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Early Verse By "Unfortunate W. Thackeray"

Juliet McMaster

On Monday, April 2, 1837, when he was twenty and a
law student in London, Thackeray recorded in his diary,
"Wrote some verses for Charlotte Shakespeare, wh. are
not quite finished." The entry continues prosaically with
a list of his current expenses, including laundry at
seven shillings. But he begins the next day's entry,
"Despatched my verses to Charlotte." I believe these
carly verses have survived (though not, probably, through
any devoted pity on the part of the lady). A manuscript
containing appropriate verses, with Thackeray's signa-
ture enclosed, was bought in an English bookshop about
two decades ago by Professor L. P. V. Johnson, from
whom I recently acquired it. The handwriting is certainly
Thackeray's, if in his sloping hand, and appears to date
from early in his career. This early effusion of Thack-
ery's muse has been printed once in an abridged journal,1
but Thackerayans will be glad to have it made more
accessible. It is written on both sides of a single sheet of 7" x
9" paper:

I have found but a gift for my fair,
And it is not at first the sort
And useful that is very small.

I have found a gift — it is sure
That truly it is small and mean,
But the thing that is small and mean
Must to all intents and purposes
Have something excessively tender.

I would speak of the silken robe
In strands of most elegant smooth
But all that is said unfortunately
I feel, when I am thinking of you still.

I would speak of the hand where you hold
Or designate the lines that are his
And where you leave lovers behind
But you leave them a very few Charlottes.

If some might be a charm in your eyes
If some might be a jewel in your
Oh go not be kind & be wise
And repeat of this horrible cruelty!


But why speak — while your heart's torn to pieces
While words are struggling in sight of her
She's ordering hats and feathers
Not thinking of me but the Mansfield.

While I remember for my love that I've coveted
You'll slightly find out a fresh one
And then you'll find — like heathen
This last dying speech & Confession!

With the fire of your eyes you will murder,
The Captain, the notes & the pen
And all you go better and better.
Why should you want a new one?

Yes — soon will be seen round you [sic]
My meaning — relations in black array
And this is the last you will hear
Of unwarinotness.

W. Thackeray

The circumstances in the poem conveniently much
those in the diary. The poet is addressed to a Charlotte
who is about to depart on a sea voyage to a land where
she'll find "Of desperate lovers there are lots" — surely
recognizable as France. And then the day after despatching
his verses, Thackeray records in his diary, a friend
"tortured me very much by proposing a visit to Paris, but
it won't do — I am, fell in love with Charlotte before I got
back." (Letters, i. 187). The mock-heroic tone in the
poem, hurrying the melancholic lover who contem-
plates his own demise when his heartless mistress des-
mits him, matches well with the down-to-earth caution of
the young man who knows she is not yet quite in love, but
sees his danger and takes precautions accordingly. In fact
the writing of the verses might itself have been useful
therapy, through which Thackeray learned the wisdom
voiced later in Pendennis: "When a gentleman is cut-
glassing his brain to find any rhyme for sorrow, besides sorrow
and sorrow and sorrow, his words are severer at an end than he thinks
for..." So much the more so, perhaps, if he is finding less
backhanded rhymes for words like "Charlotte" and
"Thackeray.

Charlotte Shakespeare was Thackeray's cousin, the
dughter of his paternal aunt, Emily Shakespeare, née
Thackeray. Apparently Thackeray gathered some
personal experience of that standard theme of the nine-
teenth-century novel of "cousins in love, &c." 2. He was

handnote that the handwriting is from the 1830's. But his conclusion for the original "Charlotte" is a different cousin. Charlotte Ratche
(1837-1870). However, I fear his conclusion confusing.
3. Pendennis, chapter 12, The Oxford Thackeray, ed. George Saint-
bury (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968), XII, 47.
4. Mansfield Park, chapter 1, The Novels of Jane Austen, ed. R. W.
afterwards to incorporate it in the loves of Clive and Ethel Newcome and Henry and Beatriz Esmond (the latter, admittedly, are not cousins), who are paired cousins like those in Mansfield Park, Wuthering Heights, and many another novel. This real-life cousin did indeed prove "fickle-hearted," and fulfilled her old love's prophecy that she would "speedily find out a fresh one": in the next year she married James Crawford of the Bengal Civil Service, and her old love had the chance to pen a letter from her that was "full of her James" (Letters, I. 286). She proceeded to have eight children.

We may owe Charlotte Shakespeare thanks for more than inspiring the youthful Thackeray to discover his ingenuity in verse. He seems to have recognized in her a type that was to become familiar in his fiction as in his life. Some years later, when he was twenty-nine, and married himself, he went to visit her, as he tells his mother:

I went to Dorking from Leatherhead & saw my pretty Charlotte Crawford. There is nothing about her but simplicity. & I like this milk & water in women — perhaps too much, under-valuing your ladyship's jewels, and caring only for the heart part of the business. (Letters, I. 469)

There speaks the creator of a string of milk-and-water women, including Amelia Sedley, Rosey Newcomte (who ought to be painted "in milk,"

"says the artist who marries her!" Theo Lambert and Charlotte Baynes another Charlotte). However, there speaks also a man perfectly able to judge the short-comings of such milk-and-water creations, and to create ladies who have specialized in the head part of the business like Becky Sharp, Beatriz Esmond, and Ethel Newcome.

This visit to Charlotte Crawford, the love of his youth, may have produced an association on which he humorously elaborated in The Newcomes, Dorking in Surrey, where he visited her, was famous for its breed of good living chickens. ("The characteristics of the pure Dorking are, that it is white-feathered, short-legged, and an excellent layer," is the description quoted in the Oxford English Dictionary from the Penny Cyclopaedia of 1840, the very year of Thackeray's visit to Dorking.) Now Clara Palley of The Newcomes, who undoubtedly belongs in the milk-and-water class of women, is the daughter of Lord and Lady Dorking, and in creating the family Thackeray peeled off a glorious series of chicken jokes: the heir to the Dorking title is Viscount Rosstorm, the family estate is Chanticlese, and the Palley girls include Hennie, Biddy, and Adelaide.8

Thackeray's youthful esprit is a delightful addition to the canon. While ridiculing nearly all his published verse, it shows already his propensity to the most heroic, his readiness in comic self-definition, and his talent for ingenuous rhyming. Fortunately, it was to be far from the last we would hear of unfortunate W. Thackeray.


University of Alberta
"A Habitable Doll's House": Beginning in Bleak House

Thorell Tsangardio

- Behold the child among his we-born bluest...
  Wordsworth

- the intrinsic evil of familiar things
  Bleak House

Soon after Richard Carstone is introduced to Bleak House, John Jarndyce counsels him, "The world is before you; ... treat in nothing but Providence and your own efforts" (137). Mr. Jarndyce's advice recalls the "beginning" that the close of Paradise Lost advances; a beginning that is initiated and modified by an end, and that sets forth a fresh design, the new criteria for continuing. In the course of Bleak House Mr. Jarndyce will again admonish his ward: "How I hoped you would begin, and how you go on. ... Make a clear beginning altogether. ... Begin afresh! Byegones shall be byegones, and a new page turned for you to write your lives in" (238-9). In Great Expectations Pip entertains an analogous Miltonic sentiment when at the end of the first stage of his Expectations and on the eve of his new life in London he exults, "...the mist has all solemnly risen now and the world lay spread before me." Both novels direct attention to the problem of beginning and both have first-person narrator protagonists who contemplate beginnings, "genealogical" and "intentional." 2

In Bleak House, however, not only does the concept of "beginning" provide the motive, direct or indirect, for action, it is central to the narrative structure of the work. The novel itself has difficulty beginning: it starts twice, and throughout maintains a dual perspective that, ultimately, resists closure. Of course, beginning as motive is inherent in narrative, which, by its own definition, is a series of re-creative verbal gestures. Edward Said suggests that concern with "beginnings" influences the kind of thought, writing and meaning that an author produces and the continuities that are thereby implied. 3 Dickens' explicit use of the concept of "beginning" throughout Bleak House must therefore prove an aid to understanding this complex narrative.

The principal characters in the work fall loosely into two groups: those who wait for ends or emphasize them and those who reflect upon and infinite beginnings. George Rouncewell endorses his reunion with his mother with the wish to "make a last beginning" (519); the shock of disillusionment causes Sir Leicester to experience "trouble in beginning": he can only "utter inarticulate sounds" (531). After her illness, Esther resolves to "begin afresh" (332), and on her return from Cheesewold, sets out to "make a general new beginning altogether" (407). Each of these characters articulates a consciousness of the need to begin at a time of crisis; each understands that he cannot or must not continue in his present course. On the other hand, there are those who either defer beginning, or cannot begin. Miss Flite, Gridley, Richard Carstone cannot begin because they anticipate an end that they believe is imminent. "Everything has an end" (524). Richard tells Alan Woodcourt, and as justification for the fatal concentration of his youthful energy upon this one, "fixed idea." Richard suggests that a general sense of incompleteness retards his power to act. He illustrates: "If you live in an unfinished house, you can't settle down in it, if you were condemned to have everything you undertook, unfinished, you would find it hard to apply yourself to anything." (245).

Richard believes that in order to "begin" there must be a "settling down" or clarification of matters, a conclusive resolution of issues. But the incentive to begin derives not from satisfactory conclusions gratuitously obtained, but from need. Beginnings, like ends, are invented. 4 They spring from an awareness that things as they stand are not producing desired results and that some alternative must be found. Moreover, contrary to Richard's expectations, his case will never be settled. Mr. Jarndyce says of the suit:

... through years and years, and lives and lives, everything goes on, constantly beginning over and over again, and nothing ever ends. And we can't get out of the same story, nor know when we are made parties to it, and must be parties to it, whether we like it or not. But it won't do to limit it! When my patience, poor Tom Rouncewell, begins to grow, that is, as the beginning of the end! (73).

Another kind of beginning is suggested here: one that is repetitive, regressive and determinist. Richard's fate results from and exemplifies this. In the chapter ironically titled "Beginning The World" Richard is jolted into an awareness of the paralyzing effect of his prepossession: at the final dissolution of Jarndyce and Jarndyce Woodcourt discovers him in the court frozen "like a stone figure" — a cogent dramatization of the effects of an externally determined or passive end. Back at Symbson's Inn Esther finds Richard "cheerful and looking forward." He now clings tenaciously to the idea of "beginning." moving


2. In Beginning: Intention and Method (New York: Basic Books, 1975), Edward Said explores "beginning" as both a heroic goal and a literary objective. Said discusses Great Expectations as exemplary of "beginning illusion," the romantic mode of defining initiation. In this study I examine the repeated statements about "beginning" by characters in Bleak House, and how the conceptualization of the idea of beginning orders the narrative. Said's study proves invaluable here. 3. Said, p. 5.

4. Franz Kavarski suggests that ends are invented by us in our effort to deal with the problem of being in the middle. The Sense of an Ending (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967).
urgenty from consciousness of need: "I have to begin the world," to expression of intent: "I will begin the world." To a clear articulation of purpose: "You will forgive me...Asha, before I begin the world." But Richard is dying. He has just left Chancery where he has participated in his run by a "fatal inheritance," has seen Jarndyce and Jarndyce's "deep" meaning. From the outset, Richard has looked to Chancery for the settlement that would allow him to start. His error was in not realizing that Chancery itself is nothing but an endless "end" and the timeliness of which is both veiled and perverted by the false starts that it continually generates at great cost to suit and suit. By its very nature therefore, Chancery is incapable of initiating creative beginnings. Its barriers, marked by the stultifying need and fog in which it sits, points to an end that is imminent and incapable of regeneration. According to J. Hillis Miller, the fog and mud of *Black House* indicate a general disintegration into the "primordial..." which, unlike the "primeval stuff out of which all fully developed forms evolve," promises nothing "fresh" or "new."

*Black House* maps two types of "beginnings." The sort of beginning that has been discussed so far is recapitulative and may more precisely be termed "origin." Origin is linked to inheritance, material and immaterial. Its phyletic gesture transect individual preference. Thus the individual may be bound to historical circumstances that are largely a primitive restatement. As already shown, in *Black House* the regenerative process has been inverted and compressed into a protracted end. Whereas Chancery's ostensible purpose is to free the suit by dismantling the confused links of a legacy that inhibits him, it intensifies the problem. Chancery absorbs the suitor: it consumes his inheritance; and by the void it creates, binds him to itself. Miss Flite summarizes the relationship between Chancery and suitors thus: "There's a dreadful attraction in the place..." [there's a cruel prediction] in the place... you can't leave it. And you must expect... The users of Chancery, Miss Flite further observes, "Draw people on... Have peace out of them. Sense out of them. Good looks out of them." (378), devitalize them. Chancery is father or creator of the most irredeemable orphans of *Black House*. Yet, it should be feasible for an orphan to "make a new beginning." Freed from the constraints of paternity, the orphan can create his own identity, as Iksik or Ushk Flandery does. In *Black House*, however, to be orphaned is to be securely bound to a non-heritage that is the less emancipating because the less differentiable from heritage. The sociological significance of Dickens' treatment of "orphans" and its implications in *Black House* need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that the characters in *Black House* are arrayed into a society in which the vital functions have ceased, in which life personifies death. As an alternative to "origin," Dickens proposes a "beginning" that is both motive and inventive—he here the author "purposely dwelt on the romantic side of familiar things." The fragmented and tyrannical society that Dickens sketches is just such a case as the romantic poets strive to transcend. The romantique advocate the autonomy of the individual, his potential for self-realization against great odds. They believe that the individual has the option to choose between passive receptiveness and the self-divorced power to act, to "begin." Said asserts that once "beginning" is identified with the individual, it can no longer be termed "origin," which is the "purely circumstantial existence of conditions," it is an "intentional act," and as such, is the "first step" towards "production of meaning." Said has much more to say that is pertinent to Dickens' treatment of "beginnings" in *Black House*. He suggests that "beginning" is largely linguistic: It utilizes language and is about the use of language; that the "beginning" usually "implicates" this: that almost invariably, "for the writer, the historian, or the philosopher the beginning will emerge reflectively and perhaps unpredictably, already engaging him in an awareness of its difficulty." In addition, Said suggests that beginning is identifiable by certain characteristic features:

...the steady, well and the freedom to reverse itself to accept thereby the risks of capture and discontinuity. The writer is in the process of beginning, he cannot continue as he is. It is, however, very difficult to begin (that concludes with a

nearly new start. Too many habits, tropes and procedures within the institution of novel enterprises for an established

state. When the Old Testament God chooses to begin the world again, he too, with Moses, must be in the process of begin

ning. Yet it is interesting that in spite of this there are not too many

pleasures from the outset. Newly orphaned people are a piece of the environment initiating the new.)

Said's definition of beginning calls to mind Esther Sumner's program for being. The terms of her survival — "It was not for me to muse over bygones, but to act with a cheerful spirit."

(63) emphasizes added — deserve attention and, besides, demonstrate that Esther has anticipated and, indeed, already taken up Mr. Jarndyce's challenge to "begin." She begins with a complex appreciation. She knows that she is beginning, that she is doing so in the new, and that it is difficult: "I have a great deal of difficulty in beginning to write any portion of


6. An analogy may be drawn between origin or the "family name," as it is defined by Jarndyce and Jarndyce, and the hopeless plight of English nineteenth-century society as Dickens depicts it. For some discussion of the topicality of the social-historical issues raised in *Black House* see Charles Dickens: *Black House: A Casebook*, ed. A. E. Dixon (London: Macmillan, 1967).


8. Ibid, p. 32.


11. Stewart receptors in Esther Sumner as exemplification of Said's view of "beginning" as a metaphor of characterization, p. 275.
these pages" (11) (emphasis added). She is also aware of the functional aspect of her linguistic enterprise: "It seems curious to me to be obliged to write all this about myself! As if this narrative were the narrative of my life!" (36). In addition Esther is aware that she is not only of Jeeves's own creation, but only partly of her world, and that other is an important element in her activity: she comments:

I don’t know how it is. I seem to be always writing about myself. I mean all the time to write about other people, and try to think about myself as little as possible, but it is all of me. I hope any one who may read what I write, will understand that if these pages contain a great deal about me, I am only suppose it must be because I have really something to do with them and can’t be kept out of it." (36).

Esther's compulsion to write, even if, she says, she must 'rub it out again,' underscores the extent to which her identity, her beginning is bound up in language. Her role as narrator defines the limits of her existence. She opens tentatively, apologizing to her audience for not being "clever." Her consciousness of her relationship to her audience summons the recollection of her earlier role as narrator and her erstwhile audience, her doll. She reminisces: "I can remember, when I was a very little girl, indeed, I used to say to my doll—" (36). "Now Dolly, I am not clever. . . . and you must be patient . . . ." "Yes, the doll, she says, "used to sit propped in a great arm-chair" (36). "Not so much: at her "as at nothing," while she told it all her "secrets" (11). Esther addresses her audience as she used to do her doll, and as she repeated the story of her "birthday" to the doll she now recounts it for her audience. This could be interpreted in two ways: as regression or as a necessary recreative gesture. But she tells us further that she was brought up in a "fairy story," by a "godmother" (13), and it is in the child's fairy tale world of fictitious inhabitants that Esther finds repeatedly the inspiration to "begin." Throughout the work she overcomes obstacles by reviving the bond between herself and the doll, that "childish prayer in its old childish words," to be "industrious, contented, and true-hearted and to do good to some one and win some love" (J36, 375) to herself. Esther recalls the past then not to be bid by it but in order to overcome it. In this sense her "beginning" is not passive recurrence but a purposeful, goal-directed act.

Nevertheless, Esther's narrative ends with unsettling echoes of its inception. The new Bleak House is "a rustic little cottage of doll's rooms" (648) (emphasis added). Though her childhood world has expanded to include a whole community, there is still a sense of cramped discomfort about its "pretty rooms," "little verandah doors" and "tiny celladons." Still, it has been constructed on her "better plan," furnished and decorated according to her "little tastes and fancies," "her little methods and inventions," peopled by her favorites. And though the new Bleak House bears the scars of the affliction of the old, Esther and her entourage, like Noah and his ark, have survived extinction. However, the "tiny," the beatific mise-en-scene of Esther's doll's rooms in the monstrous world of the for, the forlorn, the broken, the deluded, the damaged many crises—it extends and intensifies the jarring note struck by Esther's self-effacing posture counterposed against the extravagance of her I's and her constant Bovril of the keys to Bleak House. This dissonance raises questions about authority and blindness, reality and myth-making, and has led many readers to choose between the two narrative points of view, almost invariably preferring that of the third person narrator. According to Ellen Selten, Esther, in her fairy-tale sense of fulfillment offers the reader nothing but an "escape" from reality, from the "familiar things of the uncircumcised narrator's world, our world" (emphasis added). Did Dickens weave the double thread just to have his readers choose unequivocally between the strands?

Early in the novel Jermyce proposes a "inhabitable doll's house with... a few tin people..." in it as the safeguard against Skimpole's pernicious "inexperience," and as a palliative for his "childish" omissions. Conversely, the third person narrator suggests that Jeeves's "predicament of a child's armchair..." and that the Smallswood child's "unhoped and never heard of Cinderella" (220). Skimpole persuades the distortion of child-like ingenuousness—we learn later that he had been the "victim of a combination on the part of mankind against an amiable child" (639).—the embodiment of the "inconceivable" expatriate that Esther could become. On the other hand, Esther and her doll's house occupy a place between the two, as is evident in the utility of its extension, the fairy tale abode. On her arrival at Chester's Word to recuperate from her illness she finds Boythorpe's home touched up with "enlarging remembrance" of her "little tastes and fancies." Accordingly, the house takes on qualities of enchantment, to her it seems "built magically by a "good fairy," for her, a "princess," a "favored godchild" (381). Esther's perception has transformed the given into states of relatively boundless prospects. The poet Coleridge finds similar monification in the fairy tale:

For from my early morning of fairy tales and fairy... my soul had become stained to the very end I never espied my errors, in any way as the critics of my belief, I regarded all my errors by my suspicions, cut by my sight.

Esther, her doll, and her fairy-godmother belong to the child's world of improvisation where experience is still fluid enough to resist the corruption and stagnation that surround it. In the same vein Coleridge again observes:

12. Selten, ELH 03 (1976), 356.
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The first lesson that in no sense Childhood affords me is — that it is no instinct of my nature to play out of itself, and to exist in the form of others.

The second is — not to suffer any one firm to pass into me and to become the "self of self" in the disguise of what the Germans call a fixed idea.

As illustrated by Richard, the adult world of representation, of Chaucery, the Talmudist and Vohness, does become the "fixed idea" or "sucking self" that destroys. On the other hand, Esther defines her own identity utilizing the romantic technique of assertion of self through denial of self. Her success in maintaining the power she accords through her Wordsworthian egotistical rendering of the external world. The critics who claim Esther for her "unrealistic" approach overlook the significance of her authoritative performance. Esther's reaction to the problems of her society is no more dysfunctional than Wordsworth's response to the deceit Cumberland beggar; nor is it aesthetically less "real" than Dore Quincey's imaging of Dickens. In the latter case, the audience is always mindful of another reality, which, however, is magnified rather than abrogated by its counterpart. Dickens' world, the artist's, must embrace not a single, but a twofold reality.

It is in the narrative dispensation that Esther's "insufficiency" lies. In Great Expectations Dickens presents the voice of little Pip whose "infant tongue" contracts Phillip Fipps to Pip and draws "childish conclusions" from the shapes of letters, simultaneously with that of Pip the narrator whose manner, analytic consciousness demands (of Joe and Biddy) the "words" in full so that he (Pip) may "carry the sound of them away" with him. In Bleak House these two element of a single narrative utterance are separated. In one sense, Esther's narrative remains within the confines of the vacant stare of her doll — this explains, to some extent, reader resistance to Esther, a resistance to performing as one of her "pen." For although Esther speaks of the past, she narrates without the retrospective distance that provides the internal or textual critical reference that is the reader's passage to a "sympathetic" co-performance. The silences in Esther's story, occasioned by the blank stare of the doll, her audience, are filled by the impinging voice of the third person narrator. He provides the canvas on which Esther must construct, sets the stage on which she must act to "beguine." He therefore imposes an external critical gauge. The third person narrative circumnavigates Esther's narrative in the same way that Chancery environs Bleak House. The concern of each narrator — one for the individual, the other for the universal — parallels his respective stance. The reader is always tempted, then, to weigh Esther's words against those of the third person narrator. This tends to make her culpable in that her portrayal of her sense of self and its purloined sometimes reads like an excuse by Wenmack of his fairy-tale castle and its "aged" innocence, without Wenmack's acknowledgment of the conjunction of its threatening counterpart, Newgate and Jagger.

But this is a limited reading of Esther's role in the work. Far from negating the "reality" of the society, Esther's "lack" emphasizes it by demonstrating the limitations of her options, which, finally, question, in the universal sense, the efficacy of the individual necessarily "latch" laborer. Esther's predicament is that she is called upon to act in an environment that qualifies action; to write, in Quincey's fashion, her narrative within another, externally determined narrative in which she is still only embodiment — for the most part she appears in the third person narrative as a name on a bankers' receipt that bouquet discovers hidden in a drawer: as a vague resemblance to a portrait that Guppy sees; as signs that must be translated to bridge the gap between the external world and her. From the start Esther is excluded from the other narrative except as a barely distinguishable part of a chaotic mass. She must call herself into being. This difficulty begins with the beginning, with her own denial of her birth, with childhood, a lonely room, a doll, a fairy godmother and the story that all together fabricate: Esther's narrative is the child's plastic re-creation of a cosmos that refuses her access; a realm that the other distantly anatomizes.

This is not to say, however, that Esther's vision is less valid than that of the third person narrator. Astor Ehrenreich contends that the child's seemingly unrealistic or "syntactically" portrayal of the object may in fact be superior to its perception in the adult's dulter analytic posture. The child does not seek a "detailed" correspondence between perception and reality. He grasps the "total" object, and therefore has the advantage of being able to accommodate change. If the child's depiction seems unrealistic, then, it must be because of its particularity rather than from inaccuracy.

Esther particularizes Bleak House and thereby introduces a change of perspective. This change explains her actualization. Her existence cannot be accounted for on the basis of heredity — she "died" at birth; her own mother thought that she "had never . . . breathed . . . had never been endowed with life" (392). Through this, her sense of reality. According to Wordsworth, "a dreamlike vividness and simplicity . . . instill objects of sight in childhood." The "mystical gleam" fades when it maturity advances, the case of everyday life takes on greater significance, and . . . and shall have her earthly freight. and custom for sympathy with a weight. Heavy as frost, and deep almost as if. Wordsworth's distinction between child vision and adult vision provides an apt gloss to the contrast that Dickens makes between Esther's perception of the world and the perspective of the third person narrator.
uniquely defined place in the work's structure, Esther poses, against the palaeogenetic topos of 'origin' in *Bleak House*, the animating difference, "beginning." Not surprisingly the third person narrator concludes with a yielding to the end:

Thus Cheesewold, with so much of itself abandoned to darkness and vacancy, and so little change under the summer dining or the wintry lowering; so numberless - so flagging, dying by day, so rows of lights flickering by night; with so fastly to come and go, no visitors to the north of pale cold stages of rooms, no stir of life about it; - passion and pride, even to the stranger's eye, have died away from the place in Lincolnsire, and yielded to dull repose (462).

In her conclusion, Esther sets forth a new conception of the old order, based on the purposive reconstruction of a defective framework. The re-created Bleak House, she demonstrates, produces the new healthy offspring necessary for continuity. Notwithstanding, the problematic "even supposing" with which she closes introduces a question mark that qualifies conclusiveness, even on her part.

Esther does not, indeed, cannot, offer a comprehensive solution to the ills of her society, its so expansive that they dwarf individual effort, hers, Jarndyce's, Woodcourt's. She ventures a "beginning," a youthful and common one that counterpoints the eternal decline of the world that the third person narrator delineates. The tension created by these polarities imports a vibrant dialectic quality to the novel. The narratives bring together two "realities," a "beginning" and an end; each is meaningful only in the context of the other. Could it be that Dickens himself saw his own Bleak House as but a "beginning," a "doll's house" in his improved, "inhabitable doll's house" - the narrative reconstruction of a reality that threatens to cripple all save the architect of his "unreal" creation?

Howard University

Nietzsche, Bagehot and The Morality of Custom

David S. Thacker

"According to Norman St John Stevas, Walter Bagehot "combined a mind of extraordinary keenness and subtlety with a nature dominated by deep and passionate feeling," a writer whose entire work carries the stamp of "intellectual detachment." Although he may have been "the greatest Victorian," he was by no means the most representative figure of the age: "While he candidly appreciated the viewpoints and preoccupations of the contemporary middle and upper classes, as well as those of the intellectuals, he was identified with neither, and thus became the most perceptual critic of the age in which he lived." **Bagehot was, in addition, "the perfect epitome..." where much it was to describe "what is actually happening, rather than what ought to be happening according to prevalent theory," and the freshness and originality of his thought is reflected in the "weird and striking phrases" of an appealing prose style.** If this be accepted as an accurate portrayal of Bagehot as thinker and writer, it is less surprising to discover that he attracted the attention of his greater and more influential German contemporary, Friedrich Nietzsche.

It is known that Nietzsche read the German translation of one of Bagehot's most important works, Physics and Politics, or Thoughts on the Application of the Principles of 'Natural Selection' and 'Inheritance' to Political Society, shortly after it was published in 1874. Two quotations from this book were incorporated in Nietzsche's *Schopenhauer as Educator*, finished in the late summer that same year, and there is one allusion to Bagehot in a Nachlass note. Furthermore, references to Bagehot are to be found in Nietzsche's work, published or unpublished, although *Human, All-Too-Human* (1878) and *The Dawn* (1880) contain evident borrowings from *Physics and Politics*.

A chance meeting at the summer resort of Rosenau in 1877 is of some significance, for it was there, in August 1877, that Nietzsche befriended G. Croom Robertson, professor of philosophy at University College, London, and editor of the quarterly review, *Mind*. Undeterred by an insecure grasp of the English language, Nietzsche described this journal to a friend as the best English journal of philosophy, and was aware that Darwin, Edward Tyner, 1. Walter Bagehot: A Study of His Life and Thought Together with a Selection from His Political Writings (Bloomington: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1959), p. 21.
2. Ibid., p. 32.
4. *Science in the Nineteenth Century* beginning November 1, 1871; *Physics and Politics* was published in London by Henry S. King in 1872; all subsequent page references are to this edition. Frequent re-publication and transition readily to the book's widespread popularity within and without the world of science. William M. McLean offers Bagehot's title "intellectual," inasmuch as "its main theme is the relation, not between physics and politics, but between biology and politics." From *Literary Review* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Riverside Press, 1941), p. 463; McLean also discusses Nietzsche in his book, but as given between Nietzsche and Bagehot. *Physics and Politics* was translated into German under the title *Die Sprache der Naturwissenschaften*. Benachbarte Werkzeuge der sprachlichen Forschung: *Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Leipzig: W. Engelmann, 1881), p. 376. The preface of the translator, L. Rost, is dated February 7, 1876. Bagehot's book is, by and large, faithful to the English text but he acknowledges deleting some of the more repetitious passages.
5. The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964) V. 15A and 15B (1979), unless otherwise noted, all quotations from Nietzsche's works are from this edition.
6. The name reads: "Das Museum der strengen Forscher" (presses die Tageszeitung, 1873), but probably belongs to a later period.
Henry Maine and Herbert Spencer were among its distinguished contributors. Nietzsche also records that Robertson spoke to him about Darwin and Bagchiot. The meeting with Robertson may have been one reason for Nietzsche’s curiosity about English writers at this time. In the spring of 1878 we find him asking his publisher, Ernst Schmeitnizer, for Brodkaia’s second-hand catalogue of translations of English books; at the end of the following year he specifically asks to be informed of everything of Bagchiot’s that is available in German translation. The controversy of social evolution, Bagchiot was “probably the writer who has approximated most closely to Nietzsche’s ideas.” Twenty years later acting perhaps on Commen’s hint, George Sampson offered a more detailed comparison:

Walter Bagchiot wrote a book on human nature that each person as Friedrich Nietzsche was in existence; yet you may take paragraph after paragraph of Physics and Politics . . . and see ideas parallel to the aphorisms of Human, All Too Human, or those in Thus Spoke Zarathustra, for example, called “Caste and Narciss.” It is pure Bagchiot, and might have come from the Englishman’s mouth. When Bagchiot describes the evolution of superior or ruling races, we see him catch glimpses of Nietzsche’s conquering “ideal races” rising to dominate over the lesser races of primitive times. Even his insistence of decay as a necessary “practical condition” to human progress, and as an actual benefit to certain types of population, has a strangely Nietzschean complexion.

Since 1915, when Sampson wrote this passage, Physics and Politics seems to have slipped from view as an influence on Nietzsche’s thought. Symptomatic is the omission of Bagchiot from David Hamke’s Nietzsche and the Victorian Era (1971), the only full-scale study of the subject to date. A re-appraisal of Bagchiot’s influence is surely long overdue.

The striking parallels between Bagchiot and Nietzsche can briefly be illustrated by juxtaposing four statements from Physics and Politics with analogous passages in Nietzsche’s writings:

**Bagchiot**

1. In historic times there has been little progress, it appears, in knowledge there must have been much. (p. 41)

2. The child naturally accepts every idea which pleases through its birth as true. (p. 94)

3. Every sort of prejudice has been systematized . . . A large book of speculative philosophy is much to be suspected . . . Superstition, energy has worked into big systems what should be left as mere suggestion. (pp. 190, 192)

4. There is only a certain quantum of power in each of our cases, if it goes in one way it is gained, and cannot go on in another. (p. 99)

**Nietzsche**

Everything eternal in human development happens in pre-historical times, long before those four thousand years which we know anything of; man may not have changed much during this time.

The first comes which existed in the mind of primitive man, to explain anything that required explanation was sufficient and saved for future.

I mistrust all systematizers, and avoid them. The will to know is a lack of integrity.

No one can spend more time than he has . . . if one spends oneself on power, grand politics, economic affairs, world commerce, parliament institutions, military in- terests — if one expends in this direction the quantum of reason, seriousness, will, self-control that one is, then there will be a shortage in the other direction.

Other parallels could easily be adduced on such diverse topics as war, slavery, “master-morality,” “the herd,” democracy, parliamentary institutions and the phenomenon of modern restlessness. Rather than deal with each of these in a necessarily random and diffuse manner, I think it would be more instructive to dwell on an idea which permeates Physics and Politics, the idea to which Bagchiot, following the practice of Sir Henry Maine in Ancient Law (1861), gives the name of “customary norms being from Physics and Politics — see his article “Our Unwritten Laws.” Nietzsche-Studien, VIII (1879), 186, 187.

Apart from these indirect cases, and perhaps a few others which have eluded me, Bagchiot appears to be a “forbidden name” in Nietzsche’s works.

Heidegger also comments on ignorance of Inns, Landes, Lenzky, Lubbock, Manneth, Prout, Spencer, and Tyer, all of whom had varying degrees of impact on Nietzsche’s work. I have dealt elsewhere with Nietzsche’s response to Lubbock’s Origin of Civilization in the Old Stone Age, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905, and for in this manner defending the study of anthropology, Lubbock proves Physics and Politics in a work which contains his own “general conclusions” (p. 35).

11. The question from Nietzsche are, respectively: Hume, David Hume in the Encyclopedia, p. 117; MiiH, p. 2; The Twilight of the Idols ([7]), translated by R. J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1968), p. 33; E. p. 44.
law," Nietzsche's term is "die Sittlichkeit der Sire," the morality of mores or of customs.12

Bagelot and Nietzsche are agreed in the belief that, in primitive times, the domain of morality was more extensive than it is now; they regard it, in fact, as having been all-embracing. Usage, writes Bagelot, was then "social, political, religious" all in one (p. 137), and for Nietzsche, morality included "education and hygiene, marriage, medicine, agriculture, war, speech and silence, the relationship between man and man, and between man and the gods," everything, he declared, was "originally custom." Morality can be equated with custom: "Morality is nothing else (and above all, nothing more) than obedience to custom, of whatsoever nature it be," for customs are "simply the traditional way of acting and valuing" (D, aph. 9). Customs represent "the experiences of men of earlier times in regard to what they considered as useful and harmful" (D, aph. 19). In Nietzsche's view, the fundamental distinction between moral and immoral, between good and evil, has nothing to do with "altruism" and "egoism," but derives from obedience to tradition, so that "to be moral, correct, and virtuous is to be obedient to an old-established law and custom" and "whether we submit with difficulty or willingly is immaterial, enough that we do so" (HAA, aph. 96).

In keeping with the Darwinian approach already manifest in the subtitle of his book, Bagelot asserts that morality was of inestimable value in the 'struggle for existence,' and that entrenched customs aided certain tribes to survive: "The slightest symptoms of legal development, the least indication of a military bond, is then enough to turn the scale. The compact tribes win, and the compact tribes are the moral. Civilization begins, because the beginning of civilization is a military advantage" (p. 52). Paradoxically, "the most obedient, the tamest tribes are, at the first stage, in the lead struggle of life, the strongest and the conquerors." 12 Bagelot gives the term "patria" to a given system of social organizations, justifying it on the grounds of "natural selection":

I need not prove to show that any form of patriotism is more efficient than none, that an aggregation of families even a slippery adherence to a single bond, would be sure to have the better of a use of familiar acquaintance with obedience to anyone, but scattering loose about the world and fighting where they stood. (p. 34).

What is needed in such a patria is "a comprehensive rule binding men together, making them do much the same things, doing them what we expect of each other -- fashioning them alike, and keeping them so": what this rule is does not matter very much, the cardinal point being that "any rule is better than none" (p. 23). For his part, Nietzsche states that morality was primarily "a means of preserving the community and saving it from destruction." 12 A race of people is best preserved "when the greatest number hold one common spirit in consequence of the similarity of their acquired and indisputable principles" and of "their common faith (HAA, aph. 224), and primitive morality "required that a man should observe his prescriptions not to himself, but to his community, as a whole" (D, aph. 9). The permanent interest of the community outweighs the temporary interest of the individual, and "even if the individual suffers by an arrangement that suits the mass, even if he is depressed and reduced by it, morality must be maintained and the victim brought to the sacrifice." 12 Valuations and orders of rank are "expressions of the needs of a community and herd," and because it tramples the individual to be a function of the herd and to ascribe value to himself only in a function, morality can be regarded as "herd instinct in the individual," the morality of custom makes men "to a certain degree necessary, uniform, like among like, regular, and consequently calculable" (GM, p. 59. Second Essay, section 2). The customs of the herd, the pressure to submit to "a law of agreement" (GS, aph. 14), create social conformity and uniformity and hence strength and cohesion. For this reason, says Nietzsche, in words which echo Bagelot's, the "great principle which stands at the beginning of all civilization is the principle that "any custom is better than none" (D, aph. 16). Tradition is a form of "higher authority, which is obeyed, not because it commands what is useful to us, but merely because it commands" (D, aph. 9).

Commands, as both Bagelot and Nietzsche recognize, were often irrational, even superfluous. Bagelot describes them as "often of childish origin, beginning in a casual superstition or local accident" (p. 213), and he provides some amusing examples in support. Nietzsche provides examples of his own (D, aph. 16 & 34) and, fully aware of what he calls the "severity, tyranny, stupidity, and idocy" of many primitive customs, places them in a perspective quite different from that of Christian or Kantian ethics.

12. This term is found in The Queen (D, aph. 9), but is implied on Nietzsche's own admission, in the earlier HAA, aph. 96 & 99; and MMW, aph. 89. For Nietzsche's admission, see section four of his preface to The Genealogy of Morals (GM), trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), p. 18. Other explicit references to "the Sistlichkeit der Sire" will be cited in the course of this paper, but it might be found convenient to have them listed here. 2 aphs., 14, 15, 18, 33; The Gay Science (GS), trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), aphs. 43, 143, 149, 296; GM, p. 59 (Second Essay, section 2); p. 144 (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, section 9); The Will to Power (WP), trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Houlgate (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), aphs. 255, 383.

13. p. 51. "By 'natural' Bagelot obviously means not the weakest or the mildest, but those who are willing to submit to the disciplines ordained by the group." McGovern, p. 467.

14. The Wanderer and His Shadow (W), aph. 44; Cf. WP, aphs. 284, 285, 315.

15. MMW, aph. 89. Bagelot makes a similar point: "The fixed customs which public opinion alone sanctions is imposed on all minds, whether it suits them or not" (p. 34).

16. GS, aph. 116. See also aph. 117. "Real Reason," Bagelot who uses the word "natural" (very common in Nietzsche's vocabulary): "A savage tribe consists of a herd of geometric beasts; when the latter loses they lose; they copy blindly their habits, and this soon become what which he already is" (pp. 100-101).
All human action was regulated by "a sacred ritual," itself part of "an ancient usage conceived as emanating from a superhuman authority, and destined to be transcended without risk of punishment by more than mortal power." (p. 103). Bagehot is reluctant to call this usage "law," because he thinks it antedates the word "law" in human society. The usage has the force if not the character of official, legal sanctions. In Greece such usage "presented itself to men's minds as something venerable and unchangeable, as old as the city; it had been delivered by the founder himself, when he laid the walls of the city, and kindled its sacred fire." (p. 159). Nietzsche advances similar arguments to explain the grounds on which "customary law" was upheld. First, the law claimed to be of divine origin, and therefore while, perfect and exempt from human error, and, secondly, it is claimed that since "the law has already existed from time immemorial, it is implicit, a crime against the ancestors, to call it a question." In short, the authority of such law is established by the thesis, "God gave it; the ancestors fixed it."

Nietzsche's thinking is consistent with Bagehot's in two aspects of "customary law": the attitude of collective guilt for any violation, and the obstacles in the way of change. As regards the former, their thinking runs on virtually identical lines as the following juxtaposition will show:

**BAGEHOT**

Very commonly all the tribes would expect a punishment from the gods if any one of them refused to wear the dress or observe any other custom. A single government would regulate the whole of human life (p. 26). Such a government would create "a code of custom" in which all the actions of life are to be submitted to a single rule for a single object (p. 27), a "thick crust of custom" (p. 63), an "usage of imperishable import" which must be kept unaltered (p. 157). As a result of this "binding policy" or "fixity," there was no room for contract or choice: in modern days, in civilized days, man's choice determines nearly all he does. But in early times that choice determined scarcely anything. The guiding rule was the law of duty. Everybody was bound to a place in the community. In their place he had to stay; in that place he had certain duties which he had to fulfill, and which were all he needed in that in. The set of customs swept men in distinct spots, and kept each where he stood. (p. 39).

**NETSCHCHE**

Wherever a community exists, and consequently also a moral faculty of customs, the feeling prevails that the punishment for violation of a custom is inflicted, above all, on the community: this punishment is a supernatural punishment, the manifestation and witness of which is so difficult to understand, and are investigated with such suspicions here. The community and custom are alike considered as guarantees which may have followed upon such a member's act. It can also call down a sort of vengeance upon the heads of the individuals by endeavoring to show that, as a result of his actions, a sense of divine anger has burst over the community. But, above all, it regards the guilt of the individual more particularly as a divine guilt, and bears the penalties of the individual as its own punishment. (p. 40).
There are other passages in Physics and Politics (e.g., pp. 140-142) which find their reflection in Nietzsche's writings.

In view of the general liability for any infraction of "customary law," changing that law was extremely difficult and hazardous. "In early society," writes Bagehot, "originality in life was forbidden and repressed by the fixed rule of life." (p. 159). A society subordinated to the "cage of custom" free thought was prohibited; such a prohibition is not to be regarded as an evil, "or rather, though an evil, it is the necessary basis for the greatest good," since it makes "the mould of civilisation" and hardens "the soft fibre of early man." (p. 27). Furthermore, "permitted deviation from the transmitted usages becomes simple folly... It is allowing one individual, for a moment's pleasure, or a stupid whim, to bring terrible and irreparable calamity upon all." (pp. 182-183). In these circumstances, tolerance of deviations is unthinkable, even wicked. Intolerance, on the other hand, leads inevitably to stagnation and multiplication.

The peculiarity of "arrested civilisation" is to stamp out variations before they have time to develop (p. 54). Other factors hunger and inhibit change, not the least of which is the human tendency to avoid it whenever possible. "Men are too fond of their own life, too credulous of the completeness of their own ideas, too angry at the pain of new thoughts, to be able to bear easily with a changing existence." (p. 57). Exasperation obliterates through Bagehot's characteristic mask of self-control: "One of the greatest pains to human nature is the pain of a new idea." (p. 163).

In that, "enormous lapse of time," writes Nietzsche, when the "morality of custom" held the field, every kind of change was looked upon: "as immoral and pregnant with ruin." (B, aph. 18). Indeed, the values and virtues associated with that morality brought "all change, all re-learning, all self-transformation into ill repute." (GS, aph. 236). He agrees with Bagehot that fluxity is the enemy of experiment, custom the enemy of choice:

Expounding a Bagehot image, he notes that "the periods when the tasting of the human animal ("civilisation") was desired and enforced were times of intolerance against the boldest and most spiritual natures." (WP, aph. 121). The age, the sanctity and the unquestioned authority of the custom hinder "our acquiring new experiences and amending morals"; morality, in fact, "is opposed to the formation of new and better morals; it stops us." Monothetic he regards as one form of the "morality of custom" which, in its rigidity, threatened mankind "with the premature stagnation that, as far as we can see, most other species have long reached." (GS, aph. 145). Like Bagehot, Nietzsche recognizes and scorns mankind's antagonism to change: "public opinion" he reduces to "private laziness." (HAH, aph. 82).

Despite obstacles to change, Bagehot declares, societies have to negotiate the slow and difficult transition from the first stage of civilisation, "where permanence is most wanted," to the second stage, "where variability is most wanted." (p. 61). Such a transition is accompanied with feelings of dread, as primitive communities are always alarmed "when the sudden impact of new thoughts and new examples breaks down the compact disposition of the single consecrated code," and when individual men, opposing the collective ethos, strike out on new paths "without distinct guidance by hereditary morality and hereditary religion." (p. 39). A further question poses itself:

If society can no longer maintain old customs, how may new customs be enforced? No doubt most civilisations break when they first want new casts we are now wholly stagnated in the role of the world and why progress is the very new exception." (p. 190).

Bagehot's answer, which would surely have appealed to Nietzsche's loving admiration for classical Greece and Renaissance Italy, is that "the chain of custom" was first broken in the small republics of Greece and Italy which inaugurated government by discussion in which subjects of debate were "in some degree abstract" or consisted of "matters of principle." (p. 130). Discussion implies an admission that questions are "in no degree settled by established rule," and also that "there is no divinely appointed man whom...the community is bound to obey." (p. 161). If a nation can gain "the benefit of custom without the evil," and if it can have "order and choice together," then impotence to "the springs of progress" are removed. (p. 162). Tolerance replaces bigotry, "the ruling principle of customary societies.

Other forces, such as trade, operate "to bring men of different customs and different beliefs into close coaguity," thereby helping "to change the customs and the beliefs of them all." (pp. 176-177).

Nietzsche, too, describes the transition as a difficult one. "Under the dominating influence of the morality of custom," he writes, "originality of every kind came to acquire a bad conscience," and "every individual action, every individual mode of thinking, cause[d] dread."
those who dared to take new paths incurred "the utmost disapproval of all the representatives of the morality of custom," and, having severed their connection with the community, were hated and feared as "evil ones":

"The one is immoral, because it is its will to depend upon himself and not upon tradition in all the primitive means of humanity—"evil" is equivalent to "individual." Just "arbitrary," "uncontaminated," "independent," "not controllable"... it is impossible to determine how much the more subtle, rare, and original evils must have suffered in the course of time by being considered evil and dangerous, yes, because they were looked upon themselves as such."

Gradually, however, the foundation of subordination, the belief in unconditional authority, in ultimate truth" (HAAH, aph. 444), has been eroded. The reason for this, for Bagelot, was "the sudden acquisition of much physical knowledge" (p. 1); for Nietzsche, it is rather the constrictive approach to learning which has been instrumental.

We live, he says, in an age of comparison in which "various views of the world, customs and cultures can be compared and experienced simultaneously." (HAAH, aph. 23). The consequences for morality be seen as more radical than Bagelot suspected:

"In comparison with the mode of life which prevailed among men thousands of years ago, men of the present day are living in a very immoral age: the power of custom has been weakened to a remarkable degree, and the sense of morality is so refined and elevated that we might almost describe it as unworldly... Where there is no tradition there is no morality, and the less life is governed by tradition, the narrower the circle of morality." (D., aph. 4).

Bagelot's remarks about "discipline" in the political sphere closely resemble those made by Nietzsche about "freedom" in the philosophical one. Bagelot praises "freedom," Nietzsche praises "liberty." "Neither is free," he says, "nor is there a free spirit in modern thought." Bagelot's approach to morality is based on the idea of discipline, while Nietzsche's is based on the idea of freedom.

Bagelot's view of morality is important for understanding his approach to politics. He believes that discipline is necessary for the maintenance of a stable society, and that freedom is a necessary evil that must be controlled. Nietzsche, on the other hand, believes that freedom is necessary for the development of human potential and that discipline is a necessary evil that must be avoided.

"The first man is immoral, because it is his will to depend upon himself and not upon tradition in all the primitive means of humanity—"evil" is equivalent to "individual." Just "arbitrary," "uncontaminated," "independent," "not controllable"... it is impossible to determine how much the more subtle, rare, and original evils must have suffered in the course of time by being considered evil and dangerous, yes, because they were looked upon themselves as such." 3

12. D., aph. 4; D.—O. OE. 9, aph. 4.


23. For example, though he mentions writers like Words, Socrates, and others, who, he says, "arc not Nietzsche." W. M. Sabin does not mention Bagelot or any other figure whom he may have helped Nietzsche formulate his ideas on morality. Nietzsche's "freedom" is an important concept in his philosophy, and it is a central theme in his works. The concept of "freedom" is central to his idea of the importance of the individual and the individual's ability to make choices. Nietzsche's understanding of "freedom" is different from that of the ancient Greeks, who believed in the idea of "duty" and the importance of following the rules of society. Nietzsche rejected the idea of "duty" and emphasized the importance of individual choice. He believed that the individual should be free to make decisions and to live life on their own terms. This idea of "freedom" is central to his philosophy and is a key concept in his works. Nietzsche's idea of "freedom" is a powerful concept that has influenced many thinkers and philosophers, and it remains a central theme in his works. Nietzsche's work continues to be studied and debated by scholars and students around the world, and his ideas continue to be relevant in modern times.
Thought is led by many tributaries, some large, some small, and these tributaries do not always receive the attention they deserve. Nietzsche’s mode of writing—provocative, passionate, polemical, memorable—enabled him to formulate, epitomize, and bring into focus ideas in such a way that they are inevitably associated with his name and considered outside the context of the relevant intellectual background. This has led, and can lead, to serious distortions of intellectual history. As far as Victorian authors are concerned, we should seek ways of contending with Nietzsche’s habitual secrecy, and refuse to take his scornful dismissals at face value. It would be a regrettable disservice to a number of Nietzsche’s English contemporaries, Bugher, Labouchère, and Leckey among them, to continue to ignore the semantic theories of mind and reality, whereby any statement concerning the interior life of the individual is usually implied at once, if not a “religious,” at least a metaphysical concern. And here, again, I do not propose to argue that Tennyson exhibits in his poem an unequalled dependence on Romantic values, The peculiar historical position of Tennyson in his contemporaries in the Cambridge Society known as the Apostles, to another member of that Society, William Bodham Donne.

In no place the glory of the century in the understanding of poetic meaning, because our individual energy is extinct, and we are contented nothing! After one or two revolutions in thought and opinion, all our boasted poetry, all, or nearly all, of Keats and Shelley and Wordsworth and Byron, will become unbelivable. When except in our time did men seek to build up their poetry on their own individual experiences, instead of some objective (concessions common to all men).

In this passage we notice, first of all, the almost Augustan


aspiration in the last phrase. Secondly, while the Romantic assertion of the scope and authority of the individual imagination can be recognized as a considerable achievement in an age when "contemporary uses of common values were breaking up," the fruitfulness of that assertion as a guide to living is already open to doubt. In the second section of this essay I shall attempt to show that while "The Hesperides" bears witness to the vital influence of Romantic habits of thought and feeling on Tennyson's poetic concerns, it also enacts a significant movement away from certain fundamental Romantic positions. I shall seek to show that the poem may, indeed, be understood to constitute a criticism of that essential optimism concerning the relation between the finite world and the infinite which lies at the center of Romantic conceptions of the imagination. Such a reading of the poem is of particular importance since it enables us to reverse the judgment — and it is a judgment often applied indiscriminately to a wide variety of Tennyson's earlier works — that in "The Hesperides" we find merely an expression of private aesthetic reverie, divorced from any large conceptual or moral considerations.

In the "Song," which forms the main body of "The Hesperides," we learn that the root of the Hesperidian "fruit-tree" is "charmed" (ll. 17) and that its blossom "Every one ... is born anew" (l. 31). The activity suggested here is one in which laws of natural process and temporal succession are suspended. In this image of renewal, which involves a correlative of the several stages of the seasonal cycle, decay and death seem to have no reality as states distinguishable from the phenomenon of birth. An unnatural and ahistorical perspective is thus established in which the Garden is seen as existing in the perpetual luxury of springtime. This is clearly an equivalent of the condition of life to be found in the Hesperidian Gardens of Milton's "Attain'd Spirit," those "happy climes" situated "in the broad fields of the sky" (ll. 976, 978), where

The Garden, and the top-browed Hesper.
That there eternal summer's biding...
(ll. 976-978)

The idea of the Hesperidian Garden as a realm exempt from the logic of life is in time realized throughout "The Hesperides" in Tennyson's use of present and present continuous tenses to describe all forms of activity in the Garden. It is also rendered through his exploitation of the theme of an inclusive and unbroken ritual circularity: the Sisters never cease their singing and the "Every way" both "night and day." (ll. 40, 41). Father Hesper must "twinkle not" his "sleepy sight" (l. 45) and must forever "Nummer, tell them over and number. How many

the mystic fruit-tree holds." (ll. 49-50). This unwavering attentiveness appears either to dictate or to be dictated by the quiescence, even torpor, of other life in the Garden which strikes one as the necessary condition of the song. That the Sisters sing:

Standing about the charmed root,
Round about all is mute.
As the snowfield on its mountain-side,
As the stillfield at the mountain-foot,
Crocodies in snowy crests
Sleep and the wise are all mute. (ll. 49-52)

The vigilance and the stupification which together characterize the Garden are not, paradoxically, contradictory or mutually exclusive states. We notice, for example, that the redcrowned dragon's "ancient heart is drunk with watchings night and day." (l. 54). Similarly, the Sisters mysteriously insist that "Breager, the dragon, and sisters three, / Daughters three" (ll. 107-108) are a single reality composed of five elements: "Five links, a golden chain, are we." (l. 106). But in the presentation throughout the poem of the interdependence between Father Hesper, the redcrowned dragon with his ancient heart, and the Hesperidian maidens, connotations of extreme age, of experience and tried time, on the one hand, are fused with connotations of youth, innocence and vigor, on the other. The poem offers no clues as to how these contradictions may be reconciled: the Sisters' incarnation seems expressly designed to maintain a level of being which escapes formulation in rational terms. The fruit-tree is "mythic," there is "a bliss of secret smiles." (l. 78), and "Honour comes with mystery; / Honored wisdom brings delight." (l. 47-48).

Notwithstanding their role as the voice of the Garden, the Sisters' own wisdom is, to apply Carlyle's use of the phrase, "wise and secret to itself" and appears not to partake of the discursive and critical examinations of ordinary, historical self-consciousness. In referring to the redcrowned dragon they define a condition of consciousness that is unreflective with regard to its own motivation and is without autonomus, individuated will:

If he wakes, we wake, our heads beating never.
If he sleeps, we sleep; the sleep, the sleep.
(Im. 194-195)

The "treasure / Of the witson of the west" (ll. 26-27) that is defined by this condition is equated in the "Song" with the truth of the whole, the truth of "All things." (l. 79). This truth, like the dragon which helps and must be helped to preserve it, is "older than the world." (ll. 53) and is identified with qualities of eternity as the Sisters declare that if their chant comes to an end: "We shall lose eternal pleasure. / Worth eternal want of rest." (ll. 24-27).

5. The Poems of Tennyson, ed. Christopher Binks (London: Long-
very opening of Canopus the Attendant Spirit makes explicit the spiritual orientation of his realm of repose. His abode, he declares, is where "those immortal spirits/Of bright aerial spirits live emperiled" above the "dim spot" of earth (ll. 2-3), 5 where men

Servile to keep up a still, and flourish being
Unfound by them the stars and earth
Yet none can here be taught true art
To lay their paths unto that golden key.
That plies the palace of eternity...

Breathing both of those mystical and literate ancestors and Tennison's own presentation of the special attributes of the Garden in mind, it seems unreasonable to perceive in Tennison's Hesperidion realm a metaphor for a higher principle of life, for an ultimate reality where rational antinomies and logical opposites are reconciled, and where the pains of earthly existence are not felt.

It should be emphasized that Tennison's presentation of the Hesperidion Garden does not reflect the fine distinctions employed by Xenophon's writers in their representation of paradisal gardens. There is, for example, no question of our being invited to view the Garden of the Hesperides as a true paradise, in the manner of Spenser in his representation of the Shores of Bliss in The Faerie Queene. Rather, it is a symbol of pure natural regeneration, as in Spencer's portrayal of the Garden of Adonis in The Faerie Queene. In this essay, I shall simply observe that Milton's picture of Adonis, depicting the Hesperidion Garden as a higher mode of regeneration than that principle of merely natural regeneration represented in Spencer's portrayal of the Garden of Adonis in The Faerie Queene, vis. as John Carey has noted in elucidating the Platonic dimension of the cosmology of Canopus, whereas Spencer's Garden of Adonis is on earth, Milton's Venus and Adonis lie in a transitional state: "the Elysian fields of the moon" where they await the "reparation of soul and mind, when mind will finally return to its source, the sun," a sun which is "to be distinguished from that mere earthly flatness."

At the opening of Canopus the Attendant Spirit makes explicit the spiritual orientation of his realm of repose. His abode, he declares, is where "those immortal spirits/Of bright aerial spirits live emperiled" above the "dim spot" of earth (ll. 2-3), where men

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In contrast to the intact and unitary condition represented by the West, the East of the "Song" is a state characterized by deviation and discontinuity. The Sisters, for example, the rich integrity of their western "seasonal" with the more disturbed "landwind" belonging to the East.

Every flower and every fruit the reddest blush
Of this warm season again,
Catching the cool in his sleep;
But the landwind wanders.
Broken by the hinged steep. . . . (43-47)

We may understand more concerning the nature of the dissociation intrinsic to the East if we recall the observation of the Sisters that if the golden apple is taken by one from the East" (5.42) the "world will be otherwise" (5.64) to wise, indeed, that the "old wound of the world" will be healed" (5.69). There are obvious connotations of the Fall in this reference to the "old wound of the world.

Furthermore, as Gerard Jacque has pointed out, not only has the "archetypal 'deep wound'" of Adonis - alluded to in the same passage of Comus from which Tennyson took his epigraph - traditionally been seen by Christian mythologists as a type of the wound felt by creation at the Fall, but also, given such a Miltonics key as the epigraph, it is difficult to avoid an association between the "old wound" of "The Hesperides" and the "wound" that earth feels when Eve first tastes the apple in Paradise Lost (IX, 780-84). "Certainly, a basic identification in "The Hesperides" of the West with an otherworldly state of unity and harmony, and of the East with the fallen, imperfect and incomplete "world" (6.04) of human experience, is to be found in the opposition that the Sisters make between the stable eternity of their Garden and the realm of historical and natural shift and process:

Fading, minute by the medlar light,
Kingsdoms leap, and climates change, and men die;
Honour comes with mystery. . . . (45-47)

The problematic aspect of the relation between finite and infinite worlds in "The Hesperides," between the world of time and change on the one hand and the sphere of the Garden on the other, is that the Sisters are committed to maintaining an absolute separation between the two. Tennyson's line about one from the East who "threescore from the point of view of the Sisters" the golden apple is clearly to be linked with classical stories concerning the slaying of the gaulius-hereticus of the Hesperidian tree and the theft of the fruit by Hercules. The unwillingness of Tennyson's Sisters to let the apple be taken is entirely consistent with this story. But the situation involving the defense of the Garden is complicated by the further possibilities of meaning introduced through Tennyson's allusion to the Biblical theme of the Fall. Donna Fricke has noted a straightforward parallel, in the Hesiodic myth of Heraclis and the "Hebrew-Christian Eden myth" where man was prevented from eating the fruit of the tree of life "after he defied God and ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." However, the lines of Tennyson's Miltonics epigraph, in referring to Comus, do not refer us simply to this early part of the "Hebrew-Christian Eden myth." In Christian thought, although men may be supposed to have forfeited at the Fall the right to physical immortality, the tree of life is made available to him again, in the sense that the possibility of spiritual regeneration is made available to him, through the endeavor and sacrifice of Christ. This larger idea of the tree of life supports Milton's presentation of the Hesperidian Gardens in Comus. As J. B. Leishman has written, "Milton's world, unlike Plato's, is a Christian world, a redeemed world." Within the cosmology of Comus the Hesperidian Gardens are above earth but are associated with a plane of spiritual purification lower than that represented by Cupid and Psyche, who are "far above in spangled sheet" (4.106). However, there is a higher spiritual reality than all the "sphere chime" (4.102) and, despite all the Platonic elements in Comus, the Adolescent Spirit's concluding words the idea of Divine Grace is confirmed as an essential feature of Milton's thought in the poem. Here the Spirit reassures us that if human Virtue alone is insufficient to climb higher than the celestial spheres, there nevertheless remains a higher dispensation at the service of man:

Mortal that would follow,

Love Virtue, she alone is fair,

She can teach ye how to climb

Higher than the sphere chime.

Or if Virtue fail ye,

Heaven itself would open to him. (611-12)

For the purposes of this essay, perhaps the most useful gloss on this passage is that in The Poetical Works of John Milton, edited in six volumes by Henry John Todd (London, 1851), Tennyson's own copy of this edition is still extant. In his annotations in volume five (pp. 410-11) Todd prefers his own note on a manuscript variant of the poem with a quotation from the Rev. Mr. Egerton, who observes that in the last six lines of Comus, Milton contemplates

...this stupendous Mystery, whereby He, the solitary of Paradise Regained, escaping from sinners all night, "toward the Heavens, and away from Earth, in some man for the Sins of Men, to strengthen humble Virtue by the influence of his

The distinguishing feature of *Comus* is that the ultimate power presiding over the Attendant Spirit's eternal Hesperidian Gardens is sympathetic to the "un-worn mode" (I. 171) of earthly existence. This feature of Milton's presentation of the Hesperidian Gardens isflatly contradicted in Tennyson's work. We note that the powers of Tennyson's Garden are bent, not merely on denying access to the tree of life in the sense that the "Hebrew-Christian" God originally denied man access to the tree of life in Eden, but on refusing all possibility for the reemergence of what is already described as the "old" wound of the world.

There are important conclusions to be drawn from Tennyson's presentation of "one from the East" who prominely but the point of view of the world to heal the old wound of Earth. The image of a potential redeemer in Tennyson's line goes beyond the possibilities of meaning inherited directly from classical accounts of the eleventh labor of Hercules, Tennyson is apparently drawing on a traditional Christian interpretation of the figure of Hercules as a type of Christ (Milton himself makes such a comparison in *Paradise Regained*, IV. 563-74). While, however, there is an obvious suggestion of a Redeemer figure in Tennyson's line, it is not there as part of a larger Christian idea governing the meaning of the poem as a whole. The Garden, with its fruit-tree, dragon, Father Hesper, and the Hesperidai malatins, serves as a compound image of an absolute which does not sanction and which is interdicted alien to the purpose of the one from the East.

Although the East, understood as the fallen world of everyday experience, must logically be derived from the West, viewed as the eternal principle of "All things," there is in "The Hesperides" no presentation of the fall as the historical event of Christian doctrine, enacted under the view of a God whose providential purpose has been revealed to man. Key elements of Christian doctrine are suggested in this work, only to have their meaning and validity cancelled by the larger metaphysical frame of reference established through Tennyson's characterization of the Hesperidian Garden. If there is a Christian motif involved in the idea of one who is to come from the East, it is a motif which, by the metaphorical terms of the poem as a whole, can never be completed. The picture of the absolute stability of the Garden and the image of a potential Redeemer are held in tension, the attributes of the one perpetually denying the possibilities of the other. "The Hesperides" presents us with a radical split between the interest of man and the operation of an essentially blind, impersonal absolute. There is no uniquely personal Deity in the Garden responsible to the world of activity and strife. In the detached and clinical manner in which the Sisters note the existence of a realm of flux and instability we can detect a kind of constitutional inability to sympathize with the pain problems of that world. However the world of history may be related to them, in their ritual activity they are bound to an automatic principle of guarding their secret and maintaining the mystery. They are bound absolutely by the laws of their own being which they cannot alter because, as we have seen, they are without independent, individual will. "The Hesperides" would seem to constitute an early formulation of that vision of an indifferent and impersonal force governing the universe which Tennyson was to define in the light of contemporary geological and biological science in *In Memoriam*.

It is impossible that we should think of Tennyson endorsing the Sisters' refusal to let the old wound of the world be healed, or to allow the "ancient secret," the key to joy, to be revealed. The Sisters observe that "The world is wasted with fire and sword./But the apple of gold hangs over the sea." (I. 104-45). The import of these lines is that, while the world may be suffering, all is nevertheless well from the point of view of the Sisters as long as the apple of gold hangs secure and unaccountable over the sea. The Sisters' may not be able to help themselves in their invertebrate and callous disregard of the world, but the picture surely registers Tennyson's feelings of moral revolution at the kind of absolute they represent.

To conclude this first part of our discussion, it is worth remembering briefly that such feelings were to find expression again in the strain of protest that Tennyson's mariners make against the prevailing order of things in the conclusion to "The Lotus-Eaters" published in *Poems*, 1842:

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14 The variant to which Todd refers, in line 1022 of *Comus*, occurs in the author's manuscript at Trinity College, Cambridge (MS R. 3.4).
Proudie spoke of the eighteen-thirties, "the intellectual light and theDrifting, the compasses all away," and, as Tennyson's mariners put it, "confusion worse than death" (II. 139) to "hearts wearied by many wars!/And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars" (II. 131-33).

It is sometimes thought that in his presentation of the mariners' response to deprivation Tennyson reveals his own unqualified desire to escape the intellectual and social responsibilities of his age. But if it should always be remembered that in their description of the Lotus-land as "hollow" and in their own condemnation of the unfeeling and inhospitable gods whom they seek to emulate the mariners themselves provide a mesure by which they may be judged and found wanting. There is space here neither to examine the numerous parallels nor to distinguish certain important differences between the enchanted western island of the lotos-eaters and Tennyson's Garden of the West in "The Hesperides." But both are contrasted in broadly comparable terms with the "wasted" world of ordinary human experience. And, as in "The Hesperides" man has no access to the joy of the Garden, we should not fail to recognize in "The Lotus-Eaters" the truculent contradiction inherent in the mariners' comparison of life in Lotus-land to the life of the epicurean gods. For while, at one level of the poem, we see the mariners as literally successful in landing on their western isle beyond the sea of history, at another level, through the mariners' own identification of that island with the humanly unattainable condition of the gods, we find that Lotus-land connotes an order of being from which man is in reality forever excluded.

The essential unavailability to man of the condition of bliss imagined in the isle and in the "golden houses" of the gods is, in fact, apparent throughout the poem in the manner that the mariners, whatever their stated desire for escape, never actually move beyond desire and never escape to Clootie. Much has been made of the fact that Tennyson does not depict his mariners brought home, as in Homer, to responsibility and duty. But behind the presentation in the Odyssey of Ulysses's action of bringing his men home by Homer's method as to the crossing of duty, Tennyson to return his mariners to Ithaca would be to belie the theme of dispassion which runs through the poem. Tennyson may not know precisely what direction his nineteenth-century mariners should take, but he does not allow any easy solution through a simple reversion to the terms of the original story. And if Tennyson goes no further in "The Lotus-Eaters" than to identify what the hero of Ulysses was to call the "sad archery" of his age (I. XVIII. iv. 634), he does at least indicate that simple disengagement is impossible; his mariners are constitutionally unable to forget the "shady distress" (II. 38) of mankind and to become one with the epicurean gods.

II

In "The Hesperides" the discontinuity between the secret joy of the Garden and the troubled world of human experience carries considerable implications for the poem viewed as a statement about the grounds of poetic vision. As a prelude to a consideration of these implications, it will be useful to glance at a further work of Tennyson's which bears a complex of imagery associated with a paradise in the West comparable to that in "The Hesperides."

In Tennyson's 1839 Campion Prize Poem, "Timbuctoo," it is the Spirit of Fable, a personification of man's expressive and creative capacities, which makes possible the speaker's vision of the City of Timbuctoo. As the Spirit of Fable declares towards the end of the poem:

There is no happier Spirit there in pray
The heart of man, and teach him to strain
By shadowing forth his Unattainable:

I am the Spirit,
The genial life which courses through
All the lakes and rivers we know,
Of the fields and of the seats around,
With growth of shadowing leaf and clusters rose,
Balmeth to every center made, heaven
Deep-rooted to the floor and steepeth . . . . (III. 21-22)

In Tennyson's conception of this organic tertiary Spirit we see a reflection of that emphasis on self-derived authority—that claim that absolute values originate within and are projected from the mind itself—which is to be found in Romantic assertions concerning the constitutive power of the mythopoeic or poetic imagination. What is most interesting for this essay, however, is the fact that the interior, imaginative grounds of spiritual perception have already been defined in the poem in terms of the traditional myths of Atlantis and the Blessed Isles of the West. "Timbuctoo" owes a reference to "Divine Atlantis" (II. 224) as a place which once had its "Seeing of the heart of Man, as air is the life of flame" (II. 19-20) but which, for the speaker of the poem, is an unavailable dream of "ancient Time" (II. 61). The same is true of the legendary Blessed Isles of the West:

Where are ye
Thrones of the Western sea, far isles green?

Where are ye" etc., lines 48-49

Through invoking such myths as testimonies to the capacity of the human mind to apprehend and to generate metaphors for the infinite and the ideal, Tennyson

16. For a full discussion of the place and importance of Romantic
establishes in his work a mode of inward metaphysical structures which to a significant extent fulfills Northrop Frye’s observation that

the metaphysical structure of Romantic poetry tends to move inside and downward instead of outside and upward, hence the creative world is deep within, and its history or the place of the presence of God... In Blake this world at the deep centre is Jerusalem... Jerusalem is also... Atlantic, the oceanic island kingdom, which we can rediscover by crossing the Sea of Time and Space off the top of the mind... The Atlantic theme is a strong other Romantic myth...  

Tennyson’s “Tithonus” comprises an argument that while traditional myths may have lost credence, in the speaker’s vision of the City of Timbuctoo there may be discerned surviving evidence of that same apprehending sense manifest in ancient fable. The poem does not rest, however, with a celebration of the shaping and organizing power of the imagination. As the Spirit of Fable finally calls attention to his “fair City” (I. 245) he also foresees the “river” which winds through its streets “not enduring” (To carry through the world those waves, which bore/ The reflex of the City “in their depths” (II. 225-233). Forsaken by the Spirit of Fable at the very end of the poem, the speaker is enveloped by a darkness which seems to confirm the envisaged breakdown of imaginative correspondence between the “world” and the “Unattainable.”

The importance of “Tithonus” is twofold: in the first place, the identification in the poem of the Isles of the West with the sphere of the imagination directs us to the Romantic possibility of meaning in Tennyson’s symbolic geography of West and East in “The Hesperides.” Secondly, the anticipation in “Tithonus” of a failure in the sustaining and cohering power of the imagination prepares us for the doubt with which the principle of imaginative life is regarded in “The Hesperides.” The “Thrones of the Western wave, Fair Islands green” in “Timbuctoo,” with their “Edenian glooms” (I. 42), “blossoming abysses” (I. 43), and “flowering Climes” (II. 44), may be compared with the initial description of the West in “The Hesperides.” In the blank-verse prologue to the poem, we are told that Zidnus Hanoo, voyaging off the West coast of Africa, did not hear the warbling of the nightingale “Blown seaward from the shore” (I. 8) but heard voices, “like the voices in a dream, Continuous” (II. 12-13), coming

from a clime
That runs black_height near the Atlantic blue,
Beneath a highland wearing crown of sight
Of cliffs, and Parent below with ribbons blue... (I.11)

The areas of the imagination explicitly enacted for the Western Isles and their “infinite ways” in “Timbuctoo” is imaginatively realized by Tennyson in respect of the Garden of the Hesperides through placing that Garden within what Robert Stange has called the “framework of vision poetry” (p. 80). We do not, of course, fail to recognize the interior orientation of this vision, issuing from a region for which these are effectively no literal spatial equivalents the voices of the Garden are heard as “in a dream” — essentially enclosed within the space of Hanoo’s own consciousness. The textures of language and imagery in the “Song” are themselves accommodated to the inwardness defined by the opening framework of the poem. Thus, for example, we find a subliminal intensity in the description of the western seasand “Arching the billow in his sleep” (I. 83).

In “Timbuctoo,” as we have seen, the “Thrones of the Western wave” are associated with an image of the organic life on the “wine of Fable” which provides a refuge for man (at least until the closing lines of the poem) amid its “complicated glooms.” And cool unimpeached twilight” (II. 223-224). There is a correlation between these motifs and the imagery of western sea, of darkness, and of vegetative generation in “The Hesperides.”

Certainly, the central figure of “The Hesperides” by which, as Stange has put it, “the Hortense of the fruit depends on the charmed music of the Hesperides and they, in turn, draw their vitality and find the source of their song in the sea and the tree” (p. 103), is characteristic of Romantic coalescent metaphors of mind which emphasize the primacy of unconscious germ and organic growth in the creative life of the artist. The qualities of timelessness and truce which distinguish the Garden also invite comparison with the Romantic interest in these states of contemplation associated with the functioning of the creative imagination. These are the states associated, for example, with Shelley’s visionary island of the mind in Euphrosyne, that island where

all the place is peopled with secret sites...

And every motion, odor, beam, and tone
With the deep music is in idleness.

Which is a land within the soul... (143-145)

The word, “wisdom,” mentioned in “The Hesperides,” has in Tennyson a special connotation. Stange remarks: “In "The Poet," and indeed in all Tennyson’s early descriptions of the poetic nature, the qualities of the poetic charium are termed "wisdom."” (p. 102). The word is, of course, sanctioned in Romantic usage. “Ancient Wisdom” is used in Wordsworth’s Excursion (IV. 957) to describe the intuitive insights of the mythopoeic imagination and to identify that mode of feeling intellect which is to be distinguished from mere rational understanding:

... wisdom, not to be approached
By the intellect: but with all,
With her music and speculative glance,
Opinion, ever changing" (IV. 1053)

An emphasis on an unapproachable wisdom appears in Tennyson's Cambridge poem "The Poet's Mind." Tennyson's use in "The Hesperides" of the image of the enchanted garden, fertile, remote, its integrity protected by the eternal singing of the Sirens, may be compared with the final image of "The Poet's Mind," where the poetic spirit is likened to a garden which must be preserved from questionable rational processes of thought:

Dark brooded sophist, come not near,
All the place is holy ground.

In the heart of the garden, the merry bird chant.
It would fall to the ground if you came to it.

In the middle leaps a fountain
And it sings a song of lovely line...

G. H. Ford has observed that an important influence on "The Poet's Mind" is the end of Keats's Lamia: "Do not all charms fly? / At the mere touch of cold philosophy? / . . . the stately muses no more breathe, / . . . Lamia breathed death-bread; the sophist's eye, / Like a sharp spear, went through her utterly" (II, 229-30, 263, 299-300). The Keatsian influence here serves to remind us of Tennyson's general indebtedness — discernible in such poems as "A Dream of Fair Women" and "Recollections of the Arabian Nights" — to the entire world of Keatsian gardens. This is the world of sleep, poetry, and dream-vision epitomized in the music-haunted bower of Adonais in Endymion, where the "feathered lyrist" (II, 452) who watches over the sleeping Adonis welcomes Endymion as he descends from "past the scantly bar / To mortal steps" (II, 124-25):

Thought from upper sky
Through art a wanderer, and thy presence here
Might come avert, or, let alone, my whole world.
For (in the most solemn of human honor)
When some earthly and high-favoring dower
Presents immortal to mortal sense —

Here is music picked from Syrian words.
In stadia, by the three Hesperides. (II. 439-44, 452-53)

In Endymion Keats is, of course, to be found in his most idealistic mood. It is in the Odes, above all, that we find him expressing a sense of conflict, a sense that there may be no easy and untroubled meeting between the world of sleep, dream, and poetry on the one hand, and the "real" world of fever and fret on the other. The tensions of the Odes look forward to and define some of the fundamental preoccupations of Victorian poetry. The early Tennyson has often been understood to release these tensions and to commit himself either implicitly or explicitly to aesthetic withdrawal from the world. In Robert Stange's view of "The Hesperides" as a poem concerned with the source of the life of art, the desire of the Hesperidian maidens to preserve inviolate their garden in the West is seen as a statement on Tennyson's part that the integrity of the life of the imagination must be maintained over and against the demands of the world of social and moral responsibility that is symbolized in the poem by the forces of the East. Stange thus isolates the basic impulse of the work as recessive and says of the poem that "its assertion of a desire to retreat from purposive moral activity suggests the doctrine of the Beautiful that Arthur Hallam formulated in his influential review of Tennyson's Poems, Chiefly Lyrical" (p. 111).

If, however, "The Hesperides" is seen to embrace issues concerning the nature of reality itself, the nature of Tennyson's allegiance to the respective interests of West and East has to be reinterpreted. Far from sympathizing with the powers of the Garden, and far from expressing a desire to retreat from purposive moral activity, Tennyson may be seen in this poem to be recording anger and moral outrage at the conditions under which mankind is forced to live. As a poem about the imagination "The Hesperides" reveals a more complex attitude than that which Tennyson expressed in "The Poet" or in "The Poet's Mind." There is in "The Hesperides" neither an argument for retreat into private aesthetic reverie nor a portentous claim for the comprehensiveness of the poet's insight. The poem constitutes a deeper examination into the problems foreshadowed in the conclusion of "Timbuctoo." For we find that the criticism of the eternal principle in "The Hesperides" involves at center a questioning of the status and limitations of the life of the imagination.

The Romantic concern with areas of experience lying beyond or deeper than the ordinary realm of consciousness was not, we remember, developed at the expense of rationality. The special claim for the principle of imagination was that it synthesized conscious and unconscious dimensions of the mind. A higher organ of perception, it was thought to subsume and contain rather than merely to oppose the rational faculty. Imaginative experience was for the Romantics a valid means of insight into the human situation, something that brought coherence and meaning to the wide span of daily consciousness and life. Keats was to sum up Romantic attitudes when, in The Fall of Hyperion, he pointed out that the only way of distinguishing the true merit of poetic dreams from those of banalities or savages is that there is a level at which poetic reverie is rationally accessible:

...Poesy alone can tell her dreams,
With the fine spell of words she can save
Imagination from the sable drum
And dumb enforcement. (I. 1-11)

By contrast with the Romantic stress on the possibilities for some form of rational transcription by the poet of supra-normal experience, the emphasis in Tennyson's poem is that that area of experience lying beyond the rational which is imaged in the life of the Hesperidian.

Tennyson's Narrative of Desire: *The Lover's Tale*

Herbert F. Tucker, Jr.

revised 1993

I

Perhaps the most ambitious of the Poems Tennyson prepared for the press in 1832 was the one he withdrew, over Arthur Hallam's poignant protest, just a month before publication. Manuscript evidence indicates that he had begun the long blank-verse narrative he called *The Lover's Tale* as early as 1837, well before his important

Presentation of the very early "Armageddon" (1824-28) into "Timbuctoo" (1829). Of the entire collection of 1832, then, *The Lover's Tale* was the poem on which Tennyson had worked longest; it was without question the poem that would stay with him longest. Having distributed a few printed copies to friends in 1832 yet omitted the poem from the volume of that year, he returned to correct it in 1835, drew for decades upon its situation and imagery, announced yet again retracted it in 1868, and then discarded the same thing a year later. Finally, once a pirated edition had forced his hand, he published the poem in 1879 together with the incongruous conclusion *The Garden Lepus*, which he had issued separately ten years before.

Other references:
1. "The Hebrides" as something which, while involving a modification of ordinary consciousness and will, nevertheless consists in an expansion and fulfillment of identity. For we see only an obliteration and negation of recognizable human meaning in the mindless, amoral drive of the Sisters' incantation. Draining the sea of time and space off the top of the mind is not in this poem a necessarily exhausting process. Hanno cannot return to the world as Endymion from the Bower of Adonis, regenerated with manna packed by the three Hesperides, and enlightened by a loving interpreter who gives him proper knowledge of the immaterial things around him.

To conclude, it is worth remarking that, as a piece of mythmaking, "The Hesperides" may be seen to justify Robindra Biswas's observation that Tennyson is "so obviously an heir of the later Romantics, so clearly important in his anticipation of the Symbolists," the poem may at the same time be seen to demonstrate Tennyson's capacity to explore a complex intellectual, moral and social theme through the medium of what Arthur Hallam referred to as a poetry of "sensation." Most important of all, however, and the point that bears on Tennyson's entire canon, is the fact that while Romantic metaphorical and symbolic modes characteristically emphasize a vision of continuity and unity, in Tennyson's subversive use of myth in "The Hesperides," his examination of a sense of discontinuity, we see him using the language of romanticism against itself.

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This extraordinary history of vacillation might justify a sufficiently pervasive and quantitative biographer in claiming that The Lover's Tale was the central poem of Tennyson's life. I mean to advance no such biographical claim, but to suggest a more modest critical version of it: Tennyson kept returning to this poem as he did because it took up thematically — and with an analytic rigor we usually hesitate to attribute to him — imaginative problems of emotional relationship that lay at the heart of virtually all his subsequent work, and that he had first made his own in the pivotal volume of 1832. As a narrative that turns upon the seemingly insuperable difficulty posed by a lover's confession of his love, The Lover's Tale is a sustained investigation of the relationship between a central self and others, the same relations that consistently emerges as the theme of the best, and best known, of Tennyson's remarkable 1833 Poems. The very fact of its prolonged suppression may be significant in this connection: Tennyson's denial to either abandon the poem for good or to manage its narrative to his satisfaction — which we may find mirrored in his narrator Julian's fixed reluctance to bring himself to "the event" (3.29, 31.59) — suggests an imaginative inhibition that is manifested in other ways in several of the poems Tennyson did decide to publish in 1832, and that is never altogether overcome in any of them. For these reasons, quite apart from the frequent splendor of its imagery and versification, The Lover's Tale deserves a more visible place in Tennyson's canon than it has hitherto occupied.

By way of a preface to the following interpretation, it may be helpful briefly to situate the poem in the context of Tennyson's development in the late 1820s and early 1830s, and to suggest some of the ways in which it bears on the concerns of contemporaneous poems that have become better known. By 1830 the poet's reading of romantic poetry had taught him how the visionary exorcism of such early works as "An Eneidic Vision" and "Fortunatus" might be domesticated to the native scene and thus made more available for public consumption. He had also learned the romantic art of making the familiar — whether the natural or the traditional — strange and new, and from the cultural canon, "the great vice of Fable" ("Timbucto," 218), he had bred a handful of haunting myths of romantic self-sufficiency that recall his juvenile concerns in more accessible objective forms. Still, the 1830 Poems, Chiefly Lyrical were indeed chiefly lyrical, in so far as their romantic lyricism remained the preserve of the self in proud or ruined isolation. In this regard they lagged behind their creator. Since "Timbucto" Tennyson had known that the poetic character becomes itself in relationship, not in isolation, and with considerable elaborate finesse he had incorporated its relations with earlier poets into the fabric of such 1830 lyrics as "Maritana," "Recollections of the Arabian Nights," "Ode to Memory," and "The Poet's Mind." But this knowledge had not yet been raised to thematic prominence by "Mariana" and "Recollections" would both be quite different poems if the tales of Knats were not behind them, but there is no figure that stands to the unattached, otherless consciousness of Mariana and the boyish Bagatiquer as Knats stand to Tennyson. In 1830 Tennyson had come out of himself to accept and rise inter-poetic challenges, but he had left the figures he imagined behind him in the lower.

With the Poems he published in December of 1832, Tennyson's characters begin to catch up with him. The confrontation of a central self with other selves, of consciousness sought or evaded, inhibited or achieved, becomes in this volume a theme as striking as the proliferation of subtexts and poetic forms Tennyson devised for setting his theme forth. Almost all the important poems are narratives or songs in narrative frames that challenge the stasis or unidimensional fixity that prevails in his chiefly lyrical earlier writing. There imaginative energy is invested in maintenance projects, and the whole point of a poem, reductively put, is that nothing may influence the consciousness at its core. In the work of 1832, however, Tennyson imagines minds that undergo the impact of others minds, experience a self-division that is the prelude to identity, and attempt transactions with others, which range from the painfully obsolete ("The Lady of Shalott," "A Dream of Fair Women") to the aggressively modern ("Fatima," "Oenone"). Generically, then, Tennyson's narratives and narrative ensembles of 1832 mean that in these poems something actually happens, albeit in enclosed or troped ways. Further, the curve of the action these new narratives exhibit, or inhibit, may be instructively plotted on the thematic axes of personal relationship and psychological change.

Now of the matter collection Tennyson prepared in 1832 the longest poem, and the poem most obviously narrative in character, is The Lover's Tale, yet despite its length this is the narrative poem in which the least takes place. Presumably its evasive nature is what has stymied readers and has kept it virtually unanalyzed in the considerable body of Tennyson criticism. But The Lover's Tale, I shall argue, is a story in which nothing significantly changes because stasis is its subject: we might indeed call it a narrative about the paralysis of the narrative faculty. In describing it thus, however, we should take care to save it from the boring reduction of the critical parlor game of self-referentiality — as we may do, I think, by bearing in mind that for Tennyson in the early 1830s the narrative faculty disclosed dimensions of public ambition, and of the plain human need for loving relationship, which are antithetical to the tricks of hermetic self-entrapment. And about those

2 The only full-scale essay I have found in Critical Shelf is "Tennyson and The Lover's Tale," in PILIA, 87 (1967), 78-84. Short equally reviews the similar scholarship and criticism that have been devoted to the poem, establishes the continuous imagism divide between the original three parts and the Golden shovel, and deploys of the idea that Boccaccio was the important pre-
The poems of 1837 and especially 1839 show that Tennyson knew at least as much as we do, however modern psychology and hermeneutics have altered the vocabulary with which they are diagnosed. The failure of narrative development in *The Lover's Tale* is the most massive of the failures of relationship that inform the 1832 *Poems*; it was to accompany, because it confronts the most insurmountable obstacle to relationship and change: the tendency of romantic desire to displace its object and become an end in itself.

In this sense *The Lover's Tale* constitutes an early dead end in Tennyson's career, an initial castration of his complex and personally charged response to the hopes and dilemmas of romanticism. There is much in the poem to suggest that he first conceived it around the time of his removal from Somersby to Cambridge, where he also received his first, and in certain ways indelible, impressions of the works of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats. (Byron he had weathered back at the Somersbys rectory, and Byron's comparative unimportance as an influence on the poetry after 1827 probably stems from Tennyson's rejection of an author he had more than the usual reasons for associating with the melancholy of adolescence.) The conjunction of biography and literary history is quite rich here: without privileging either the man's life or the poet's career, we may speculate that in the late 1820s Tennyson's social circumstances and friendships, on one hand, and on the other the poetry he was reading and writing (often at the urging of his new Cambridge associates), to an exceptional degree reinforced and even interpreted each other. As a young man exchanging a notoriously oppressive family circle for the broader horizon of university life—which presented itself, moreover, as a threshold to the new and expansive world of early Victorian society—Tennyson seems to have found in the romantic dialectics of alienation and recovery a set of imaginative terms with which to survey his own position. At the same time, at a young poet encountering the poets of the older generation with a very direct sense of their personal relevance, he seems to have read his romantics at Cambridge quite ideologically, and the way in which he then and there appropriated them for his own purposes—as we paradoxically say, the way he took their influence—arguably imported his bias to Tennyson's romantics for decades to come.

The romanticism of *The Lover's Tale*, with its congested narrative of emotional disability, offers a grim but clear case in point. The tale a disappointed lover tells his friends about his incapacity to tell his love when he thinks it might have done some good, the poem is manifestly concerned with the transition from solitude to communion, from silence to communication, that had occupied Tennyson during his university years, and that was to remain his most characteristic and successful mode of apprehending the cultural situation of the poet writing under a romantic dispensation. But while the university 

prize poem "Timbucto" had effected this transition with considerable ease in the terms of mythic faith and of literary history, the erotic terms of *The Lover's Tale* evidently posed more daunting obstacles. The original preface states that "the Love is supposed to be that of a poet." But despite a long tradition linking poetry and love, the tradition within which Tennyson wrote when he enclosed "The Port" of 1830 with "The love of love" (4), *The Lover's Tale* appears to be the first to pose a suspicion that the poet's needs and the lover's may be incompatible. "Timbucto" had asserted the commanding presence of the poet in an abyss, and had celebrated his creative, representative power to exercise and elicit belief in a world where meaning is fictive to begin with. But in the context of love, the romantic assertion has a way of turning sour. What is the status of lovers' truth in such a fictive world? What keeps imaginative command, when it is a lover who does the imagining, from issuing in a shadowy idealization of the beloved that divides and conquers beloved and lover alike?

Of all versions of the romantic question, these were the ones that came to mean most to the great Victorian poets. Tennyson never attained Browning's radical confidence in equating the ground of romantic belief with those of true lovers' romance, or the pure austerity of Arnold's rejection of romantic love as a joy whose grounds were not verifiably true. The Victorian love poet most like him was Rossetti, although Tennyson refrained from the anomaly of Rossetti's vibration between erotic rupture and doubt. Nevertheless, among Victorians it is Tennyson's distinction to have written, in *The Lover's Tale*, the first love poem that asks how imagination is connected to desire, and how this connection may bear upon one person's loving recognition of another. He honors these questions by pursuing the melancholy conclusion that a certain kind of imagination—a kind deeply affiliated with the successses of his earlier poetry—demands for its life the sacrifice of love. That Tennyson found this conclusion both honest and unacceptably explains why he could neither consider the poem complete nor extend it on its own terms. In its discordant jolliness part IV, *The Golden Book*, is what the poet called it in his 1879 preface, a "sequel" and hardly a conclusion; for despite his reluctance to acknowledge the fact, his original three-part fragment had already wound down to its own brand of desperate closure.

In the preface of 1879 Tennyson explained his retraction of *The Lover's Tale* almost fifty years before: "feeling the imperfection of the poem, I withdrew it from the press." One's sense that he is referring here to the formal imperfection of its fragmentary shape is reinforced by his original preface ("I am aware how deficient the Poem is in point of Art"), and again by the letter he wrote to Edward Moxon on 30 November 1832, which explains that "it is too full of faults" and that "it would spoil the completeness of the book." One can also imagine, though, that

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Tennyson’s devotion stemmed from motives similar to Matthew Arnold’s in withdrawing Empedocles on Etna from his own Poems two decades later. Tennyson’s disenchanted anatomy of narrative and erotic failure in a work, as in Arnold’s, there is little enough to
‘inspire and wasp the reader,’ in which a continuous state of mental distress is prolonged, unreleased by incident, hope, or resistance; in which there is everything to be endured, nothing to be done. In such situations there is inevitably something morbid, in the description of them something monotonous. 1 In short, Tennyson’s poem like Arnold’s confronted a problem the youthful poet found insurmountable, and therefore it suffered in his estimation from an ‘imperfection’ that was more than formal. But an anatomy of failure may be a poetic success even if it prescribes no cure, and in fact both poems were received with their author’s mature blessings. As we have long since followed Robert Browning’s example and welcomed Empedocles into the Arnoldian canon, we might extend a similar courtesy to The Lover’s Tale, about whose suppression Hallam wrote at once to its author: “You must be
point-blank mad.” 2 Hallam, we know, was a skilled close reader of Tennyson’s early verse, and the urgency of his protest suggests that this early poem may be worth the pains of a detailed analysis. Such analysis, in any event, can do more than testimonial or considerations of biographical context to secure a better reception for a neglected work. The remainder of this essay undertakes to show some detail how much psychological sophistication and technical “point of Art” stand behind the monotonous descriptions of which The Lover’s Tale is so largely composed. I hope to validate particularly what I have thus far been asserting in general terms: Tennyson’s bulky, bulky narrative deserves higher rank among those early works in which he first posited a central analogy between the cities of literary art and of human identity—an analogy that would later let him speak compassionately for a troubled age, in a work like In Memoriam (1850), without ceasing to speak for himself as a romantic craftsman.

2

The plot of The Lover’s Tale is easily told: Julian and Camilla are cousins who have been reared as foster siblings, almost as twins. One spring day in their late adolescence they take a walk through the mountain woods by the sea-coast where they live, and as Julian exults in his unspoken love for her, Camilla confesses that she has fallen in love with his friend Lionel. Julian swoons away, and upon awakening to find both Lionel and Camilla with him he resolves to bear his disappointment in silence. Here the first real part of the poem ends; the next two parts reverse with briefer intensity the consequences of this self-suppression, as Julian (now Furioso) wanders alone through the woods and into a series of three extraordinary visions. While this plot may be easily told, Julian finds it tough going indeed—as does the reader, whose interest in the story line is persistently frustrated by Julian’s digressions into self-analysis and, most particularly, his obsessive dwelling on static descriptions, all of which conspire to extend the bare plot over the course of a thousand lines and more.

It makes a certain ease to impute these problems to Tennyson’s insensitivity to narrative, but before taking that step towards critical dismissal of the poem it also makes sense to ask how Julian’s hesitations and obsessions may be serving Tennyson’s artistic purpose. We should begin by observing that both Julian’s analysis of his own soul and his portrayal of landscape are conducted to a striking degree, through figurative imagery. Julian’s narrative inhibitions are the proliferation of his imagery are related phenomena, and their relationship in the telling may bear some analogy to two features repeatedly emphasized in the tale: Julian’s failure to speak to Camilla about his love, and the wordpiecely, the cloistered image of love itself. He remains silent in Camilla’s presence on the subject of his love, not just after she disappoints his hopes but beforehand as well; the self-suppression, after the fact, of “I did name no wish” (1.567, 572), “I spoke not” (1.696), is pointedly forecast when in the very futility of his hopeless love, as Julian reports it, “I did not speak” (4.435). Ignorance may be bliss, but for Julian it seems that a lover’s highest bliss involves speechlessness, the treasuring up of an enshrined emotional wealth that utterance would spend and profane.

I did not speak. I could not speak my love.
Lest words show my love all I felt about.
Love wreathes its wings on either side the heart,
Consuming it with kites soft and warm.
Absorbing all the essence of sweet thoughts
So that they pass not to the ciphers of sound.
(4.435-40)

Love so “wraps” and “constrains” the heart’s thoughts that no language can “grasp the infinite of Love” (I.474). This conjunction of speechlessness with imagery of enshrinement suggests that Julian’s difficulties in telling his love (whether as lover or as narrator) have much to do with the imagery of encirclement and boarding that governs The Lover’s Tale. He is saved from present despair by what is “glazed and garneret pty / Into the grannies of memory” (I.134-35), a flowery way that traverses a wasteland and in “him keeps / A draught of that sweet fountain that he loves” (I.136-37). On the “day which did enwomb that happy hour” (I.475) of his unspoken bliss, the significantly less tongue-tied Camilla gave him his name and thus transformed it to “A centred, glory-irced memory” (4.450-451) to endure. 5, 6

6. Arnold reprinted Empedocles in 1851, but wrote, “in the request of a man of genius, when it had the honor and the good fortune...to interest, a. V. Boker: Borrowing” (Poetry and Criticism, ed. D’Hurst, p. 204). Julian’s response is quoted to Dr. Charles Tennyson, Alfred Tennyson (New York: Macmillan, 1949), p. 12.
7. Shutt, p. 80, notes “the absence of figures of speech and the interpolation of sentimental self-analysis which show the narrative.”
38. During his period of intense disappointment, Julian's imagination was ruled, as he clearly sees, by "forms which ever stood / Within the magic circle of memory, / Invisible but deathless." (II, 16-18). Note that these are second-degree images, images for the image of Julian's love, and that their very variety implies that his "infinite of Love" remains "deathless" and inexhaustible precisely in that it remains inaccessible to language. "Had I died then, I had not seemed to die; / For bliss stood round me like the light of heaven." (I, 484-85): compassed round by bliss, the lover's identity can know no death. Even as he launches his tale, Julian opens the vista of memory by shading his face, physically shutting himself in upon an imaginative center, "for when the outer lights are darkened thus, / The memory's vision hath a keener edge." (I, 34-35). Julian's physical posture foreshadows his most arresting habit as a narrator, the substitution of figurative representations for literal presence; and this habit in turn repeats in the narrator present the Exaltation of erotic imagination that repeatedly held his tongue at the time of which he tells.

Love's alchemist, Julian turns everything he touches into precious imagery. Tennyson is subtle but explicit about this process of transmutation in the very first lines of the poem:

Here far away, seen from the topmost cliff,
Filling with purple gloom the vacancies
Between the golden hills, the sleeping sea
Hang in mid-heaven, and half-way down each sail,
White as white clouds, flourished from sky to sky.

Oh! pleasant breast of waters, quiet bay,
Like to a quiet mind in the loud world,
Where the shaded corners of the water swim,
Each gondola, as pearly full of love;
And wonder on the breast of peaceful love;
Thus didst receive the growth of plant that Budged
The hills that bore them, as Lovers travel love,
In three own existence, and delight itself
To raise it wholly thin on sunny days.

A. W. Wollen has called attention to the way the repeated similes likening natural to emotional conditions declare in advance the poem's focus on the psychology of its speaker. Furthermore, in the process of assimilating nature to consciousness the passage offers an emblem of that process in the reflexive "breast of waters." The smooth bay is humanized not only with Julian's apostrophe in line 6 but more thoroughly with his attributing to it a purpose that stands for his own unacknowledged purpose in appropriating natural objects and converting them to images, here and throughout the poem.

"Delight thyself / To make it wholly thin on sunny days": Julian addresses the water here, but he might as well be addressing himself. Only after several readings can we be certain that "it" refers to "the growth of pines" from line 11; it is a fine bonus, if not the intentional point, of Tennyson's roundabout syntax to make us feel that "it" includes whatever the water reflects (the sky? the hills? all heaven and earth?) — and, as we envied this highly involved image for the reflective imagination, to make us feel that the image in effect appropriates everything that comes within Julian's self-regarding ken.

The self-consciousness of the passage most likely expresses Tennyson's poetic self-awareness in drawing on a celebrated excerpt from The Prelude: "There Was a Boy," which Wordsworth had published separately in 1800 and republished with commentary as his first "Poem of the Imagination" in 1815. Coleridge had also singled it out for laudatory notice in his Biographia Literaria ten years before Tennyson started work on The Lover's Tale.

The visible scene

Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery its mists,
Its words, and that unenterable
Into the bottom of the steady lake.'

In Wordsworth, as in Tennyson, the mind appropriates the scene by transforming it to "imagery," and also finds a reflective image for its uprooting in the scene itself. But where Wordsworth does all he can to keep imagination gentle in its sway, even to render the process unconscious ("unawares"), Tennyson is startlingly explicit about the purposeful and knowing self-delight of such imaginative possession. Wordsworth's lake receives the "rocks," "woods," and "heaven" to its bosom as a mother might a child. When in Tennyson the breast of waters received the comparable "sky," "pines," and "hills," it seems by contrast to be taking them into receivership: "To make it wholly thin..." In the preface to the same volume that first included "There Was a Boy," Wordsworth had written that poetry "takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity;" Tennyson's introverted poet-lover begins with something more like emotion tranquilized in recollection, in the accessibility of a mimetic imagination that makes a collector's gallery of the natural world. For all the variety of movement in both passages, it is Tennyson's passage that unhappily loses bare the romantic tyranny of self-over nature — a tyranny that is already implicit in Wordsworth, but that (Tennyson appearing here to agree with Keats) Wordsworth's egoistically sublime slight of nature had masked.

Biographia Literaria.


10. The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, ed. E. de Selincourt (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1944), 260. These lines, which are virtually unchanged in the Periods of 1805 and 1805-1806, first appeared in Lyrical Ballads of 1800. See Wordsworth's "Preface" to the edition of 1815: also the twentieth chapter of
sleights in Julian’s rhetoric, and to see them as self-deceptions. Though Julian can hardly be said to acknowledge as much, the fourteen-line poem to The Lover’s Tale is in effect an unrhymed love sonnet to his own imagination. As Love watcheth Love: Julian presumably intends this simile for the sea’s reflection of the overlooking hills to represent the mutual absorption of two lovers in each other’s sight. But the drift of the surrounding images, and of the entire poem, suggests that the simile is apodictically literal: what love watcheth is love, in a relationship not of mutuality but of self-absorbed reflectivity. A similar irony inheres in Julian’s conviction that he is nothing but a true lover. The deflection that often narrative establishes that this poem is less the lover’s tale than the lover’s tale; and like one of Chaucer’s pilgrims, or for that matter one of the suitors from Tennyson’s own precocious play The Devil and the Lady (1843), Julian is known exclusively through his profession of love. If we ask what he loves in his capacity as lover, however, the sobering answer is again that he loves “love,” which becomes another name for the principle of his identity. This is my sum of knowledge— that my love
Grew with myself— say rather, was my growth,
My inward sap, the hold I have on earth.
My outward circling air wherein I breathe.
Which yet uphold my life, and essence
Is to me daily life and daily death.
For love should I have lived and am have loved? (I. 194-202)

This remarkable imagery for love merits special attention in a poem concerned with the relation of love to imagination. One cluster of images places love outside Julian, and supports his consistent understanding of himself as a man in the grip of love: “outward circling air... / Which yet uphold my life.” According to another set of images, though, it is Julian who grips and contains: “My inward sap, the hold I have on earth.” Apparently Julian and love are simultaneously inside and outside each other, in a process for which the most nearly adequate image in the passage is that of inspiration: “air wherein I breathe.” The easy commerce of inner and outer, together with a strong current of physical and kinesic imagery, make this passage reminiscent of “Ariadneon” — “All sense of Time / And Being and Place was swallowed up and lost / Within a victory of bottomless thought” (“Ariadneon” II 43-45) — but to think of that poem is to suggest a primary narcissism that should have no place in a true lover’s tale. Sometime after 1832 Tennyson gave a somewhat less prominent place to overt narcissism by striking a passage in which Julian, gazing on Camilla’s eyes, “did pause / To worship mine own image, loved in light.” This revision was in keeping with a poetic strategy of indirectness that consistently keeps Julian from understanding himself too well. But even the most innocent evidence is devastating: what seems conspicuously absent from the passage on love last quoted, as from the comparable passage on the inexpressibility of love, is its “kisses soft and warm,”12 any mention of the beloved. Julian’s identity as a lover entails such an interpenetration of the self with love that it precludes the intrusion of any beloved, any Camilla, any living, breathing, other self at all. Otherness is crowded out even at the level of poetic form, as the partial rhymes of “growth,” “earth,” “breathe,” and “death,” and of “love,” “loved,” and “more distant but still in the familiar loved,” provide an exceptionally unventilated kind of blank verse.

Dowered like Tennyson’s “Poet” with “the love of love,” Julian is in thrall to a romantic desire that acknowledges no object, but “as Love watcheth Love,” possesses only the images it is possessed by. “
Always the insubstantial thought
Artificer and subject, lord and slave,
Shaped by the audible and visible,
Moulded by air and life” (I. 194-201)

This passage, unlike those quoted thus far, comes from part II, and Julian offers it as an explanation of the phantasmagoria he has undergone during the life of solitary distraction into which Camilla’s confession has plunged him. I introduced it here in order to underscore its likeness to the passage we have just been considering, and to suggest the extent to which the almost monitory homogeneity of the narrative is due to the care with which Tennyson has shaped its local details. Although at this stage of disillusionment the relation between Julian and his “thought,” the “one mute-passion” (I. 194-201) of his disappointed love, seems more like a mutual entanglement than like an innocent embrace between the self and its sustaining love, in fact the reversible patterning of inner and outer, master and slave, remains the same. The stylistic resemblance between the hopeful lover’s early Eden and the rejected lover’s later hell lets us realize why Julian’s puerile confession in the present should exhibit its cloying but significant uniformity. Dream and waking, hallucination and perception, past and present, all fall under the regime of “the insubstantial thought,” an objectless and therefore insatiable desire. The uniform texture of the poem corresponds to its uniform temporality, which in turn explains why Julian never comes to the promised rendition of “the event”: it is as vain to expect any event to have a decisive effect on the love of love as it is to expect such love to make room for any actual Camilla.

11. Short observes in Julian “an intense desire for an unmaterial perfection personified in the beloved” (p. 81) — suggesting the theme of Tennyson’s speaker from Shelley’s “Julian and Madeline” — “for a permanent union with the idealized spirit, the Elphiaschild of Shelley” (p. 87).

12. The varied meaning of personified categories in part II makes it difficult to agree with the interpretation of these lines offered by Sir Charles Tennyson in “The Theme in Tennyson’s Poetry,” Virginia Quarterly Review, 40 (1990), 370: “the insubstantial perception of the waking brain which then express themselves in new abstract images.”
Yet is my life not in the present time,  
Nor is the present place, to me alone,  
Posed from its charm of high birth.  
The Present is the soul of all the Past:  
So that, if I have lived, do I live,  
And cannot die, and am, in having been—  
A portion of the pleasant, yesterday,  
Thirst hownest on today and out of place.  
(11:2-9)

The disjointing of the twin coefficients of event, time and place, through the usurpation of fused desire, could hardly be put with greater clarity. The analytic rigor of this passage may in fact seem out of character for Julian, but it can return us to the imaginative thrill with which the flavor of the whole poem is established in its impossible opening phrase—"Here far away"—which stations his tale quite accurately in a mental neverland that is always and nowhere.

The insubstantiality of the present makes itself felt even at Julian’s happiest moments. The temporal and textual uniformity of The Lover’s Tale makes it a dubious enterprise to establish any one moment as ‘happiest,’ but my choice would be the following lines:

Through the woods we wound:  
The grass upon the slender stems  
That scarce can stand the wind, our hands  
Blended in turn the mountain stream  
With tears in our eyes and the gathering clouds.  
And all the love that rose, a bud of love!  
A kind of promise, a kind of memory,  
A kind of present those two times with milk  
And honey of delicious memories!  
(11:7-26)

Joy, freedom, warmth, fulfillment, and in the last lines paratactic repetition and the biblical allusion to a promised land—all make powerful demands of presence and responsiveness. Yet even stronger are the demands of this erotic imagination for absence and representation; even at the height of happiness Julian is most in love with a promise, a memory, whatever can remind him of something else. Earlier he has spoken of the infantile fulfillment he and Camilla shared once upon a time, before the "term of eighteen years," or length period of latency, that his narrative has serenely skipped at line 381. As he now looks back upon a time when he and Camilla were "looking back," it would be consoling to think, with Freud, that Julian is glancing hints of a possible return to such infant joys. But the passage denies us this consolation at its threshold by emphasizing the "lonely" sounds of joy that shake the pine. This tree, like the single "Tree, of many, one," in Wordsworth’s great ode based on recollections of early childhood, speaks "of something that is gone" and that imagination may represent ("Ode," 51-53). Moreover, Julian has after his fashions already denied the consolation to himself in the earlier passage on infancy, which reconstructs a primal bliss from heaven but withholds the sponsorship of Julian’s own memory:

If this be true—  
And that way my wish leads me—  
Still to believe it—"in so sweet a thought,  
Why in the utter stealth of my soul  
Dost questioned memory answer?"
(II:87-91)

If we have followed the inexorable dialectic of the love of love, we understand that Julian’s memory remains silent not although but because his wish leads him “everymore / Still to believe it.” Julian remains where desire everywhere desires to be, "Here far away," in the stronghold of an imagination that insists that the sound of deepest joy be its own, and therefore personally "lonely." This may be why the text too "looks back" at this point to the initial description of cliffs, pines, and seas "Filling with purple gloom the vacancies / Between the tall trees." If the two scenes are the same, the reason may be that Julian has withdrawn himself from each, in order to replenish it with an imaginative fertility that he prefers to presence.

3

Tennyson thus brings considerable psychological acumen into collaboration with a matching sophistication in the handling of narrative to make The Lover’s Tale an intentionally static study in erotic failure. The poem is so nearly pointless because a desire as private as Julian’s can show no significant advance where it has no goal to advance towards. There is a sense, though, in which Tennyson’s plot does suggest a movement towards the recognition, on Julian’s part, of his own dilemma. During the long first part of the poem, where Julian implicitly laments the irony of circumstances in frustrating his desires, the larger irony is that circumstances have left desire where it truly wishes to be: alone, Parts II and III, however, in removing Julian from external controls, let his imagination tell its own tale through a series of waking visions. Each vision gratifies a wish whose fulfillment then precipitates a nightmare of rejection that ends in paralyzed solitude.

As the first vision begins, Camilla is already dead, and we may suppose that her death destroys the desire of Julian’s hopes that his love will be requited. He joins her funeral procession, marching beside Lionel, who to contrast to Julian’s silence is "loud in weeping and in praise" (II:86). Stilled to "strong sympathy" (II:87) with his ever-valuable rival, Julian does what he has pointedly left undone throughout part I:

I long myself upon a  
In tears and cries I held him all along,  
How I had loved her from the first, whereat  
He thrust and bowed, and from its bow drew back  
His hand to push me from him.  
(II:88-91)
For the one time in the poem Julian imagines himself embracing not love, but his beloved, only to discover that she is what imagination has made her all along, an "empty phantom" who in no sooner dispelled than she shatters into insubstantiality. It is his touch that clarifies; this notion begets the succeeding image of his drinking her breath, a figure of vampirism that grotesquely represents the way this lover has an ostensibly defined desire death by sacrificing the living present. This violent passage is no mere Gothic exercise but a precise correction of Julian's fantasies of rejection. In part I, he has said that upon awakening from his swoon to find Lamart with Camilla, "I was led mute / Into her temple like a sacrificial victim," (l. 673-74), but now the roles of deity and victim are dramatically reversed. And whereas in the previous vision the result of Julian's wish-fulfillment was that Lionel "shrank" and rejected him, now it is Julian who rejects Camilla, "groaning," "for once, with an audible and inhibited assertion of voice. ("Screaming," in the 1932 version, was less decorous but more faithful to the psychic energy invested in this climactic rejection.) Finally confronting the confessed object of his desire, Julian finds it wanting and discards it, to be alone with the peculiar "calm" of the self-sufficiency that absorbs him now, and always, "ever and ever." Twice in part I he has alluded to the story of "The Hill of Woe," where according to local legend, from a bridge crossing a chasm a man once "Hath thrust his wife and child and dashed himself Into the dizzy depth below" (l. 865-72, 510). Whether dreams fit themselves to facts or vice versa — and the morbid passage on "the immobile invisible thought" there comes a quickening of the vision into Tennyson both options may be valid at the same time — the legend on which Julian has earlier dwelt with apparent irrelevance now can be seen as an apt illustration of his own history.

Can Julian see it thus? If so, the poem might open here towards a diagnosis of his malady and the possibility of change. But for Julian to envision the source of his failure as a lover is not necessarily for him to understand or accept it, and the sharpest twist Tennyson gives to the psychological screws is to have Julian prefix this revelation with the series of defensive interpretations offered in lines 123-37. His hovering among a number of alternatives suggests that none of his interpretations has convinced him, but the idea to which he returns, "that which must / Enrages the soul," is just the mind. With some revenge — even to itself unknown, / Made strange division of its suffering" with Camilla and that his "dull agony" was "ideal to her transferred," Julian wonders, in other words, whether his trance was not an attempt to extricate his pain by wishing some or all of it on Camilla, rejecting her as she has rejected him. He has so consistently held himself to a high ethical ideal of self-denial that this explanation seems a persuasive concession to a more plausible psychic reality; but given the grim facts of sexual relationship. Although Pater's remains our best account of the bearing of Tennyson's poetic inhibitions upon his own art, I understand that in 1932 or part was working his way towards a fuller understanding of such matters than Pater allows.
Tennyson's erotic parable, the notion that Julian might share any emotion, pleasurable or painful, turns out to be only an evasive idealization of a different kind. Julian, who has never for an instant dreamed of putting himself in Camilla's place, is not likely to have put her in his this once. She has ever taken emotional revenge, he has done so in the unrelenting past for reasons the poem keeps shrouded in silence; long before Camilla's rejection of him for Lionello, Julian has rejected her in order to become the servant of desire itself. The most idealistic force in this part of the poem may well be Julian's unconscious, in its attempt to make him see this homely truth; and it is the finest irony of the poem that even this tragic ideal of self-knowledge goes unachieved. Tennyson's despairing wisdom thus keeps even his sketchy plot of psychological recognition from the eventfulness of consummation.  

Julian's self-analysis ends in paroxysm, which is also the goal of each of his visions, if in his immobile "calm" we recognize the condition of helpless frustration that typifies Tennyson's earliest poems. We should also observe how the tranquilizing power of doom that reigns hence from a distance has now taken up residence within the self. Desire, the principle of Julian's identity as "the lover," now provides the grounds of its own frustration; character itself has become fate.

Paroxysm is the theme of Julian's "latest vision" (II, 59), a milder one than returns to the ritual frame of the first and corrects it with an infusion of the meaning disclosed by the second. Julian and the veiled figure of Lionello again march in Camilla's funeral procession, which sudden measure of wedding bells quickens intouchenian dance. After the laughing pilasters have thrown down Camilla's base and a gust of wind has blown her shroud away into the sky, Julian says:

Shall I, in love, like a scrawling leaf in the wind.

14. My argument about this poem is somewhat with Christopher Ricks's general thesis about Tennyson in an essay on "Four Poems," in Tennyson: A New Look (Macmillan, 1971). But with this poem, at least, the poet's estimate would seem to be precisely the opposite of that which the poet's estimate would seem to be. "The Lover's Tale" makes it seem to complete the story.

15. Tennyson here reviews not just his own prior visions but those of Hector as well. The singling out this last part II, 59, in particular, produces a trigonization, the pains of each echo being in some, Julian more radically than the already isolated literati passages whose origin he rivals. Here follows a sketch of this innermost moment, to suggest the shape that might emerge by a sealing of the poem that pays full attention to its absences — which here, as elsewhere in Tennyson, decreases further screening in his image received. First, the first glimpse of 1823: "The Lover's Tale" as we have it: the wheeling fust

Led by the pace now tossed, one dancer, and bad

And Woolf twined in the steeple in the woods,

(1) As at the time of "Esthe in Nightshade," the soul self stands frozen, in vast contrast to a happy presence that has just been, In Kent. "nestled deep..." in the next: " Esthe in Nightshade." II, 17:796; and

Tennyson's erotic parable, the notion that Julian might share any emotion, pleasurable or painful, turns out to be only an evasive idealization of a different kind. Julian, who has never for an instant dreamed of putting himself in Camilla's place, is not likely to have put her in his this once. She has ever taken emotional revenge, he has done so in the unrelenting past for reasons the poem keeps shrouded in silence; long before Camilla's rejection of him for Lionello, Julian has rejected her in order to become the servant of desire itself. The most idealistic force in this part of the poem may well be Julian's unconscious, in its attempt to make him see this homely truth; and it is the finest irony of the poem that even this tragic ideal of self-knowledge goes unachieved. Tennyson's despairing wisdom thus keeps even his sketchy plot of psychological recognition from the eventfulness of consummation.  

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...in Tennyson, "

Walking to see the settled countenance"

Of her I loved, advanced with walking flowers.

In this most chasteest of the three visions, mosted detail puts special weight. Whether Julian is now turning back from the faraway shore to the river or actually averting his eyes from Camilla, the focus of his attention seems curiously inconstant for a lover. And while in the earlier visions Lionel and Camilla each "shrank" from his touch, here the cold and shrinking heart is revealed to be none other than Julian's. Though he might have found ample cause for renewed hope in the events of the preceding lines, evidently he hopes most for a "settled countenance" to match the inner image he has composed and adorned for so long that any contact could but mean change for the worse. To clinch its point, once Camilla has leapt back into splendid life the remorseless logic of his dream draws Julian to a second crucial hesitation.

One hard the needed this to those that came behind,  
And while I mused yet excluded to take  
So rich a prize, the man who stood with me  
Stepped gaily forward, throwing down his clogs,  
And clapped his hand in his.  

(II, 18:57)

My account of this obliterated poem will have failed if it is not clear that Julian could never "endure" to take a prize like this, not because the prize is so rich, but because on his scale of value it is so poor. In comparison to "the infinite of love," the treasure of an imagination that can no more be expended upon one object than it can be sold — courted or recounted — even this visionary offer of Camilla's hand seems a poor thing indeed. Hence the incongruity of Tennyson's 89% sequel, which attempted to modify the terrible strength of Julian's rejection of Camilla by letting him see her as a rich bridal prize to

"Shall I, in love, like a scrawling leaf in the wind."

Julian, however, lacks the valor of Keatsian demigodness: he knows he has been a vision, not a walking dream, and may be for him the distinctionbetween these two imaginative media — with which, the comparatively elevating Keatsian pole — has long since ceased to signify. "If the miracle dissolved of Tennyson's last but one reveals a poem about thunderous references is unanswerable: the "Ode to Psyche" — "O love born and broken vision far!" (II, 34) — the effect of the echo is to measure his distance from another personal Keatsian compensation for frustrated desire, that of sublimation. Keats can console himself by transforming the visionary's lot into the prison's and creating Psyche's fate, but for Julian, who enjoys imagining the desire always and diametrically denied, "the steeple in the woods" is there before him as a fact accompli, built by and for others. Julian's "latest vision" more painlessly echoes the Knight's-arms from "La Belle Dame Sans Merci": "The horse does not love destruction! On the cold inhale" (II, 35:56). Keats's poem is longly premature; Tennyson's is the final statement of a sonorous lover who is, we may suspect, less abandoned than abandoning. And Julian's across the more elegant variation, since he lacks even the visionary fellowship, or poetic elixir, of established poetasters: he has appeared in Keats's knight. Having in Lionel a precursor to whom he might act as immy's companion but as its cause, Julian ends the 152 poem bedroom in an inner darkness somewhat further out than anything Keats could imagine.
Self-Validation in Housman’s A Shropshire Lad LXII ("Terence, This is Stupid Stuff")

Eddy Dow

The first speaker in this poem begins his criticism of his friend Terence's poetry with these words:

"Terence, this is stupid stuff: You're very virtuous first enough; There can't be enough 'saints, 'sires, To see the rain you drink your beer."

(1-4)

Thirty-eight lines later, Terence defends his work in this way:

Terence’s friend has just read, or had read to him ("This" l. 1), the sixty-one poems that preceed "Terence" in A Shropshire Lad. Only one follows it: "I Hoed and Trenched and Weeded," also a defence by Terence of his own poetry, though on different grounds from those of "Terence." Terence’s friend’s response is the bluff and good-humored exposition that opens the poem. Terence’s verse, he says, "gives a clap of belly-ache" (l. 6). And he hints in the first passage quoted in this paper that since Terence obviously feels fine, his gloomy poetry is insincere. Terence’s friend then concludes:

"Pretty friendship this to reign: Your friends to death before their time Keeping melancholy too: Come, get a turn to dance to, lad."

(1-14)

Terence’s defense of his poetry (and, by implication, similar poetry by others) takes up the poem’s remaining sixty-two lines.

He begins by saying, in wise, afflicting, allusive language, that drink is better suited than poetry to produce the effect his friend seeks. But "The mischief is that 'twill not last" (l. 28). This gray fact Terence documents humorously from his own experience, and then he comes to the crux of his (and the poem’s) argument.

Terence admits that his poetry is mostly concerned — as his friend has charged and as the reader knows who comes upon LXII in its place in A Shropshire Lad rather than in an anthology — with decay, loss, inconstancy, melancholy, and death, often, curiously, death imposed as punishment by the state. But he insists that this is precisely its value, precisely the source of its power to "train" (l. 48) its reader to carry on when he or she en-

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A. In the fourth day of the tenth day of the Decembrist, Justin’s companion lives in a house happily ever after with the couple he has newly minted: "Mister friend always remained a friend of Titothulius and his relations and the lady’s relations" (The Dreamer of Baccarat, tr. Robert Ashington (New York: Dell, 1990), p. 578. Pardon. Terms in Italic, p. 80, speculates that Terence’s first attempt to complete the tale ended where Baccarat’s had begun, with the disappointed lover’s descent into the lady’s tomb.

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counters these things, not in art, but in reality — in other words, "When your soul is in your soul's stead" (1.56). The immediate context of this last line is Terence's recommendation of his poetry as suited to "The dark and cloudy day," and "The embittered hour," which makes it clear that his soul has already arrived there. If corroboration is wanted, W. J. Swanson has provided it by pointing out — in The Explicator, 39 (1971), item 67 — that the line comes almost verbatim from Job XVI, 4 (King James Version).

By what means does what Swanson nicely calls the "propylactic quality" of Terence's poetry do its work? According to the parable of King Mithridates which ends the poem, it works by a process akin to inoculation: Terence's poetry gives its readers manageable doses of the poisons of "The many-venomed earth" (6.6), thus developing in them the resistance needed to survive to a ripe age, as the King did, the otherwise destructive amounts that sooner or later are sure to come.

B. J. Leggett has argued persuasively in The Poetic Art of A. E. Houseman: Theory and Practice (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1970), pp. 115-41, that the parable comes closer to describing the action of tragic and pessimistic poetry than it may seem to, but I am not here concerned with the truth of Terence's theory in that sense.

Rather, my point — as my reader may have anticipated by now — is that Terence's friend's certainty that "there can't be much amis" at the very moment that Terence has reached "the embittered hour" is in fact a curious and very pleasing kind of validation of Terence's doctrine — validation, that is, within the fiction of the poem. In the midst of his unspecified trouble, Terence (who of course has had greater exposure to his own poetry than has anyone else) has remained so sociable, so witty, so clearly in emotional and intellectual command of himself (even under criticism), and so able to enjoy the pleasures of food and drink that his friend hadn't even suspected that everything was wrong.

One final matter. The reading that I have been urging enables us also to see that Terence's friend's great confidence in his perceptiveness — "There can't be much amis" (my emphasis) — is a sarcastic thrust by Houseman and thus related to the poem's larger didactic purpose. Like many another who sees in literature merely an escape from the realities of our lives, Terence's friend is not only wrong-headed, but delightfully, slyly, certain in his wrong-headedness.

Rutgers University

Coming in

The Victorian Newsletter

Franklin E. Court, "The Image of St. Theresia in Middlemarch and Positive Ethics"

Eileen Jordan, "The Christening of the New Woman: May 1894"

Shoshana Knapp, "'Joy came in the morning': A Note on a Serious Joke in George Eliot's Diary"

Robert K. Martin, "Parody and Homage: The Presence of Pater in Dorian Gray"

Hans Ostrom, "The Disappearance of Tragedy in Meredith's Modern Love"

Martha Westwater, "The Victorian Nightmare of Evolution: Charles Darwin and Walter Bagehot"
Books Received

Bobbington, D. B. The Nonconformist Conscience: Chapel and Politics, 1790-1914. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982. Pp. x + 190. $22.50. The focus is on the political interests and activities of nonconformists during the period between the Nonconformity Act of 1864 and the Franchise Act of 1918, when their influence was significant on questions of Irish Home Rule, public education, imperialism, the strength of the Liberal Party and the support of the infant Labour Party.


Crum, R. W. Charlotte and Emily Brontë, 1846-1915: A Reference Guide. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1982. Pp. 194 + 194. $27.50. An annotated bibliography of writings about both sisters, which includes "memorials, memoirs, sketches, essays, articles, book-length studies, chapters of books, reviews of the Brontës' works, introductions from editions of her works, and reviews of works about the Brontës that include additional comments concerning them." (p. vii), some 900 entries in all.


Preston, F. B., ed. A George Eliot Miscellany: A Supplement to Her Novels. Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble, 1982. Pp. xii + 183. $28.50. A true miscellany, this one includes "key passages from her pre-novel essays and reviews, two stories in prose, writings relative to some of her major publications, four poems, and some evaluations of her contemporary English world." (p. viii) Selections were in part determined by their unavailable.

Robertson, Priscilla. An Experience of Women: Pattern and Change in Nineteenth-Century Europe. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1982. Pp. xii + 673. $35.00. The first half of the book is about patterns in four European cultures - England, France, Italy, and Germany - and the second half is about breakers of those patterns. The method used by Ms. Robertson was to investigate all kinds of material and to give us the benefit of her sensitive and penetrating judgment. There is an appendix by Steve Hochatz, "Demography and Feminism," and a 46 pp. bibliography. An important book.


Walder, Dennis. Dickens and Religion. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981. Pp. xvi + 232. $22.50. Walder does not seek to place Dickens in any particular religious camp, but to identify "the area of contemporary belief with which he associated himself." (p. 5) a liberal even romantic protestantism, which was ascriptive and more concerned with the morality of religion than its ritual or supernatural aspects. Novels to which Walder devotes chapters are: Pickwick, Twain, Old Curiosity Shop, Copperfield, Bleak House, Little Dorrit, Tale of Two Cities, Great Expectations, and Our Mutual Friend.

Wijesinha, Rajiva. The Androgyneous Trollope: Attitudes to Women amongst Early Victorian Novelists. Washington, D.C.: Univ. Press of America, 1982. Pp. vi + 355. $22.75, $12.75 paper. Argues that well into the Victorian period it was largely true that women were "not only seen by the other sex, but seen only in relation to the other sex"; however, "the works of Trollope provide a very distinct exception to the rule" (p. 1).
Victorian Group News

A. THE LOS ANGELES MEETING

28 December 1982, 10:15-11:30 AM, Renaissance, Biltmore

Presiding: John D. Rosenberg, Columbia Univ.

I. Business

II. Papers and Discussion

3. "Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Pull of Science," Hartley S. Spatt, Maritime College, State Univ. of New York
4. "Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Caught between Two Centuries," Miriam Fuchs, Elizabeth Seton College

B. THE VICTORIAN LUNCHEON

The Annual Victorian Division Luncheon will be held in the Cobomade, Biltmore.

Cash bar at 11:45; lunch at 12:30 p.m. For information, write to James R. Kinsaid, English Department, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309.

C. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The research Society for Victorian Periodicals will hold its first International annual meeting July 13, 1983, at the Victorian Studies Centre, The University of Leicester, LEI 7AH, England. Inquiries should be sent to Dr. Joanne Sharrock, Conference Chairman, at the Centre or to R. T. Van Arsdol, Department of English, University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, WA 98416.


The Midwest Victorian Studies Association will hold its annual meeting in Chicago 29-30 April, 1983 on "Victorian Health and Victorian Disease." Address inquiries to Frederick Kirchhoff, English Dept., Indiana Univ.-Purdue Univ. at Fort Wayne, Fort Wayne, IN 46805.

The Southeastern Nineteenth Century Studies Association, a fascinating interdisciplinary group, will hold its annual Conference on the theme "Children and Childhood in the Nineteenth Century" April 15-16, 1982, in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Address inquiries to Linda Zallin, English Department, Morehouse College, Atlanta, GA 30314.

University of Hartford Studies in Literature. Fall, 1982, is a special issue of interdisciplinary essays on Victorian literature. Included are Nancy Aycock Metz, "Maryhay's Book of Lists"; Linda Seidel Costic, "Elizabeth Gaskell and the Question of Liberal Education"; Benjamin Brody, "Briseis and the Question of Victoriana"; and Natalie Schroeder, "The Oedipal Triangle in Pater's 'Hippolytus Veil'". Individual issues may be ordered from Leonard Mamison, Editor, University of Hartford Studies in Literature, English Department, University of Hartford, West Hartford, CT 06117.

Back issues of VNL at a cost of $4.00 per copy, are available in limited quantities for the following numbers: 38, 41, 45, 47, 49, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60, 61.