by side, for all the treasures that's wrecked in the sea" (ch. 22). After Emily's fall, Dickens gradually transforms Mr. Peggotty into a mystic and a prophet, apparently to provide his change of heart with a wider significance. "His

hair was long and ragged"; "His face was burnt dark by the sun" (ch. 40). He begins to speak in Biblical phraseology. Of Steerforth's clipper: "If ever a boat foundered, since there was darkness on the face of the deep, that one's gone down" (ch. 33). On another occasion he appears "as if he were awaking from a vision" (ch. 32). His language even escapes from the immediate experience into some indefinable symbolic reference. "I went across Channel to France, and landed theer, as if I'd fell down from the sky" (ch. 39). He becomes a "pilgrim," and at "Our Saviour's Cross outside the village" townspeople come to comfort him and bring him sustenance: some even bring their little girls to sit on his knee (because he is a holy man? because he is a charm against unchastity?). He seems to be the recipient of supernatural intelligence. "I don't know wheer it comes from, or how 'tis, but *I am told* as she's alive." David comments, "He looked almost like a man inspired" (ch. 46).

Along with the transformation from fisher to prophet comes a change in attitude. "The time was Mas'r Davy . . . when I thowt this girl, Martha, a'most like the dirt underneath my Em'ly's feet. God forgive me, there's a difference noe." David notices "a new and thoughtful compassion in him" (ch. 46). The important development of charity out of wrath, from Old Testament to New Testament emotion, leads to his taking Martha to Australia. She is "saved . . . for repentance" (ch. 47) and begins a new life in a new land.

The latter development of Mr. Peggotty is the event with the richest religious significance in the novel, and even here this aspect is thin compared to the weightier themes. In perspective the matter of religion is strictly marginal, though the lumping of evidence may temporarily deceive. But it is not surprising that in a novel as rich and comprehensive as *David Copperfield* even subordinate themes are handled with coherence and grace.

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## *In Memoriam* and *The Excursion*: A Matter of Comparison

Stuart F. C. Niermeier

MANY EARLY REVIEWERS of *In Memoriam* found it useful to compare the poem to Greek and English elegies from Bion and *The Lament for Bion* to Lamb and Shelley, while

others suggested it bore a structural similarity to the sonnet sequence of Petrarch and Shakespeare. Not unpredictably, these comparisons soon became commonplace.

4. H. M. Garth (*Saint Mary Magdalen in Medieval Literature, Johns Hopkins Univ. Stud. in History and Pol. Science, Ser. LXVII, No. 3* [Baltimore, 1950]) states that Mary and Martha are frequently confused, and cites among others Bede, who "states flatly that 'Mary Magdalen is the sister of Lazarus,

and anointed the Lord with ointment'" (p. 20). She also notes that Mary Magdalen was believed to have been a prostitute, "had a sudden and dramatic repentance," and "retired to a desert for many years to live in prayer and penitence" (p. 25). For "desert" substitute "Australia."

Among the 1850 reviews of Tennyson's poem, however, were two that introduced a comparison of *In Memoriam* with *The Excursion* of Wordsworth — a comparison that was to be developed more fully in 1853 by L. Etienne in the *Revue Contemporaine*, and one that is interesting, suggestive, and perhaps unexpected. In its lengthy article assessing the importance of an *In Memoriam* still hot off the press, the *North British Review*<sup>1</sup> predicted that within the history of English poetry *Paradise Lost* and the two poems here considered would be deemed of similar stature and revolutionary importance. Within the context of the history of English meters from the Anglo-Saxons to 1850, it directed most of its remarks to the metrical excellence of Tennyson's poem, while acknowledging that both *In Memoriam* and *The Excursion*, with their powers of meter and language, revealed their authors' profound understanding of the relation of art to the most sacred depths of being. In comprehending the beauty of the laws of life, Tennyson and Wordsworth produced their supreme responses to the human situation, each poet perceiving the needs of his own generation.

Now the great philosophical worth of the poem before us [*In Memoriam*], and the element of its merit, which makes it peculiarly what all great poems have been, a work addressing itself especially to its own time, is to be found in the fact that while it proclaims primary truths with an astonishing force of conviction and persuasion, it roots up, with equal zeal and efficacy, the poisonous weeds that are germinating in all directions, and choking the good crop.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, *The Palladium*<sup>3</sup> called *In Memoriam* the most important poem since *The Excursion* and, with the possible exception of some of George Herbert's poems, the best religious poetry in English. Although this review mentioned neither Tennyson nor Hallam in connection with *In Memoriam*, and although it would admit to no view of the poem as a unified whole, it recognized in the work a new form, various tones of thought and feeling as the poet follows nature, and a pattern of progression and change. The poem had a special refinement and power: "The profoundest grief, despair itself, is seen through the subduing medium of thoughtful memory; and therefore its immediate effect upon the mind of the reader is not so remarkable as the way in which that effect clings to and imperceptibly grows around his heart."<sup>4</sup>

Although direct "comparison" is too strong a term for the second reviewer's reference to the two poems, it is ap-

propriate for that short section of Etienne's enterprising article of 1853<sup>5</sup> that speaks of Wordsworth and Tennyson, in *The Excursion* and *In Memoriam*, as types of stoic poet-philosophers — articulate exponents of the stoic doctrines of providence and consolation. Of the two, the more secular Tennyson had stronger doubts, less faith, and diminished enthusiasm (something quite natural in any poet writing after Byron), but he also knew more of those anxieties and uncertainties that gripped man at that time. To illustrate that Wordsworth and Tennyson both represented poetically the search for consolation, Etienne quoted (in a French prose translation) the following passage from Book III of *The Excursion*,<sup>6</sup> as the lines seminal to the whole idea of *In Memoriam*. The skeptic Solitary is recalling his soul's search for consolation after the loss of his children and his wife:

I called on dreams and visions, to disclose  
That which is veiled from waking thought; conjured  
Eternity, as men constrain a ghost  
To appear and answer; to the grave I spake  
Imploringly; — looked up, and asked the Heavens  
If Angels traversed their cerulean floors,  
If fixed or wandering star could tidings yield  
Of the departed spirit — what abode  
It occupies — what consciousness retains  
Of former loves and interests. (ll. 686-95)

On the face of it, of course, these poems are very different in primary theme, surface genre, metrical form, and structure. And Wordsworth's "law supreme/Of that Intelligence which governs all"<sup>7</sup> contrasts Tennyson's doctrine of love as cosmic principle and highest faculty of man, despite the Pastor's statement in Book V that

Life, I repeat is energy of love  
Divine or human; exercised in pain,  
In strife, in tribulation; and ordained,  
If so approved and sanctified, to pass  
Through shades and silent rest, to endless joy.  
(ll. 1012-16)

Nevertheless, the reviewers, like those in 1929 who compared Bridges' *Testament of Beauty* with Wordsworth's *Prelude*, were thinking to some extent in terms of length and philosophic seriousness or in terms of uniqueness, purpose, unity, or religion. Without knowing more fully how the reviewers of *In Memoriam* read *The Excursion*, one can enter the doorway they opened and point out some significant similarities between the two poems, undeterred

1. *North British Review*, XIII (1850), 532-55.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 554.

3. *The Palladium*, I (1850), 94-100.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

5. L. Etienne, "Poètes Contemporains: Alfred Tennyson, Poète Laureat," *Revue Contemporaine*, VI (1853), 205-30.

6. William Wordsworth, *The Excursion* (text of 1850), ed. E. de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire (Oxford, 1966). See Etienne, p. 225.

7. *Ibid.*, "Preface to the Edition of 1814," ll. 21-22.

by Arnold's warnings against Wordsworth's philosophy and his smoke-screen dislike of Tennyson.

Both poems, sharing an element of dramatic form (Wordsworth's speaking characters and Tennyson's "I" *persona*), were designed to interpret their age in history with reference to the powers of man, moral worth, love, the necessity of reverence, the growth of knowledge, problems of active faith, man's divinity, immortality, and human progress. Both, which may have been seen as the products of solitude, deal with individuality, law, and suffering; they are expressions of emotions and deal with the contradictions and tensions in life. The title of *The Excursion* is similar to one of Tennyson's favorite subtitles for *In Memoriam*, "the Way of the Soul," and Wordsworth's Wanderer is the type of *persona* that the "I" is for Tennyson, for they both represent the poetic imagination.

Ignoring the tempting mathematical comparisons of the proportions of the poems, one can note their similarity in spiral structure, in growth (if not in specific genesis), and coincidentally in history of textual care. We know that both poems have been read as theodicies, evidence for which has been taken at least from their respective prologues. Wordsworth's "Prospectus" for *The Recluse*, as a kind of prologue to *The Excursion*, parallels in function both the prologue and motto stanza (I. i) of *In Memoriam*, as a statement of intention and definition of man's place in the cosmic scheme, in the form (partly) of a prayer, and

in terms of the availability of paradise. Elsewhere, one is reminded of Tennyson's "imaginative woe"<sup>8</sup> in Wordsworth's "no unpleasing sadness"<sup>9</sup> and of the "blessed consolations in distress"<sup>10</sup> that both poems affirm. Urania, overwhelmed by Wordsworth's high task, can only scowl at Tennyson when she once again meets pastoral elements, the marriage metaphor, images of shadow, veil, and light and forms of transcendental communion in another monumental poem. The line "But in the mountains did he *feel* his faith"<sup>11</sup> is thoroughly Tennysonian, and Wordsworth's doctrine of the relation between the individual mind and the external world may be considered part of what Tennyson means by "Aeonian music."<sup>12</sup> The passage Etienne quoted as seminal comes from the one book of *The Excursion* that is closest to *In Memoriam* in imagery and language, in energy and vision, the links with Arnold notwithstanding.

The parallels, from the vague to the remarkably clear, are merely touched upon here. Perhaps, after all this, their most important function is to help define the *differences* in the two poems — differences in unorthodox structures and form, in poetic doctrines of man, in critical problems, and in poetic appeal. Some of their differences involve the way they indicate changes in the history of hope and the progress of poetry itself. If the similarities can serve to reveal the differences, perhaps both can shed a little more light on our perspective of the two poems.

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## Past or Future Mindscapes: Pictures in *Jane Eyre*

M. B. McLaughlin

PERHAPS PART of the difficulty in interpreting the pictures in Chapter 13 of *Jane Eyre* is that they seem such very bad, such very lurid and melodramatic pictures. One is tempted to compare them to Huck's description of Emmeline Grangerford's attempts:

Another one was a young lady with her hair all combed up straight to the top of her head and knotted there in front of a comb like a chair-back, and she was crying into a handkerchief and had a dead bird laying on its back in her other hand with its heels up. . . .

But Jane's pictures have no intentionally comic function. She is really quite pleased with them, and Mr. Rochester seems duly impressed. Jane is young and full of energy

and spirit. Those lurid aspects of imagination that she cannot handle emerge in another Brontë heroine, Lucy Snowe of *Villette*, as hysteria and illness. Perhaps they emerge in *Jane Eyre* as bad pictures.

The case has frequently been made for these pictures to be considered as prophecy, but if this is true, it is certainly a more gratuitous use of supernaturalism than is the use of Mr. Rochester's voice calling, "Jane! Jane! Jane!" The latter device does at least seem necessary to rescue Jane from the proposed marriage with St. John Rivers. The nature here, the "Mighty Spirit" or God, which intervenes has been prepared for earlier — for example, when Jane wanders on the moors: "Nature seemed to me benign and good; I

8. *In Memoriam*, LXXXV, 1. 53.

9. *The Excursion*, "Preface," 1. 5.

10. *Ibid.*, "Preface," 1. 16.

11. *Ibid.*, I, 1. 226.

12. *In Memoriam*, XCV, 1. 41.

thought she loved me, outcast as I was; and I, who from man could anticipate only mistrust, rejection, insult, clung to her with filial fondness."<sup>1</sup> And there is also the justification for the supernatural voice in the special relationship between Jane and Rochester. They are, he explains, soul mates: "I am bound to you with a strong attachment . . . a solemn passion . . . draws you to my centre and spring of life, wraps my existence about you . . . fuses you and me in one" (p. 342). Supernaturalism still, but surely more acceptable than the notion that the paintings of the school-girl Jane are to be seen as a mapping out of her future life in vivid watercolor.

Jane has drawn the pictures during her last two vacations at Lowood. But these are not the only ones she has drawn. There seem to be a great many pictures in the portfolio she presents to Mr. Rochester. "He deliberately scrutinized each sketch and painting. Three he laid aside; the others, when he had examined them, he swept from him" (p. 156). If the reader is really to take these paintings as prophetic pieces, he must also commit himself further. It is not only Jane who can draw prophetically, but Mr. Rochester who can recognize prophecy when he sees it!

In view of their subject matter, it is not surprising that Mr. Rochester should ask, "Were you happy when you painted these pictures?" Jane answers, "I was absorbed, sir: yes, and I was happy. To paint them, in short, was to enjoy one of the keenest pleasures I have ever known" (p. 157). Now surely there is nothing very pleasurable about corpses and cormorants, icebergs, and electric travail. Freudian critics undoubtedly would see these pictures as typical schoolgirl fantasy, with the expected abundance of phallic imagery — the "half-submerged mast" on the "swollen sea," the "peak of a hill, with grass and some leaves slanting," and the "pinnacle of an iceberg piercing a polar winter sky."

Is the reader to think that only these three pictures that Mr. Rochester has selected from the portfolio are prophetic? Can he believe that if all the pictures in the portfolio were described, something like a giant jigsaw puzzle of Jane's life would be available? Charlotte Brontë may have intended that the pictures be prophetic, but if so, the device is a clumsy and disturbing one.

Thomas Langford in the Spring 1967 issue of *The Victorian Newsletter* maintains that the pictures are not only prophetic but help provide unity for the novel. But when he attempts specificity in interpreting the pictures, his straining is obvious. His assignment of symbols becomes clearly arbitrary, as when he suggests that the bracelet torn from the corpse's arm in the first picture represents Jane's broken relationship with Helen Burns. But it is possible, I believe,

to see this picture and the other two as imaginative representations of real and traumatic *past* experiences with a less arbitrary interpretation of symbols.

It is the death of Mr. Reed that has made Jane's early life so miserable, the broken relationship with him that has made her so vulnerable. One of the most vivid scenes of Jane's childhood is that of her imprisonment in the Red Room. Here, too, she is preoccupied with death, and hears "the rushing of wings" (p. 49); the weather is similarly foreboding: "Daylight began to forsake the red-room . . . the beclouded afternoon was tending to drear twilight. I heard the rain still beating continuously on the staircase window, and the wind howling in the grove behind the hall" (p. 48). In the Red Room experience there is "a gleam from a lantern" (p. 49) as there is "one gleam of light" (p. 157) in the first picture.

The second picture, which Langford calls "clearly a vision of the goddess of love and connected in various ways with Thornfield," can also, I think, be treated in another way. The picture is one of serenity. The image of electric travail is used only as a simile to describe the way in which the "shadowy hair" is separated. The eyes that "shone dark and wild" are eyes of spirit — the kind of spirit Miss Temple displays in ordering bread and cheese for the students at Lowood. Jane has described Miss Temple at Lowood: "I derived a child's pleasure from the contemplation of her face, her dress, her one or two ornaments, her white forehead, her clustered and shining curls, and beaming dark eyes" (p. 103). And the secret tea that Helen Burns and Jane share with her elicits from Jane the remark that "We feasted that evening as on nectar and ambrosia" (p. 104). Miss Temple has Helen read aloud from Virgil, and the goddess Venus looms large in Virgil's most famous work. This second picture can be seen as an idealized portrait of Miss Temple at Lowood. The picture is of a goddess — a "vision of the Evening Star." Venus is the evening star, and Venus, of course, is the goddess of love. Miss Temple furnishes Jane with affection, love, and concern at an extremely impressionable time in Jane's life. Both pictures tell, then, of a traumatic loss and abandonment — the first symbolizing the consequences of Mr. Reed's death, the second that of Miss Temple's loss through marriage.

The third picture presents more difficulty. Certainly it seems prophetic of St. John Rivers, largely because of the images of icebergs and coldness. But St. John Rivers and Mr. Brocklehurst are very much alike in their coldness and aloofness. Jane associates the two men in her mind several times in the novel. The martyr imagery of the third painting can, I think, be related to Helen Burns. And the cold,

1. Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (Baltimore, 1969), p. 350.



male image of Mr. Brocklehurst would be contiguously associated with this memory. In the incident at Lowood when Jane is punished by Mr. Brocklehurst and stands on a high stool, "exposed to general view on a pedestal of infamy" (p. 99), Helen passes before Jane, and Jane notes:

. . . in passing, she lifted her eyes. What a strange light inspired them! What an extraordinary sensation that ray sent through me! . . . It was as if a martyr, a hero, had passed a slave or victim, and imparted strength in the transit. . . . What a smile! I remember it now, and I know that it was the effluence of fine intellect, or true courage; it lit up her marked lineaments, her thin face, her sunken gray eye, like a reflection from the aspect of an angel.

The death imagery of the third picture can be applied to Helen Burns, but not to St. John Rivers. And again, the third picture would be of loss and abandonment.

Jane is painting, then, not with the aid of a supernatural brush but from real and difficult periods of her experience. The painting of the pictures may be pleasurable in that it is purgative, and Mr. Rochester's choice of these three from a portfolio of many demands of him no prophetic eye but only the kind of critical eye which can recognize powerful feeling. These are the rather bad paintings that one might expect of a sixteen- and seventeen-year-old school girl who has undergone several periods of traumatic loss.

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## The Midsummer Eves of Shakespeare and Christina Rossetti

Warren Herendeen

FOR LONA MOSK PACKER, Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market* is best described as a temptation poem in which the poet celebrated, by condemning, sensuous passion: "Two lovely sisters are tempted by the little goblin merchants who haunt the glens and woods and toward evening allure unwary maidens with fruit, rich, glowing, delicious to the taste."<sup>1</sup> What the poet took from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* becomes a matter of importance when the temptation theme and the girls of *Goblin Market* are related to the larger significance of influential scenes in the play.

A first and obvious point in a comparison of poem and play is that the two girls in the former (Laura and Lizzie) and the latter (Hermia and Helena) have experiences in nature with supernatural beings on midsummer eves (traditionally in May and June), and at the end of each work marriage comes to each girl.<sup>2</sup> Other comparisons and contrasts are more illuminating: Laura wilfully listens to and looks at the goblin men and succumbs to their temptations; Hermia wilfully opposes her father's (Aegeus') and Duke Theseus' command that she marry Demetrius though she "loves" Lysander. Laura's passion for the spiritual death that goblin fruits symbolize resembles Helena's debasing passion for Demetrius, who scorns her even as she follows him to the forest whither he has gone in pursuit of Hermia. (Helena, for a taste of recognition, betrayed Hermia and

Lysander's destination.) Ultimately, when resolutions come in the play, the source proves to be Oberon's desire that true "lovers" be united, and by magic the girls and young men are harmoniously made one. Doubtless the requirements of fantastic farce are different from those of a pre-Raphaelite romance, yet the poet, in contrast to the dramatist, persuades us that at least one girl, Lizzie, could go to a haunted glen and force the supernatural to do her bidding. Lizzie's moral greatness makes her the heroine of the poem, but both Lizzie and Laura (the latter redeemed both by suffering and Lizzie's sacrifice) are more worthy wives of the husbands they also will marry than are Hermia and Helena.

Through heroic Lizzie, Christina Rossetti opposes both the observations about women made in the play and the interpretation of women that Shakespeare offers. Theseus commands that Hermia obey her father, Aegeus, and marry Demetrius or else "die" as a nun, or die literally, if the nun's life is refused (I.i.74 ff.).<sup>3</sup> His insensitivity to a girl's desire is not necessarily Shakespeare's, but Lizzie's desires are not to be balked by convention — precisely because her desires are superior to those of Laura and Helena. Hermia is upbraided by Helena, who correctly sees that Hermia pays no heed to Helena's suffering for an indifferent Demetrius. The problem is a moral one: the purgation of de-

1. *Christina Rossetti* (Berkeley, 1963), p. 141.

2. B. Ivor Evans identified a number of sources for *Goblin Market*, including some references to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in *The Modern Language Review*, XXVIII, 156-65. *Seventeenth-Century News* will publish my identification of certain of her connections with Andrew Marvell.

3. I have used Charlton Hinman's edition of *The First Folio of Shakespeare* (New York, 1968) for citations from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Act and line references given in the text after each citation are to the Hinman edition.

basing desire — the temptation in *Goblin Market* — not the securing of what is desired. If death comes as a result of the sacrifice for a noble end, that is part of the heroine's risk. Aegeus' command, or the Duke's, is therefore of no importance in any moral scheme. Shakespeare surrenders to a convention, or eludes it perhaps by irony and mockery, yet he does not offer so valuable a study of the troubles of girls in certain hard circumstances as Christina does.

Titania's rude strength may have appealed to one side of Christina:

These are the forgeries of jealousy,  
And neuer since the middle Summers spring  
Met we on hil, in dale, forrest, or mead,  
By pauer fountaine, or by rushie brooke,  
Or in the beached margent of the sea,  
To dance our ringlets to the whistling Winde,  
But with thy braulls thou hast disturb'd our sport.  
(II.456-62)

But Christina thinks so little of Titania (whose night with Bottom raises no moral issues in either the transformed patch or the Queen of Fairies), that the fruits Evans noted as deriving from the play are ones offered to Bottom at Titania's command. For Christina, it is not gender but *temptation* that is the more important point. Oberon, close to a goblin figure, has the power to transform Titania's vision by the liquor derived from love-in-idleness. He will "make her full of hatefull fantasies" (II.639), for he too suffers balked desire (she will not surrender the Indian boy he demands, and for the good reason that the mother was one of Titania's votaresses). Lizzie's sister's vision is also magically transformed by the wicked goblins' fruits, but Lizzie's will and nobility prove stronger than any Oberon or Puck.

The most striking differences occur in a comparison of the appearance and reality of Laura and Lizzie with Hermia and Helena. Shakespeare's girls are very alike in nature and very different in appearance. Helena speaks to Hermia:

Is all the counsel that we two haue shar'd,  
The sisters vows, the houres that we haue spent,  
When wee haue chid the hasty footed time,  
For parting vs; O, is all forgot?  
All schoole daies: friendship, child-hood innocence?  
We Hermia, like two Artificiall gods,  
Haue with our needles, created both one flower,  
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,  
Both warbling of one song, both in one key;  
As if our hands, our sides, voices, and mindes  
Had bene incorporate. So we grew together,  
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,  
But yet a vnion in partition,

Two louely berries molded on one stem  
So with two seeming bodies, but one heart, . . .  
(III.1225-39)

Christina Rossetti's girls are look-alikes but their natures differ. She seems to echo Shakespeare in the description (ironic because Laura has fallen) of the two sisters sleeping:

Golden head by golden head  
Like two pigeons in one nest  
Folded in each other's wings  
Like two blossoms on one stem  
Like two flakes of new-fall'n snow,  
Like two wands of ivory  
Tipped with gold for awful kings. (ll. 185-91)<sup>4</sup>

Christina's identical girls are as different as Italian and English girls, or as different as a stubborn, wilful, and selfish girl and a sister of moral strength and character who is to be tested. Christina may have drawn on Hermia's moral character (she wills Lysander to sleep further off [II.iii.40] during their night in the forest) and combined it with her conception of the sacrificing sister in developing the figure of Lizzie. Of course in the passionate picture quoted from *Goblin Market* we are far from the tone of Shakespeare's play in which he perhaps needs to distinguish identities of comic significance by painting a maypole as she upbraids a low prancing puppet . . . a rolling acorn.

Play and poem echo each other in numerous ways, none of which is sufficiently precise to be called other than a possibly conscious theft. Note for example Shakespeare's comic rhetorical devices when Hermia addresses Lysander:

I sweare to thee, by Cupids strongest bow,  
By his best arrow with the golden head,  
By the simplicitie of Venus' doues,  
By that which knitteth soules and prospers loue,  
And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage Queene,  
When the false Troyan Vnder saile was seene, . . .  
(I.180-85)

Christina seriously uses the device of repetition (especially of identical words beginning consecutive lines, e.g., "one" or "like"). Words throughout play and poem make us nod familiarly ("golden head" or references to Troy and especially to the animal world, to owls, bats, glowworms). Puck is described as a goblin, or Hobgoblin, and in a fairy's accounting of Puck's activities there is a faint resemblance to the idyllic world of beautiful daily life as dreamed by William Morris and the pre-Raphaelites. The fairy asks:

Are you not hee,  
That frights the maidens of the Villagree,  
Skim milke, and sometimes labour in the querne,

4. *Goblin Market and Other Poems* was first published in 1862. A convenient contemporary edition of the poem *Goblin*

*Market* may be found in Cecil Y. Lang's edition of *The Pre-Raphaelites and Their Circle* (New York, 1968).

And bootlesse make the breathlesse huswife cherne,  
And sometime make the drinke to beare no barme,  
Misleade night-wanderers, laughing at their harme,  
Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Pucke,  
You do their worke, and they shall haue good lucke.

(II.404-11)

Christina pictures an idyllic scene but one already penetrated by goblin reality:

Early in the morning  
When the first cock crowed his warning,  
Neat like bees, as sweet and busy,  
Laura rose with Lizzie;  
Fetched in honey, milked the cows,  
Aired and set to rights the house,  
Kneaded cakes of whitest wheat,  
Cakes for dainty mouths to eat,  
Next churned butter, whipped up cream,  
Fed their poultry, sat and sewed . . . (II. 199-208)

Finally, the juice Puck brings to Oberon makes one mad and changes appearances just as the fruits have the power by visual appearance to seduce a girl weak of vision into tasting the deceiving joys of a goblin feast.

Problems associated with the temptations of young lovers course through poem and play: Is reason able to sway the will or will the reason? Is desire love? In what sense is self-enclosure wrong or right for the loving? What are true gentleness and the role of pity in love? Shakespeare answers, to the perpetual mystification of his critics; Christina's answers are less well known, mystify less. Reason can sway the will and, if it is reason empowered by conviction cautiously achieved and requiring sacrifice rather than selfish pleasure, then it is also love. Desire is not love, for love is an intellectual and imaginative act, primarily, in which desire plays a role limited by thought. Laura's desires, or the various self-enclosing desires of clowns, fairies, or lovers and other mortals in the play, have nothing to do with love, and Christina on this point has the better of Shakespeare. Pity is a cherished virtue in Christina and leads immature Lizzie back to the glen from where she had uncourageously fled when Laura was tempted. She saves her sister and overcomes herself in the maturity of her love. In the play pity is an unaccountable intrusion in Oberon.

At the play's end we hear conclusions in language that echoes in Christina's concluding *moralitas*. Those who find hers a Victorian idyll may say the same of Shakespeare. The real point is that there is more reason to believe Christina's idyll. Goblins in both writers' work have led lovers, and others, "Up and downe, vp and downe" (as Puck declares) — "*Goblin*, lead them vp and downe" (III.1437,1439) so as to prove "what fooles these mortals be" (III.1139). In Christina, however, a fool manages to survive by reason of Lizzie's domestic heroism, and the

goblins (to quote Shakespeare against them), "On the ground sleepe sound" (III.1497). Though it may be offensive for a modern generation to hear such lines as, "So shall all the couples three /Ever true in loving be" (V.i.414-15), both Shakespeare and Christina seem to believe, however different their artistic forms (fantastic farce and pre-Raphaelite verse romance), that there are moments more of gold than of dust.

Shakespeare's play leaves us more uncertain than Christina's poem, as the greater genius leads us further. And by a curious power Shakespeare enables us to supply a more richly suggestive definition of the word "pre-Raphaelite" than has yet been given either to the movement generally, or to such of her poems as *Goblin Market*. We wonder in Shakespeare's play at Oberon's scorn for Bottom, and wonder if Bottom was not more worthy than the king of shadows and his queen were capable of seeing. Shakespeare thus sets a limit on the insights of the lovers, clowns, and fairies. The fairies — of whom this point is not generally made — have exceeded their dominion and crossed the lives of the mortal, Titania and Oberon both taking unnatural interests in Theseus and Hippolyta. This crossing of fantasy with reality (a Bottom with ass-head) in fact permeates the play and is essential to its meaning. We usually remember the depiction of the bank where love-in-idleness grows: "I know a banke where the wilde time blowes . . ." (II.630). But how many remember Puck's remark in this idyllic forest that Hermia is asleep on the "danke and durty ground" (II.728)? This crossing is a danger to producers who in presenting the play will sometimes make it either more fantastic than it is or more real. The fantasy and the reality must be held in tension.

Although I believe Shakespeare has defined a pure comedy in his play, involving the three worlds described, it seems to me that the special quality of this form is the mingling of the three worlds, equally, so as to produce a crossing of fantasy and reality. It is a farce because the great is made small (themes of romantic love or great characters) in larger proportions than the small is made great (the enlargement of the rude mechanicals). There is some burlesque for this latter reason, especially in the scenes involving Bottom, who in this literary form balances the fantasy of the play, as, in multi-layered speech, he says, "it shall be called *Bottomes Dreame*, because it hath no bottome . . ." (IV.1742).

In Christina Rossetti, the form will mean something else finally than in Shakespeare, but I think she is attracted to literary forms in which fantasy crosses reality, especially when the subject matter is of the kind she explores in *Goblin Market*.

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## A Victorian "Modest Proposal"

Charles T. Dougherty

BURIED IN THE ARCHIVES of the *Propaganda* in Rome is an anonymous letter that deserves to rank with the very best examples of satiric writing.<sup>1</sup> Its author is probably an Irishman living in Rome. His subject is the relief of Ireland from English oppression.

Like Swift's, his proposal seems to be the work of a fanatic. Like Swift's, his true argument is only perceived at the end. He is as successful as Swift in maintaining verisimilitude as he earnestly details his outrageous scheme.

Swift drops his mask for one bitter paragraph, then quickly dons it as he assures us that his wife is past child-bearing. This author drops his mask only for one final sentence, then regains his posture to deal one last hilarious stroke: "Yours in Faith"!

The argument of this proposal, at first reading obscure, becomes perfectly clear when it is read backward: The root of Ireland's suffering is her religious difference with England. England will only do justice to Ireland when England is once more a Catholic country. Dreams of bringing this about through the reunion of Roman Catholics and Anglicans are beside the mark, because very few Englishmen are members of the Established Church. The greater number are Protestants, and they are fiercely anti-Roman Catholic. They are not to be moved by the kind of intellectual argument that is having some effect among Anglicans. Therefore the following course of action. . . .

The argument, right up to the proposal, is no bad argument, and it is an original one. A survey of fifty years' correspondence between English Roman Catholics and Rome reveals nothing else like it. There is a general understanding that no-Popery sentiment is very strong among Protestants and also an awareness that in the face of various legal disabilities Roman Catholics and Protestants frequently find a common cause in relation to the Established Church. There is no interest shown in the conversion of Protestants.

This proposal can, of course, be understood on at least two levels. It may be that the author is urging the development of a less intellectual apostolate directed toward Protestantism in rural England. A more likely reading, and a more Swiftian, is one of despair. The seat of virulent anti-Romanist sentiment is in the nonconformist rural churches. Since there is no way to convert them, there is no way "of getting justice done to Ireland."

The guess that the writer is Irish is based upon the subject and upon the facts that the letter is in English, the writer once refers to England as "that country," and the spelling is not American. The arguments are not overwhelming.

The clerk who filed the letter began to summarize its contents in Italian, a usual procedure, then broke off to note, still in Italian, "the writer is a fanatic." Thus was buried for one hundred and twenty-four years the work of a man who has deserved to sit, if not on the chair of the Dean of St. Patrick's, surely at his feet.

Rome February 15th 1848

Reverend Fathers,

Though prevented by my secular state from taking an active part in the extension or advancement of our Holy Church I nevertheless presume to lay before you a plan which, if adopted, can hardly fail to make a deep impression upon that immense body of hardened, ignorant, and resolute heretics distinguished by the appellation of Wesleyans and Anabaptists, dissenters from the Anglican Church in England. With these people all reasoning is useless and their prejudices are so strong against the Catholics, on account of the harsh measures taken in Queen Mary's time, that I greatly fear even were the comparatively small proportion of English who form the established church of that country to conform to the doctrine of this, the opposition the true religion would meet with from the bigotted preachers and their obstinate congregations would render futile any attempts to make the Roman Catholic, as it was before, the religion of England. One means alone remains, and this is to practice on their credulity, for these people are for the most part badly educated and would be most apt to believe what there should be no possibility of disproving. In many towns and cities of England the chapels of these sects are situated in out of the way places whence it would be easy for anyone to gain access without being observed from without. How easy would it be then, as they hold their evening worship after dark sometimes till 10 or 11 o'clock, for anyone sufficiently bold and prudent to attire himself in a gorgeous manner with a glittering crown on his head to represent either the Saviour or the blessed Virgin and entering suddenly at the door warn them if they hoped for salvation to quit the accursed house

1. Archives de Propaganda Fide. *Scrittura, Anglia*, XII, ff. 65r-66r. This letter was found while pursuing research partly supported by a grant from the American Philosophical Society.

and return to the Holy Catholic Church. At the same time a rosary and crucifix should be thrown in the middle of them. To facilitate the escape of the person, he should be prepared with the means of producing a great smoke which should give out a powerful perfume. Indeed were a quantity of ottar of roses upset at the time, it would do. And smoke might be easily made so that he would when getting away appear to vanish in clouds of odour. He should of course have others near him to cover him with a cloak and they should all immediately leave not only the town but the kingdom. If another were to remain off at a distance and kindle an immense cross of flame which they might see immediately when they came out — I do not mean that this should be executed merely at one place, but that a number of places far removed from each other should be selected, choosing such as have in them no priest

of our Catholic church, and that the same day and hour should be assigned for the attempt. It should be stated by the apparition that he will visit many places a hundred or more miles distant before the half hour be finished and any who might be inclined to doubt what they saw would cease to do so when they should afterwards hear it authenticated. Although I am no stranger in this city, you will never perhaps know who has dared to form this project but zealous and ardent in the hope that we may yet make England a Catholic country, the only method of getting justice done to Ireland.

I have the honour to be  
Reverend Fathers,  
Yours in Faith

University of Missouri (St. Louis)

## Recent Publications: A Selected List

Arthur E. Minerof

AUGUST 1971-JANUARY 1972

### I

#### GENERAL

ARTS. Gaunt, William, and M. D. E. Clayton-Stamm. *William de Morgan*. Studio Vista. Associate of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement. Rev. *TLS*, 1 October, p. 1183.

Muir, Percy. *Victorian Illustrated Books*. Batsford. Rev. *TLS*, 24 September, p. 1154.

Naylor, Gillian. *The Arts and Crafts Movement*. Studio Vista. Rev. *TLS*, 12 November, p. 1412.

Oliver, Anthony. *The Victorian Staffordshire Figure*. Heinemann. Ceramics. Rev. *TLS*, 7 January, p. 8.

Summerson, John. *Victorian Architecture*. Columbia University. Rev. *TLS*, 3 September, pp. 1041-43.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Dawson, Giles E. "John Payne Collier's Great Forgery." *Studies in Bibliography: Papers of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia*, Vol. 24, pp. 1-26. Paleographical proof that Collier forged the "Perkins Folio."

Tobias, R. C. "The Year's Work in Victorian Poetry: 1970." *Victorian Poetry*, Autumn, pp. 301-30.

CRITICISM AND LITERARY HISTORY. Alexander, Edward. "Arnold, Ruskin, and the Hanwell Insane Asylum." *English Language Notes*, September, pp. 53-55. Arnold felt that the intemperance of Ruskin's whole critical manner was a sign of incipient madness.

Chandler, Alice. *A Dream of Order*. Routledge and Kegan Paul. The medieval ideal in nineteenth-century English literature. Rev. *TLS*, 15 October, p. 1280.

Faber, Richard. *Proper Stations*. Faber and Faber.

Class society as presented by Victorian novelists. Rev. *TLS*, 15 October, p. 1263.

Fleishman, Avrom. *The English Historical Novel*. Johns Hopkins. Rev. *TLS*, 8 October, p. 1198.

Fleming, G. H. *That Ne'er Shall Meet Again*. Michael Joseph. Break-up of the friendships between Rossetti, Millais, and Hunt. Rev. *TLS*, 3 December, p. 1501.

Keating, P. J. *The Working Classes in Victorian Fiction*. Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Lucas, John, ed. *Literature and Politics in the Nineteenth Century*. Methuen. Essays dealing with politics as revealed in Victorian novels. Rev. *TLS*, 15 October, p. 1263.

ECONOMICS AND POLITICS. Richter, Donald. "The Role of Mob Riot in Victorian Elections, 1865-1885." *Victorian Studies*, September, pp. 19-28. The deceptive myth of an apathetic, orderly Victorian society.

Thompson, Dorothy. *The Early Chartists*. Macmillan. Rev. *TLS*, 27 August, p. 1023.

HISTORY. Bennett, Daphne. *Vicky*. Collins and Harvill. Biography of the eldest daughter of Queen Victoria. Rev. *TLS*, 1 October, pp. 1175-76.

Best, Geoffrey. *Mid-Victorian Britain, 1851-1875*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. Rev. *TLS*, 17 September, p. 1118.

Corrigan, H. S. W. "The Channel Tunnel in 1883." *History Today*, November, pp. 803-9. Why the project was rejected.

Cunningham, Hugh. "Jingoism in 1877-78." *Victorian Studies*, June 1971, pp. 429-53. These patriotic outbursts were part of the new wave of conservative nationalism sweeping over Europe.

- Epton, Nina. *Victoria and Her Daughters*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. Rev. *TLS*, 1 October, pp. 1175-76.
- Fulford, Roger, ed. *Your Dear Letter 1865-1871*. Evans. Selected correspondence between Queen Victoria and the Crown Princess. Rev. *TLS*, 1 October, pp. 1175-76.
- Hurst, Michael. "Young Gladstone." *Durham University Journal*, December, pp. 45-52. Review-article.

**RELIGION.** Grosskurth, Phyllis. "Pusey's Visit to Ireland in 1841." *TLS*, 3 December, p. 1531. Newly published letters surrounding Pusey's overtures to Whately.

Roach, John. "The Rudiments of Faith and Religion: Religious Controversy at Oxford, 1860-1865." *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, October, pp. 333-53. The controversy was one of the last occasions when the traditionalists stood and fought for the old order.

**SCIENCE.** Andrews, Stuart. "The Victorian Naturalist." *History Today*, November, pp. 810-17. Victorian Methodists continued the keen interest in scientific subjects once shown by Wesley.

Wilson, David B. "The Thought of Late Victorian Physicists: Oliver Lodge's Ethereal Body." *Victorian Studies*, September, pp. 29-48. Lodge's theory was representative of the thought of many late Victorian physicists.

**SOCIAL.** Askwith, Betty. *Two Victorian Families*. Chatto and Windus. Picture of two upper-middle-class families. Rev. *TLS*, 5 November, p. 1393.

Betjeman, John, and David Vaisey. *Victorian and Edwardian Oxford from Old Photographs*. Batsford. Rev. *TLS*, 14 January, p. 43.

Crow, Duncan. *The Victorian Woman*. Allen and Unwin. Rev. *TLS*, 17 September, p. 1114.

Girouard, Mark. *The Victorian Country House*. Oxford. Rev. *TLS*, 31 December, p. 1627.

Haight, Gordon S. "Male Chastity in the Nineteenth Century." *Contemporary Review*, November, pp. 252-62. Male chastity at the English university was not abundantly prevalent.

Harrison, Brian. *Drink and the Victorians*. Faber and Faber. The Temperance question in England, 1815-1872. Rev. *TLS*, 27 August, p. 1023.

Hobhouse, Hermione. *Thomas Cubitt: Master Builder*. Macmillan. Victorian London's developer. Rev. *TLS*, 1 October, p. 1182.

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Tarn, J. N. *Working-class Housing in 19th-century*

*Britain*. Lund Humphries for the Architectural Association. Rev. *TLS*, 28 January, p. 86.

Wardle, David. *Education and Society in Nineteenth-Century Nottingham*. Cambridge. Rev. *TLS*, 31 December, p. 1636.

## II

## INDIVIDUAL AUTHORS

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Hagan, John. "Enemies of Freedom in 'Jane Eyre.'" *Criticism*, Fall, pp. 351-76. Jane can attain her goal of freedom only if her service of God and man is reconciled.

Stevens, Joan. "Woozles in Brontëland: A Cautionary Tale." *Studies in Bibliography: Papers of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia*, Vol. 24, pp. 99-108. The need for a correct edition of the Brontë letters.

BROWNING. McNally, James. "Two Small Verses of Browning." *Victorian Poetry*, Autumn, pp. 338-41. About Disraeli and Watts.

Shapiro, Arnold. "Browning's Psalm of Hate: 'Caliban upon Setebos,' Psalm 50, and *The Tempest*." *Papers on Language and Literature*, Winter 1972, pp. 53-62. The Psalm and the play provide almost a complete context of the poem.

CARLYLE. Campbell, Ian. "Carlyle and the Negro Question Again." *Criticism*, Summer 1971, pp. 279-90. The complexity of Carlyle's attitude.

Collis, John Stewart. *The Carlyles*. Sidgwick and Jackson. Rev. *TLS*, 26 November, p. 1472.

Leicester, H. M., Jr. "The Dialectic of Romantic Historiography: Prospect and Retrospect in 'The French Revolution.'" *Victorian Studies*, September, pp. 5-17. The relationship between theory and practice in Carlyle's historical writing.

Reed, Walter L. "The Pattern of Conversion in *Sartor Resartus*." *ELH*, September, pp. 411-31. The unifying pattern is a process of conversion.

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Scott, P. G. "Mallock and Clough: A Correction." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, December, pp. 347-48. The quote from Clough that Mallock had his hero in *The New Republic* quote was genuine.

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- Barnard, Robert. "The Imagery of *Little Dorrit*." *English Studies*, December, pp. 520-32. The importance of reoccurring ideas and certain sources of metaphor.
- Bornstein, George. "Miscultivated Field and Corrupted Garden: Imagery in *Hard Times*." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, September, pp. 158-70. The coherence of the book's imagery in terms of the central patterns of miscultivated field and corrupted garden.
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- Lane, Lauriat, Jr. "Dickens and Melville: Our Mutual Friends." *Dalhousie Review*, Autumn, pp. 315-31. Similarities in use of subject and method.
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- Sucksmith, Harvey Peter. "The Secret of Immediacy: Dickens' Debt to the Tale of Terror in *Blackwood's*." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, September, pp. 145-57. The influence of a series of Gothic tales.
- Tarr, Rodger L. "The 'Foreign Philanthropy Question' in *Bleak House*: A Carlylean Influence." *Studies in the Novel*, Fall, pp. 275-83. The pronounced influence of Carlyle's antforeign philanthropy in *Bleak House*.
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- Fernando, Lloyd. "Special Pleading and Art in 'Middlemarch': The Relations between the Sexes." *Modern Language Review*, January, pp. 44-49. The critical gap in the relations between Dorothea and Lydgate is the locus of a creatively balanced interplay of character and of an organic extension of theme.
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- GILBERT AND SULLIVAN. Joseph, Tony. "Towards a 'G. & S.' Bibliography." *Library Review*, Winter 1971, pp. 135-40. Descriptive bibliography.
- Young, Percy M. *Sir Arthur Sullivan*. Dent. Critical biography. Rev. *TLS*, 3 December, p. 1504.
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- Hall, William F. "Hawthorne, Shakespeare and Tess: Hardy's Use of Allusion and Reference." *English Studies*, December, pp. 533-42. The importance of the references to *Hamlet*, *The Scarlet Letter*, and *The House of the Seven Gables*.
- Hazen, James. "The God-Curst Sun: Love in 'Neutral Tones.'" *Victorian Poetry*, Autumn, pp. 331-36. The poem fuses the human drama and the natural scene into a meaningful whole.
- . "Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Antigone." *English Literature in Transition*, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp. 207-15. Significant relationships and resemblances between the two works.
- Kramer, Dale. "Hardy's Prospects as a Tragic Novelist." *Dalhousie Review*, Summer 1971, pp. 178-89. Hardy succeeds as a writer of tragedy through his ability to carry forward opposing concepts in dramatic tension and to keep both concepts viable in characterization and action.
- Migdal, Seymour. "History and Archetype in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*." *Studies in the Novel*, Fall, pp. 284-92. *Mayor* is a modern novel that narrates the demise of tragic consciousness.
- Millgate, Michael. "Hardy's Fiction: Some Comments on the Present State of Criticism." *English Literature in Transition*, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp. 230-38. Present state of Hardy scholarship.
- Orel, Harold. "Trends in Critical Views toward Hardy's Poetry." *English Literature in Transition*, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp. 223-29. Review-article about books on Hardy.
- Schweik, Robert C. "Current Problems in Textual Scholarship on the Works of Thomas Hardy." *English Literature in Transition*, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp. 239-46. Deals with descriptive bibliography, textual analysis, and editing.
- Swigg, Richard. *Lawrence, Hardy, and American Literature*. Oxford. Rev. *TLS*, 28 January, p. 95.
- HOPKINS. Hardy, John. "Hopkins' *The Habit of Perfection*." *Explicator*, December, No. 32. The word *stir* is used in its slang sense of "prison."
- Hentz, Ann Louise. "Language in Hopkins' 'Carrion Comfort.'" *Victorian Poetry*, Autumn, pp. 343-47. Hopkins' use of multiple levels of language.
- Mackenzie, Norman H. "On Editing Gerard Manley Hopkins." *Queen's Quarterly*, Winter 1971, pp. 487-502. Problems involved.
- Thornton, R. K. R. "Hopkins and the Histories." *Victorian Poetry*, Autumn, pp. 341-43. The poet may have had *Henry VI* in mind when writing "The Windhover."
- White, Norman. "Hopkins' *Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves*." *Explicator*, November, No. 24. The suggestion of the music of the spheres.
- KIPLING. Green, Roger Lancelyn, ed. *Kipling: The Critical Heritage*. Routledge and Kegan Paul. Rev. *TLS*, 12 November, pp. 1405-6.
- MACAULAY. Sirkin, Gerald, and Natalie Robinson Sirkin. "The Battle of Indian Education: Macaulay's Opening Salvo Newly Discovered." *Victorian Studies*, June 1971, pp. 407-28. Macaulay's paper was of utmost importance to the future of India.
- MEREDITH. Fletcher, Ian, ed. *Meredith Now*. Routledge and Kegan Paul. Critical essays. Rev. *TLS*, 21 January, p. 59.
- Foster, David E. "Rhetorical Strategy in *Richard Feverel*." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, September, pp. 185-95. The author's narrative voice provides a certain coherence of structure and effect in the plot.
- William, Joan, ed. *Meredith: The Critical Heritage*. Routledge and Kegan Paul. Rev. *TLS*, 22 October, p. 1311.
- MILL. Thomas, William. "John Stuart Mill and the Uses of Autobiography." *History*, October, pp. 341-59. Mill's interpretation of his early motives is subordinated in the *Autobiography* to his later aims.
- MORRIS. Berry, Ralph. "A Defense of *Guenevere*." *Victorian Poetry*, Autumn, pp. 277-86. The past is not sheer escapism but a legitimate framework for the projection of Morris' poetic vision.
- Dunlap, Joseph R. *The Book That Never Was*. Oriole Editions. Morris' typographic adventure with *The Story of Cupid and Psyche*. Rev. *TLS*, 3 December, p. 1501.
- NEWMAN. Dessain, Charles Stephen, and Edward E. Kelley, eds. *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*. Vol. XXI: *The Apologia*. Nelson. Rev. *TLS*, 6 August, p. 951.
- Lawler, Justus George. "Newman's *Apologia* and the Burthens of Editing." *Modern Language Quarterly*, September, pp. 291-304. Guidelines for editing the work.
- Weatherby, H. L. "Newman and Victorian Liberalism: A Study in the Failure of Influence." *Critical Quarterly*, Autumn, pp. 205-13. Modern Christian literature has been more conservative than Newman was.
- PATER. Frean, R. G. "Pater and Martial." *Notes and Queries*, November, pp. 418-19. The need to recognize the influence of Martial in *Marius the Epicurean*.
- Monsman, Gerald, and Samuel Wright. "Walter Pater: Style and Text." *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Winter 1972, pp. 106-23. Style and textual history of *The Renaissance*.
- PATMORE. Mc Elrath, Joseph R., Jr. "Coventry Patmore's 'The Angel in the House': The Experience of Divine Love." *Cithera: Essays in the Judaeo-Christian Tradition*, December, pp. 45-53. This first major work objectively expressed Patmore's belief that in the experience of full interpersonal love man could realize the divine.
- ROSSETTIS. Cooper, Robert M. *Lost on Both Sides*. Ohio University. Critical Rev. *TLS*, 27 August, p. 1038.
- Curran, Stuart. "The Lyric Voice of Christina Rossetti." *Victorian Poetry*, Autumn, pp. 287-99. Christina Rossetti is a gifted minor poet with a remarkable ease of spontaneous melody.
- Fisher, Benjamin Franklin, IV. Rossetti's 'William and Marie': Hints of the Future." *English Language*



- Notes, December, pp. 121-29. This poem anticipates many of the later ballads in form and theme.
- Langford, Thomas A. "Rossetti's *The Blessed Damozel*, 71." *Explicator*, September, No. 5. The importance of the words of Christ in *Matthew, XVIII*, 19.
- Spector, Stephen J. "Love, Unity, and Desire in the Poetry of Dante Gabriel Rossetti." *ELH*, pp. 432-58. Rossetti shows that love, or any intense emotion, often increases the isolation of the self.
- RUSKIN. Pevsner, Nikolaus. *Ruskin and Viollet-Le-Duc*. Thames and Hudson. Rev. *TLS*, 3 September, pp. 1041-43.
- Unrau, J. "Ruskin's Uses of the Adjective 'Moral.'" *English Studies*, August, pp. 339-47. Since Ruskin's use of words like "moral" is unusually variable, one must be cautious when generalizing about that writer's aesthetic thinking.
- SWINBURNE. Shmiefsky, Marvel. "Swinburne's Anti-Establishment Poetics." *Victorian Poetry*, Autumn, pp. 261-76. Swinburne's basic bias during a half century of criticism is the aestheticism of the early essay "Blake."
- TENNYSON. Duncan-Jones, Katherine. "A Note on Tennyson's 'Claribel.'" *Victorian Poetry*, Autumn, pp. 348-50. An expression in miniature of his literary imagination.
- Gray, J. M. "An Origin for Tennyson's Characterization of Percivale in 'The Holy Grail.'" *Notes and Queries*, September, pp. 416-17. A detail in Malory gave Tennyson freedom to develop the entire character on his own lines.
- Harrison, James. "Tennyson and Evolution." *Durham University Journal*, December, pp. 26-31. Tennyson was more interested in thinking of evolution as a matter of ends than one of means.
- Zuckermann, Joanne P. "Tennyson's *In Memoriam* as Love Poetry." *Dalhousie Review*, Summer 1971, pp. 202-17. *In Memoriam* is one of the greatest series of love poems in the English language.
- THACKERAY. Sutherland, John. "The Inhibiting Secretary in Thackeray's Fiction." *Modern Language Quarterly*, June 1971, pp. 175-88. One reason for the decline in Thackeray's fiction was his use of a secretary, to whom he dictated, and whose presence was an inhibition.
- Wilkenfeld, Roger B. "'Before the Curtain' and *Vanity Fair*." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, December, pp. 307-18. The prelude provides significant glosses on the metaphorical and tonal intricacies of the novel.
- TROLLOPE. apRoberts, Ruth. *Trollope: Artist and Moralist*. Chatto and Windus. Rev. *TLS*, 24 December, pp. 1605-6.
- Hamer, Mary. "Working Diary for *The Last Chronicle of Barset*." *TLS*, 24 December, p. 1606. Description of contents.
- McMaster, Juliet. "'The Unfortunate Moth': Unifying Theme in *The Small House at Allington*." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, September, pp. 127-44. A study of the subplots clarifies Trollope's intention in the main plot.
- Pope-Hennessy, James. *Anthony Trollope*. Cape. Rev. *TLS*, 24 December, pp. 1605-6.
- WILDE. Beckson, Karl, ed. *Oscar Wilde: The Critical Heritage*. Barnes and Noble.
- Fussell, B. H. "The Masks of Oscar Wilde." *Sewanee Review*, Winter 1972, pp. 124-39. Wilde's genuine style was the Irish flamboyance and the jester's mask.
- Paul, Charles B., and Robert D. Pepper. "The Importance of Reading Alfred: Oscar Wilde's Debt to Alfred de Musset." *Bulletin of The New York Public Library*, December, pp. 506-42. An important source of *Earnest* was Musset's comedy "Never Swear to Anything."

PROJECTS-REQUESTS FOR AID

- ELIZABETH GASKELL. Dorothy Collins is looking for material for a bibliographical edition of *Cranford*. *TLS*, 3 December, p. 1534.

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## English X News

### *Committee News*

- Officers for 1972 are John F. Stasny, Chairman; Michael Timko, Secretary. Edgar Johnson and Boyd Litzinger were elected to the Executive Committee (1972-1974).
- Robert A. Colby will serve as Program Chairman for the 1972 meeting. The topic is "The State of Victorian Studies During the Last Ten Years," and participants will include Lionel Stevenson (fiction), G. B. Tennyson (prose), and Richard Tobias (poetry). For 1973, Ruth apRoberts is to serve as Program Chairman and papers are invited on the topic "Sexuality and Victorian Literature." The program will consist of a panel discussion on the several papers selected; the latter will have been published in advance of the meeting in the fall issue of *VNL*. The deadline for the receipt of papers is March 1, 1973.

### *Correspondence*

- Janet M. Todd (University of Florida, Gainesville) announces the forthcoming *Mary Wollstonecraft Newsletter*, which will appear semiannually and deal with women writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as well as with the treatment of women in the literature of the period.

• Walter F. Wright (University of Nebraska) comments: "There seems to be an unwritten rule in recent 'symbolic' criticism that, even when a simple objective explanation is available for those who search, the critic should instead achieve an ingenious subjective one. In 'On the Naming of Hardy's Egdon Heath' (*VNL*, 39 [Spring 1971], 22-23), Allan C. Christensen writes: 'There is no evidence, so far as I know, to indicate exactly how Hardy came to conceive the name for his version of the Victorian wasteland. . . . It seems probable, however, that Hardy consciously or unconsciously created the name by fusing three geographical terms that are particularly significant for their mythical meanings. These are geographical locations that are also specifically referred to in the novel — Egypt, Aegean, and Eden.' He does not show how 'Aegean' fits into the telescoped name or why 'den' becomes 'don.'

"It is singular that Mr. Christensen finds no objective evidence for the naming, as it has been known for decades that, just as Hardy transformed Sherborne into 'Sher-ton,' Shaftesbury into 'Shaston,' Bere Regis into 'Kingsbere,' and Dorchester into 'Casterbridge,' so he shortened 'Eggardon' (also spelled 'Eggerdon'), the name of the hill and fort west of Dorchester; and as he transferred 'Talbothays' from his father's land to the famous dairy, so he transferred 'Egdon' to the heath east of Dorchester.

"In his autobiography, published in Florence's name and now in the one-volume version, *The Life of Thomas Hardy* (St. Martin's Press, 1962), on page 117 Hardy says that the parish of Ower Moigne, southeast of Dorchester, 'includes part of the Egdon Heath of the story (*vide* Hutchins's *Dorset*).' It does, although not, of course, under that name. Hutchins lists no Egdon, but he does, quite naturally, have several pages on Eggerdon Hundred and a map of the ancient hill fort. If one wished to play with internal evidence, he might start by noting that Hardy's term for Eggardon Hill is 'Haggardon Hill,' and that in the fifth paragraph of the novel he writes, 'Haggard Egdon.'

"One is reminded of another study some years ago which maintained that when he wrote *The Dynasts* Hardy had not read *War and Peace*. The argument sounded conclusive enough, but had the author consulted the manuscript in the Dorset County Museum, he would have found paraphrases from the novel with the tell-tale annotation 'Tol.'"