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Introduction

Three men run across the cover of Vides Volume 4, gesticulating wildly to each other as they move; the tide is rushing in at Briton Ferry and they need to leave the shore. The two men at the front reach out their arms, the man at the back his umbrella, and all three dart towards the right hand side of the image where three sunbeams penetrate the clouds above, beckoning them.

The man at the back of the group runs but looks too and his middle companion turns, as if to make sure he’s keeping up. ‘Look!’ we imagine him saying, pointing to the vast expanse of water, land and sky, urging his friends to appreciate the view, but they must keep going. As viewers of this watercolour, we, unlike the figure at the back, are able to appreciate Paul Sandby’s beautiful depiction of the Welsh landscape. We can relish his portrayal of nature versus man at our leisure and without the rush of the tide pushing us as it does for our friends on the sand. In short, we are awarded the luxury of ‘looking’ without compromise.

With this in mind, it is pertinent to remember the definition of this journal’s title. Vides, meaning ‘you see’, particularly when referencing a specific part of a text, is a word which encourages and encompasses the notion of enlightenment, learning and looking. Thus, this interpretation of Sandby’s watercolour compliments all that the word vides represents; not only offering the viewer an unfettered visual experience, but the gestures of the figures on the foreshore direct the reader to the pages, text and knowledge of this volume and its authors. Both this volume’s title and this image here represent the sanctity of education as the means by which one may look, analyse and be enlightened without the fear of lake water closing in around us.

This journal exists due to its authors’ participation as students on the Master of Studies in Literature and Arts programme. Their engagement with interdisciplinary study, as a key component of the course, has allowed them to employ a wide lens to their studies, considering a vast array of media and sources to construct historical arguments. Each of these essays is the author’s response to the task of critically comparing two artefacts of different media and examining how they engage with a shared topic. Much like the course itself, this volume represents a variety of time periods and interests and offers its readers a diverse tour of British culture through five centuries of history, from Holbein to Rossetti via Hogarth and Gillray, and examines its impact both at home and abroad.

RUBY RUTTER
PART I

Late Medieval to Early Modern
Improving Vision: The Moral Focus of the Sense of Sight in Seventeenth-Century Text and Textile

JEAN LAMBERT

In early modern culture, the eye was widely deemed to be the pre-eminent organ of the sensorium on account of its contribution to the intellectual and spiritual enlightenment of the individual. Paradoxically, however, it was also perceived as the faculty most vulnerable to dangerous errors and offences and, hence, principal conduit for vice and instrument of inducement to sin. Centring on the moral dimension of sight, this paper compares the representation of the sense of sight in a mid-seventeenth-century embroidered panel depicting the personification of sight and Richard Brathwait’s essay ‘Of Seeing’, published in 1625. It considers ways of seeing as inflected by the different idioms of needle and pen, including a re-presentation of the feminization of ocular vices. Specifically, it discusses the relationship between external and internal sight, the body’s eye and the soul’s eye, in connection with proffered monitory instruction on the proper moral function and spiritual object of the eye as prescribed corrective for improving vision.

From antiquity onwards, sight was almost universally esteemed the noblest, most spiritual sense due to its affording the greatest benefit to the human soul through its vision of God’s creation. Significantly, during the latter sixteenth and much of the seventeenth century, the growing tendency in natural philosophy (general science and metaphysics) and medicine to understand the cognitive role of visual sensation in terms of the anatomy and physiology of the eye, the somatic rather than the spiritual aspect of the mind-body question, occurred within a moral context. In fact, reciprocal influences, common across discourses, ensured that empiricist approaches to the practical functioning of the eye were largely underwritten by theological and philosophical interpretations of ocular perception. Essentially, the perpetuation of traditional notions about the relationship between material flesh and immaterial soul continued to inflect thinking on the sense of sight, notably, its proper use for the moral and spiritual profit of the individual. Helkiah Crooke’s popular volume on anatomy, Mikrocosmographia (1615), provides examples of such interactions on the subject of the communing of the soul and organ of sight. However, increasing knowledge of physical sight generated scepticism around the veridical nature of human vision that prompted concerns about the eye’s fallibility as moral guide and its dangerous abuses as chief instrument of sin of the sensorium. Taking those concerns as starting point, this paper considers the moral focus of the sense of sight as interpreted through a comparison of the representation of the eye in an unattributed mid-seventeenth-century English embroidered panel depicting the personification of sight [fig. 1] and Richard Brathwait’s essay ‘Of Seeing’,

1 Helkiah Crooke, Mikrocosmographia. A description of the body of man: Together with the Controversies thereto belonging / Collected and translated out of all the best authors of anatomy, especially out of Gasper Bauhinus and Andreas Laurentius, 2nd edn (London, 1631).
published in 1625. It discusses their articulation of the intercourse between the eye of the body and the eye of the soul and what were perceived as errors of sight and the prescribed correctives for improving vision, specifically its proper moral function and spiritual object. Additionally, it briefly addresses the possibility that the embroidery subverts the conventional feminization of ocular sins.

Figure 1 Unknown provenance, embroidered panel of the personification of sight from a cabinet, English, c. 1650-1675, object number T.8-1945, height whole 9.5 in., width whole 10.75 in., depth whole 6.5 in. © Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

2 Richard Brathwait, ‘Of Seeing, I ESSAY’, in Richard Brathwait, Essays upon the five senses revised by a new supplement; with a pithy one upon detraction. Continued with sundry Christian resolves, and divine contemplation, full of passion and devotion; purposely composed, 2nd edn, revised and enlarged (London, 1625), pp. 1-7
Richard Brathwait (1588-1673), gentleman, poet, satirist and conduct book writer, makes explicit for his dedicatee and wider audience the essay’s moral purpose: ‘directs the eye how to bee disposed lest by straying, it loose Him, to whom it should be erected’. The embroiderer, probably a young gentlewoman or aristocratic female who wrought the panel in polychrome silks on linen, would conceive the primary purpose of her expensive luxury item as personal, ornamental, and domestic. Its proffered direction on the improving theme of the proper use and object of the eye and invitation to potential viewers to decode its subtle visual eloquence would more likely be secondary. As different media and modes of expression, text and textile generally delineated gendered areas of operation. Embroidery, though not exclusively a female occupation, represented a major social agency for reinforcing and reflecting feminine, or feminized, behaviour through its form and content, in this case, a monitory lesson on the control of the eye evinced through a pictorial personification of the faculty of sight.

_Visus_, meaning sight, seeing, vision or supernatural manifestation, owed its moral and epistemological pre-eminence specifically to its being, to quote Brathwait, ‘the most extended to objects of all kinds’. Accordingly, the eye transmits the most varied and greatest volume of sensibles of objects, ‘visible species’, via the brain to the highest, divinely endued, intellective or rational soul. Brathwait’s essay, similarly the embroidery, emphasizes the moral communication between the ‘ey[e] of the body’ and ‘ey[e] of the soule’ and admonishes as irrational the subjection of incorporeal to corporeal sight. Evidently, the two artefacts reflect shared cultural references surrounding the eye and attributes of ocular perception although their articulations draw chiefly from different symbolic registers. As briefly discussed below, Brathwait enlists recurring literary tropes to figure antinomies of good and evil in the struggle between the soul’s eye and the body’s eye, while the embroiderer’s imagery mainly evokes artistic sources. Parallels emerge through conspicuous analogies, iconographic commonplaces including the mirror and the myth of Narcissus, and adumbrated comparisons illustrating, for instance, the custodial and vigilant functions and divine object of sight.

The embroidered panel is mounted on the right-hand door of a lockable cabinet decorated pictorially with the five senses, four elements, the myth of Orpheus, and pastoral scenes. Although its once vibrant colours have faded and some stitching perished, original details, including exposed drawn lines, are largely recoverable. Sight is personified by a genteel young woman fashionably and modestly dressed, standing facing forwards with her eyes fixed straight ahead and holding up a mirror in her right hand. The mirror, also facing outwards, reflects the image of a face, hers presumably, and is superimposed on yellow petals. The location describes a garden or pasture with flowers, foliage, a fruit tree, clouds, a parrot and an eagle, the large bird to the gentlewoman’s right. Pictorially, the scene resembles popular moral allegories of the senses appearing in a wide variety of Elizabethan

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3 Brathwait, ‘Of Seeing’, [n.p.].
5 Crooke, p. 569.
6 Brathwait, p. 6.
and Jacobean decorative surfaces, textiles, graphic arts and paintings. Combining traditional elements, possibly borrowed from several, now unidentifiable, sources, with atypical imagery, it translates the familiar into a unique composition.

Significantly, the eagle, a traditional symbol of sight, was identified by Pliny the Elder as having acute vision, superior to man’s, and from the early middle ages gained moral purport as a motif for spiritual vision, as bestiaries such as White’s *Book of Beasts* record. Yet, from around 1500, interpenetrating the moral with a psychological approach, a human figure with a mirror became the predominant motif for visual sensation, the original male figure being quickly displaced by a female. Although the rationale for this gendered shift remains unknown, it may relate initially to the Romance genre with its idealization of womanhood, as in the Lady with the Unicorn tapestries, the first instance of the specific connection of sight with the female sex. However, the turn towards the coupling of eye-induced vices with female sensuality was most likely influenced by Christian exegesis of biblical testament, principally, Eve’s temptation entering primarily through the eye: ‘the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired’. Furthermore, Eve’s sole guilt rendered her the archetype for original sin: ‘Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression’. By extrapolation, woman *qua* woman carried moral responsibility for this lapse and, therewith, the Fall of Man.

The particular linking of womankind’s association with sensuality, and thereby cause of men’s folly, and vices surrounding sight was much quoted through the familiar paradigm of a seated woman gazing at herself in a glass. Examples feature in emblem books, notably, George Wither’s, as prints available in books or from print sellers, famously, Peter Stent, and embroidery pattern books, such as Richard Shorleyker’s *schole-house for the needle*, which situates the image beneath a peacock, symbol of pride. Less plentiful are illustrations of sight doubly symbolised by a woman with a mirror accompanied by an eagle, as in Cesar Ripa’s stylized rendering in *Iconologie* and Adrian Collaert’s sixteenth-century engraving, after Martin de Vos, portraying biblical scenes in its background. Even more rare, a seventeenth-century embroidery configures sight personified jointly by the conventional motifs of the eagle alongside a seated woman looking into her mirror. In medieval and

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10 I Timothy 2: 14.
early modern society, the mirror itself, traditionally manifested as convex, represented a fascinating object as well as emblematizing the eye and the sense or an attribute of sight. Bernard Salomon’s engraving of a sole convex mirror as emblem for Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, transformation *per se*, epitomizes the mirror’s symbolic complexity.14 Do interpretative departures from convention in the embroidery reflect a personalized design created by pattern drawer or embroiderer? If invented by the needlewoman, was the creation a device for displaying intellectual alongside accepted female accomplishments and negotiating meaning to construct a novel narrative? Questions about intentions remain unanswered but the combination and placing of motifs might be read as a nuanced evocation of its reforming theme to embrace a female voice.

For Brathwait, reforming the physical eye means defending spirit against the ‘offences’ and ‘wrongs’ committed by nature to ‘deluded worldlings’: ‘though the *eye* of my body allude to the *eye* of my soule, yet is the *eye* of my soule darkned by the *eye* of my body’ being inclined to ‘concupiscence, affection to affectation’.15 Conceiving the body’s eye as ‘powerful Oratour’, he counters its sensual rhetoric with a series of oppositions and negative exemplars designed to prick his reader’s conscience through persuasive warnings.16 First, although the eye is the ‘most eminent’ faculty and ought to direct all the senses, it is ‘the principall organ of errour to the affections’. Secondly, the ‘motive of thankfulnesse’ in man, a muscle absent in the eye of other animals, enables man to look up but, following baser instincts, mankind focuses his lens on the ‘creature’ not his ‘Creator’. Thirdly, despite its contributing most to the soul’s intellectual life, the insatiable desire of the fleshy eye renders it the first and easiest inducement to vice, especially that ‘most hurtfull’.17 Accordingly, he repeatedly figures the eye as aperture or conduit, ‘passage … entry … crany … entrance’, to underline its involuntary receptiveness yet affords it agency in deceptively feigning ‘defensive warre’ against ‘dangerous intruders’.18 Militaristic metaphors insinuating complicity with sin summon Spenser’s darkly grotesque fashioning of the battle against passion and the eye’s collusion with ‘monstrous … misshapen’ vices.19

Similarly, Brathwait’s tropes of visual error, moral antitypes, are predicated on the lures and snares of corporeal sight. They exemplify its propensity for carnal lust and conceits as principal temptations to ‘loose Him’. Presumably they are ‘most hurtfull’, as when the eye is beguiled by an object ‘pretending Love … her aime … perverted by lust’.20 He extends this lustful eye to ‘jealous … prying’ eyes sent out as ‘spies’, a reminder of the eye motifs emblemsitizing royal intelligencers on Elizabeth I’s gown in *The Rainbow Portrait*.21 Probably, Brathwait alludes rather to Augustine’s ‘ocular cupidity’, implicitly interconnecting lust for

20 Brathwait, ‘Of Seeing’, p. 3.
knowledge with the question of the divinely ordained ontological limit of human cognition.\textsuperscript{22} He references ‘vice’ as ‘her’ and ‘she’, perhaps indicating a grammatical distinction in Latin determined by the feminine gender of virtues and vices and masculine gender of oculus (eye) and visus (sight).\textsuperscript{23} Alternatively, it may presume the purported connection between women’s sensuality and seductive power and the feminised symbol of sight mentioned above.

‘Wandringst’ spy-like eyes and fixing ‘the eye of delight’ on ‘creature’ not ‘Creator’ betray the soul to ‘objects of vanity’, idolatry or ‘eye-service’, to borrow George Hakewill’s term.\textsuperscript{24} Earthly vanities move the eye to love and hate and, consonant with the external eye’s pre-eminence as pleasure organ and, thereby, instrument of sin: ‘passions of the mind receive their greatest impression by the eye of the body’.\textsuperscript{25} Brathwait’s ‘impression’ suggests the contemporary notion that sense data are received as resemblances, imitations, replicas and similitudes that form mental impressions or imprints. Interestingly, thoughts were conceived as pictorial images, hence reinforcing sight’s perceptual elevation.\textsuperscript{26} Brathwait’s principal concern regarding interior imagery evokes fantasy’s eye, the inventiveness of imagination in creating new images from impressions, known also as ‘phantasms, species or images’.\textsuperscript{27} Imagination, a mental faculty envisaged as an inward sense or wit, was assigned to either the ‘speculative’ or the ‘sensitive’ soul, the latter by followers of Aristotelian theory.\textsuperscript{28} In Brathwait’s words: ‘if the eye is restrained, and lacks an object outwardly, it makes itself a mirrour represented inwardly’.\textsuperscript{29} Compare John Davies’s ‘Phantasie, wits looking glasse’ and ‘senses glasse’ from his poem on the soul, Nosce Teipsum (Know Thyself).\textsuperscript{30}

Brathwait cautions that this inward speculum ‘sometimes Narcissus-like doats for want of a substance, on an imaginary shadow’.\textsuperscript{31} ‘Narcissus-like’ elicits delusions that arouse emotions intertwining obliquely around the central icon of self-love, namely pride and vanity, sensory errors attending the reflective surfaces of eye and mirror. Contextually, for Brathwait’s thesis, it also signifies the transition from exterior to interior objects of vanity, paralleling Narcissus’s awakening realization that he desires his self-image. Its negative exemplarity indicts mistakes of vision as moral faults causing capital sins and leading to personal dissolution, ‘shadow’ intimating a conscious reprise of Ovid’s ‘phantom of a mirrored shape … nothing itself’, the ‘false face’ in the watery glass.\textsuperscript{32} Brathwait, as his contemporaries, was well aware that mirror

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Saint Augustine, Confessions, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford, 2008), p. 211.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Brathwait, ‘Of Seeing’, p. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Brathwait, ‘Of Seeing’, pp. 2,6; George Hakewill, The Vanitie of the Eye First Began for the Comfort of a Gentlewoman bereave of her Sight, and since upon occasion enlarged and published for the Common Good, 2\textsuperscript{nd} [sic] edn [actually 4\textsuperscript{th} edn] (Oxford, 1633), p. 127.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Brathwait, ‘Of Seeing’, p. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Stuart Clark, Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture (Oxford, 2007), pp. 2, 10.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Crooke, p. 432.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Brathwait, ‘Of Seeing’, p. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Sir John Davies, Nosce Teipsum, in Sir John Davies, The Poems of Sir John Davies (New York, 1941), p. 181.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Brathwait, ‘Of Seeing’, p. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Ovid, Metamorphoses, trans. A. D. Melville (Oxford and New York, 1986), Book III, lines 436-7, 432.
\end{itemize}
images are inverted, sometimes subtly distorted or deceptive, and not exact copies of what they reflect, also, following Kepler’s discovery in 1604, that the eye produces an inverted retinal image.33

Typically, the embroidered mirror motif is covered with mica, or similar transparent material, to represent its reflective property and distorting sphere-like curvature and, perhaps, symbolically, the eye.34 Whilst the embroiderer’s semantic intentions cannot be recovered and potential significances corroborated, the visual effect of the mica describes the non-correspondence between appearance and reality, juxtaposed mirror image and facial image, and may be interpreted as reinforcing the morally corrective purpose of the allegory. As metaphorical device, the mirror was conceived as reflecting an idealized model. Here, a negative paradigm enjoins moral conduct through inversion. A witty conceit, this mirror represents a hieroglyph or curiosity compounding layered symbolic cautions for deciphering. Semiotically compact, it covertly summons warnings unequivocally articulated by Brathwait, mental idols bespeaking pride, vanity and self-adoration associated with ocular and specular misprision. Ostensibly, vanity primarily affected the frail sex, females being more prone to being caught by the eye in adornment and self-admiration. Recurring illustrations admonishing females for staring into glasses while neglecting household duties affirm this common stereotype. Unusually, Henry Peacham’s ‘Philautia’, ‘in Pride (self-love)’, emblematized by a woman with her mirror, evades obvious allusion to Narcissus; not so the embroidery.35 Although the stitched mirror apparently implicates the female reflected in its mica glass, it palpably connects self-love and Narcissus.

As Brathwait’s text, the textile employs the Narcissus myth as framing reference for vices induced by erroneous vision. Brathwait’s ‘Narcissus-like’ translates materially and figuratively as the yellow trumpet of the narcissus enclosing the mirror and reflected image. Both gesture towards death as consequence of the ‘looking disease’, to quote from the play Lingua, Brathwait presuming the nominal signifier ‘Narcissus’ sufficient cue for the narrative, the picture invoking transformation, death’s entry, by mimicking Ovid’s ‘cup of gold’ as memorial to self-love.36 Intriguingly, the composite mirror wrought in silks re-presents the fable. Uniquely conjoining narcissus, mirror and face while eliding the watery glass, it reinterprets familiar pictorial renderings of the flower emerging from pool or well. Notably, Virgil Solis’s woodcut, ‘Narcissus in florem’, from his illustrated edition of Ovid’s Metamorphoses is evoked in two embroideries from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.37

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To revisit the notion of framing, when the petals surrounding the mirror and its image are envisaged as a physical frame describing an object, the mirror-self resembles a portrait or self-portrait intimating the confounding of creative imagination, artifice and self-obsession, a visual interpretation echoing Brathwait’s idol-making eye of fantasy. That is not to say that embroiderer or designer had these ideas in mind or conceived the subject as artist-creator of an idealized likeness of himself or herself. Interestingly, however, this particular motif of a female figure holding up a mirror projecting her likeness resonates with Brathwait’s emblem of ‘Decency’, ‘her eye modestly fixt on her glasse’, in the frontispiece to his *English Gentlewoman* (1631). Yet, ‘Decency’ glances sideways at her mirror whilst the figure on fabric averts her eyes from her glass, presumably to signal that she eschews vain pleasures.

Indeed, as the original embroidery reveals, neither her eyes nor the mirror with its reflected image engage one another. Both face the viewer, the female figure’s eyes looking directly ahead, imitating the symbol of the divine unblinking eye, and avoiding ‘twinkling’, the wayward eye of the impure messenger of an impure heart. In disassociating the female from evils affecting the physical eye, including turning away from the fruit tree that tempted Eve’s eye and caused her lapse into carnal sin, is there a veiled subversion of female stereotyping? Does the eagle’s presence as sight’s conventional symbol reinforce this, particularly its metaphysical signification, explained below? Possibly, it offers a counterpoint to Brathwait’s acceptance of the traditional feminization of ocular, and specular, vices even while agreeing with his moral thesis on reforming erroneous vision. More obviously, the figure’s signalling control of the senses through directional placement connects with the moral discipline of needlework, specifically its appearing to offer a self-reflexive reminder to the needlewoman not to cast aside her look, that a ‘gazing mind’ brings ‘small profit’, according to *the first part of needlewrokes* (1596). Equally, her disposition may illustrate the proverbial injunction: “let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee”.

Likewise, Brathwait’s ‘he is a wise man that carries his eyes in his head’, inveighing against the eye’s ‘strayings’, invokes scripture: ‘the wise man’s eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness’. For young women particularly, this meant chaste eyes and looks. Appropriately, the petals around the mirror motif seem to blinker the eyes as if actively defending them from the eye’s passive, indiscriminate acceptance of visible sensibles and, hence, protecting the soul’s purity. Considered as intimating a moral corrective for the fallibility of sight, they intersect with Brathwait’s martialist figuring of ‘Sentinels’ guarding against ‘intruders’. Iterating typical tropes, as in Crooke’s ‘scoutwatches’, Arwaker’s ‘Centries … Cittadel’, and Davies’s ‘watchman … sentinell’, this imagery may serve as metaphorical

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39 Crooke’s title page depicts the image of the open eye, symbol of the deity’s unblinking eye; Woolgar, p. 177.
40 Brooks, *Michaël and Elizabeth Feller*, p. 67
41 Proverbs, 4: 25.
analysis of Aristotle’s concept of ‘aesthesis’ into passive, involuntary sensation and active, voluntary perception.\textsuperscript{43}

For Brathwait, correcting the moral blindness of passion’s eye and rendering it ‘temperate’, or virtuous, presupposes subjecting the light of the body’s eye to the ‘soules beauty’, ideally: ‘the eyes to direct me by objects outwardly moving, to the affections of soule inwardly working’.\textsuperscript{44} DivERTing the physical eye from ‘outward delectations’ towards ‘inward contemplation’, the soul’s aptest motion, teaches it to fix only on ‘that Object’ furnishing its sole and whole satisfaction.\textsuperscript{45} As the body’s guide, the eye should afford moral sight by leading us towards heaven. Brathwait’s frontispiece visually realizes this transcendence of the inner eye of the soul through sight, personified as female, holding a mirror up for judgement by reason, a male figure seated atop the globe. Brathwait begins his essay with the eye of the soul darkened by the eye of the body. He ends with a persuasive hope that the proper functioning of corporeal sight might, as the ‘Sunne cheeres and renewes … cleares and purifies’, cause the soul’s eye to cheer, renew and purify the body.\textsuperscript{46} Thus conceived, Brathwait’s enlightened spirit links with the stitched eagle motif in the picture through myths of the eagle’s soaring heavenwards to clarify its vision and encouraging its young to look upwards to the sun, also to Brathwait’s recounting this lore of the eagle’s spiritual signification elsewhere.\textsuperscript{47}

What the essay exhorts discursively on the proper disposing of the eye, the pictorial allegory foreshadows through its tableau-like demonstration of the movement from external to internal vision. Both evoke the psalmist plea: ‘turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken now me in the way’.\textsuperscript{48} Epitomizing this corrective turn, Brathwait’s ‘principallest motive and Organ of thanks-giving’ evokes the teleological notion of God’s beneficent creation and design, a premise consistent with natural theology and anatomical theory, hence grounding his ‘heavenly exercise’ of the eye on divine providence.\textsuperscript{49} Possibly, the allegorical embroidery enacts a similar conception in holding the mirror up to nature. And, appropriately, its surface is designed to draw the eye’s attention to its symbolism and, thence, embedded moral instruction rather than itself or its creator. Although a ‘curious’, fancy work for the upper ranks, it avoids pandering to vanity, its plain textures, without embellishment, spangles (sequins), appliqué or silver and gold thread, conforming with the ethics of representation and self-representation prescribed by the reformed religion, as endorsed by


\textsuperscript{44} Brathwait, ‘Of Seeing’, pp. 4, 5-6.

\textsuperscript{45} Brathwait, ‘Of Seeing’, p. 5, [n.p.].

\textsuperscript{46} Brathwait, ‘Of Seeing’, p. 6.


\textsuperscript{48} Psalm 119: 37.

John Taylor’s verse in *The needles excellency*: ‘to serve for ornament, not for pride: / To cherish virtue’.50 Arguably, as embodied ornament of virtue, the female motif represents an exemplary woman in harmony with her paradisal surroundings and is analogous to Brathwait’s purified body attuned to its ‘convoy to heaven’.51 In the early modern consciousness, gardens had religious and psychological significance.52 Brathwait’s ‘heaven’ and the embroidered garden would likely evince divine pastures, mental landscapes resonant with the pre-lapsarian innocence of the first, edenic garden. Viewed so, they would reflect the divine light of the mind’s eye and true mirror of spiritual vision.

When compared as objects in themselves and products of the, largely, gendered leisure pursuits of the wealthy, text and textile can be predominantly read as culturally dissonant documents. Considered, however, as articulating the *topos* of the sense of sight, pen and needle emerge as equally instructive and compelling expressions that interplay on their morally charged theme of redirecting ocular waywardness, interestingly nuanced by the embroidery’s apparent sublimation of the conventional negative connotations surrounding the feminized personification of sight. Through their different idioms, the two artefacts intersect and diverge, offering expositions and illustrations that speak separately and to each other in ways that enhance our understanding of early modern perceptions of improving vision.

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52 Brooks, *Michéil and Elizabeth Feller*, p. 76.
A booke of curious and strange inventions, called the first part of needleworkes containing many singuler and fine sortes of cut-workes, raisde-workes, stiches, and open cutworke, verie easie to be learned by the dilligent practisers, that shall follow the direction herein contained. Newlie augmented (London, 1596) http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2176/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgimages.cfg&ACTION=B

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Figure 1. Unknown provenance, embroidered panel of the personification of sight from a cabinet, English, c. 1650-1675, object number T.8-1945, height whole 9.5 in., width whole 10.75 in., depth whole 6.5 in., © Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
King Edward VI and the Pope and Elizabeth I: Drawing Parallels in Tudor Group Portraits and Texts

CHELSEA SWALES

For over fifty years, ‘King Edward VI and the Pope or An Allegory of the Reformation under Edward VI’ has posed a mystery. The anonymous painting was originally thought to have been created during the reign of Edward VI—a time in which parallels were being drawn between the young king and Josiah, the boy king of Judah found in Old Testament scriptures. Recent studies, however, have concluded that the image was produced during the reign of his sister, Queen Elizabeth I. During this time, William Leigh was preaching about the parallels between Elizabeth and other Old Testament patriarchs. Leigh would later publish these sermons under the title ‘Queene Elizabeth, paraleld in her princely vertues, with Davuid, Issua, and Hezekia’ in 1612. In light of the recent dating of this painting and the dedicatory epistle of Leigh’s published sermons, this article will seek to investigate the relevance of this image and the Tudor tradition of parallelism to Elizabeth’s reign.

In 1993, Margaret Aston published an in-depth study on the anonymous King Edward VI and the Pope or An Allegory of the Reformation under Edward VI.1 In The King’s Bedpost: Reform and Iconography in a Tudor Group Portrait, Aston contests Sir Roy Strong’s previously accepted dating which suggested that the portrait was created during the reign of Edward VI—between the years 1548-9.2 This estimation would have correlated with the royal visitation that required removal of all images which were the focus of pilgrimages and the removal of all monuments and idols from churches.3 However, Aston’s work provides evidence that suggests this estimation is about twenty years too early. She estimates that the production date of the painting falls during the reign of Elizabeth I in the 1570s. Twenty years later, in 2013 (and possibly as a result of Aston’s work), King Edward VI and the Pope was chosen as one of three portraits to be renovated by the National Portrait Gallery through support of an art conservation project.4 This project confirmed the theory of a later production date. Dendrochronological analysis helped researchers conclude that the panel was made from a tree that was felled between 1574 and 1590.5

1 Figure 1. Anonymous, King Edward VI and the Pope or An Allegory of the Reformation under Edward VI, c. 1574-90, oil on panel, 62.2x90.8 cm © National Portrait Gallery, London.
Figure 1. Anonymous, *King Edward VI and the Pope or An Allegory of the Reformation under Edward VI*, c. 1574-90, oil on panel, 62.2 x 90.8 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London. © National Portrait Gallery, London

Figure 2. Lucas de Heere, *The Allegory of the Tudor Succession*, c. 1572, oil on panel, 131.2 x 184.0 cm. © National Museum of Wales
The dating of this piece is of particular interest due to its content. The Tudor group portrait appears to capture a moment of succession, anti-papal sentiment, and iconoclasm. The inset at the top-right corner of the image refers to image-breaking—a result of the injunctions of the 1540s and serves as a reminder of Edward’s reputation as a ‘second Josiah’ as propagated by Archbishop Cranmer. A parallel was drawn between Edward VI and the boy king of Judah who inherited the throne at eight years old—the king known to have ‘put downe’ the idols in his kingdom in obedience to God. According to Cranmer, Edward VI would continue Henry VIII’s work in England’s break from Catholicism and see, with his ‘predecessor Josiah, God truly worshipped, and idolatry destroyed, the tyranny of the bishops of Rome banished from [his] subjects, and images removed.’ Cranmer interpreted Edward’s work for the kingdom: ‘these acts be signs of a second Josiah who reformed the church of God in his days’. Despite this understanding, the date of production, the absence of the reigning monarch, and the anonymity of the artist ensures that the exact purpose of this piece remains a mystery. Given the recent developments regarding dating, the modern viewer is likely to wonder how an image of the dying King Henry VIII, Edward VI, and a fallen pope are relevant to the reign of the king’s surviving daughter, Elizabeth I.

In the decades that followed Archbishop Cranmer’s parallels drawn between Edward VI and Josiah, William Leigh’s sermons in *Queene Elizabeth, paraleld in her princely vertues, with Dauid, Iosua, and Hezekia* drew comparisons between Elizabeth’s rule and other biblical stories of the Old Testament patriarchs. This work, compiled of three sermons preached during Elizabeth’s reign, is prefaced by a dedicatory epistle to Princess Elizabeth (James I’s daughter) which offers a few clues about how this image may relate to the reign of Elizabeth I. With *King Edward VI and the Pope* and Leigh’s dedicatory epistle as a focal point, this article will observe Elizabeth I’s place in the relationship of the Protestant Tudor dynasty to their royal Judaic predecessors. Through studying this anonymous Tudor group portrait with reference to its context and Leigh’s dedicatory epistle to his sermons, we can observe this depiction of Edward VI as it may have been intended—as a monarchical proxy. He is an icon for and a representation of the Protestant ruler of England.

In order to understand the relevance of *King Edward VI and the Pope* to Elizabeth’s reign, we must first look at other Tudor group portraits. Two of the more pertinent examples are *The Allegory of the Tudor Succession* (c. 1572) by Protestant Flemish artist Lucas de Heere and the updated engraving based on the same scene by William Rogers (c. 1595-1600). In these Tudor succession images, King Henry is surrounded by his heirs. In both images, Mary enters from the left with her husband, Philip, and Mars, the god of war. ‘Prudent’ Edward

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9. Figure 2. Lucas de Heere, *The Allegory of the Tudor Succession*, c. 1572, oil on panel, 131.2 x 184.0 cm, National Museum Wales © National Museum of Wales.; Figure 3. William Rogers, *The Family of Henry VIII*, engraving after *The Allegory of the Tudor Succession*, c. 1590-95, 35.56 x 48.9 cm, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, London ©Trustees of the British Museum.
kneels at Henry’s feet, receiving the sword of justice and Elizabeth enters the scene holding hands with Peace; they are followed closely by Plenty.\textsuperscript{10}

*Figure 3. William Rogers, The Family of Henry VIII, c. 1590-95, engraving after The Allegory of the Tudor Succession. 35.56 x 48.9 cm, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, London. ©Trustees of the British Museum*

Both de Heere and Rogers guide the viewer in their interpretation of the scene through Henry’s body language. His torso and head are turned to the right—towards his Protestant heirs—and demonstrate a clear favouritism of the Protestant regime. The image is also balanced in favour of a Protestant future by the depiction of Elizabeth (and her substantial gown) dominating the foreground on the right of the image. Catholic Mary is depicted in the background and she is dwarfed by the opulence of Elizabeth’s sleeves and wide skirt. However, Mary is not simply depicted in order to represent a contrast with a peaceful Elizabeth. Explanatory verse on the frame of the earlier de Heere painting offers an interpretation of the image of succession as a single image of a corporate entity. The verse tells its viewer that, the ‘fowr states’ in the ‘little roome’ are represented by a ‘valyant’ Henry, a ‘rare and vertvovs soon’ Edward, a ‘zealvs daughter’ Mary and, in Elizabeth, the ‘last of all a virgin qveen to Englands Ioy we see/ Svccessyvley to hold the right, and vertves of the

\textsuperscript{10} Figure 2 and Figure 3.
three’.\textsuperscript{11} Mary is generously identified as ‘zealous’ in an attempt by the Protestant artist to enhance the qualities of Elizabeth. This inscription suggests that an interpretation of Elizabeth’s presence should not be an independent one; she should be interpreted as the receptacle of inherited virtues. Through the depiction of others, her image as a monarch is strengthened; her predecessors’ virtues have been explicitly identified as parts of a perfected queen. In a similar fashion, the text of the Rogers engraving identifies all of the monarchs as vehicles through which the history of Elizabeth I and her current Protestant kingdom of ‘plenty and peace’ is told. In these images, Elizabeth I is an amalgamation—a symbol of hope for a Protestant future. This reading is supported by William Leigh’s example of the Tudor propensity to draw parallels of monarchs with past figures.

William Leigh, a popular preacher who was later appointed as tutor to Prince Henry under James I, makes a similar reference to corporate and inherited identity in the ‘Epistle Dedicatorie’ to his three sermons preached during Elizabeth’s reign. In this letter, written after Elizabeth’s death, he draws parallels between Elizabeth I and the ‘Kings of Israels Iudah’:

My purpose is not to stirre Elizabeths sacred hearse, whose graue is full of Princely earth, and her obsequies are ended, my thoughts are higher euē to match her Manes in blisse, with greatest of Soueraignes there (Soueraignantie it selfe onely excepted) I meane with Dauid, Iosua, and Ezekia, guides, and Kings of Israels Iudah.

After having established Elizabeth I’s desirable status as one of the ‘greatest Soueraignes’ in the history of Christendom (including King David whose name is frequently referred to in support of the messianic claims in the genealogies of Christ), he explores the parallels between the Queen and princess Elizabeth:

Pard [...]n me (gracious Lady) if I put this vn-d [...]r the shelt [...]r of your highnesse protection, Sem-blance of sexe, name and blood, together with your high place, person, and pietie, craueth no lesse at your Princely hands, then protection of her shrine, and Ghost. Shee a Kings daughter, so are you: shee a maiden Queene, you a Virgin Prince: her name is yours, her blood is yours, her carriage is yours, her countenance yours, like pietie towards God, like pittie towards men: one-ly the difference stands in this; that the faire flower of her youth is fallen; yours flourisheth like a Rose of Saram, and a Lilly of the Valley. [...] euer may your happinesse growe together, and make you blessed with that immortall crowne, that withe-reth not.\textsuperscript{12}

Special attention should be paid to the repeated references to the similarities between the two Elizabeths and the reminder of the ‘immortall crowne, that with-reth not’.\textsuperscript{13} ‘The grouping of Princess Elizabeth as one of James I’s ‘three children’, and references to the princess as one of the ‘threefold gable’ reinforces the image of corporate identity. There is also an ambiguity

\textsuperscript{11} Aston, Bedpost, p. 129.
\textsuperscript{13} Leigh, ‘Epistle Dedicatorie’ in Queene Elizabeth, paraleld.
in the semantic conflation of the ‘immortall crowne’.\textsuperscript{14} It appears as though this is the crown of Christ’s followers and the crown of the body politic.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
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\caption{Figure 4. William Leigh, ‘Epistle Dedicatorie’ in Queene Elizabeth, paraleld in her princely vertues, with David, Iosua, and Hezekia (London: Printed by T[hosmas] C[rede] for Arthur Johnson, 1612). © The British Library Board, 874.c.15}
\end{figure}

An example of how these concepts are merged in the narrative of the Protestant cause is demonstrated by the close proximity of Leigh’s reference to how ‘superstition withereth’ in the ‘thrice happie gouernment of our Liege Lord, and King’– superstition being closely associated with Catholic practices at the time. The Protestant cause of a return to “true worship” is inseparable from the English monarchy’s break from Rome. Leigh appeals to Princess Elizabeth’s similarities to Elizabeth I and (given the content of the sermons) consequently appeals to Princess Elizabeth’s shared Protestant identification with the spirit of the Old Testament patriarchs\textsuperscript{15}. As was the case in the de Heere portrait, we can see here that Elizabeth I’s image (or memory) is appropriated in this epistle in order to strengthen the rhetoric of the Protestant cause.

\textsuperscript{14} 1 Corinthians 9:25.
\textsuperscript{15} Leigh, ‘Epistle Dedicatorie’ in Queene Elizabeth, paraleld.
Leigh’s epistle offers two main reflections which shed light on the relevance of King Edward and the Pope to the reign of Elizabeth. Firstly, the epistle draws attention to the reign of Elizabeth I as instrumental in the Tudor and Stuart Protestant narrative. Secondly, he highlights how common the practice of drawing parallels between Protestant monarchs and the irrefutable authority of the Old Testament patriarchs was. Perhaps most significantly, Leigh’s work reinforces an implied relevance of the anonymous painting of Edward VI to Elizabeth’s rule by concluding his letter with a reminder of the divine appointment of all rulers. ‘The Lord God of heaven’ is the ‘maker of Kings and director of Crownes’.16

Elizabeth demonstrated her (arguably self-preserving) reverence for the divine appointment of kings in several ways—most famously in her reluctance to execute Mary Queen of Scots in 1587.17 Despite his attempts to disinherit her in favour of the Duke of Suffolk’s daughter Jane, she also allowed images of Edward VI to act as a Protestant icon in the publications of the New Testament under Christopher Baker, which still held the young prince’s image on the title page as late as 1595.18 In 1568, Elizabeth’s image was found on the title page of the Bishop’s Bible.19 However, her appearance was not long lived. As Aston argues, there were purists ‘who deemed it inappropriate for any living mortal—even the Supreme Governor of the Church – to be represented in the book of God’s word’.20 Aston’s conjecture is that, perhaps, the role of Edward VI in the English Reformation helped to sanction the privilege of his image remaining. It is more likely that the conflation of Edward VI and Josiah in the English consciousness (as supported by Cranmer) played a part. This conflation of divine appointment and the need to justify “true worship” with reference to Old Testament narratives was widespread.

In the Elizabethan world order, this understanding of corporate identity, the body politic, and the body natural was typical.21 Though her natural body would age and eventually die, as a queen, Elizabeth inherited the corporate body politic. The Henrician practice of extending the scope from the English throne and identifying with the Old Testament patriarchs was carried on from the reign of Edward VI to Elizabeth I. One example of this parallelism that precedes Leigh’s sermons is found in court favourite, Hans Holbein the Younger’s Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (1534-5).22

In this engraving, King Solomon is clearly modelled on the image of King Henry—suggesting the holiness, wisdom and plenitude of his reign. By the time King Edward VI was

16 Leigh, ‘Epistle Dedicatorie’ in Queene Elizabeth, paraleld.
19 Aston, Bedpost, p. 133.
20 Aston, Bedpost, p. 133.
21 Edmund Plowden, Les comentaries, ou les reportes de Edmunde Plowden vnapprentice de le comen ley, de dyners cases estoantes matters en ley, & de les argumentes sur yceux, en les temps des raygnes le roye Edwardele size, le roigne Mary, le roy & roigne Phillip & Mary, & le roigne Elizabeth (London: In aedibus Richardi Tottelli, 1571); Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz, The King’s Two Bodies (Princeton, 1957).
22 Hans Holbein the Younger, Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, c. 1534, Brown and grey wash, blue, red and green bodycolour, white heightening, gold, and pen and black ink over metalpoint on vellum, 22.9 x 18.3 cm, Royal Collection Trust, London.
painted, and by the time Leigh preached his sermons, there was a well-trodden path of parallelism. For example, in John Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments* (1570) (which includes Henry VIII and Edward VI), Queen Elizabeth is referred to as ‘our peaceable Salome’.23 Here, ‘Salome’ is variant spelling of Solomon and a history of King Solomon is the story with which the book opens.24 Foxe begins: ‘Salomon the peaceable Prince of Israel’.25 He writes about the building of the temple (representing a return to a correct form of worship) and examples of correct ‘fayth, and doctrine’. By referring to Elizabeth as ‘our peaceable Solome’, Foxe is accomplishing two things. First, he is elevating Elizabeth’s rule to the glory of her father’s reign in the Protestant history of England. He links Elizabeth to Henry’s legacy of freeing the English from the power of Rome whose ‘ambition destroyed Religion’, drowning it in ‘superstition and ceremonies’.26 He is also drawing support for Elizabeth’s policies by aligning her cause with a patriarch abundantly blessed by God.27 Likewise, Leigh’s sermons explicitly link Elizabeth to other Judaic leaders: David, Joshua, and Hezekiah—all of whom led God’s people during uncertain times. Hezekiah (also in the Davidic line) was about the same age as Elizabeth was at her coronation when his reign in Jerusalem began.28 Like Josiah, he is known for the destruction of idols and is traditionally remembered for recording Solomon’s proverbs.29 Leigh’s sermons are conscious of this necessity of biblical precedent as he assures his listeners and readers in this uncertain time that ‘…wee haue as stable and certaine promises to assure vs, as euer Iosua had’.30 With this reference, he likens Elizabeth to Joshua, who (chosen by God) helped lead the Israelites through the desert after the death of Moses who had led their escape from slavery in Egypt. Leigh reminds his readers that, like her brother and father before her, in this new Protestant kingdom, she would help to lead her people away from spiritual slavery to the Catholic church; she is ‘Queen Elizabeth who ruleth for God…’31

King Edward and the Pope is a ‘text-picture’. Following the tradition of *ut pictura scriptura*, the story it tells provides insight into the relationship between the Protestant church, Judaic kingly prototypes and the Tudor corporate monarchy.32 It appears to serve the same purpose of Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments* which appeals to ‘all true disposed mindes which shall resort to the readyng of this present history contaynyng the Actes of Gods holy Martyrs […] receiue some such spirituall fruit to their soules’.33

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25 Foxe, ‘A Protestation to the whole Church of England’.
26 Foxe, ‘A Protestation to the whole Church of England’.
28 2 Kings 18:2.
29 2 Kings 18:4.
30 Leigh, *Queene Elizabeth, paraleld*, p. 100.
31 Leigh, *Queene Elizabeth, paraleld*, p. 18.
33 Foxe, ‘A Protestation to the whole Church of England’.
Figure 5. Hans Holbein the Younger, *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba*, c. 1534, Brown and grey wash, blue, red and green bodycolour, white heightening, gold, and pen and black ink over metalpoint on vellum, 22.9 x 18.3 cm, The Queen's Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh. Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2016
The image itself is oil on panel and is measured at approximately sixty-two by ninety centimeters. At the centre of the image sits Edward VI on his throne. He is in a relaxed pose above a fallen pope and he is surrounded by some familiar court figures such as Protector Somerset, Thomas Cranmer and Garter knights. A bible in the vernacular, or, ‘THE WORDE OF THE LORDE’ has apparently crushed the Pope. Surrounding this figure are banners that read ‘IDOLATRY’ and ‘SUPERSTICI[O]’ clearly referring to the ‘FEYNED HOLINES’ of the Catholic figures. If the viewer is left in any doubt about what these figures represent, the precariously-balanced papal tiara is pointed towards the word ‘POPS’ (‘popes’). This is Protestant England rejecting Rome and recovering “true worship”, free of superstition and idolatry.

The righteousness of the Protestant cause is indicated by several features. One example is found in the juxtapositioning of the falling ornate triple-tiara and the writing across the papal figure’s chest; the phrase ‘ALL FLESHE IS GRASSE’ is a pointed reminder of the Protestant challenge to papal infallibility and hypocrisy. By painting ‘all fleshe is grasse’ (a phrase taken from Isaiah 40.6 and 1 Peter 1.24) across the Pope’s rich garments, the artist has indicated that the Pope’s glory will fade and that his person holds no special authority in England. Henry, however, points to his son who sits above the vernacular Bible; this symbolizes an image of his enduring significance in a new Protestant kingdom.

Leigh notes that following her father’s first daughter, Queen Elizabeth began her reign ‘in desperate times’; ‘her sister had shaken the State, with no lesse fearfull then fiery designes, fetched Altars from Rome, and sacrificed her chiefest subjects to the fire, exiled the godlie of the land…’ The difficulties of Josiah were also hers. Elizabeth’s desire to see God being ‘truly worshipped’, ‘idolatry destroyed’, ‘the tyranny of the bishops of Rome banished’, and ‘images removed’ is reflected here. Though her desires for the end of idolatry were tempered by comparison, The Injunctions of 1559 were based on her brother’s earlier work. The inset of image-breaking also reflects interpretations of her injunction: ‘…they shall not set forth or extol the dignity of any images, relics, or miracles; but declaring the abuse of the same …’ Elizabeth’s ‘advancement of the true honour of Almighty God’ and the ‘suppression of superstition’ is imagined here. Though it could be argued that the violence of the image-breaking in the inset more closely resembles accounts of iconoclasm sanctioned in Edward’s reign, the goals of cleansing the church of idolatry in the spirit of the Old Testament Patriarchs were the same:

34 For information about identification of the figures, see Aston, Bedpost, p. 8.
36 Leigh, Queene Elizabeth, parallel, p. 136.
38 Aston, Iconoclasts, pp. 299-301.
39 Aston, Iconoclasts, p. 299; for information on non-state ordained or wilfully misinterpreted forms of iconoclasm, see Aston, Iconoclasts, pp. 298-317.
Queen Elizabeth purged the Sacraments of her Christ, and reduced them to their right forme, left off, if not weleware lost in the vaste wildernesse of popish impietie, for more then fortie yeares ten times told.40

The inset is a primary focus due to its alignment with the steady gazes of Henry and Edward. Despite its relative size, the inset scene of image-breaking in the painting demands the attention of the viewer. The drama of the chamber appears still and peaceful when compared to the flames and movement depicted in the inset. Though this portion of the portrait is nearly monochrome, it is perhaps one of the most persuasive details of this text-picture. The inset offers an odd conflation of the classical and Catholic in its iconoclasm. The classical plinth with a Marian figure balancing dubiously on a column serves as a reminder to the viewer that Catholic idol worship is akin to pagan idol worship and that the work of Josiah, is the work of the Protestant church. The figure, like the papal tiara, is about to fall and join the broken idolatrous relics behind her.

In addition to the general Protestant practices of printing vernacular holy texts and participating in iconoclasm, the Pope in the image highlights current events of Elizabeth’s reign. At the time of production, Pius V’s 1570 papal bull Regnans in Excelsis would have been fresh in the minds of any viewer. The papal bull damned Elizabeth and threatened excommunication for anyone who made any oath of allegiance to her.41 The Pope at the feet of Edward is easily paralleled with Elizabeth’s excommunication. It is a pose commonly found in Tudor art depicting a literal interpretation of Psalm 110:1 which reads ‘Sit thou at my right hand, vntil I make thine enemies thy fotestole’.42 It is reminiscent, for example, of the woodcut of Henry VIII in the 1570 Actes and Monuments where ‘The Pope [is] suppressed by K. Henry the eight.’43 In both images, the Pope is the enemy of the monarch and he is made the literal ‘fotestole’ for their feet. There is no doubt that the Pope was considered the enemy of Elizabeth. She shared a common burden with her brother which was represented by a small girdle-book she wore. It contained a manuscript of her brother’s final prayer: ‘O my Lord God defend this realme from papistrie and mainteine thy true religion, that I and my people mai praise thy holie name’.44

Elizabeth I inherited the throne in a time of political and religious turmoil. As was the case in the reigns of her father and brother, the Protestant cause required an irrefutable authority to reference in their break from Rome. They found this support through a combination of divine right and allusions to exemplars from the Old Testament such as Solomon, David, Josiah, and Hezekiah. In the 1570s, Elizabeth I was considered a part of a corporate Protestant vision—a vision that was already conflated with these exemplars. Due to this,

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40 Leigh, Quene Elizabeth, paraleld, p. 87.
41 Thomas Barlowe, Brutum fulmen: or The bull of Pope Pius V. concerning the damnation, excommunication, and deposition of Q. Elizabeth, : as also the absolution of her subjects from their oath of allegiance, with a peremptory injunction, upon pain of an anathema, never to obey any of her laws or commands. With some observations and animadversions upon it (London, 1581).
42 See also Matthew 22:44.
44 Aston, Bedpost, p. 134; see also H. Clifford Smith, Jewellery from the Fifth Century to A.D. 1800 (London: 1921), p. 83.
depictions of her role in the Tudor succession were complex. We can witness this complexity with the holistic view provided by the ‘Epistle Dedicatrice’, Leigh’s sermons, contemporaneous paintings and engravings of the Tudors. Edward VI and the Pope, though devoid of explicit images of the female successors, is not lacking in relevance to the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. In the minds of the Elizabethans, she was not only continuing the work that her father and brother had started, but she was a part of a much older narrative of restoring “true worship” to God’s people. When we look at Edward VI and the Pope, we should recall that we are looking at a Tudor group portrait—not only with all the complexities of corporate identity that are seen in de Heere and Rogers but also with the complexities of subtext and flexible parallelism as seen in the works of Leigh and Foxe. With this considered, we must acknowledge that this Tudor group portrait not only tells the story of Edward and Josiah, but also the stories of Elizabeth and Hezekiah. Edward VI and the Pope tells the story the Protestant ruler of England.

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Figure 2. Lucas de Heere, *The Allegory of the Tudor Succession*, c. 1572, oil on panel, 131.2 x 184.0 cm, National Museum Wales © National Museum of Wales

Figure 3. William Rogers, *The Family of Henry VIII*, c. 1590-95, engraving after *The Allegory of the Tudor Succession*. 35.56 x 48.9 cm, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, London ©Trustees of the British Museum

Figure 4. William Leigh, ‘Epistle Dedicatory’ in *Queene Elizabeth, paraleled in her princely vertues, with David, Iosua, and Hezekia* (London: Printed by T[omas] C[reede] for Arthur Johnson, 1612) © The British Library Board, 874.c.15

Figure 5. Hans Holbein the Younger, *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba*, c. 1534, Brown and grey wash, blue, red and green bodycolour, white heightening, gold, and pen and black ink over metalpoint on vellum, 22.9 x 18.3 cm, The Queen’s Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh. Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2016
Examining the Language of Science in the Prose of William Harvey and the Poetry of Margaret Cavendish

MINTRA TANTIKIJRUNGRUANG

This interdisciplinary paper crosses a study of science with a study of literature. It will examine the language of science in a work of seventeenth century scientific prose and a piece of seventeenth century scientific poetry. This is done through a comparison between William Harvey's medical treatise on the circulatory system entitled ‘On the Motion of the Heart and Blood in Animals’ (1628) and Margaret Cavendish's poem on the same subject entitled ‘The Motion of the Blood’ (1653). Both textual artefacts will be explored within the wider context of the seventeenth century debate over the appropriate language style for science.

When it comes to the subject of the language of science, the customary opinion has been that language used in scientific writings should reflect the plain clarity of reason and the straightforward simplicity of science itself. This view can be traced back to the writings of Sir Francis Bacon whom many scholars consider to be the father of modern scientific prose because he advocated the use of plain prose as the appropriate style of language to be used in scientific writings. This opinion would later be echoed amongst members of the scientific academy known as the Royal Society where men like Thomas Sprat rejected the ‘amplifications, digressions, and swellings of style’ in favour of plain prose language. As a result of this preference, an irreconcilable rift has been created in science between prose and poetry. Prose was to become the accepted and recognised medium for science while poetry was to become its adverse opposite and an example of what scientific language should not be: descriptive, imaginative, evocative, and abstract in its subjectivity. The new science had to be impersonal in its objective pursuit of reality, reason, and knowledge.

Recent studies on Bacon, however, have renewed the old debate between poetry and prose in science. Critic Robert Schuler has examined Bacon’s writings and argues that the great thinker himself could not ignore the important role poetry plays in science by inspiring the imagination and aiding reason. Poetry and prose, reason and imagination are therefore not diametrically opposed to each other but support each other in the practice of science. Another critic, Stephen Daniel, also sees Bacon acknowledging the positive role poetry plays in science because of how it can help foster the scientific method. As the method involves generating hypotheses that are later to be tested in experiments, it is crucial during the initial stage of formulation where questions are being asked and theories are being formed, that this...

2 Zappen, ‘Francis Bacon and the Rhetoric of Science’, p. 244.
process of invention be inspired just as much by imagination as it is guided by reason. For Daniel, Bacon’s description of nature as a language controlled by *grammatica philosophica* or ‘philosophical grammar’ entails that treating nature as a ‘poetic and metaphoric language instead of as a logical, mathematical, or rationally regulated language’ can help develop the ‘procedure of discovery’ \(^5\) -- which is the aim of the scientific method. According to Daniel, having a concept of nature that is metaphorical / poetical means having a nature that cannot be easily grasped, which leaves any account of the world open and indeterminate.\(^6\) Having a nature that eludes easy understanding forces scientists to continue inventing new approaches towards understanding it. In terms of the scientific method, this leads to new questions being asked, new hypotheses being imagined, new experiments being designed to test them, and new theories being invented. This advances the cause of science and leaves it open for improvement and new discoveries, which is crucial to science as Bacon explains:

> It is an idle thing, and shows a narrow mind, to think that the art of discovering the sciences may be invented and proposed in perfection from the beginning, so as to be afterwards only exercised and brought into use; for men should be made sensible that the solid and real arts of invention grow up and increase along with inventions themselves; so that when any one first comes to the thorough examination of a science, he should have some useful rules of discovery; but after he hath made a considerable progress in the science itself, he may, and ought, to find out new rules of invention, the better to lead him still further.\(^7\)

Considering the important role poetry plays in the practice of science, it would be interesting to compare and contrast a piece of scientific poetry with a work of scientific prose to see how each type of language is similar and different in its treatment of the same subject. Examining what each achieves will offer us a glimpse into how language functions within science and how it can help drive the engine of invention forwards to improve it. Therefore, to compare, we have two textual artefacts that are each an example of scientific prose and scientific poetry. The first is a prose work from William Harvey whose pioneering study on blood circulation has earned him recognition as the father of the circulatory system. Harvey’s work in *Exercitatio Anatomica de Motu Cordis et Sanguinis in Animalibus* or *On the Motion of the Heart and Blood in Animals* (1628) is important for two reasons: a) because it revolutionised our understanding of the circulatory system in human anatomy by explaining how blood is recycled in the body, and b) his scientific approach through dissections, experiments, and careful observation served as a model for all future scientific research.\(^8\) The second textual artefact is a piece of poetry by Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, whose writings

on science are invaluable because they document a woman’s interest and engagement with a subject that has always been closed off to women due to institutional and ideological barriers that excluded women from becoming active members in scientific academies such as the Royal Society of London. Cavendish’s short poem entitled ‘The Motion of the Blood’ (1653) is singular because of how it directly addresses the science of the day by alluding to Harvey’s *On the Motion of the Heart and Blood in Animals*. Cavendish’s poem also raises the issue of poetry’s role in science. As we compare and contrast Harvey’s prose with Cavendish’s poetry, the question that is continuously asked is: are the differences between prose and poetry so great that nothing can be gained in science from studying one with the other? Comparing these two textual artefacts will show where they differ but also where their similarities can help foster an interdisciplinary synthesis between science and literature.

When examining Harvey’s prose language in *On the Motion of the Heart and Blood in Animals*, it is easy to see why his book would be looked upon as a paragon of seventeenth century science and a success of the new scientific method. As academic Walter Pagel had said of Harvey’s book, it ‘is famous for its small size, for its conciseness, its clear language, its logical structure in which fact follows on fact, argument on argument, proof on proof.’ Indeed, Harvey’s choice of words through which he delivers his groundbreaking discovery of the flow of blood through the circulatory system is delivered with simple objectivity, as this excerpt demonstrates:

> [. . .] when I surveyed my mass of evidence, whether derived from vivisections, and my various reflections on them, or from the study of the ventricles of the heart and the vessels that enter into and issue from them, the symmetry and size of these conduits, [. . .] - or from observing the arrangement and intimate structure of the valves in particular, [. . .] I frequently and seriously bethought me, and long revolved in my mind, what might be the quantity of blood which was transmitted, in how short a time its passage might be effected, and the like. But not finding it possible that this could be supplied by the juices of the ingested aliment without the veins on the one hand becoming drained, and the arteries on the other getting ruptured through the excessive charge of blood, unless the blood should somehow find its way from the arteries into the veins, and so return to the right side of the heart, I began to think whether there might not be a motion, as it were, in a circle. Now this I afterwards found to be true; I finally saw that the blood, forced by the action of the left ventricle into the arteries, was distributed to the body at large, and its several parts, in the same manner as it is sent through the lungs, impelled by the right ventricle into the pulmonary artery, and that it then passed through the veins and along the

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vena cava, and so round to the left ventricle in the manner already indicated.  

Given the complicated manner of the subject he is studying, Harvey succeeds in reducing the complex intricacies of human anatomy into a simple map that plots the movement of blood from point a to point b and back again. His plain prose relays this information effectively in a literal sense. There is, however, a drawback to Harvey’s prose style. Due to his use of technical anatomical terms and nominal language, readers are unable to render in their minds a visualisation of the biological process he is describing. Harvey later counterbalances this inherent weakness of prose language’s limitations by supplementing his prose with the figurative language of similes. Using similes, Harvey stirs the reader’s imagination so that they may better visualise and understand why the blood has to circulate through the body as it does:

This motion we may be allowed to call circular, in the same way as Aristotle says that the air and the rain emulate the circular motion of the superior bodies; for the moist earth, warmed by the sun, evaporates; the vapours drawn upwards are condensed, and descending in the form of rain, moisten the earth again [. . .] And similarly does it come to pass in the body, through the motion of the blood, that the various parts are nourished, cherished, quickened by the warmer, more perfect vaporous, spirituous, and, as I may say, alimentive blood; which, on the other hand, owing to its contact with these parts, becomes cooled, coagulated, and so to speak effete. It then returns to its sovereign, the heart, as if to its source, or to the inmost home of the body, there to recover its state of excellence or perfection. Here it renews its fluidity, natural heat, and becomes powerful, fervid, a kind of treasury of life, and impregnated with spirits, it might be said with balsam. Thence it is again dispersed. All this depends on the motion and action of the heart.  

The presence of figurative language in Harvey’s prose blurs the traditional line that has been drawn in science to separate poetry and prose. The assumption has always been that the two are incompatible, but as Harvey’s writing demonstrates, the two are not only compatible but they can work together to improve scientific writing and make it more effective and easy to understand. Similes, vivid in their poetic imagery, help fill the gaps left in the reader’s mind by the limitations and deficiencies of prose language. Although prose might be able to tell readers where and how blood travels from one part of the heart to another part of the body, it cannot show or explain to readers the abstract process that occurs when the blood moves through the circulatory system. However, by taking this obscure abstract process in the body and comparing it to a similar process i.e. the precipitation cycle in nature, this scientific concept is easier to understand. The poetic language of similes can therefore play a positive role in science by explaining complex scientific concepts. At the same time, poetic language

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12 Harvey, ‘On the Motion of the Heart and Blood in Animals’.  

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can also help scientists like Harvey formulate hypotheses during the initial stage of the scientific method. As Harvey had demonstrated in his own writing in the excerpt that was previously cited, he had hypothesised that the blood moved through the body in a circular motion even before he had actual physical proof that it did. His theory was undoubtedly inspired not only by Aristotle’s idea of the cycle of precipitation, but also by Aristotle’s belief in the perfection that such a continuous and self-sustaining system of circular motion represents. Although Walter Pagel argues that Aristotle’s philosophical speculations on the superiority of the circle movement cannot be directly found in Harvey’s treatises, it is clear from our examination of the text, that Aristotle’s appreciation for the circle’s ability to paradoxically sustain, in equilibrium, states of both motion and rest, forwards and backwards movement influenced Harvey’s thoughts during his initial observations of the heart and blood vessels.13 This is evident at the point in Harvey’s text where he first theorises that blood must be supplied throughout the body in a constant and unceasing circulatory motion otherwise the heart would be supplied by blood while ‘the veins on the one hand becoming drained, and the arteries on the other getting ruptured through the excessive charge of blood’.14 Harvey’s conjectures that blood must therefore be constantly present in the vessels and the heart in a continuous flow in order for the system and the body to function properly, is a deduction inspired by Aristotle’s idea of constant circular motion which was confirmed by Harvey’s own observations. Aristotle’s idea of the poetry of circular motion thus makes its way into Harvey’s thinking and both influences and inspires his scientific study of the circulatory system. At the same time, poetic language in the form of similes and figurative language also helped Harvey to convey his scientific discovery effectively through his writing, thereby proving the benefits that poetry can bring to the field of science.

While Harvey’s scientific writing contained poetic elements that worked well with his prose language to prove the compatibility of science and poetry, Margaret Cavendish’s adaptation of Harvey’s medical treatise into her poem entitled The Motion of the Blood, demonstrates how poetry can help advance science by pushing the scientific method’s engine of invention forwards. Looking at the text, we immediately see the physical qualities of its form that marks it as a piece of poetry quite different from Harvey’s prose in On the Motion of the Heart and Blood in Animals, even though the subject matter is the same and the title almost identical:

Some by their industry and learning found,
That all the blood like to the sea runs round;
From two great arteries it doth begin,
Runs through all veins, and so comes back again.
The muscles like the tides do ebb and flow,
According as the several spirits go;
The sinews as small pipes come from the head,
And they are all about the body spread,
Through which the animal spirits are conveyed
To every member, as the pipes are laid;

14 Harvey, ‘On the Motion of the Heart and Blood in Animals’. 
And from those sinew’s pipes each sense doth take
Of those pure spirits, as they us do make.15

The twelve lines of verse are clearly organised into heroic couplets in iambic pentameter. These are the formal elements of the poem that makes it poetry – a medium, we might add, that Cavendish felt safe to express her thoughts in because her ‘errours might better passe there, then in prose; since poets write most fiction, and fiction is not given for truth, but pastime’.16 Although the parameters of her poem constrict her in terms of meter and rhyme scheme, they paradoxically offer Cavendish the freedom to express her own opinion on Harvey and the circulatory system. As a woman interested in the new science but excluded from participating in the scientific academies of the Royal Society because of her gender, Cavendish is an outsider who nevertheless finds a way to engage with science by situating herself within the gender-free space poetry offers her that is outside of the institution’s authority, beyond its masculine control of scientific discourse, its hegemony over scientific truth, and its tyranny over scientific prose. A close look comparing Harvey with Cavendish will reveal an important difference: Harvey was a male scientist who was able to perform dissections and carry out experiments whereas Cavendish was a woman and, ergo, was unable to do either. Cavendish however finds a way to perform her own symbolic dissection on the body through her poem by using similes that exposes the motions of the body’s circulatory, muscular, and nervous systems to a comparison with the sea and tide. This is different from Harvey’s use of Aristotle’s imagery of the precipitation cycle because where Harvey’s simile was used to illustrate the mechanical process of the blood through the body, Cavendish’s similes are designed to draw the connection between the motion of blood with the motion of water in nature, thereby illustrating the organic nature of such biological processes. Cavendish’s poem had referenced Harvey and his work evasively so as not to challenge its science directly, but subtly enough as to engage with it whilst expressing her own opinion on the subject. A close inspection of the poem will reveal a crucial difference between Harvey and Cavendish: her poem does not refer to the heart at all, neither in the title of her poem or anywhere in its verse. Cavendish has clearly taken Harvey’s treatise and cut out the heart; an intriguing decision considering that Harvey’s study on the heart was crucial to his scientific discovery of the circulation of blood. Her decision to excise the heart from her poem stems from Cavendish’s vitalist and materialist views which made her sceptical of science and critical of its tendency to reduce nature’s complexities into explanations of mere mechanical processes.17 As Cavendish explains when she writes of ‘art’ or experimental science:

[. . .] all mankind that ever have lived, or are at present living in this world, could never find out the truth of nature, even in the least of her parts, nay, not in themselves: for what man is he that knows the figurative corporeal

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motions, which make him to be such a creature as man, or that make any part of him? And what man or art can inform us truly of the figurative motions that make the nature of blood, flesh, bones, etc. or can give a reason why the heart is triangular, and the head spherical, and so for every differently shaped part of his body? I will not say, but that man may guess at it, but not infallibly know it by any art[. . .].

Therefore, although Cavendish had agreed with Harvey on the motion of the blood through the body, she did not agree with his decision to simplify the inner workings of the body’s circulatory system into a mechanised process created by a pump-like heart. For Cavendish, the truth of the body’s intricate actions and movements will always exceed the scientist’s reach and refuse his complete mastery. Although this view might, at first glance, appear to be antagonistic towards all science and scientific advancement, it is not when we consider that Bacon himself had argued that science is not perfect and that it cannot grow idle but must constantly reinvent itself in its method in order to progress. Cavendish’s refusal to include Harvey’s heart in her poem is therefore a cleverly veiled message from an excommunicated woman to the consecrated world of male-dominated science, that it must check itself against its pride of resting on discovered ‘truths’ otherwise it might grow resistant to change and future advancement. Like her poem’s emphasis on the motion of the blood through the body, the emphasis of science should be upon moving constantly and never resting on the stasis of known facts. Science and the male scientist’s obsession with controlling nature is also the wrong attitude to have, as Cavendish explains in her response to Robert Hooke’s remark that science and mechanical technology can help mankind exert their power over nature:

[. . .] I do not understand, first, what they mean by our power over natural causes and effects: for we have no power at all over natural causes and effects [. . .] neither can natural causes nor effects be overpowered by man so, as if man was a degree above nature [. . .] for man is but a small part, and his powers are but particular actions of nature, and therefore he cannot have a supreme and absolute power.

Humanity, like the body Cavendish depicts that has blood that flows like the river to the sea and muscles that expand and contract like the ebb and flow of the tides, should imagine itself as a part of nature containing within ourselves the same patterns that can be observed in nature; making us reflections of it and not in any way superior to it. Instead of seeking to control nature through science, we should, like Cavendish, acknowledge that science will never completely discover all of nature’s truth and that certain things will remain beyond the abilities of even science to explain. Cavendish’s short scientific poem therefore challenges

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20 Robert Hooke was a scientist who pioneered the use of microscopes and was a supporter of the use of mechanical technology in scientific study. Cavendish here is responding to his seminal work Micrographia: or Some Physiological Descriptions of Minute Bodies Made By Magnifying Glasses. With Observations and Inquiries Thereupon. (1665).
21 Margaret Cavendish, Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy, p. 49.
science’s discrimination not only against poetry, but also its discrimination against women like her who have much to say about aggressive seventeenth century masculine attitudes towards scientific practices.

In a study that has crossed the disciplines of science and literature, a comparison of William Harvey’s prose on the circulatory system with that of Margaret Cavendish’s poetry have brought forth both similarities and differences between the two. Nevertheless, there has been no difference so great between them that nothing can be gained from analysing them together. It has always been a point of concern with interdisciplinarity, that research which crosses the boundaries between disciplines might not be possible considering that it runs counterintuitive to the traditional view of knowledge as being divided into distinct branches of specialised subjects -- too different in their divergence to ever come together in a study. However, as this research has shown, crossing the divide between disciplines and between two different artefacts that intersect on a common theme is not only possible, it is also productive. Analysing the language of science in Harvey’s prose and Cavendish’s poetry has closed the gap between literature and science by demonstrating that an interdisciplinary study of the two has shown how poetry aids scientific thinking and writing. At the same time, this interdisciplinary study has also help expose deep social issues related to power and gender that are embedded within the supposedly pure and sterile language of seventeenth century science.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES


SECONDARY SOURCES


PART II

The ‘Long’ Eighteenth Century
That-Which-Remains: A Phenomenological Reading of Two Eighteenth Century Texts on Death

SIMON DEMETRIOU

This article compares an eighteenth century treatise calling for the banning of church burial with a funeral sermon from the same period in relation to two questions. Where and to whom does that-which-remains after death belong? And how do the texts represent the nature of that-which-remains? The first section looks at the remains’ conceptual position in relation to the space of the church, and in relation to the living and the dead. The second compares the texts on the basis that one sublimates the body, denying its physicality, while the other acts to reinforce the flesh’s status as flesh. Drawing upon the thought of Heidegger and Derrida, the article concludes that both texts support arguments that eighteenth century considerations of the dead prefigure what would come to be the modern phenomenological understanding of death and the dead, arguing that they both engage with the phenomenological issue of death as the presencing of an absence.

THE TEXTS AND THEIR BACKGROUNDS

Both the texts under discussion in this article were written by Protestant clergymen. The first, Seasonable considerations on the indecent and dangerous custom of burial in churches and church-yards (SC), was written by Thomas Lewis in 1721, and is a theologico-medical treatise combining ecclesiastical history with contemporary medical understanding to argue for the abolition of interment in churches and church-yards.1 Lewis was a high church Anglican, who at the time of writing the text was reportedly acting as curate at St Clement Danes, London. His text was written in light of the plague scare which took place in Marseille in 1720, and the consequent fear of a similar epidemic crossing the channel.

The second text, Heavenly treasures in earthen vessels (HT), is a funeral sermon written and originally delivered in 1722 by Jeremiah Smith for his co-pastor of the Silver Street Presbyterian Chapel, London, Samuel Rosewell.2 Both writer and deceased subject were dissenting ministers, and the text adheres to the conventions of the eighteenth century Protestant funeral oration, consisting largely of an exegesis of 2 Corinthians 4:7: ‘But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us’.3

Both texts are fundamentally concerned with that which remains after death. The term that-which-remains is used here and throughout this article to signify the fact that these texts, and

1 Thomas Lewis, Seasonable Considerations on the Indecent and Dangerous Custom of Burying in Churches and Church-yards (London, 1721), henceforth SC.
2 Jeremiah Smith, Heavenly treasures in earthen vessels (London, 1722), henceforth HT.
debates surrounding the dead in the early eighteenth century, conceptualised the human post-mortem in ways that incorporated far more than the physical matter of the body. The precise nature of that-which-remains was a critical and contested consideration in contemporary debates surrounding the resurrection and whether, or how much of, the body was required to join with the soul at the end of days. Not merely the spiritual value of corporeal matter was at stake, but also the question of what makes man, and whether identity adheres to bodily sameness or, in the post-Lockean theorisation of the separation of man and person, to a continuity of consciousness in the working of memory, which renders the physical body merely matter. Such debates were also tied to the rise of anatomical dissection and the preservation and display of human remains in cabinets of curiosities and medical museums – trends which suggest a conceptual detachment between living and dead, and a view of the dead body as strictly corporeal. Yet concurrently, the eighteenth century saw the rise of what has been called the sentimentalisation and individuation of the dead body, becoming the age of the professionalization of the undertaking industry, and of the commodification of burial space, burial manner, and memorialisation.

These issues crossed over into both architecture and public health, with plans for the rebuilding of London following the great fire, and for the construction of new churches, having to deal with the crucial issue of whether to include church-yards in their designs, or if not, where to place new burial sites outside the metropolis. This question was not merely about space, design, and theology, but public health, since medical thought from the seventeenth century onwards maintained the contagious potential of the effluvia rising from the dead body, and advised that the relocation of burial sites to non-populated areas would be a remedy for the frequent outbreaks of disease plaguing urban populations.

This article considers SC and HT in relation to two questions. Where and to whom does that-which-remains belong? And how do the texts represent the nature of that-which-remains? The first section will look at the remains’ conceptual position in relation to the space of the

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1 See, for example, Lucia Dacome, ‘Resurrecting by Numbers in Eighteenth-Century England’, Past and Present, 193 (November 2006), 73 – 110.
church, and in relation to the living and the dead. The second will compare the texts on the basis that one, *HT*, sublimates the body, denying its physicality, while the other acts to reinforce the flesh’s status as flesh. The article concludes that both texts support arguments that eighteenth century considerations of the dead prefigure what would come to be the modern phenomenological understanding of death and the dead, arguing that they both engage with the phenomenological issue of death as the presencing of an absence, that which Heidegger has called ‘…the shrine of Nothing… of that which in every respect is never something that merely exists, but which nevertheless presences’.  

**THAT-WHICH-REMAINS: WHERE AND TO WHOM?**

**WHAT OF THE SANCTUARY?**

While the eighteenth century saw the slight weakening of the parish’s status as the key organisational and conceptual unit of community, in the period during which both texts were written, the parish, with its church standing as literal and symbolic centre, was still the community to which most people considered themselves as belonging.  

The right of burial within the church’s space, be it the building itself or its church-yard, was a critical component of this notion of communal belonging. So powerful was it that it became monetised: there was a known hierarchy of spiritual values attached to burial spaces, which translated into the cost of burial dependent upon location. For many, therefore, that-which-remained belonged both to and in the church.

For Thomas Lewis, the body did not belong either to or in the church: the custom of burying in church or church-yard is immediately declaimed as ‘indecent and dangerous’. The heading for each chapter of the text, and a variant title for the text itself, is ‘The Sanctuary undefiled’, and Lewis spends the bulk of his text citing historical precedent, both ecclesiastical and otherwise, to prove that ‘All nations in the world have most religiously preserved the sanctuary, the place of divine worship, from the pollutions of the dead.’ This is the basis of Lewis’s claims that the practice of church(yard) burial is ‘indecent’, for it defiles that which God would keep pure. So far from belonging in the church, the dead body here becomes toxic to it, a pollutant both spiritually – for it defies scriptural instruction and is thus an act of profanity – and physically, causing ‘pernicious consequences to the living’.

In *HT*, the opposite is true, and once more the question of the remains’ belonging revolves around the author’s use of the word ‘sanctuary’. In Smith’s sermon, delivered at a burial taking place in Bunhill Fields rather than a parochial church-yard, we are introduced to the word ‘sanctuary’ on the third page of his preamble. Here, in the second use of the word ‘vessel’, referring to the body of the departed minister, Smith refines his conceptualisation of

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13 SC, title-page.
14 SC, p. 5.
15 SC, p. 6.
the bodies of ministers into ‘vessels of the sanctuary’. Henceforth, the phrase ‘vessels of the sanctuary’ is used another three times, with ‘vessels of God’s house’ used once. More importantly, we read the further 25 uses of the word ‘vessel[s]’ as an elided version of the expanded phrase. The metaphor, used from the title onwards to characterise that-which-remains of Samuel Rosewell, is one which ascribes a definite sense of belonging: that-which-remains belongs to and in God’s house.

TO WHOM IT MAY BELONG

The antithetical positions over the question of where that-which-remains belongs are partially explained by a consideration of the attitude taken by each text about who the remains belong to. I begin with HT, since it may be remarked that regardless of the phrase ‘vessels of the sanctuary’, my argument is undone by the fact that the that-which-remained in this instance was not buried in a church(yard) but in the second of London’s public burial grounds, Bunhill Fields, which was opened in 1665. That this is not the case comes down to the eighteenth century phenomenon of the commodification of burial space based on perceived spiritual value. For most Anglicans, burial inside the church, especially in chancel or chapels, was more desirable and therefore more expensive than in spaces further from these loci of spiritual concentration. Samuel Rosewell was not an Anglican; he was a dissenting minister, and by 1722, Bunhill Fields had become the burial site of choice for London dissenters. Rosewell, therefore, is buried where he would have wished, in the dissenters’ equivalent of the church chancel, and here we arrive at the key notion of belonging in the sense of possession.

The eighteenth century saw the individual take charge of his/her own remains. We see this in the increasing numbers of people who specified their funeral arrangements in their wills, and even who built their own funerary monuments and graves in advance of their own deaths. The rise of the undertaking trade meant that the dead body no longer belonged to those who survived it, but more and more came to belong to the individual whose remains they were yet to be.

Lewis’s text takes issue with this development, attacking those who would ‘make their [own] graves’ in the church, seeing this as originating in a kind of autochthonous projection of the imagination fuelled by pride:

The ambitious prelates… could not long see princes entomb’d in churches and themselves and their brethren shut out… but if princes would venture to lye in the porch, they would… venture into the Body of the Church and make their graves at the very altar…

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16 HT, p. 3 (preamble).
17 HT: p. 3 (preamble); 1; 9; 25; 32.
20 SC, p. 42.
To make one’s own grave is an act of possession in defiance of time and mortality. It is a making of a grave for oneself, but for a self that is not oneself, because a grave with a living man in it, is a hole: a grave is not a grave without remains to fill it. The maker of the grave, as both subject who makes and object to be en-graved, possesses the grave by being at the moment of its construction necessarily both living and dead. This temporal disjuncture, expressed above through the use of the conditional, allowing one to ‘see’ the funerals of others and the self in the same tense and to tenselessly ‘make’ one’s own grave, shows the emergent sense that one could be present at one’s own funeral, possessing and directing one’s remains after death. It is this sense of possession which Lewis sees as contributing to the deleterious practice of church burial.

SC is an attempt to repudiate this egocentric death-in-life, suggesting that that-which-remains should neither belong to nor be considered on behalf of the living person whose physical remains they might be. This approach bookends Lewis’s treatise: his introduction states that burial is an act of necessity, charitable only to the living whose grief is allayed by the ritual, and whose health is preserved by the burying of rotting corpses.21 SC ends with an appeal to ‘our Governours’ to ban church(yard) burial by an act of parliament in order to prevent the spread of disease and the potential of plague arriving from France.22 Lewis’s entire work culminates in an appeal to take that-which-remains out of the hands of the autochthonously proud individual or those who still see burial as an act of charity to the dead, and hand it over to the state to ensure the safety of the community.

THE FLESH MADE WORD VERSUS THE FLESH MADE FLESHIER

As a funeral sermon delivered at the graveside of a man who might well have chosen his own burial location, and who was known well by both preacher and congregation, it might be said that HT provides evidence of the sentimental individuation of that-which-remains. Meanwhile, SC’s concerns for public health and desire to consign that-which-remains to public bodies, can be read as belonging to the objectivity of the natural sciences, advocating detachment equivalent to the donation of bodily remains to the medical museum or curiosity cabinet. A consideration of the manner in which the texts represent the nature of that-which-remains shows that neither text fits so neatly into simple categorisation.

HT immediately detaches the reader/listener from the corporeality and individuality of that-which-remains, sublimating the corpse through the generic scriptural metaphor of the ‘earthen vessel’. The sermon then resolutely ignores the physical remains and focuses upon the metaphysical contents of that broken vessel: the word of God in the form of the words, oral and written, of the departed minister: ‘tho the vessel be broken, yet the Treasure be not altogether lost… let us gather up the Fragments, all that can be recollected or gotten of his holy instructions and counsels…”23

21 SC, p. 3.
22 SC, p. 61.
23 HT, p. 2 (preamble).
This is the first instance, after the title page, of the use of the term ‘vessel’, and we see the immediate displacement of the physical vessel, which might be expected to have fragments that can be collected, by the metaphysical treasure – a treasure consisting of words. Therefore, the sublimation is a textual act that transforms flesh into word; we do not, even at the graveside, need to confront that-which-remains as flesh doomed to rot, but are allowed to experience that-which-remains as incorruptible and edifying.

In the entirety of this sermon, which has as its only subject that-which-remains after death, we hear of the dead body as corpse only once: ‘But the bodies of good men, though they moulder and rot in the grave, will be raised again, glorious and beautiful’. The fact that the sentence begins with a negating conjunction and that the mention of decomposition is hedged between parenthetical commas and made subordinate in a sentence whose main clause is to do with the resurrection of the beautiful and incorruptible spiritual body sums up the attitude of Smith’s text to that-which-remains. While the body might perhaps be sentimentalised, it is not individualised, and is certainly detached. The metaphysical transformation of flesh into word, like the physical transformation of flesh into exhibit, allows for the unease of the grave to be dispelled by the marshalling of that-which-remains into something incorruptible, edifying, strictly controlled and comprehensible.

Lewis’s text, meanwhile, though its use of historical precedent and the terminology of contemporary medical science might be said to make the body into an object, represents that-which-remains with unceasing focus on its fleshiness, a fleshiness which remains actively potent in death:

It is an undoubted truth that the corruption of dead bodies interr’d in churches may be communicated to the living, and that many dangerous and fatal distempers may be received from the effluvia of the dead by secret communication, although the stench be not perceived by the nostrils.

Here we see that-which-remains as the subject of modern medical analysis; the word ‘effluvia’ had only entered the language in 1646. Yet these effluvia are invasive; they are made the subject of the second relative clause, while the living are the object of the first relative clause. When Lewis refers back to the plague of 1665, he writes that ‘the very carcasses when dead would weep out… the morbous ferment both through the cutaneous pores and the lachrymal ducts…’, again combining scientific lexis with the agency of carcasses that can – in what must be described as a sentimental metaphor – weep. Further on in the same section, Lewis describes an experiential antagonism between the dead who both can and wish to destroy, and the living whose imaginations are subordinated by a terror arising from this:

…the effluvia from the dead naturally tend to destroy the life of others… that is really the reason men naturally abhor the sight or touch of the dead, the natural spirit of life is afraid of a dead body and has an abhorrence of

24 HT, p. 12.
25 SC, p. 56.
26 SC, p. 55.
it… from this natural fear, humane flesh being dead, seems to be much colder to our touch than any other flesh…\textsuperscript{27}

There is a physical and intellectual proximity between the living and that-which-remains that is far more involuntary and experientially complexified than Smith’s conceptualisation of the living collecting the verbal fragments of their deceased minister. Lewis insists repeatedly on a flesh made fleshier, on a that-which-remains rotting, stinking, corrupting and infecting.

CONCLUSION: THE LIVING AS CARRIERS OF THE DEAD

Despite their differences, both \textit{Sc} and \textit{HT} tie in to recognisable eighteenth century trends surrounding the discursive and symbolic understandings of death and the body. Vidal has argued that the eighteenth century saw the beginnings of what would become the modern phenomenological approach to death.\textsuperscript{28} This essay lacks the scope to say whether Vidal’s assertion is correct, but does provide evidence that these eighteenth century texts engage conceptually with that-which-remains in ways that can be seen as phenomenological. They are both concerned with giving their readers/listeners an experiential understanding of death. And both engage in a phenomenological conceptualisation of that-which-remains, which figures the living as carriers of the dead.

In \textit{The Work of Mourning}, Derrida writes of the deceased Paul de Man that he leaves thoughts ‘alive within us’, and this rather simple quotation serves to highlight the unifying phenomenological similarity between \textit{HT} and \textit{Sc}.\textsuperscript{29} Like Lewis’s conceptualisation, the living are invaded, penetrated by the dead, carriers of the dead. Smith also makes the living carriers of the dead, where he imagines the living gathering up the fragments of treasure which remain: his living are gleaners as well as carriers. In one sense, Derrida’s living are carriers more in the sense of Lewis’s: that-which-remains is alive and active, and penetrates the innermost reaches of the living, rather than remaining external. Yet like Smith’s conceptualisation, that-which-remains is metaphysical, ideas which are of value to the living, rather than the primarily physical corruption carried by the living as a result of that-which-remains in \textit{Sc}.

Of course, Derrida’s conceptualisation differs from both eighteenth century approaches: his that-which-remains is a flesh made idea, rather than a flesh made word or a flesh made fleshier. de Man leaves behind his own ideas, ideas that are carried subjectively rather than being objectively accessible as scripture. Equally, the invasion is not physical or contagious, but intellectual and individually circumscribed. Neither Lewis nor Smith were or could have been post-modern humanists, as we might term Derrida. But their engagement with that-which-remains can be seen as having more in common with the twentieth century phenomenologist than might be assumed.

\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Sc}, p. 55.
Perhaps that is inevitable in any writing about that-which-remains. Heidegger wrote that mortals ‘are called mortals because they can die. To die means to be capable of death as death… Death is the shrine of Nothing… of that which in every respect is never something that merely exists, but which nevertheless presences.’30 Meanwhile Derrida remarks upon how death forces one to speak of rather than to speak with.31 Speaking of something is exactly what both these texts do, just as it is precisely the presencing of an absence: to speak of something which is no longer there is to bring into presence the absence of the object. It is to render that-which-remains an object which cannot presence itself any longer.

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‘Worthy of Eve before the Fall’: Representations of Palmyra in Eighteenth Century Britain

ELISABETH GRASS

‘The Ruins of Palmyra’ (1753) was the first of a new genre of architectural publication which appeared in the mid-eighteenth century, applying empirical taxonomy to the buildings of the ancient world. It promulgated the architecture of Roman Palmyra in modern Europe and was instrumental in the development of British Neo-Classicism. This essay considers two Palmyra-inspired artefacts: Gavin Hamilton’s ‘James Dawkins and Robert Wood Discovering the Ruins of Palmyra’ (1758) and Robert Adam’s ceiling to the drawing room at Osterley Park, Middlesex (c. 1763). Contemporary mimetic responses to ‘The Ruins’, these artefacts are recognised as masterpieces of their respective makers and seminal to the narrative of Neo-Classicism, but they have seldom been assessed as private commissions for private individuals. This essay suggests that they offer an insight into architectural trends, self-fashioning agendas and spheres of influence, and provide a unique prism through which to view eighteenth century connoisseurship.

Palmyra’s influence on western art and design is celebrated in its qualification as a UNESCO World Heritage site.1 This influence can be traced to the mid-eighteenth century, when James Dawkins and Robert Wood’s seminal publication The Ruins of Palmyra otherwise Tedmor in the Desart (1753) brought the ‘magnificence of Palmyra’ to Europe through descriptive prose and detailed schematic plates.2 The Ruins established a new genre of architectural publication, the methodology of which would ‘completely transform the study of Greek antiquities’.3 The empirical methodology applied first to Palmyra had a profound influence on Britain’s architectural landscape; the book was a major catalyst for British Neo-Classicism, by which connoisseurs rejected Palladian and Vitruvian models in favour of empirical studies in the Greco-Roman world.4

The recent destruction of Palmyra’s monuments has reinforced the importance of its artistic legacy. This essay began as an attempt to outline Palmyra’s aesthetic influence in Britain by concentrating on two artefacts inspired by and contemporary to The Ruins: Robert Adam’s Palmyra ceiling in the Drawing Room at Osterley Park, Middlesex (c. 1763) and Gavin Hamilton’s monumental canvas Dawkins and Wood Discovering the Ruins of Palmyra (1758). As both of these artefacts copy material from The Ruins, they offered what seemed like a profitable opportunity for tracing their indebtedness to the book, and thence to the site. In

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4 For a brief outline of the development of Neo-Classicism, see Mordant Crook, pp. 69-76.
practice, close study of the artefacts suggested that they revealed as much about the people who commissioned and created them as about their Neo-Classical context. The project quickly evolved into a study of these individuals through the works they commissioned, and suggests that Palmyra motifs might illuminate something of the mid-eighteenth century gentleman’s self-fashioning agenda. Indeed, it recasts these Palmyra artefacts as tools of the upwardly mobile nouveau riche who sought to engender gravitas through the Classical past.

Horace Walpole was outspoken in his approbation for *The Ruins of Palmyra*, describing it as ‘a noble book’, and eventually dedicating his own *Anecdotes of Painting in England* (1762) to its brilliance. He would be similarly moved a decade later by Sir Robert Child’s newly remodelled Osterley Park, in particular the drawing room which he described as ‘worthy of Eve before the fall’. This Edenic splendour was derived from Robert Adam’s Palmyra Ceiling, lately called the ‘most important single work inspired directly by *The Ruins*’ (Figure 1).7

There are some twenty Palmyra ceilings recorded in British country houses and follies of the eighteenth century. Like Adam’s at Osterley, almost all of these are copied from the South

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6 Walpole’s Correspondence, vol. 32, p. 125 (21 June 1773).


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*Figure. 1.* Robert Adam, ‘Palmyra ceiling’, Osterley Park, Middlesex (c. 1763) © Elisabeth Grass, with the kind permission of the National Trust.
Adyton ceiling of the Temple of Bel as recorded in plate XIX of *The Ruins* (Figure. 2). Broadly Hellenistic, Palmyra’s architecture spoke the language of the Classical Orders through a ‘virile local tradition’ of the Near East. Roman provincial success was based in part on its concatenation of existing deities and architectural styles with the imported Augustan models, and Plate XIX distils Palmyra’s hybridity particularly well. It is an appealing combination of exotic and controlled Classicism.

**Figure. 2.** Plate XIX, *The Ruins of Palmyra* (London, 1753), © The British Library Board, 744.f.16 (XIX).

The Osterley Palmyra ceiling is rightfully considered a masterpiece, although it deviates more from the source material than any other example. Adam lessened the depth of relief, elongated the central fleuron to accommodate the design into an oblong room, and reduced the number of encircling octagons; each is larger than the original, and contains more detail. The result is a superb example of British Neo-Classicism at work; moderation of what Browning has called the ‘bold musculature’ of the original to create a design perfect for the polite environs of an English drawing room.

Based on contemporary opinion, that the ceiling was an unqualified success, one might have expected the Palmyra motif to become one of Adam and Co.’s stock decorations. The company’s business model was to incorporate a variety of classical decorative schemes and

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9 Browning, p. 77.

10 Browning, p. 93.

11 Browning, p. 93.
designs, reusing those that were particularly successful. Adam would later articulate this, attributing his and his brother’s popularity to their ability to ‘seize with some degree of success, the beautiful spirit of antiquity, and to transfuse it, with novelty and variety, through all their numerous works’. The Adam ‘Etruscan’ interior is a prime example of this process. Indeed, the company’s success lay in its ability to create interiors that were both instantly recognisable—the à la mode Adam aesthetic—and uniquely adapted to a particular space. The Osterley ceiling seemed to fit these criteria, as it was both fashionable and a personal triumph, but nonetheless Adam would never reuse it. Moreover, when his modifications of Plate XIX produced large spandrels at the fleuron’s four corners, he filled them with a curious rococo motif rather than returning to The Ruins for further inspiration.

Why did it not become a stock design? Eileen Harris has speculated that the aegis for Osterley’s Palmyra ceiling came not from Adam, but from Sir Francis Dashwood, an early adopter of the Palmyra ceiling who had installed three at his estate at West Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. As a friend of Dawkins and Wood and founder member of the Society of Dilettanti, Dashwood was at the fore of architectural taste-making, and also enjoyed close connections with Robert Child’s bank, Child & Co. Whatever the truth about the genesis of the Osterley ceiling, it has interesting implications for other decorative schemes, and offers a tantalising view of potential interplay between designer, patron, and outside influences.

It has been said that Adam’s ceilings ‘required no knowledge, effort or understanding on the part of the spectator’. This is not quite true in the case of the Palmyra ceiling. Whilst a viewer might interpret it as successful or not, according to their taste, only those familiar with The Ruins could recognise the source material and comment authoritatively on its success as an interpretation. For those with that knowledge, the act of viewing could transcend mere aesthetic enjoyment, imparting self-satisfaction and privilege through recognition, and distinguishing the viewer from someone without the requisite understanding.

This is seen in practice in the diary of Caroline Lybbe Powys (1738-1817), a landed woman of moderate wealth who assiduously documented her peregrinations around Britain and within society. Despite her ostensible privilege and education, Lybbe Powys was unable to identify the stylistic origin of the Palmyra ceiling in Francis Dashwood’s ‘much talked of’ church. She likened it to an Egyptian Hall, presumably in the Vitruvian vein, but had no recent architectural knowledge to draw on and was evidently not furnished with any supplementary information during her visit. This was the pre-information-placard era of the private club, which resounded with secret rites, rebus-like insignia and esoterica.
Dashwood was a ‘natural clubman’ who would doubtless have enjoyed the combination of ostentation and secret knowledge suggested by the Palmyra ceiling.\(^{19}\) Perhaps in the absence of an ancient name or ancestral seat, new-made gentlemen found that esoteric taste created a self-sustaining coterie of influence and power.

The only common denominator behind Adam’s patrons was wealth, and although the majority of his clients came from old money, mercantile clients accounted for fifteen percent of his country-house commissions.\(^ {20}\) Adam, more than any other designer, did well across the social spectrum, and Peter De Bolla has suggested that newly wealthy patrons were drawn to his disregard for accuracy of copy and his ‘fantasised versions of the antique’.\(^ {21}\) Perhaps, as at Roman Palmyra, a hybrid style denoted an intensely modern process of assimilation and offered an opportunity for self-fashioning. At Osterley as elsewhere, Hellenistic remodelling conferred the gravitas of the established order with the recognisably expensive gloss of Britain’s premier interior designer.

Gravitas was likely to have appealed to the Child family, as their wealth was relatively new. Their status had been improved drastically by Sir Francis Child the elder (1642-1713), who, fittingly for the family business, acquired Osterley through a defaulted mortgage. Child took advantage of his client’s financial mismanagement in the same year as he was appointed Lord Mayor of London, as well as Jeweller in Ordinary to William III.\(^ {22}\) Although he died before taking possession of Osterley, his heirs inherited it as part of an impressive legacy which included political influence, material wealth, and an established directorship of the East India Company. His great-nephew Robert Child’s appointment of Adam coincides almost exactly with the mid-century windfalls precipitated by the Company’s expansion into South Asia, a move which bolstered investors’ coffers and was lauded as a national triumph.\(^ {23}\)

The mid-eighteenth century is notable for a spike in nationalist fervour expressed through popular culture, as evidenced by Robert Arne’s successful musical adaptation of \textit{Rule Britannia} (1740). Britain was characterised as a powerful martial and economic force, and the \textit{The Ruins of Palmyra} itself capitalised on and was co-opted into this sentiment. Robert Wood’s prefatory comment, ‘the desert was in great measure to Palmyra what the sea is to Great Britain, both in their riches and defence’ draws an explicit comparison between ancient and modern civilisations, likening Britain to Imperial Rome.\(^ {24}\) Contemporary international relations are also evoked; Wood expresses gratitude for Antoine Desgodetz’s \textit{Edifices de Rome}, but his subtextual comparison of the two projects – the French explore the relative safety of Rome whilst the British explore uncharted desert – suggests the most intrepid journey belongs to Britain, a nation already excelling overseas. Walpole recognised this in his \textit{Anecdotes}, celebrating \textit{The Ruins}’ publication, not ‘at the command of a Louis quatorze’, but as


\(^ {22}\) Harris, p. 157.


\(^ {24}\) \textit{The Ruins of Palmyra}, p. 20.
a result of the uniquely plucky spirit of British gentlemen and the nation’s ingenuity at home and abroad.25

The Ruins’ nationalist sentiment is most interestingly represented in Gavin Hamilton’s monumental canvas Dawkins and Wood Discovering the Ruins of Palmyra (1758, Figure. 3). This vast painting is an imagined representation of Dawkins and Wood’s arrival at the site in 1751. Dressed in togas, they are surrounded by palm trees and architectural masonry, three members of their mounted Arabian guard and an African page. Behind them, turned away and sketching, is the Italian Architect Giovanni Battista Bora whose drawings would ultimately illustrate the book. Three of these are incorporated into the painting; the building in the foreground, its inscription, and the distant colonnaded street and triumphal arch.26 Fascinatingly self-reflexive, Hamilton’s painting places Dawkins and Wood within a landscape they made available through their book, and in so doing becomes a manifesto for the whole imitative and empirical ethos of eighteenth century architectural investigations.

Figure. 3. James Dawkins and Robert Wood Discovering the Ruins of Palmyra, 1768, oil on canvas, 309.90 x 388.60 cm © Scottish National Gallery. Acquired by private treaty sale, with support by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund and with the assistance of the Art Fund 1997.

25 Walpole, Anecdotes, p. xiii.
Hamilton’s painting is also a curious composition which ‘elevates the achievement of two British archaeologists to the level of a national event’, most obviously through its stylised depiction of costume. Dawkins and Wood doubtless adopted a version of the ‘semi-Turkish dress’ preferred by European travellers to the Levant. Hamilton instead portrays them in Roman ceremonial costume, pointing to a tradition of portraiture – popularised by Charles II – in which Roman clothing was a signifier of dignity and timelessness. Dawkins and Wood are depicted in strict numismatic profile and gesture towards the distant arch, a staple of Roman triumphal architecture denoting a celebrated return. Hamilton’s programmatic use of chiaroscuro starkly emphasises the concepts of belonging and return; the first rays of dawn illuminate both the distant arch and Dawkins and Wood, despite not having yet reached the other figures in the foreground. As the distant stone echoes the marmoreal density of their togas, the Roman ruins and the Roman dress mirror one another across the plain of the painting. It suggests that Dawkins and Wood belong to the classical past with a legitimate claim to their ‘discovery’ of Roman Palmyra, and they bring with them the dawn of enlightenment.

The impact of the Roman costume is heightened by its juxtaposition with the travelling garb and attitudes of their retinue. Although these figures represent members of the party’s three-hundred-strong armed guard, they are cast as threatening; mounted where the British men are not, visibly armed, and strikingly animated in comparison to the frieze-like central figures. Christine Riding sees them as a foil to Dawkins and Wood, and points to the ‘aggressive incomprehension’ of the rearing rider as an animalistic attitude; it heightens the central figures’ urbanity. Untouched by the distant light, the guard belong to the jumbled immediacy of the foreground and the present and have no part in the Roman past. This they literally cannot decipher; one of them seems to puzzle over a Palmyrene inscription. Curiously, where later in the century orientalist motifs and figures would become a signifier of timelessness, for Hamilton they represent a dangerous uncertain present and emphasise the glorious past.

The painting’s narrative is that Britain (as the new Rome) has discovered its rightful property, a concept that extends to use of ‘discovery’ in the title. Theirs was not a discovery in a literal sense, for not only was Tadmor (the modern town of Palmyra) an inhabited settlement, but it had been visited by British Levant Company traders on expeditions from Aleppo from the late seventeenth century onwards. These early travellers had published illustrated accounts, but because they showed only rubble, ‘artfully arranged’, they were of little use to architectural enquiry. The Dawkins party stayed for just five days at the site.

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30 Riding, p. 51.
32 Browning, p. 73.
and can have no genuine claim to ownership, but in that time they incorporated Palmyra into the empirical canon, and it is this act which is celebrated in Hamilton’s painting.33

The painting now hangs at the National Gallery of Scotland, where it is displayed in another nationalist context, that of Hamilton as celebrated Scottish artist. Since Joseph Burke described Dawkins and Wood as ‘the great manifesto painting of Neo-Classicism’,34 scholarship has built on this view. Commentators have characterised its arch mixture of classical motifs and distinct ‘proto-romantic strains’ only as signifiers of Neo-Classicism at the hand of a genius Scottish artist living and working in Rome.35 This is a valid view, but studies have generally failed to take into account that the painting, like Adam’s ceiling, was a private commission for a private space.

Dawkins and Wood was commissioned by Henry Dawkins (1728-1814) upon the death of his brother James (1722-1767), who funded both the Palmyra expedition and the publication. He died aged just thirty five, six years after the expedition, but was known as ‘an active and dynamic organiser, an accomplished scholar, an observant naturalist, and, perhaps above all, a passionate and apparently tireless measurer and recorder of everything that he saw.’36 Perhaps most interestingly of all, James Dawkins was an absentee planter, owner of the fourth largest packet of real estate in Jamaica.37

Previously neglected by scholarship, it is only recently that the Dawkins family has emerged from under the long shadow of the Beckfords as plantation owners with pretensions to political and social advancement. Shrewd investments in Jamaican property and equally shrewd marriages into its wealthiest families meant that James Dawkins’ father left his eldest son eight sugar plantations and personal property totalling some £116,727 12s 2½d in Jamaican currency (approximately £76,200 sterling).38 This included livestock and just over one thousand African slaves. As Sheridan has noted, the family fortune assured, James and Henry Dawkins’ generational imperative was the ‘acquisition of landed estates’ in Britain; the Dawkins, like the Childs, were seeking to establish themselves.39

James Dawkins died, unmarried, before he could fulfil this imperative. Hamilton’s painting co-opts his memory into the family’s newly-noble history, by imbuing the intrepid youth with Roman gravitas. The painting was eventually given a twin in the form of Richard Brompton’s equally vast pastoral composition The Family of Henry Dawkins (1773), in which Dawkins, his wife Juliana and nine of their twelve children are pictured in an Arcadian idyll. This hung opposite Dawkins and Wood at Standlynch Park (now Trafalgar House), the country

38 Sheridan, p. 225.
villa Henry Dawkins bought c. 1764. True to the upwardly-mobile self-fashioning mode, he hired Nicholas Revett (a close associate and travelling companion of both James Dawkins and Gavin Hamilton) to remodel the house with Hellenistic additions, including a Palmyra ceiling of its own in the North Wing.\(^{40}\) Paired, the two paintings must have reflected the contrived image of the Dawkins brothers as archaeologists, taste-makers and established gentlemen, all in the appropriate setting of the newly acquired and appropriately refashioned country seat.\(^{41}\)

As with the Osterley ceiling, the Dawkins-Hamilton commission is lost and we may never know exactly how far Dawkins’s influence extended. Hamilton was certainly working from a copy of *The Ruins*, and the expedition to Palmyra seems a natural subject evoke in a commemorative scheme. Indeed, Robert Wood would eventually be eulogised in terms of his work at Palmyra, despite a long and varied career.\(^{42}\) Nonetheless, the lacuna of Dawkins’ creole heritage is noteworthy, particularly as neither Hamilton’s painting nor the Dawkins mausoleum in Chipping Norton bear any visual coda of their West Indian birth (or, more curiously, James Dawkins’s Jamaican death). Although it is not within the purview of this study, at the very least Dawkins’s slave ownership suggests the need to reinterpret the stock ‘otherness’ of the oriental figures in Hamilton’s painting; James and Henry Dawkins were men who necessarily believed in inferior and superior racial distinctions.

It is not perhaps surprising that Henry Dawkins evinced an unwillingness to publicise his Jamaican heritage. There was a common perception that wealthy creoles were gauche, as evidenced by Richard Cumberland’s *The West Indian: A Comedy*, a tremendously successful production which ran for twenty eight performances at Drury Lane in 1771.\(^{43}\) As Abbott has noted, ‘rich as creole’ became a common expression for a conspicuously wealthy new-made man.\(^{44}\) Hamilton’s painting avoids the unfashionable subject of the West Indies, whilst still evoking Dawkins’s mastery over foreign lands and foreign peoples.

This interpretation of the painting suggests some of the concerns of a newly-made gentleman, and points to the tensions at the heart of self-fashioning in a society with strict rules of taste and fashion. Conspicuous consumption funded by banking and mercantilism did not go unnoticed; Walpole revelled in Osterley’s ostentation, and its potential to discomfit the gentry:

> oh! the palace of palaces! and yet a palace sans crown, sans coronet—but such expense! such profusion! and yet half an acre produces all the rents

\(^{40}\) *A Social and Architectural History of Trafalgar Park* [http://www.trafalgarpark.com/history] [21 Jan. 2016].

\(^{41}\) This process was common amongst absentee plantation owners, see Perry Gauci, *William Beckford: First Prime Minister of the London Empire* (New Haven, 2013), p. 52.

\(^{42}\) Walpole’s eulogy for Wood’s tomb references the ‘more lasting monument’ of *The Ruins*, see *Walpole’s Correspondence*, vol. 32, pp. 125-126 (21 June 1773).

\(^{43}\) The play hinges upon the wealthy but hapless Belcour, a kind of noble savage whose unfamiliarity with English customs is used for satirical ends.

that furnish such magnificence … all the Percies and Seymours must die of envy…\textsuperscript{45}

The ‘half acre’ is Child’s banking premises at number one Fleet Street, and Walpole envisions ancient families appalled by the luxury and splendour of a house with such baldly mercantile beginnings. Walpole’s arch comments suggest that he rather enjoyed the phenomenon, and he was a demonstrably innovative aesthete in his own measure. Not all were so pleased. The architect James Paine, one of The Ruins’ few contemporary detractors and a devoted Palladian, was disconcerted by the trends. He criticised the fashion for foreign travel among architects and the age’s developing obsession with archaeological precedent, emphasising the importance of practical convenience rather than the pursuit of ‘inconsistent antiquated modes’.\textsuperscript{46} Evidently concerned for Britain’s aesthetic and social landscape, Paine issued an architectural treatise that was part ultra-conservative invective against the sort of activities undertaken by both Child and Dawkins. As perhaps befits a man who dismissed Greek architecture as ‘despicable ruins’, Paine would be edged out of posterity by the force of Neo-Classicism, but his anxieties reflect the unease that both new money and new architectural investigation could engender.

Neo-Classical artefacts such as those discussed in this essay are often characterised as the legacy of a fixed and venerable past, but Paine’s perspective offers a reminder that the development of British Neo-Classicism was neither a linear nor a hierarchical phenomenon. It was borne of enquiry and influence within a group of private gentlemen seeking new aesthetic modes and expression. As possessions of the National Trust and National Gallery of Scotland respectively, Adam’s Palmyra ceiling and Hamilton’s painting have long been co-opted into the public Neo-Classical context, which has occluded their origins as private commissions for private homes.

Gavin Hamilton did indeed exploit the self-referential and narrative possibilities of his medium to create a nationalist panegyric, but the public knew it only through engravings he commissioned.\textsuperscript{47} The original canvas formed part of an elaborate private narrative in which the success of the Ruins reflected upon the Dawkins family and established venerability for a creole planter dynasty which preferred not to own its beginnings. Adam’s ceiling relied upon the viewer’s knowledge of the source material to convey its fullest meaning, and speaks to the self-referential ‘clubland’ of eighteenth century connoisseurship. It also challenges the assumption that an Adam interior denoted a top-down designer-led process and points to the many spheres of influence that connected gentlemen of the day.

These Palmyra artefacts represent a trifold interplay between the source material, maker and owner. Viewed as products of their patrons’ as well as their creators’ agendas they can be lifted from the impersonal Neo-Classical context in which they are usually viewed, and

\begin{footnotes}
\item[45] Walpole’s Correspondence, vol. 32, p.126.
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considered independently as fascinating artefacts in their own right. The ceiling and painting offer new avenues into the study of their source material, which in the aftermath of Palmyra’s destruction we must continue to revisit afresh.

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Figure 1. Robert Adam, ‘Palmyra ceiling’, Osterley Park, Middlesex (c. 1763) © Elisabeth Grass, with the kind permission of the National Trust.

Figure 2. Plate XIX, The Ruins of Palmyra (London,1753). © The British Library Board, 744.f.16 (XIX).

Figure 3. Gavin Hamilton, James Dawkins and Robert Wood Discovering the Ruins of Palmyra, 1768, oil on canvas, 309.90 x 388.60 cm © Scottish National Gallery. Acquired by private treaty sale, with support by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund and with the assistance of the Art Fund 1997.
A Prospect and a Description: The Pleasures of the Imagination in Eighteenth Century Naples

LESLEY MURPHY

To the eighteenth century traveller, a visit to Naples meant an encounter with Nature and Antiquity that necessitated an aesthetic as well as an intellectual response. As Romantic Sensibility began to trump Reason in the 1780s, the subjective came to dominate the objective as a mode of apprehension, and the Sublime gained ascendancy over the Beautiful as tourists sought to be thrilled as well as charmed by what they saw. This paper compares two responses to a famous Grand Tour site of classical origin, the Grotto of Pozzillo, located on the northern side of the Bay of Naples: an etching from William Hamilton’s luxury folio on volcanoes, Campi Phlegraei (1776), and an extract from a suppressed travel memoir, Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents (1783), by William Beckford, considering both in the light of these dichotomies and the interplay of the cultural shifts and philosophical tensions characteristic of the age.

‘A beautiful Prospect delights the Soul, as much as a Demonstration; and a Description in Homer has charmed more Readers than a Chapter in Aristotle’, Joseph Addison, The Spectator, 2, 411 (21 June 1712).

On November 2nd, 1780, twenty-year-old William Beckford set off from Rome towards Naples on the southernmost reach of his first Grand Tour. Southern Italy was ‘the classic ground’, the meeting place of two great western civilisations, Greece and Rome: for a young gentleman temperamentally unsuited to university, the Tour would have constituted the final phase of his education. Passing by the Circean promontory, a toponymical evocation of Homer’s Odyssey, he entered the Campania Felix, legendary landing place of Aeneas, Virgil’s heroic founder of Rome, the following afternoon. His destination was the Palazzo Sessa, residence of his second cousin, Sir William Hamilton, British envoy to the court of Naples. Sir William had taken up his diplomatic posting in the Bourbon-ruled Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in 1764, and, in addition to holding official functions, kept open house for aristocratic travellers, entertained famous scholars and artists like Wincklemann and Goethe, and pursued his passion for antiquities, volcanoes and music. It was the heyday of the Grand Tour: the three ‘peaceful’ decades of the eighteenth century between the end of the Seven Years’ War in 1763 and Napoleon’s occupation of Italy in 1796, a period when continental travel was relatively safe and the funds to do so abounded.

Hamilton and Beckford had little in common temperamentally: they were a generation apart; Hamilton was an ‘impoverished’ aristocrat who had married a Welsh heiress,

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Catherine Barlow, to secure his fortune, while Beckford’s immense wealth derived from his family’s slave plantations in Jamaica; Sir William was vigorous, charismatic and sanguine by nature, while young William was of an indolent, eccentric and melancholic disposition. Each was a product of his age: Hamilton embodied the Enlightenment consciousness of the mid-century - privileging rational empiricism, self-control, and the balanced harmony of beauty - while Beckford arrogated the end-of-century Romantic imperatives: a fervid imagination coupled with a neurotic sensibility and indiscriminate veneration of all things sublime. This essay seeks to illustrate and evaluate the philosophical and cultural implications of these differences through the comparative analysis of two artefacts that represent and respond to a physical place, the Grotto of Posillipo, site of Virgil’s so-called tomb on the north side of the bay of Naples. The ‘prospect’ is a hand-coloured copper-plate etching by the Anglo-Neapolitan artist, Pietro Fabris; one of the 54 illustrations in Hamilton’s luxury folio publication Campi Phlegraei, printed in Naples in 1776. The ‘description’ is an extract from the November 6th journal entry from Beckford’s travel memoir, Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents, printed in 1783 but withheld from circulation during his lifetime. Considered together, they provide an insight into the aesthetics of Grand Tour art and literature, reflecting the cultural shifts and tensions that occurred as the Age of Reason made way for Romanticism.

According to Addison, extrapolating from Locke, the Pleasures of the Imagination were twofold: those that were primary, deriving from ‘such Objects as are before our Eye’, and those that were secondary, ‘which flow from the Ideas of visible Objects’, called up from memory or imagination when we contemplate artistic representations of things. While both the illustrated plate and the travelogue are really concerned with the latter, since they were intended for an audience ‘back home’, it is appropriate here to briefly outline those features of the Grotta di Pausiliopo that contributed to the primary pleasure of viewing it in loco. Known locally as the Crypta Neapolitana, the ‘crypt’ was in fact a Roman tunnel hewn through the hill of Posilippo as part of a military infrastructure connecting the Greek city of Neapolis on the southern side with the Roman harbor city of Puteoli (today Pozzuoli), situated in the volcanic caldera, Campi Flegrei (Fields of Flame) to the west. Carved out of the local yellow tufaceous rock, the tunnel is 711 metres long, between 4 and 5 metres wide, with a varying height of 5 to 20 metres. It was originally constructed in the first century B.C. by the Roman architect Cocceius Auctus and remained a public right of way until 1929. Over the centuries, it acquired its reputation through the writings of authors such as Seneca, Petronius and Petrarch, and later through the accounts of travellers and visitors to Naples, mainly due to the presence of a Roman columbarium that came to be associated in popular tradition with the burial place of Virgil. It was a great place to initiate intrepid travellers into the ‘curiosities’ of Naples, due to its rather insalubrious aspect, its association with medieval catholicism and mysterious priapic cults, and its hold on popular superstition.

Figure 1: Gaspare Vanvitelli, *The Grotto of Pozzuoli, with Virgil’s Tomb*, 1702, Oil on canvas, 49 x 64.2 cm. © Compton Verney Art Gallery and Park.

Figure 2: Pietro Fabris, *The Grotto of Posillipo*, plate XVI, hand-coloured copper-plate etching from *Campi Phlegraei* by William Hamilton. Photo: author’s own.
The magnificent folio *Campi Phlegraei* was the brain-child of Sir William Hamilton, but the Anglo-Neapolitan topographical artist Pietro Fabris, its editor and illustrator, delivered it. Each copper-line etching is based on sketches of Vesuvius and its environs made by Fabris, a painter specializing in genre scenes of local colour and customs, under the supervision of his patron en plein air. The purpose was to illustrate the written observations of Hamilton regarding volcanic activity in the Naples area, remitted in a series of epistolary reports to the Royal Society, of which Hamilton eventually became a Fellow. The plates themselves testify to a symbiotic process of scientific observation and artistic creation, with Hamilton and Fabris making guest appearances in person, a visual trope intended to testify to the authenticity of the scene being documented. The bringing together of Hamilton’s letters and Fabris’ views into a deluxe hand-coloured two-volume-with-supplement folio production turned what was initially an undertaking driven by empirical observation and natural philosophy into an aesthetic enterprise of the highest order.

The etching from *Campi Phlegraei* owes much to contemporary eighteenth century taste and a tradition of pictorial depictions of the site initiated by the Dutch draughtsman and vedutista, Gaspar van Wittel (Vanvitelli) at the turn of the century. One of his earliest views of the entrance to the tunnel is currently on view in the Naples collection at Compton Verney (Figure 1). Credited with popularizing the topographical genre of vedute with his Grand Tour clientele, Vanvitelli produced at least thirteen different autograph versions and a wash drawing of the view of the grotto between 1701-1715. This oil painting establishes the conventions of the genre in a picturesque representation of the natural and man-made features of the grotto: a predominantly horizontal perspective with the entrance to the tunnel constitutes the vanishing point of the view, the monument commemorating Alfonso of Aragon’s fifteenth century restoration of the thoroughfare dominates the lower left-hand side, and a Roman colombarium over-run by vegetation, Virgil’s alleged resting place, is perched on the upper left side above the entrance. A sense of scale and local colour is provided by the staffage of figures lingering or in transit through the tunnel, together with the shadows cast by the late afternoon sun. The blue sky and intensity of light are unmistakably Italian. The white hooded figure seated in the foreground is Vanvitelli’s trademark. The curve of the road and expanse of paving stones signal an important theme: Man’s dominion over Nature.

Fabris’ plate adopts a somewhat different stance. The angle, for a start, is unusual. Virgil’s ‘tomb’ is no longer visible, while a side view of a single pilaster of the Aragonese monument merely provides some verticality to the perspective, suggesting that both the classical context and the urban topography are only incidentally relevant to the representation. The tunnel and vanishing point are displaced to one side, although the architectural features of the Roman construction are more prominent, while the staffage contributes a sense of peaceful serenity and timelessness to the scene. The seated figure in the foreground is either Hamilton or Fabris, a kind of composite genius loci, and his gaze directs our attention to the real

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protagonist of the view: the rocky outcrop, its lines accentuated by shadow and the luminosity of the late afternoon. In a letter to the Royal Society included in the accompanying text, dated October 16, 1770, Hamilton offers some ‘Remarks upon the Nature of the Soil of Naples, and its Neighbourhood’. What is of interest to him and his intended audience is tufa, the geological material he knew had contributed to the preservation of Herculaneum, the excavations of which were currently underway:

The stratum of erupted matter that immediately covers the town [is] of a sort of soft stone, composed of pumice, ashes, and burnt matter. It is exactly of the same nature with what is called here the Naples stone; the Italians distinguish it by the name of tufa, and it is in general use for building. Its colour is usually that of our free stone, but sometimes tinged with grey, green, and yellow [...] The chief article in the composition of tufa seems to me to be, that fine burnt material, which is called puzzolane, whose binding quality and utility by way of cement are mentioned by Vitruvius and which is to be met with only in countries that have been subject to subterraneous fires. It is, I believe, a sort of lime prepared by nature. This, mixed with water, great or small pumice stones, fragments of lava, and burnt matter, may naturally be supposed to harden into a stone of this kind; and, as water frequently attends eruptions of fire [...] I am convinced the first matter that issued from Vesuvius, and covered Herculaneum, was in the state of liquid mud.7

This, then, is the true subject of the view: not the grotto or its illustrious literary connection, but soil strata, as Hamilton subsequently acknowledges: ‘The famous grotto anciently cut through the mountain of Pausilipo, to make a road from Naples to Puzzole, gives you an opportunity of seeing that the whole of that mountain is tufa’.8

What brings this analysis into the realm of aesthetics is Fabris’ treatment of colour and the philosophical implications of Hamilton’s ruminations on geology. The prospect is rendered pleasing in Addison’s terms because of the delicate colours and shading that give a mediterranean warmth to the scene and highlight the gradations within the rock formation. The limited palette of the aquatint etching overlaid with muted watercolour washes and bodycolour for definition confers an almost photographic realism well adapted to Hamilton’s documentary aims. The whole conforms admirably to the tenets of Beauty laid down by Edmund Burke in 1757:

First, the colours of beautiful bodies must not be dusky or muddy, but clean and fair. Secondly, they must not be of the strongest kind. Those which seem most appropriated to beauty, are the milder of every sort; light greens; soft blues; weak whites; pink reds; and violets. Thirdly, if the colours be strong

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8 Hamilton, Campi Phlegraei, p. 66.
and vivid, they are always diversified, and the object is never of one strong colour; there are almost always such a number of them (as in variegated flowers) that the strength and glare of each is considerably abated.\(^9\)

In preparing this illustration, Fabris and his assistants attended to creating an harmonious effect of visual balance designed to evoke a contemplative mood and a pleasurable appreciation of natural beauty. The mud was for the scientists.

Philosophically, Burke’s *Inquiry* places Beauty in an either/or dichotomy with the Sublime, which he defines as a kind of pleasurable feeling of terror experienced when we encounter something, or a representation of a something, we perceive as being a potential threat or beyond our comprehension. Seneca’s early account of an unsettling transit through the tunnel\(^10\) created an enduring association of the grotto with the thrill of the Sublime. Addison, with inimitable English skepticism, wanted none of it. He begins his account of the place by negating the possibility of it being Virgil’s burial site: ‘It is certain that this Poet was buried at Naples; but I think it is almost as certain that his tomb stood on the other side of town, which looks towards Vesuvius’.\(^11\) He goes on to note wryly that ‘The common people of Naples believe it to have been wrought by magic, and that Virgil was the magician; who is in greater repute among the Neapolitans for having made the grotto than the Aeneid’. He goes on to describe the grotto in culturally familiar terms: ‘If a man would form to himself a just idea of this place, he must fancy a vast rock undermined from one end to the other, and a highway running through it, near as long and as broad as the mall in St. James’s park’. Dismissing Seneca’s gloomy musings; Addison arrives at his own, matter-of-fact explanation for its existence:

> There are nowhere about the mountain any vast heaps of stones, though it is certain the great quantities of them that are dug out of the rock could not easily conceal themselves, had they probably not been consumed in the moles and buildings of Naples. This confirmed in me a conjecture, which I made at the first sight of the subterraneous passage, that it was not at first designed so much for a high-way as for a quarry of stone, but that the inhabitants, finding a double advantage by it, hewed it into the form we now see.\(^12\)

Beckford’s account of his visit to the grotto on 6 November 1780, though notionally inspired by Burke and Seneca, is largely the result of his own literary imaginings, sharpened by his

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11 Joseph Addison, ‘The Antiquities and Natural Curiosities that lie near the City of Naples’, in *Remarks on several parts of Italy, &c.: In the years 1701, 1702, 1703* (London, 1767) p.132.

apodemic readings. Having ignored the breathtaking views of the bay as he makes his way there, the description of what he finds might just as well be of a painting as of the place itself:

[I] soon reached the entrance of the grotto, which lay in dark shades, whilst the crags that lower over it were brightly illumined. Shrubs and vines grow luxuriantly in the crevices of the rock; and their fresh yellow colours, variegated with ivy, have a beautiful effect. To the right a grove of pines sprung from the highest pinnacles: on the left, bay and chestnut conceal the tomb of Virgil, placed on the summit of a cliff which impends over the opening of the grotto, and is fringed with a florid vegetation.

Beckford is immediately drawn to the mouth of the cave, where the noise of locals quarrying stone breaks his reverie. The mood of the moment provokes him into comparing the quarriers to the Cimmerians, a mythical people described in Book 11 of Homer’s Odyssey as living beyond Oceanus in a land of fog and darkness at the entrance to Hades. In keeping with the sepulchral surroundings, he goes on to invoke the Manes, chthonic deities often referred to on Roman tombstones with the letters D.M. = Dis Manibus, ‘for the ghost gods’. With almost as much conviction as Addison, Beckford postulates: ‘Twas here the mysterious race I have just mentioned performed their infernal rites, and it was this excavation perhaps which led to their abode’. The implication, of course, is fatuously ironic: the presence of people has destroyed Beckford’s illusion of solitude, and he wishes them to the devil in consequence. For him, the Cimmerians are none other than the famously picturesque lazzeroni of Naples. Beckford is actually confirming Addison’s quarry theory, but he employs a recondite allusion to the Homeric sublime in doing so.

The reverent tone is continued in another reference to Addison’s journal entry and the story concerning Petrarch’s response to the guide who told him of Virgil’s ‘magical’ powers and his overnight creation of the grotto. Beckford invites his reader to conjecture Petrarch’s answer, who famously replied that he was unaware Virgil was also a sorcerer. The humour is characteristic of the ‘Fool of Fonthill’ but raises the question of intention. Beckford, like Hamilton, refuses to concede to popular taste and concludes that the most appealing aspect of the place was the opportunity it afforded for scrambling about. He effectively deflates the reader’s gothic expectations by his self-consciously ironic posture. It is his own personal trope: a form of literary and apodemic bathos, aimed at undermining the genre he was writing in - and had assiduously studied - by poking fun at fellow travellers who were rather more literal and high-minded than himself. The encounter with the ‘sibyl’ at Cumae in the subsequent entry is an even more flagrant example of the same.

Beckford does, nevertheless, attain a moment of Romantic sublimity. From a vantage point high above the staffage of the scene below him, ‘[he] hazarded [his] neck on the top of one of

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the pines, and looked contemptuously down on the race of pigmies that were so busily moving to and fro’. What follows is an inspired panegyric:

The sun was fiercer than I could have wished, but the sea-breezes fanned me in my aërial situation, which commanded the grand sweep of the bay, varied by convents, palaces, and gardens, mixed with huge masses of rock and crowned by the stately buildings of the Carthusians and fortress of St. Elmo. Add a glittering blue sea to this perspective, with Caprea rising from its bosom, and Vesuvius breathing forth a white column of smoke into the ether, and you will then have a scene upon which I gazed with delight, for more than an hour, almost forgetting that I was perched upon the head of a pine, with nothing but a frail branch to uphold me. However, I descended alive, as Virgil’s genii, I am resolved to believe, were my protectors.16

Although rising to a rhetoric worthy of Longinus, Beckford was, however, actually responding to the view of the bay he had ignored earlier that day rather than to the grotto itself. Ultimately, it was Sir William who fully grasped the sublimity, as well as the beauty, of the cave in the hill of Posillipo, and it was Nature that, quite literally, ignited his imagination.

While Beckford was transported by the magnificence of the prospect contemplated while hanging from a tree, Hamilton reasoned the implications of what he saw. A description of a rock sample concludes a subsequent letter to the Royal Society, not reproduced in the folio, but published in an earlier version of Observations:

I found, in the tufa of the mountain of Pausilipo, a fragment of lava: one side I polished, to shew it to be true lava; the other shews the signs of the tufa, with which it is incorporated. It has evidently been rounded by friction, and most probably by rolling in the sea. Is it not natural then to imagine that there must have been Volcanos near this spot, long before the formation of the mountain of Pausilipo? This little stone may perhaps raise in your mind such reflections as it did in mine, relative to the great changes our globe suffers, and the probability of its great antiquity.17

In his allusion to the timescale of geological transformation, Hamilton, combining empirical observation and rational speculation, takes us beyond Burke into the realms of Kantian phenomenology and modern geophysics. His Campi Phlegraeae was a scientific investigation but it was also an aesthetic response to a physical manifestation of the Sublime: that power and beauty in Nature which, because of its relationship to time and history, as well as to the individual, makes apprehension a function of reason, not feeling.

Addison would probably have described Beckford as ‘a man of polite imagination’, Hamilton ‘a man of understanding’. The younger man’s pretensions were less grandiose than his older cousin’s, whose costly folio Beckford had surely perused in the library at Palazzo Sessa. He seems to have had enough self-deprecation not to put his own Dreams, Waking Thoughts and

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16 Beckford, p.206.
Incidents into circulation when it was printed in 1783, ordering the suppression of nearly all of the 500 copies of the original print run as soon as it came out. Yet the style is witty, racy and replete with lively details and touches of humour that do indeed 'charm the reader'. Ultimately, however, the pleasures which derive from each artefact are genuinely incomparable, and for an armchair Grand Tourist, while one might constitute an amusing diversion, the other raises a teleological Leviathan. Not a matter of Taste, perhaps, but of Judgement.

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**LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS**

Figure 1. Gaspare Vanvitelli, *The Grotto of Pozzuoli, with Virgil’s Tomb*, 1702, Oil on canvas, 49 x 64.2 cm, Compton Verney, U.K. Image courtesy of Compton Verney Art Gallery and Park

Investigating Personal Character: Sir John Barnard – A Portrait and *A Present for an Apprentice*

HAROLD PEARCE

The most highly influential business book of the twentieth-century was based upon the learning from over 200 years of success literature and was founded upon the principle of the ‘Character Ethic’. Whilst researching the extent of this success literature, it was discovered that in the early Georgian period, Sir John Barnard, Lord Mayor of London in 1737, wrote a treatise entitled ‘A Present for an Apprentice’. This treatise espoused the character ethic through a code of conduct that apprentices could follow if they were to successfully make their way in the world. This paper presents personal character as offered by Barnard and briefly deliberates upon its true reflection of his conduct in life, before investigating whether this character was manifest within the celebrated portraiture of the day, as depicted by Joseph Highmore.

‘Men discharge their duty to the world, who act uprightly, whatever is their motive; but they are best acquitted to themselves, who love and practice virtue, for its own divine perfections’.1

Whilst firmly placing the discussion within this paper in the eighteenth-century, the seed of thought was rooted in a much more contemporary text. Highly regarded as the most influential business book of the twentieth-century, Stephen Covey’s *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* amassed the learning from over two hundred years of success literature into a single treatise that centred around the ‘Character Ethic’.2 This focused the foundation of success on such personal characteristics as integrity, humility, fidelity, temperance, courage, justice, patience, industry, simplicity and modesty.3 Whilst undertaking some initial research into the application of such characteristics within the historical literature, a book was discovered by Sir John Barnard entitled *A Present for an Apprentice*, that laid out a startlingly similar set of criteria, upon which a young apprentice may enter ‘gracefully on the stage of the world’.4 This led to a question as to what was deemed the appropriate personal character for a young working man to hold in the early Georgian period, and whether this matched up to the documented character of Barnard himself. Furthermore, a comment within the dedication of Barnard’s book stated ‘Be what you see, carrying with it a much more

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3 Covey, 2004, p.18.
4 It was initially written in 1740, but has gone through at least ten editions, which made it available well into the nineteenth-century (Anon, ‘A Present for an Apprentice’, *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society*, 5, 5 (1931), p.17; plus Bodleian library search); Barnard, p.9.
commanding force, than *be what you read!*, which led to an investigation of a portrait of Sir John Barnard, painted by Joseph Highmore, to see if Barnard’s personal character could be determined within the picture.5 This paper, therefore, addresses Barnard’s personal character through an investigation of two objects, *A Present for an Apprentice* and Highmore’s portrait of Barnard.

That Sir John Barnard had a deep and sympathetic understanding of human nature seems apparent from his intelligent discussion of the weaknesses and foibles of mankind within *A Present for an Apprentice*.6 This was founded upon his personal experiences of a life rooted in business and politics. Barnard’s treatise was written in the form of a lengthy letter or tract addressed to his son, providing advice upon which to conduct himself as an apprentice, prior to making his own way as a master in business. The title ‘Apprentice’ is an important one, in that a successful apprentice could become a Freeman and then a Liveryman, upon gaining the freedom of the City of London, within one of the Livery Companies of London.7 Only a Liveryman could vote (and be voted) for distinguished City of London positions, including that of the Lord Mayor. An apprentice could, therefore, with diligence and the right personal character, ultimately become the Lord Mayor of London.

As an object in its own right, *A Present for an Apprentice* is a simple pamphlet, substantial enough to provide detailed guidance, but succinct enough to be read in a single sitting. The pragmatic value of the guide’s advice in the early Georgian period may account for it going through at least ten editions.8 The copy referred to in this paper is a third edition, dated 1807, and was printed for the publisher John Joseph Stockdale.9 How many of each edition were sold is not known, but the numbers must have been substantial enough to merit continued printing well into the nineteenth-century.

Barnard’s reputation was exemplified in a 1741 notice, presenting reasons for electing certain Members of Parliament:

… he is so much more the deserving of our Choice, since he has shewn himself, upon all Occasions, susceptible of none, but a publick Spirit, and fearless of the Consequences in serving, or attempting to serve, his Country… This was a Roman

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5 Barnard, Dedication Pg [Italics original].
6 Anon, 1931, p.15.
7 Barnard himself was in the Worshipful Company of Glovers, and then Grocers, the second highest ranking of London’s Great Twelve City Livery Companies, see J.B. Heath, *Some Account of the Worshipful Company of Grocers of the City of London* (London, 1829)).
8 A tenth edition, printed for James Fletcher, was commented upon by the British Historical Society in 1931 (Anon, 1931, p.15).
9 Whilst this copy is a facsimile printing of the original, its presentation is similar to a copy sold at Bonhams in 2009, which had an ownership inscription of Thomas Barnes (1805) and was backed with contemporary marbled boards (Bonhams, ‘Advice [Barnard [John]] A Present for an Apprentice’ <http://www.bonhams.com/auctions/> [24 Jan. 2016]). Stockdale was himself a Freeman of the Stationers’ Company (H. Barker, ‘Stockdale, John [c.1749-1814]’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26541> [1 Feb. 2016]).
Virtue, and ought to render him dear to Britons; for to act uprightly without Applause, and in Despight of Clamour, is the surest Sign of an heroick Temper.10

Indeed, Hayton notes that:

All who have written concerning Sir John Barnard, and all who were acquainted with him, have united in testifying to the universal excellence of his character. He was not only blameless, but eminently exemplary, as a son, a husband, a father, a master, a benefactor, a merchant, a magistrate, and a senator. To the faithful and active discharge of the personal and social duties, he added a most devout sense of religion.11

Whilst it is not in the scope of this paper to substantially enquire into the veracity of these historical records, it should be noted that the available records that have been consulted on Barnard have all presented a public and private excellence of personal character. It is upon all the roles that Hayton quotes above, that Barnard comments and advises upon within A Present for an Apprentice, advising, above all, that ‘the grand foundation…must be an inviolable attachment to truth, both in word and deed’.12 Employing discourses ranging from economics to courtship, he shared advice centred upon a foundation of honesty and humility, and concluded with a devoutly religious stance, stating, ‘God is a spirit; worship him in spirit and truth,’ and to ‘come before him with the incense of an innocent and virtuous life’.13

The written treatise by Barnard exemplified the personal character that was evidenced in the public recognition of his life. But what about the picture, would this present a visual manifestation of such personal character? The simple, but major, visual questions ‘What, Where and When?’ need to be asked when looking at the painting of Sir John Barnard (fig. 1).14

The painting is a full-length portrait, entitled ‘Sir John Barnard (1685-1764), Lord Mayor of London (1737)’, which not only introduces the sitter, but also presents the occasion upon which the portrait was painted. It was acquired by the City of London Corporation in 1957, from the collection of Edwina, Countess Mountbatten, and forms part of the collection of the Guildhall Art Gallery.15 The painter of the portrait is identified as Joseph Highmore.

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10 Anon, Reasons for electing Sir EDWARD BELLAMY, Knight and Alderman, Sir JOHN BARNARD, Knight and Alderman, MICAJAH PERRY, Esq; and Alderman, and the Honourable Vice-Admiral VERNON, Members in the ensuing Parliament for this Metropolis (London, 1741).
12 Barnard, p. 13.
13 Barnard, p. 168.
15 City of London Corporation; little else is known of the painting’s provenance; how it came into the possession of the Countess, or where it had originally hung.
Figure 1. Joseph Highmore, *Sir John Barnard (1685–1764), Lord Mayor of London (1737)*, 1738, oil on canvas, 236cm x 144cm, Guildhall Art Gallery, London. Image courtesy of City of London Corporation.

The painting is oil on canvas, and is 236cm by 144cm in size. Whilst being unable to view the painting in situ in Guildhall Art Gallery, a digital image of the portrait was nevertheless projected onto a plain wall, at scale, and it is evident that it is painted at life size. This is important in terms of how the painting is received by the viewer. It is unlikely that the painting was glazed in any way, but it is likely to have been framed; however, details of the latter are not provided. I suspect that due to the Rococo style, and the period in which it was painted, a substantial, ornamental, wooden frame would have been used, but whether this remains original or has been replaced over the past 278 years is impossible to tell.

It is difficult to decipher who the original audience for the painting would have been, or where it would have originally hung. Highmore was often commissioned, as was the contemporary fashion, by the wealthy classes to have their portrait painted in order to hang in the home. However, this doesn’t seem to fit with the character of Barnard, whose modesty was exemplified in an example relating to a statue that was sculpted of him in 1746. In veneration of his achievements, the merchants of London erected the statue, during his lifetime, in the Royal Exchange, an honour which had not been conferred on anyone without a crown. However, Barnard thought that such a testimony ought not to be paid to any character until its perseverance in integrity had been sealed by death. Accordingly, he said (and fulfilled his promise) that he could not, with decorum and delicacy, appear in the Royal Exchange whilst the statue was there. He contented to do his business in front of the building from then on. It would likely be ‘uncharacteristic’ of Barnard, therefore, to stand beneath a portrait of himself hung in his home, and it is more likely that the portrait was commissioned by the City of London and hung in a more public setting, for a selected audience of merchants and chosen associates.

Highmore was known to have painted pictures that he then kept on display in his studio in Lincoln’s Inn Fields. This is unlikely with such a portrait of Barnard, and whilst it may well have been painted and displayed in the studio for a short while upon its completion, it would undoubtedly have been collected and hung by its patron soon after. With Barnard being a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Grocers, it could well have hung in the original Grocer’s Hall, which was built in London’s Old Jewry, thereby limiting the audience to a select group of people. Ultimately, it is unlikely that the portrait was intended for a wide public audience, despite the wide public acclaim that Barnard acquired as Lord Mayor of London.

Undoubtedly, the portrait was commissioned in order to celebrate, as per the painting’s title, the achievement of Barnard in his role as Lord Mayor. As Einberg notes, ‘painting [of this period] was still largely confined to aristocratic circles, large in scale, aiming to record dynastic grandeur, splendid possessions or epic achievement’, and it is to the latter that this portrait points. The painting is dated 1738, so it would have likely been started on Barnard’s appointment as Lord Mayor, and completed some time within his twelve-month tenure, or as it was coming to its close.

19 Hayton; T. Hankey, Preface to *Memoirs of the Late Sir John Barnard, Knt. and Alderman of the City of London, Together with Notes furnished by Mr. Overall, Librarian to the City of London Guildhall Library* (London, 1885), p.16.
20 Hankey attests to Barnard’s private character displaying integrity with that shown in public.
21 An example of this being his celebrated *Pamela* series, from 1744, an adaptation of Samuel Richardson’s bestselling novel, see Einberg, p.157.
22 Einberg, p.13.
Joseph Highmore, a scholar of Sir Godfrey Kneller’s painting academy, was highly regarded as the best English painter of the early Georgian period (after William Hogarth) with a wide range that stretched from Kneller-inspired, free-bravura brushwork portraits of the 1720s to small-scale, direct conversation pieces.23 Highmore’s portrait of Barnard displays an elegant Rococo style, which had influenced his paintings from the 1730s onwards.24 There is a sense of chiaroscuro within this painting, with the sitter’s head, right hand, and stockings providing three points of light along a central vertical plane in an otherwise darkly painted representation. The stockings provide some balance and contrast to the lower half of the painting, whilst the hand and the face are quite purposefully given prominence as the main points of interest. The light is shown coming from the left of the frame, enhanced by the shadow of the sword in the background, as if a narrow window has swathed the sitter in natural light, thereby allowing him to radiate from the gloom behind him.

The architectural background and the paved/tiled floor in both the foreground and the background give the image perspective, and certainly point to Highmore’s training in geometry and perspective and the scientific side of his art.25 It is highly likely that the arches represent the buildings of the Royal Exchange, where Barnard would have conducted much of his daily business. The fact that a wall has been painted to the left of the image, and that Barnard is turned towards the arches to the right, gives prominence to the setting within which the portrait is depicted. Whilst likely to have been designed by Highmore, the background may well have been painted by studio assistants, which was very much the practice for successful portrait painters of the period, with Highmore himself concentrating on the hands, face, and likely in this case (due to the detail) the clothing of the sitter.26

References to the position of Lord Mayor are obviously stated. The office of Lord Mayor was instituted in 1189 and the position was elected by the City, rather than appointed by the Sovereign, ever since a Royal Charter providing for a Mayor was issued by King John in 1215. Importantly, since 1435, the Lord Mayor had been chosen from the Aldermen of the City of London.27 Barnard was elected as Lord Mayor, after being put forward by his contemporary Aldermen, in 1737; his qualification as a current Alderman, and having served as a City Sheriff, being mandatory requirements for selection to the position, notwithstanding the high regard for his personal character amongst his colleagues within the Royal Exchange.28 During a ‘Silent Ceremony’ to be sworn into office, the mayoral insignia of Seal, Purse, Sword and Mace were transferred to the incoming Lord Mayor, and it is these objects which are depicted to the left of the portrait, laid on a simply-dressed table.29 Further reference to the position is laid around the neck of Barnard, in the form of the Royal Livery

23 Einberg, p.15.
26 Einberg, p. 23.
28 Hankey, p. 10.
29 A modern account of which may be found at City of London, 2016.
Collar of Esses. This had been worn by the Lord Mayor since 1545, and was bequeathed by Sir John Alen for his successors to wear. It was enlarged in 1567 and contained twenty-eight Esses (the Lancastrian ‘S’), Tudor roses, the tasseled knots of the Garter, and the Portcullis, from which hung the Mayoral Jewel. The elaborate robes worn by Barnard in the painting are less likely to be mayoral robes, as these were either scarlet or crimson, trimmed with an ermine cape. The robes worn by Barnard are much more likely, therefore, to be of his Company Livery, which gives greater credence to the idea that the portrait was commissioned by the Worshipful Company of Grocers and that the architectural arches do indeed refer to the Royal Exchange and not the mayoral residence.

Returning to the subject of the hands and head of the portrait, it is this which stands out, and which continues to both catch the eye, and question Highmore’s depiction of the character of Barnard. Barthes wrote of an image, that its ‘punctum is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)’, and whilst maybe not an accident, it is the depiction of the right hand and face, and the overall body position of the portrait that is ‘bruising’. Originally, the author of this paper experienced the portrait whilst searching online for images of Sir John Barnard; several results were shown, but of all, this was the image that caught the eye. Barnard’s body is turned to his left, accentuated by the outward turn of his left foot, and as he hides and perches his left hand on his lower back, his right hand gently opens, with his palm facing upwards, almost to touch the surface plane of the canvas. The hand is perfectly central, forcing the viewer’s eyes towards it, as if reaching out to invite a handshake. But the gesture feels disingenuous; a latent hostility presents itself. There is a certain dandyism to the body language that doesn’t fit with the man who advised, in his A Present for an Apprentice, for a temperance in dress, and warned of ‘sporting a cocked-hat at public places’, whilst stating that ‘when a man aims at an appearance beyond what his situation entitles him to, he is generally seen to a disadvantage and almost inevitably, meets with merited contempt’. Extrapolating from this, there is, likewise, a facial expression that borders on pride and egoism, contradictory to the humility for which Barnard was reknowned. The chin is slightly raised, and the eyes narrowed and slightly mocking, with a look that seems off-putting to the viewer as if being forced to feel inferior to the man in the picture. The impression created is one of a depiction of Barnard that was discussed between the artist and the commissioner of the portrait, without the full consultation of Barnard himself. Indeed, the positioning of the body is identical in every respect, including the mayoral chain, to a small pencil/pen on paper sketch, drawn by Highmore in 1738, called ‘Three Full-length Studies of a Man in Robes’, suggesting that Barnard simply sat for

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31 City of London, 2016; violet and black gowns were also worn at times of especial significance.  
33 Barnard, pp. 77-78.  
Highmore in order for the artist to create a likeness, after which the pose, the robes and all other details were added at a later date.\textsuperscript{35}

These impressions are more acutely formed through an investigation of other images available of Barnard from the same period. Whilst only a small number exist, including a bronze medal from 1744 by Jacques Antoine Dassier, and a line and stipple engraving circa 1746-1760 by Thomas Jefferys, there are a number of similar paintings and mezzotints (mainly by John Faber Jr, but also including a small oil painting by Hogarth from 1739), of varying scale, which upon closer inspection are copies of an oil on canvas portrait of Barnard from 1739, attributed to the artist Allan Ramsey (fig. 2).\textsuperscript{36}

\textbf{Figure 2.} Allan Ramsey, \textit{Sir John Barnard (c.1685-1764)}, 1739, 150.5cm x 124cm, Committee Room of Inverness Town House. Image courtesy of Ewen Weatherspoon (Highland Council).\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{35} The pose is reminiscent of another of Highmore’s paintings of the period, ‘Unknown Man with a Musket 1745’, which although smaller in scale, demonstrates the refined Rococo style and a soundness of design that could be enlarged to the scale of life without any loss of effect, see Einberg, p. 155.


\textsuperscript{37} Weatherspoon (Highland Council).
Whilst it is not in the scope of this paper to provide an in-depth analysis of this painting, suffice it to say that the whole demeanour of Ramsey’s Barnard reflects the personal character of the man espoused within *A Present for an Apprentice*, and reflected through the historical accounts available of his conduct. Indeed, the portrait is in the collection of the Highland Council and hangs in the Committee Room of Inverness Town House, as a reminder of how Barnard helped to sort out the troubled finances of Inverness in the 1720s. Ramsey created a portrait, three-quarters in length, that brings the viewer closer to the sitter and shows Barnard as a humble man, soft of expression, and a dedication to his duty, which he points to at the right of the frame. It is altogether a different portrait, displaying a different character, and it is not surprising that other artists chose to copy Ramsey’s rather than Highmore’s portrait for their own iterations, despite the latter being the older painting of the two.

Sir John Barnard’s reported life was one that displayed integrity, humility and diligence; a display of personal character that led to his being honoured by his fellow merchants and the people of the City of London, in the various accolades and appointments that were bestowed upon him. This personal character was exemplified within his own treatise, with *A Present for an Apprentice* extolling a written account of how he presented and conducted himself in the world. This character is challenged when being presented pictorially within the portrait by Joseph Highmore, though the pictorial representation of such character has been shown to be possible, through the eyes of Allen Ramsey, for example. From a modern viewer’s perspective, it is often the case that paintings from the eighteenth-century are more accessible to the public than texts, especially when they are presented in substantial art galleries in major cities. In the case of Sir John Barnard, the impression of his character may be in question within a modern context if all that was presented was the grandiose portrait by Highmore, without additional textual or historical reference. It is doubtful that an apprentice of the Georgian era would have had access to anything more than Barnard’s guide, and that only if his master were prudent enough to supply it, and Barnard’s personal character would have shone as an example for apprentice’s to follow if they desired mercantile success.

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Figure 1. Joseph Highmore, Sir John Barnard (1685-1764), Lord Mayor of London (1737), 1738, oil on canvas, 236cm x 144cm, Guildhall Art Gallery, London. Image courtesy of City of London Corporation

Figure 2. Allan Ramsey, Sir John Barnard (c.1685-1764), 1739, 150.5cm x 124cm, Committee Room of Inverness Town House. Image courtesy of Ewen Weatherspoon (Highland Council)
Private Spaces for Public Consumption: Female Privacy as Erotic Satire in Eighteenth-Century British Print Culture

RUBY RUTTER

Female privacy in eighteenth-century British print culture was often represented as facilitating salacious and debauched behaviour. The misogynistic gender roles, that branded women as lesser men, fed an interpretation of the female sex as being unable to control their libidinous urges. Women who were able to control these urges could claim virtue and sensibility as their greatest traits, but private spaces in which women could exist without the need for social performance fuelled anxieties about female deception. This article examines two eighteenth century artefacts that represent female privacy, and considers how their manipulation in print culture informed and promoted them as spaces in which the erotic and the lascivious could be found.

The anthropologist Morton H. Levine defines privacy as ‘the maintenance of a personal life-space within which the individual has a chance to be an individual, to exercise and experience his own uniqueness’.¹ With the notion of privacy here focussed on the individual, it can be argued that the discussion and exploration of privacy is an unattainable feat, for the act of divulging in a communication regarding a private and personal space, either psychological or physical, renders any claim to privacy redundant. Therefore, any investigation into the behaviour of people within a private space will inevitably comprise sources that demonstrate the very worst examples of privacy- those whose secrets have been revealed. This article will consider how eighteenth century print culture manipulated the unknowable nature of privacy to fallaciously and voyeuristically present the female private space as something lascivious and salacious. This notion will be explored via the examination of two artefacts that represent contemporary female privacy; a hand-sewn silk pocket dating from c.1760 (fig.2) and an etching by James Gillray titled ‘Sir Richard Worse-than-sly, exposing his wife’s bottom; - oh fye!’ (fig.1) and will consider how the treatment of these objects promoted misogynistic ideals and contemporary gender stereotypes.

Women were largely viewed as ‘defective’ men during the eighteenth century, with contemporaries such as Alexander Pope describing them as forming a ‘softer man’.² Therefore, gender roles during this period were formed via women’s dependence on men as the more dominant and unadulterated sex. This is explored in Joseph Addison’s Allegory of Publick Credit, published in the Spectator in March 1711 where the nonsensical female temperament is used as a means to personify the irrational nature of commerce and trade.³

³ Joseph Addison, Allegory of Publick Credit, The Spectator, 3 (3 Mar, 1711).
With men posited as the stronger and more logical ‘provider’ figures whose ‘higher earning power would see them [women] through raising a family and give them some sufficiency in old age’ the woman’s role was ultimately defined via her relationships with men; a definition which was thus ascertained via her perceived sexual status as either virgin, wife or whore.\(^4\) This in turn meant that the value of chastity and sexual purity became an integral part in the promotion of the female ideal. Therefore, if a woman were able to display a commitment to their chastity by resisting and regulating her sexual desires, she demonstrated that she was virtuous and less susceptible to the irrationality of her nature, as it was commonly understood. As Edward Ward theorised in 1716, ‘Constancy is maintained by Vertue, and she who hath lost her Vertue, hath nothing left to oblige her to be Constant’.\(^5\) Katherine Kittredge has noted that new ways of reading outward female behaviour were promoted, with a focus on detecting ‘the related [transgressional] behaviours that would indicate, through their deviance from the feminine ideal, that these women were rebellious in spirit and thus likely to commit or condone sexual transgressions’.\(^6\) This behaviour largely manifested itself in the performance of sensibility, which meant an ‘extraordinary sensitivity to emotional stimuli, expressed often through such physical manifestations as weeping, blushing and fainting’.\(^7\) In short, such behaviour suggested one’s ability to self-expose, rather than conceal.

While this may not seem to directly affect issues surrounding women’s privacy, a display of willing and frequent self-exposure suggested that there was little capacity or desire for concealment and that there was a greater authenticity in the woman’s virtue. Thus, the possibility of a woman desiring to consciously make herself unknowable was an acute social threat. Patricia Meyer Spack has argued that despite contemporary promotion of the practise of emotional openness in women, one could not avoid the possibility that a person may, ‘conceal – even from those who most needed to know- precisely what should define them’.\(^8\) This anxiety imbued the idea of female privacy, either psychological or physical, with caution and distrust. As Edward Ward once again warned other men, ‘be careful how you conceive too good an Opinion of a Woman at first sight, for you see not the Woman truly, but her Ornaments and Paint’.\(^9\)

However, despite the distrust it inspired, women’s privacy was regularly acknowledged during this period. For example in William Congreve’s play of 1700, *The Way of World*, Millament and Mirabell discuss a pre-nuptial agreement which centres on Millament’s desire for privacy and autonomy as Mirabell’s wife,

MILLA. Trifles…. to write and receive letters, without interrogatories or wry faces on your part; to wear what I please… dine in my dressing-room when I’m out of humour, without giving a reason. To have my closet

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\(^{9}\) E. Ward, *Female Policy*, p.1.
inviolate; to be sole empress of my tea-table, which you must never presume to approach without first asking leave. And lastly, wherever I am, you shall always knock at the door before you come in. These articles subscribed, if I continue to endure you a little longer, I may by degrees dwindle into a wife. 10

Similarly in Henry Fielding’s Tom Jones, Squire Western’s sister is astounded at her brother’s insensitivity when he enters a female domain without permission,

‘Brother, said she, I am astonished at your behaviour; will you never learn any regard to decorum? Will you still look upon every apartment as your own, or as belonging to one of your country tenants? Do you think yourself at liberty to invade the privacies of women of condition without the least decency or notice?’11

In both examples however, female privacy is used as a plot device for comedic purposes, with Millament’s excessive demand for privacy inferring her dislike of her prospective husband, and Squire Western’s sister using his uninvited entry into her personal space to deliver a stern telling off. Nonetheless, it is the unsolicited penetration of a physical private space that most offends the women in these passages.

Contemporary architectural developments that hint at a psychological shift towards a greater concern for privacy, corroborate with Fielding and Congreve’s character’s concerns for the regulation of designated personal spaces. The introduction of back stairs, interior halls, corridors and smaller rooms intended for specific activities ensured the ‘dependable separation of individuals from one another’.12 13 Thus, it is the common understanding of the impropriety associated with the penetration of a woman’s private space where permission is required, that informs the titillation when it is invaded and exposed.

This notion is exemplified in James Gillray’s etching ‘Sir Richard Worse-than-sly, exposing his wife’s bottom; - oh fye!’ (fig.1) depicting Lady Seymour Worsley being spied on as she bathes in a private washroom. The etching dates from 1782 and was created as a satirical comment on the trial of George Bissett, who was sued for £20,000 damages by Sir Richard Worsley for the debauchery of his wife, Lady Seymour Worsley. The case note from the trial states that,

The Defendant [Bissett], on the 19th day of November, 1781, and on divers other days and times....with force and arms, made an assault on Seymour, the Wife of the Plaintiff, and then there debauched, deflowered, lay with and carnally knew her.14

11 Henry Fielding, The history of Tom Jones, a foundling, chapter vii –In which Mr Western pays a visit to his sister in company with Mr Bilfil (1749), Project Gutenberg edition <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/6593/6593-h/6593-h.htm> [1 Mar. 2016].
Figure 1. James Gillray, *Sir Richard Worse-than-sly, exposing his wife’s bottom; oh fye!*, 1782, etching, National Portrait Gallery, London. © National Portrait Gallery
However, many men claiming to be Lady Worsley’s lovers were brought forward to testify and evidence indicating Sir Richard’s complicity in the debauchery of his wife mounted. One particular incident, told to the court by Bissett’s solicitor Mr Bearcroft (and immortalised by Gillray), tells of the time Sir Richard held George Bisset on his shoulders in order to gain a better view of his naked wife,

… the Plaintiff there had absolutely raised the Defendant upon his shoulders to view his naked Wife while bathing, and at the same time called to, saying, Seymour! Seymour! Bissett is looking at you.15

That Gillray chose to depict this particular incident, when many more suspected lovers of Lady Worsley were questioned throughout the trial, indicates the eroticism associated with infiltrating a woman’s private space and acted as a seamless sexual metaphor for physical penetration of her body. Furthermore, the assistance given by Sir Richard to Bissett in his access to his wife’s privacy imbued the image with male consent and female passivity; the invasion of Lady Worsley’s room is not met by a wrath similar to that of Squire Western’s sister in *Tom Jones*, instead she peers coquettishly over her shoulder at the men. This serves to further reinforce anxieties regarding woman’s privacy as a means to enable the exploration of her true libidinous nature, free from the public performance of sensibility and virtue.

The idea of a dressing room as a place in which women could explore their salacious true selves is also expressed in William Hogarth’s 1738 engraving, *Strolling Actresses Dressing in a Barn* [fig.2]. Although this space is by no means private, for the composition is abundant with women in varying states of undress, Christina Kiaer has noted that the all-female cast of this engraving reinforces the ‘perception of Woman as a figure of pretence and deception, the consummate actress.’16 Kiaer argues that Hogarth’s print is situated in ‘the context of the anti-feminist satire of Jonathan Swift and Alexander Pope, particularly the convention of the satirist who exposes femininity by penetrating into the boudoir to lay bare the deceptions practiced there’.17 It is therefore arguable that a similar exposure of deception is at play in Gillray’s etching of Lady Worsley.

This notion is further reinforced by a later piece of evidence given at the trial by Lord Deerhurst, which stated that Sir Richard Worsley had found him in Lady Worsley’s dressing room at four o’clock in the morning. After exclaiming ‘Deerhurst, how came you here?’ Sir Richard ceased his interrogation of his friend. This incident was referenced by Lord Mansfield as he delivered his judgment at the trial’s close, saying ‘Is it not extraordinary to find a Gentleman in his Lady’s dressing-room at four o’clock in the morning, and nothing further said?’ 18 This declaration by Mansfield suggests that the presence of a man in the private room of a woman was clearly an indication of sexual behaviour and something a husband should be astonished by. That Lord Mansfield uses this example, along with the events in the bath house, as reason to award Sir Richard one shilling damages as opposed to

15 R. Worsley, *The trial with the whole of the evidence*, p.12.
17 Kiaer, ‘Professional Femininity’, p.76.
18 R. Worsley, *The trial with the whole of the evidence*, p.20.
the twenty thousand pounds he originally requested (the consensus being that Lady Worsley was not worth the sum assigned by her husband due to her sexual proclivity), only serves to confirm that the penetration of a woman’s private space and her body were one and the same in the eighteenth-century mind.

The case of Lady Worsley demonstrates a multi-faceted breach in personal privacy. Originally, Lady Worsley’s privacy was negated by her husband, who took enjoyment in observing her relations with other men via an intrusion into areas designated for her personal privacy. When the case was brought to court, Lady Worsley once again relinquished her right to privacy by offering the names and details of her previous lovers to help the cause of George Bissett. This in turn instigated an outpouring of printed media depicting her most private moments and relationships for an even wider audience. It can be argued then, that it is the infiltration of Lady Worsley’s sexual privacy and the notion of sanctioned voyeurism by both her husband within their marriage, and Lady Worsley herself during the court case, that so excites a contemporary audience.

Figure 2. William Hogarth, *Strolling Actresses dressing in a Barn*, 1738, engraving (44.5cm x 56.3cm), The British Museum, London © The British Museum
Of course, not all women had access to their own private rooms but, from the close of the seventeenth century, every woman regardless of rank owned one or several pairs of pockets. The egalitarianism of pockets therefore meant that their representation as examples of female privacy infiltrated rank and could be applied to women universally. Figure 3 shows a hand-sewn silk pair of pockets dated c.1760 from a collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Pockets were often the first item a young girl would make when learning to sew and, as Ariane Fennetaux has discussed, young girls would be ‘taught by their mothers how to sew, embroider and quilt, and pockets offered an ideal practical exercise’. This practise reads as an initiation into womanhood; a world in which a woman would be required to darn, sew and embroidered as an integral part of her gender role. Indeed, the practise of making pockets honed skills a young girl would be expected to utilise as a woman and the work involved in making a pocket was, ‘an exercise in good housewifery’. While this practise arguably inferred the importance of the privacy borne through owning a pair of pockets on to young girls, it also cemented them as an item existing firmly within the female sphere.

Contemporary newspaper advertisements and court cases revealed the contents of lost and stolen pockets and shows us that women primarily used their pockets to carry household

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items and daily necessities such as money, thimbles and pins. Despite this, pockets were depicted in print culture as concealing much more lascivious articles.

This interpretation is arguably due to a pocket’s physical location close to the female body and accessible only via a slit in the outer skirt of a woman’s dress. Thus, to gain access to a woman’s pockets was to physically penetrate her clothing, and (as pockets were often found listed alongside items of female underwear in inventories and cloth merchant’s bills) touch an article of clothing that was categorised alongside her most private garments. As women did not wear drawers at this time, the touching of a woman’s pocket also had the scope to be an incredibly sexual act, bringing one in close proximity to a woman’s genitalia. Pockets therefore represented the threshold between a woman’s most intimate body parts and her public appearance, which, coupled with the aforementioned distrust of female privacy, made the item a tantalising and alluring object to explore. For example, in Daniel Defoe’s *Moll Flanders*, Moll is able to attend a secret rendezvous with a lover due to her ability to hide items such as a fan, a mask and a pair of gloves in her pockets, thus enabling her to be, “as wicked as [she] please[s]” without detection.22 Pockets here enabled secret dalliances, extra-marital affairs and relationships that would otherwise be disapproved of by the father, husband or guardian, undermining male authority and assisting female promiscuity.

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The aesthetic similarity between a pocket and a woman’s genitalia (aided by the pocket’s proximity to this body part) was also widely commented on and manipulated. In Laurence Sterne’s 1768 novel *A Sentimental Journey*, the character Yorick is sexually tantalised when watching a woman look for a crown in her pocket, ‘So she put her hand into her right pocket, which was next to me, and felt for it for some time –I never bore expectation more quietly’, this scene depicting the woman’s hand searching in her pocket is described by Ariane Fennetaux as taking part in a sexual double-entendre, along with the inclusion of a purse, which ‘is described as being “just big enough to hold [Yorick’s] crown”’. Similarly, in 1716, Edward Ward used the work ‘placket’ - the name given to the opening or ‘slit’ of a pocket - to discuss the genitalia of prostitutes in Waterlane, describing them as, ‘Whores with gaping plackets’. This rather crude interpretation of a woman’s pocket is also demonstrated in a 1791 etching by Thomas Rowlandson entitled, *A Sudden Squall in Hyde Park* [*fig.4*]. The etching depicts the effects of a gust of wind on a crowd in Hyde Park as it unfortunately reveals a passing lady’s pocket, leaving it exposed for the leering phallic lens of an old man standing nearby. As Fennetaux explains, ‘the satirist uses her flabby, gaping pocket as a trope to signal the woman’s promiscuity’. Thus, these print culture representations of pockets transform an object of female privacy that transcended rank, into an item imbued with sexual scope and salacity. Despite evidence suggesting that the contents of women’s pockets contained collections of mundane household items, print culture inferred that pockets could enable adulterous liaisons and hide sensational secrets. By likening their shape to female genitalia, particularly in the case of baggy or lose pockets, what was an item of female autonomy, became a source of sexual embarrassment.

The examples of female privacy discussed in this article, with the exception of the physical pair of pockets, can only claim to be signifiers of privacy. The artefacts discussed do not represent the true private behaviours of women, but manipulate known symbols of privacy to promote the image of women as sexually louche, morally corruptible and deceptive in their outward performance of virtue. Lady Worsley’s privacy was a triptych of public erotica and sensationalism; the illusion of privacy maintained and promoted in prints such as Gillray’s only heightens the naughtiness of the story. If we apply Morton H. Levine’s promotion of the individual to Lady Worsley’s case, nothing about her personal life can be considered private. Thus, the audience’s intrusion of the representation of Lady Worsley’s private space made Gillray’s images all the more tantalising. Similarly, representations of women’s pockets demonstrated the crude mockery of a woman’s autonomy and anatomy, reducing an object that was often the only private object in a woman’s possession, to a symbol of her sexuality; comparing it to her genitalia to arbitrarily signify sexual promiscuity. That contemporary reports of lost or stolen pockets often record money, tickets and pamphlets as their contents, indicates that pockets enabled a woman freedom away from the domestic sphere, and makes the misogynistic agenda associated with representing them as crude, sexual objects all the more explicit. The pair of silk pockets from the Victoria and Albert museum however, is the only example of inviolate privacy here discussed. Its contents and owner being unknown to

us, we can only speculate at its life story, with these now empty pockets existing only as a vessel that once offered a woman the opportunity to possess a personal, secret and wholly private space. Whether these pockets facilitated the louche sexual behaviour represented in contemporary print culture we will never know, but that alone means this pair of pockets can be regarded as an object that represents true and uncompromising female privacy.

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Figure 3. Maker unknown, Pair of pockets, c.1760, Silk taffeta, hand-sewn with silk thread, and silk and taffeta ribbons, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Item no. T.175&A-1969, © Victoria and Albert Museum

Figure 4. Thomas Rowlandson, *A Sudden Squall in Hyde Park*, 1791. Print (41.5 × 53.2 cm), © Thomas Rowlandson Collection, Graphic Arts Collection, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
Symbols of Behaviour in mid-17th Century English Coffee Houses

SCOTT SHRINER

Coffee drinking became popularized in England during the dawning of the Commonwealth period and into mid-18th century. The interest in this beverage predates its replacement, tea, as the iconic national drink of Britain. This article will examine two artefacts that played a role in the culture surrounding the 17th century coffee house. The first artefact is a coffee house token from Morat’s, a London coffee establishment. A broadside entitled ‘A Brief Description of the Excellent Vertues of that Sober and wholesome Drink Called Coffee, and its Incomparable Effects in Preventing or Curing, Most Diseases Incident to Humane Bodies’ will also be discussed. Together these objects help to reflect the actions and activities behind the culture of these popular establishments.

Almost one hundred years separate the beginning of the Ottoman coffee houses and those starting in London. The first coffee house opened in Constantinople in 1554-55, during the reign of Süleyman I. Merchants associated with the Levant Company helped bring the popular social phenomenon to England. As was the custom with the Turks, coffee houses were a welcoming and relaxing place to conduct business or converse. All walks of life would be represented there and able to partake in sharing the friendly and social experience. This practice was transferred to England with all the sociability intact. The idea of the coffee house was welcomed by most of the interested public. Having numerous social and political issues to discuss during the Commonwealth era helped prepare patrons for the Restoration and the resulting discourse and debate. The coffee house idea was so successful that by 1708, there were ‘as many as five or six hundred in London and Westminster alone’.¹

Originally simple single rooms, usually upstairs, these locations were designed for coffee and conversation. Enjoyed by locals as well as foreign visitors, Henri Misson, in his 1698 visit to London, states:

These Houses, which are very numerous in London, are extremely convenient. You have all manner of news there: you have a good Fire, which you may sit by as long as you please; you have a Dish of Coffee; you meet your Friends for the transaction of Business, and all for a penny, if you do not care to spend more.²

² H. Misson, Memoirs and observations in his travels over England: With some account of Scotland and Ireland (1719), pp. 39-40.
Coffee houses offered a forum where ideas could be freely debated by a wider and diverse public audience. Symbols of these sanctuaries of deliberation help to reconstruct the important legacy of the 17th century coffee house.

Broadsides, or broadsheets, can be considered an ancestor of the newspaper. It was a single sheet and printed on only one side. Early uses for the broadside could range from announcements and advertisements to proclamations and news. These, along with pamphlets, were set out for patrons to read and discuss in the coffee houses. One must remember that literacy was low during this period and broadsheets were printed without any illustrations. However, with time and improved methods, broadsheets eventually included more sophisticated illustrations from the original and simple wood block artwork.3

The first illustrated broadside dealing with coffee and its effects was published in 1674.4 It had the lengthy title of ‘A Brief Description of the Excellent Virtues of that Sober and wholesome Drink, Called Coffee, and its Incomparable Effects in Preventing or Curing Most Diseases Incident to Humane Bodies.’ Appended to this were ‘The Rules and Orders of the Coffee-House.’ This broadside was printed for Paul Greenwood and was ‘to be sold at the sign of the Coffee-Mill and Tobacco Roll’, indicating Greenwood’s establishment. This could be considered an advertisement broadsheet, since they did appear in London coffee houses in the 17th century.5

The creation of this broadside can be viewed as a rebuttal to initial critics of coffee consumption. An early opponent, and the first one of note, was the satirical broadside entitled, A Cup of Coffee or Coffee in its Colours (1663). One criticism made was that Englishmen wanted to adopt the indulgences of the Turks, which included coffee drinking and the perceived negative effects.6 There was also a fear that drinking this Middle Eastern concoction would diminish the Christian spirit of the consumer. In the interval between 1660 and 1675, there were a number of written tracts on the subject of London coffee houses. Half of the writings have the words ‘character of a coffee house’ in their titles.7 Evidently, coffee houses were controversial enough to continue the dialogue.

Not only xenophobes or health-conscious advocates could be responsible for such propaganda. The tavern and ale-house proprietors were also troubled about the loss of patrons to the ever-growing number of coffee houses. The one-time monopoly now faced competition for its customers.8 An educated faction of society now has another outlet for discourse among like-minded people in an environment conducive to discussion, debate and discovery. This could be considered trading one intoxicating environment for another without the potential hangover.

3 <ilab.org/eng/documentation/1119-a_brief_history_of_broadsides.htmlzz>.
7 Ukers, All About Coffee, p. 61.
8 Ukers, p. 61.
Figure 1. Anon, *A Brief Description of... Coffee*, Broadside, 1674 © The British Library Board, C.20.f.
The broadside in question has an engraving centered within the title atop the page. Pictured in the upper cell is a coffee shrub with a decorative crown and the words ‘The Desarts of Arabia’; next to this is a grape vine, also posed with a crown. This depiction sets up the comparison between wine and ale with coffee in the poem, ‘A Brief Description of the Excellent Vertues of that Sober and wholesome Drink Called Coffee, and its Incomparable Effects in Preventing or Curing, Most Diseases Incident to Humane bodies’ (Appendix). Throughout the poem, the healthy and healing benefits of coffee are touted regarding the ‘all-healing – Berry’ and the resulting state of being ‘sober and Merry’. Artistically speaking, the poem implies that the muse of music and poetry should again be invigorating coffee.

The lower cell depicts the interior of a coffee house. Pictured in the engraving is a simply furnished room with a long table and five gentlemen seated around it. The style of dress indicates different social classes and business interests. Two have hats while another is seen smoking. The ‘coffee boy’ is carrying a pot to fill their coffee ‘dishes.’ This simple woodcut refers to ‘The RULES and ORDERS of the COFFEE-HOUSE’ on the broadside. One could argue that the public space is an egalitarian or democratic setting. Without any apparent hierarchical seating, it signals that all classes can interact equally.

The poem and its title are ironic when discussing the coffee house as a functioning social unit. ‘Rules and Orders’ was more commonly associated with judicial courts and laws, not a sober and serious public house. Customers had expectations upon entering these establishments. The code of behavior was different from that of a concert hall or even a tavern. Coffee house discourse became the norm and the expected conduct of the patrons. The coffee house patrons were aware of the parameters of behaviour before entering, which is what separated it from other venues.

The broadside was published fourteen years after Cromwell’s reign ended. It was the Puritan world of the 1650s that ushered in the newest form of a public house to England. The Lord Protector saw no harm in having these austere temperance-minded institutions proliferate the realm. Unlike ale-houses and taverns of the past, customers visiting coffee houses came for coffee, conversation and camaraderie. The broadside may have harkened back to an earlier time of civility in the public space, a symbolic reminder of how unbiased and democratic the coffee house milieu was in the beginning. Possibly the potential fear in 1674 was losing that type of civil and cultured environment.

After the Great Fire occurred in 1666, not only did London rebuild but, due to their growing popularity, there were many new and larger coffee houses opening all over the city.9 Since their inception, coffee houses were well known to have the black drink with sobering properties. Because of this, coffee houses attracted many inebriated customers after the taverns closed. With this influx of undesirables, and through time, the coffee house image and overall reputation suffered considerably from its distinctive beginnings. The Commonwealth institution began to evolve during the Restoration period. This was the beginning of when coffee houses made a major contribution to the social life of England.

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9 Ukers, p. 57.
An economic and cultural phenomenon existed in 17th century Britain. A short-lived anomaly was the introduction of trade tokens. These ‘unofficial’ coins helped to fill a void that was exacerbated by the monarchy. Throughout many reigns, having enough coins of the realm in circulation had been an enduring problem for the expanding empire. There was a perennial demand for coins in small enough denominations to assist in daily business transactions. It was this prolonged shortage of royal coins (half pennies and farthings) that demanded attention for the ever-growing number of businesses and shopkeepers. To assist the realm’s economic and trade expansion, some form of action was needed.

Eventually, out of frustration with an inactive government, trade and shop owners created their own unofficial and illegal currency, tokens. Although earlier tokens had existed, this concerted action was undertaken just as the Commonwealth period began. This was done without any interference or government permission. The disengaged leadership’s approach can be due to being a newly installed government but also its unwillingness to coin money in metals other than silver or gold. Trade tokens were issued during various times in British history. Commercial purposed tokens, especially for London, date to the middle of the 14th century. However, the token period being examined is the middle of the 17th century (1648-72). It has been estimated that 12,000 types of tokens were issued in the British Isles during this era; in London alone, the number produced was estimated at 3,500. The tokens were struck with dies and were mainly three values: farthing, halfpenny and penny. Chiefly made of copper or brass, the vast majority produced were farthings and halfpennies. The peak time of trade token production was 1666-67, probably coinciding with London’s recovery, followed by a rapid decline in the number being struck and their falling out of usage. This was largely due to royal proclamations banning their use and official coins of the realm being issued.

Tokens shed light on the habits, customs and overall domestic life of people at that time. These tokens usually had the name of the issuer on the obverse side with a depiction of the trade or business in question and on the reverse side was the place of issue, their initials and usually that of the proprietor’s wife. The value or denomination was usually, but not always, obvious. This illegal tender was created to fill the void of coin change needed in peoples’ daily transactions. The issuer would use the tokens as currency in his place of business. In turn, trade tokens could circulate anywhere, provided the tradesman was willing to accept them. Owners preferred to handle tokens of establishments known to them, because redemption of tokens for royal currency could only take place at the point of origin.

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12 Dickinson, Seventeenth Century Tokens of the British Isles and their values, p. 1.
13 Dickinson, p. 2.
15 Berry, Taverns and Tokens of Pepys’ London, pp. 9-10.
Coffee houses began in mid-17th century England, originating in 1650 Oxford. The earliest establishment, which appeared in London in 1652, was operated by Pasqua Rosée on St. Michael’s Alley. There were about eighty different types of tokens (penny and half penny) issued during the mid-1660s and early 1670s by the city coffee houses. The earliest dated coffee house token debuted in 1664. Almost one half of the London coffee tokens were issued from 1669 to 1671, about twenty of them valued at a penny.¹⁷

One of London’s coffee establishments was Morat’s Coffee House, opened in 1662 on Exchange Alley. Other names used for the same establishment have been, according to Bryant Lillywhite: Turk’s Head, Great Turk, and Great Coffee House.¹⁸ Morat’s was noteworthy due to the number of tokens it created in such a short life as a coffee house; however, it was destroyed in 1666 during the Great Fire and was never rebuilt. Unfortunately, there is a gap in the record as to the name of the proprietor. During its brief existence, four examples of coffee tokens were created. All made of brass, but without minting dates, three were penny tokens and the fourth had a halfpenny value.¹⁹

Figure 2 shows a penny token with the inscription (obverse) ‘Great Men Did Mee Call’ and a bust of Turkish Sultan Amurath IV, the Ottoman ruler from 1623 to 1640. On the reverse side is the inscription ‘Where Eare I Came I Conquered All; Coffee Tobacco Sherbet Tea and Chocolat retal’d in Exchange Ally’.²⁰ The word ‘Tea’ does not appear on any other token than those

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¹⁷ Berry, 17th c England: Traders and their Tokens, p. 25.
issued from ‘the Great Turk’ (aka Morat’s) coffee house in Exchange Alley.\textsuperscript{21} Perhaps this foreshadowed the eventual demise of coffee for tea as the country’s beverage of choice.

Although a tyrant at home, Morat/Amurath IV was ‘popular’ with the English in the 1660s. His likeness appeared on many of the thirty or so London tokens that feature a Turk’s visage.\textsuperscript{22} In order to aid customers in locating their desired establishment, coffee house proprietors used hanging signs on the outside façade with the corresponding image, usually the same one on the token. Hence, in advertisements or announcements, the coffee house was referred to as ‘under the Sign of the Great Turk’. One must remember that as a large percentage of the population at this time was unable to read or write, the image on the token would be recognized and serve as a point of reference.\textsuperscript{23}

Contemporary accounts are rare regarding the use of tokens. Samuel Pepys does not write about or refer to trade tokens once in the entire \textit{Diary}, although he must have encountered them during visits to those establishments. The years of his writings (1660-69) occur during the height of trade token popularity.\textsuperscript{24} Pepys visited Morat’s at least on one occasion. He noted that on Thursday, 28 May 1663:

\begin{quote}
At the Coffee-house in Exchange – ally I bought a little book, Counsell to Builders, written by Sir Balth Gerbier, it is dedicated almost to all the men of any great condition in England, so that the epistles are more than the book itself; and both it and them not worth a turd, that I am ashamed that I bought it.\textsuperscript{25}
\end{quote}

The coffee house mentioned above is likely also to be the issuer of the token (fig 2). These establishments, especially in London, also served as shops for the citizenry. Some, including Morat’s, also functioned as booksellers, stationers and post offices.\textsuperscript{26}

Coffee house tokens helped to unify the neighborhood in which it was located. It gave a sense of identity to not only the establishment but also to its patrons. Being seen as a community center for a variety of reasons, coffee houses also helped to alleviate the shortage of needed specie through the issuance of tokens, an action which created a strong psychological and economic allegiance for the inhabitants to their local trades.\textsuperscript{27} All the while, tokens acted as a form of advertising and helped bring repeat business.

The tokens helped to symbolize a sense of liberty and freedom from the idle government regarding the specie problems. Even though government largely ignored the issuing and usage of tokens, it was still an unlawful act. These tokens undermined the legal and legitimate tender of the realm. An attempt was made or at least to discourage such actions and many

\textsuperscript{21} J. Burn, \textit{A Descriptive Catalogue of London Traders, Tavern and Coffee House Tokens}, (1853), p. 90.
\textsuperscript{23} Berry, \textit{Taverns and Tokens of Pepys' London}, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{25} Berry, \textit{Taverns and Tokens of Pepys' London}, p. 121.
\textsuperscript{26} Berry, p. 121.
were called before the King and his Privy Council for their illegal ‘coyning of coffee pence’. It also must be remembered that each coffee house generated a substantial amount of tax revenue for the crown, at the same time dispensing ‘counterfeit coins.’ How easy it would be to arrest the offenders just by looking at their tokens for their name and address, but it was not until three royal proclamations were issued between 1672 and 1674 that brought an eventual end for tokens. The defiance and the egalitarian environment of the coffee house would eventually lead to change, since tokens could be viewed as democratic by their nature. Coffee house tokens were created by and for the people. Government was not part of the process; instead, the ordinary, hard-working masses filled the void and solved the problem, eventually receiving the notice of the monarchy. In the same way, people were also creating a democratic model via the coffee house. This public space appealed to many and served an important function in society. Symbolically, the coffee house had a major impact on 17th century culture.

Coffee house behaviour, whether intentional or not, is exemplified by way of the two artefacts. The broadside, with ‘rules of behaviour’ included, showed possibly an ideal and sober setting for civilized discourse regarding matters of the day. Maybe this was indeed a satirical posting of etiquette for 1674 coffee houses; it did, in fact, elicit in a pictorial way, attention to the existence of a locale possessing a code of behaviour. That place was the coffee houses of the time and the behaviour was egalitarian in nature, a rarity where people from all walks of life could come together and interact in a setting that would become popular for approximately a century. This democratic approach, offering a center for free expression and communication, helped create the stage for future political and ideological dialogue that would lead to the evolving behaviour of an egalitarian England. At the same time, coffee house tokens also were an indication of a democratic undercurrent taking place. Taking matters into their own hands, while perpetrating an illegal act, the token creators and the people using them, were all guilty. The government may have looked the other way for a while, but the shared despair of the people helped mould the citizenry into seeking further democratic reform. Tokens connected people of those localities that shared the trades depicted on the symbolic and counterfeit coinage. The two artefacts contrast with each other, one depicting ‘ideal behaviour’ and the other, just the opposite. Together they combine to illustrate how the actions taken are both egalitarian and democratic while symbolically indicating the political course England had set on.

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29 Dickinson, *Seventeenth Century Tokens of the British Isles and their values*, p. 5.
30 Williamson, ‘Historical Evidence and Information Gathered from the Traders’ Tokens of the Seventeenth Century and from the Minor Currency’, p. 172.
A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE EXCELLENT VERTUES OF THAT Sober and wholesome Drink, CALLED COFFEE AND ITS INCOMPARABLE EFFECTS IN PREVENTING or CURING MOST DISEASES INCIDENT TO HUMANE BODIES.

When the sweet Poison of the Treacherous Grape,
Had Acted on the world a General Rape;
Drowning our very Reason and our Souls
In such deep Seas of large o’refflowing Bowls,
That New Philosophers Swore they could feel
The Earth to Stagger, as her Sons did Reel:
When Foggy Ale, leavying up mighty Trains
Of muddy Vapours, had besie’d our Brains;
And Drink, Rebellion, and Religion too,
Made Men so Mad, they knew not what to do;
Then Heaven in Pity, to Effect our Cure,
And stop the Ragings of that Calenture,
First sent amongst us this All-healing-Berry,
At once to make us both Sober and Merry.
Arabian Coffee, a Rich Cordial
To Purse and Person Beneficial,
Which of so many Vertues doth partake,
Its Country’s called Felix for its sake.
From the Rich Chambers of the Rising Sun,
Where Arts, and all good Fashions first begun,
Where Earth with Choicest Rarities is blest,
And dying Phoenix builds Her wondrous Nest:
COFFEE arrives, that Grave and wholesome Liquor,
That heals the Stomach, makes the Genius quicker,
Relieve, the Memory, Revives the Sad,
And cheers the Spirits, without making Mad;
For being of a Cleansing QUALITY,
By NATURE warm, Attenuating and Dry,
Its constant Use the sullenest Grieves will Rout,
Removes the Dropsie, gives ease to the Gout,
And soon dispatcheth wheresover it finds
Scorbutick Humours, Hypochondriack winds,
Rheums, Pusicks, Palsies, Jaundise, Coughs, Catarrhs,
And whatsoe’re with Nature leaveth Wars;
It helps Digestion, want of Appetite,
And quickly sets Consumptive Bodies Right;
A Friendly Entercourse it doth Maintain,
Between the Heart, the Liver, and the Brain,
Natures three chiefest Wheels, whose Jars we know,
Threaten the whole Microcosme with overthrow;
In Spring, when Peccant Humours Encrease most,
And Summer, when the Appetite is lost,
In Autumn, when Raw Fruits Diseases Breed,
And Winter time too cold to Purge or Bleed;
Do but this Rare ARABIAN Cordial Use,
And thou may'st all the Doctors Slops Refuse.
Hush then, dull QUACKS, your Mountebanking cease,
COFFEE's a speedier Cure for each Disease;
How great its Vertues are, we hence may think,
The Worlds third Part makes it their common Drink;
The Amorous Gallant, whose hot Reins do fail,
Stung by Conjunction with the Dragons-Tail:
Let him but Tipple here, shall find his Grief
Discharg'd, without the Sweting-Tubs Relief;
Nor have the LADIES Reason to Complain,
As fumbling Doe-littles are apt to Faign;
COFFEE's no Foe to their obliging Trade,
By it Me rather are more Active made;
'Tis stronger Drink, and base adulterate Wine,
Enfeebles Vigour, and makes Nature Pine;
Loaden with which, th' Impotent Sott is Led
Like a Sow'd Hogshead to a Misses Bed;
But this Rare Settle-Brain prevents those Harms,
Conquers Old Sherry, and brisk Clarret charms.
Sack, I defie thee with an open Throat,
Whilst Trusty COFFEE is my Antedote;
Methinks I hear Poets Repent th'have been,
So long Idolaters to that sparkling Queen;
For well they may perceive 'tis on Her score
APOLLO keeps them all so Cursed Poor;
Let them avoid Her tempting Charms and then
We hope to see the Wits grow Aldermen;
In Brief, all you who Healths Rich Treasures Prize,
And Court not Ruby Noses, or blear'd Eyes,
But own Sobriety to be your Drift,
And Love at once good Company and thirst;
To Wine no more make Wit and Coyn a Trophy,
But come each Night and Frolick here in Coffee.

The RULES and ORDERS of the COFFEE-HOUSE.

Enter Sirs freely, But first if you please,
Peruse our Civil-Orders, which are these.

First, Gentry, Tradesmen, all are welcome hither,
And may without Affront sit down Together:
Pre-eminence of Place, none here should Mind,
But take the next fit Seat that he can find:
Nor need any, if Finer Persons come,
Rise up for to assigne to them his Room;
To limit Mens Expence, we think not fair,
But let him forfeit Twelve-pence that shall Swear:
He that shall any Quarrel here begin,
Shall give each Man a Dish t' Atone the Sin;
And so shall He, whose Complements extend
So far to drink in COFFEE to his Friend;
Let Noise of loud Disputes be quite forborn,
No Maudlin Lovers here in Corners Mourn,
But all be Brisk, and Talk, but not too much
On Sacred things, Let none presume to touch,
Nor Profane Scripture, or sawcily wrong
Affairs of State with an irreverent Tongue:
Let Mirth be Innocent, and each Man see,
That all his Jests without Reflection be;
To keep the House more Quiet, and from Blame,
We Banish hence Cards, Dice, and Every Game:
Nor can allow of Wagers, that Exceed
Five shillings, which oft-times much trouble Breed;
Let all that’s lost, or forfeited, be spent
In such Good Liquor as the House doth Vent,
And Customers endeavour to their Powers,
For to observe still seasonable Howers.
Lastly, Let each Man what he calls for Pay,
And so you’re welcome to come every Day.

London, Printed for Paul Greenwood, and are to be sold at the sign of the Coffee-Mill and Tobacco-Roll in Cloath-fair near West-Smithfield, who selleth the best Arabian Coffee-Powder and Chocolate, made in Cake or in Roll, after the Spanish Fashion, &c., 1674.

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1. *A Brief Description of … Coffee*, Broadside, 1674 © The British Library Board, C.20.f

Figure 2. *Morat Coffee House Token* courtesy of Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.
PART III

The ‘Long’ Nineteenth Century
On the Eve of Famine: Two Ideals of Irish Nationhood in 1842

SIOBHAN FRANCES FALLON

This article reflects on views of Irish nationhood. By the early 1840s, the effects of Union with Britain had generated in Ireland a desire for national autonomy, and the ‘Great Hunger’ had yet to silence multitudes and sting some others to the point of rebellion. In comparing a painting, ‘The Origin of the Harp’, with a newspaper, the ‘Nation’, this article considers the role of the arts in attempts to forge a national consciousness, and examines some of the philosophical questions that confronted the Irish people in 1842. These concern whether the essence of nationhood is determined by the view of the colonised or coloniser, and whether the claims of nationhood should be predicated on the past or the present, on potent myth or experienced reality.

‘There is no cure but nationality’¹

In the summer of 1842, three twenty-something men were planning the launch of a newspaper. Their headquarters were in Dublin, a city denuded, by the 1800 Act of Union, of its parliament and much of its social and cultural life. In titling their paper the Nation, these ‘Young Irelanders’ announced their ambition to rekindle a sense of nationhood in their country. At the same time, Daniel Maclise (1806-1870), an Irish artist living in England, was the subject of much chatter amongst visitors to the Royal Academy.² One of his exhibits was The Origin of the Harp (fig.1), a painting which interpreted Thomas Moore’s song of the same name, from the Irish Melodies.³ While the Nation was explicit about its mission, Maclise’s painting was mysterious; though it is now widely interpreted as an ‘allegorised representation […] of Ireland’,⁴ this was not so clear to the English audience for whom it was painted. The Young Irelanders and Maclise had different audiences in mind, and different purposes. This article considers the Origin alongside poems and prose from the first edition of the Nation: two visions of nationhood, in many ways poles apart, but considered together, they highlight the competing claims of the past, present and future on those who sought to shape Irish identity in 1842.

The tendency of nations, particularly at times of crisis, to employ myths of the past for reassurance or self-aggrandisement has been derided. But national myths, like religion, have also inspired great art, perhaps because of the values to which they appeal; an example is Arthurian legend in England’s national narrative. Ireland’s interest in its past, in the

¹ ‘J.E.O’R.’ in a letter from Paris, 8 October 1842, printed in the Nation (15 October), p. 10: ‘I am come at length to the opinion that there is no cure but nationality; and Ireland has but to will that and it is accomplished’. All further references to the Nation, except where otherwise stated, refer to this edition.
² Blackwood’s art critic referred to Landseer and Maclise as ‘the two artists that most people speak of who visit the academy this year, as giving, more than any others, […] a character to our Exhibition’, ‘Exhibitions - Royal Academy’, Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine (July 1842), p. 24.
³ The series of Irish Melodies (1808-34) is the best known work of Thomas Moore (1789-1852), Irish poet.
nineteenth century, was more vexed; not everyone living on the island, still less those
purporting to oversee it, held that it could claim to be a nation. The Irish antiquaries of the
eighteenth century had done much to nurture a sense of a coherent Gaelic heritage, but
Clare O’Halloran has noted that they were ‘edgily aware of the contemporary resonances of
[their] pronouncements on the early Irish past’. It is in this context that Maclise revisited
the originary myth of the harp which had come to him, via Moore, from Edward Hudson.
This United Irishman had drawn it on his prison wall following the failed rebellion of 1798,
but visitors to the Royal Academy in the summer of 1842 would have had no inkling of this
provenance. On the contrary, they were not quite sure what to make of the painting. One
reviewer dismissed the Origin with the laconic verdict, ‘We think [it] a decided failure, very
hard, and not possessing his usually good workmanship’. The Art-Union received the
painting warmly, but was equally evasive regarding its subject-matter: ‘This picture must be
seen to be understood and felt; any prosaic description would be a profanation, from which
we shrink with becoming reverence’.

Of course, at one level, Maclise was simply interpreting Moore’s song which told the story of
a sea-maiden who waits in vain for her human lover, until Heaven takes ‘pity on true-love so
warm’ and transforms her into a ‘soft Harp’, her ‘sea-beauties’ forming the frame and her
hair the ‘bright chords’. The song’s focus is on physical beauty and emotional betrayal, and
the artist’s treatment could be seen as primarily a celebration of the female form, the
narrative merely fulfilling the Victorian requirement for a respectable context. Naked or
barely-clothed Titaniast were popular in the period, while Classical myths also enabled
artists to give men the best of both worlds: the opportunity to gaze on bare breasts whilst
congratulating themselves on their cultured high-mindedness. If we look closely at Maclise’s
siren, we cannot deny the sensuality of the treatment. The contrast of the warm flesh tones
with the cool blues and greens of the background, the fall of the seaweed which draws the eye
over the hip and down between the legs, the extra softening of the brush strokes which
combine seaweed with shadow where it touches the pubic bone, all offer a sexual charge to
the gazer. However, there is at the same time enough allusiveness to engage the intellect.
Related myths abound, including one connected with St. Cecilia, and Apollo’s lute was,
‘strung with his hair’, so Maclise was presenting a version of a familiar myth, and for those

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3 Clare O’Halloran, ‘Harping on the Past’, in Exploring Cultural History: Essays in Honour of Peter Burke, ed.
Melissa Calaresu, Filippo de Vivo and Joan-Pau Rubies (Farnham, 2010), pp.327-343 (p. 330).
6 Moore’s account of seeing the drawing in Kilmainham gaol is quoted by Matthew Campbell in
‘Thomas Moore, Daniel Maclise and the New Mythology: The Origin of the Harp’, Anthem Studies in
7 Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine (July 1842), p.28.
10 From Fuseli’s Titania’s Awakening (1780-90) through Robert Huskisson’s The Midsummer Night’s Fairies
(1847) to John Simmons’s Titania (1866).
11 For example, William Etty’s The Judgement of Paris (1843), William Edward Frost’s Diana and her
Nymphs Surprised by Actaeon (1846).
12 See discussion in Campbell, Thomas Moore, pp. 81-84.
who perceived the reference, Ireland’s nationhood was rendered alluring, but passive, and
safely located in a past ‘adventure time’.14

The influence of German Romanticism15 must be acknowledged, and Maclise’s thinking is
likely to have been informed by the fact that this movement was serving the purpose of
nation-formation in Germany. Was Maclise, then, a ‘proto-nationalist’, as his biographer
has claimed,16 and if so, what is the nature of his nationalism? The harp itself was a symbol
whose significance was contested,17 but the very romanticism of the narrative ensures that
whatever Irish nationhood is denoted in the Origin is the impotent kind that dissolves itself in
lamentation of the past and even panders to the stereotype of a lachrymose, feminised Celt.

In questioning whether Maclise has anything to say about an Irish future, a recent re-
appraisal of the painting is valuable. Previous analysis reads the sun as setting, but Campbell
argues that the time is dawn, in faithfulness to ‘Moore’s song-lyric, which moves temporally
through the night’.18 These differing positions unconsciously point forward to the twin
names for the cultural movement of the late nineteenth century, the ‘Celtic Twilight’ and the
‘Celtic Revival’, and in so doing, reveal the insoluble paradox inherent in nation-formation
underpinned by mythology. The theme of metamorphosis can be regarded as forward-
looking, but here, Campbell finds ‘a newness which is nevertheless imminent and not
achieved’.19 It is, however, conceivable that Maclise intended his metamorphosis to signify
hope in Ireland’s position in 1842, following Catholic Emancipation and the reform
legislation of the 1830s.

A romanticised love of country is expressed in the painting through the the fusion of myth
with nature and humanity. The play of pearls - jewels believed by antiquaries to be found in
Ireland20, is emblematic of this treatment. There is a curvaceous vertical from the flowers in
the figure’s hair, through a string of translucent pearls, whose shapes and luminosity are
echoed in the bulbs of the seaweed as it falls towards the water. In parallel, a curving line of
tears and water-drops descends from her cheek, across her breast and down her thigh till it
reaches the water.

14 I have borrowed Bakhtin’s useful phrase from ‘Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel’,
M. M. Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Cary Emerson and
15 Leon Litvack has made a detailed study of this influence on Maclise in ‘Continental art and the
“Cockneyfied Corkonian”: German and French influences on Daniel Maclise’, Ireland and Europe in the
Nineteenth Century ed. Leon Litvack and Colin Graham (Dublin, 2006), pp. 122-147 (especially pages
129-131).
17 For an analysis, see Clare O’Halloran, Harping on the Past, especially p. 332.
18 Campbell, Thomas Moore, p. 67.
19 Campbell, Thomas Moore, p. 69.
20 See Joseph Cooper Walker’s An Historical Essay on the Dress of the Ancient and Modern Irish (1788) and
Sydney Owenson’s note in The Wild Irish Girl (1806): ‘Pearls abounded and are still found in this
country; and were in such repute in the 11th century, that a present of them was sent to the famous
Bishop Anselm, by a bishop of Limerick’, Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan, The Wild Irish Girl: A
Figure 1, Daniel Maclise, *The Origin of the Harp*, 1842, oil on canvas, 110.4cm x 85.0cm, Manchester City Art Gallery.
The sinuosity of these verticals is emphasised by the presence of the straight, green-hued rods of water which travel relentlessly through the curled strands of hair to meet the water surface in hard, bright drops. Larger pearl shapes gleam from the stalactites, connecting the siren to the ovum of her grotto, and for all the other-worldliness of the painting, there is a tenderness in the handling of the figure, which seems at once exposed, adorned and enclosed, and, despite the mythical context, vividly human. By contrast, Maclise’s 1846 illustration for Moore’s song - the only version seen in Ireland - gives the siren a mermaid’s tail, while the flatness of the treatment locates her firmly in myth.

While Maclise was interpreting Ireland obliquely to the English by offering a well-fed beauty to their gaze, the real Ireland was experiencing the usual ‘distress’.21 Young journalists Thomas Davis, Charles Gavan Duffy and John Blake Dillon believed there was a need to interpret Ireland directly to the Irish in order to effect change, and expressed this conviction in the quotation which became the paper’s slogan, ‘To create and to foster public opinion in Ireland - to make it racy of the soil’. Their focus was on building a sense of nationhood based on residence rather than on confessional or class lines; in other words, founded in the present, not the past. In a subversion of the process de Nie describes as ‘Ireland’s role in the construction of British identity,22 the editors urged that,

We must open our eyes and look our domineering neighbour in the face - we must inspect him, and endeavour to discover what kind of a fellow he is. Not that we ought to do him injustice - not that we ought to run into opposite extremes - not, above all, that we ought to take universal England to be fairly represented by the disagreeable person who sometimes condescends to visit His Ireland - a fat man, with his head in the clouds and his brains in his belly, looking the incarnation of self-importance.23

This measured ‘othering’, its purpose being to establish a depth of difference which would justify Ireland in governing itself, rather than to rationalise dominion over the ‘other’, contrasts with the frequently malicious depictions of the Irish in the British press.24

The editorial in the first edition of the Nation established a position based on forward-looking ideas of justice and human rights, informed by the theories of libertarians such as Thomas Paine.25 This position explicitly rejected the old fault lines: ‘there are, in truth, but two parties in Ireland: those who suffer from her National degradation, and those who profit by it’.26 The editors stressed the importance of now, announcing that their object was ‘to organise the greater and better of those parties’, because, ‘there never was a moment more favourable for such a purpose than the present’.27 The chief author of this ‘moment’ was

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21 References to ‘distress’ - denoting extreme poverty and hunger - in Ireland abound in the parliamentary records for 1842.
24 For example, de Nie, The Eternal Paddy, p. 90.
25 Thomas Paine (1737-1809), revolutionary and author of Rights of Man (1791).
Daniel O’Connell, who had formed the Loyal National Repeal Association in July 1840 with the purpose of overturning the Union legislation of 1800. This movement had the support of the Nation. The paper argued a rational case for the right to nationhood, and it was one which looked outward as well as forward. Indeed, the extensive coverage of overseas affairs, notably criticism of the British operations in Afghanistan and close analysis of the polity of comparably sized nations, such as Belgium, signals pretension to a national voice on a global stage. The salient characteristic of the Nation, however, was that it strove to inculcate in its readers a pride in their cultural distinctiveness which would find expression in ambition and action. In this it couldn’t be more different from Moore’s and Maclise’s sublimation of Ireland’s distress in terms of romantic love.

Although the weekly Nation contained in each 16-page edition a miscellany of news reports, political comment, Repeal campaigning, social gossip and much else, literature was to be a key medium by which the editors would raise national consciousness. The first edition contained poems and songs written in-house, and thereafter the paper would include submissions from the public, both real and invented, inviting editorial comment which would help to form the impression of a lively and often humorous national conversation. Newspapers, especially weekly ones which were extremely popular in rural areas, were often read in gatherings, and this very modern organ of communication could quite naturally, therefore, tap into the tradition of oral culture. The first poem published in the Nation, ‘Our First Number’, reflects this reality, striking the note of popular appeal essential to the editors’ philosophy. Framed on the page by a report on the ‘ricketty’ financial fabric of England, which asks ‘Would it not be wise to stand out from it?’ and a bitterly ironic commentary on the English insistence that Irish soldiers should fight the Afghans on their behalf, the poem is a high-energy clarion call for unity and resistance, as seen in the first of the six verses:

’Tis a great day, and glorious, O Public! for you -
This October Fifteenth, Eighteen Forty and Two!
For on this day of days, lo! THE NATION comes forth,
To commence its career of Wit, Wisdom, and Worth -
To give Genius its due - to do battle with Wrong -
And achieve things undreamed of as yet, save in song.
Then arise! fling aside your dark mantle of slumber,
And welcome in chorus the nation’s first number.

The trisyllabic metre gives a musicality and energy appropriate to the populist message. Written by the Nation’s staff poet, James Clarence Mangan, it is characteristically rousing.

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28 Daniel O’Connell (1775-1847), lawyer and politician, known as the ‘Liberator’ for his success in achieving Catholic Emancipation.
29 The campaign in Afghanistan is analysed in detail, and characterised as an invasion, ‘with no pretext save a lie, and no design save aggrandisement’ of ‘the territories of an independent and unoffending people’, in ‘The English Army in Afghanistan [sic], and the “Notions” of the English Press Thereupon’, Nation, p. 9.
30 The key factors in Belgium’s comparative prosperity are identified as, ‘Fixity of Tenure and Domestic Legislation’ in Nation, (5 November 1842), pp. 56 and 62.
32 ‘Our First Number’, Nation, p. 9.
The rhyme scheme contributes to the mood: the first three couplets of each verse contain passionate indictments of ‘tyrants and bigots’, ‘serf-grinding Landlords’, and ‘lickspittle panders to Power’, as well as calls for ‘bloodless yet mighty Reform’, and these have the assertiveness of masculine rhyme-endings. The final couplet which contains the refrain, ‘the nation’s first number’, has instead a feminine rhyme-ending, which softens the barb with celebratory good humour. And although there is some reference to the Gaelic past, for example in the oblique reference to the traditional Irish mantle which was outlawed by Henry VIII, the context is an exhortation to abandon the inactivity associated with retrospection. The poem calls for a vigorous engagement with modern realities; to ‘take the shine out of “Punch”’ and, though,

To OLD IRELAND our first love is given;
Still, our friendship hath arms for all lands under Heaven.\(^{33}\)

While ‘Our First Number’ takes a high moral tone, ‘The Exterminator’s Song’ expresses bitter resentment in unvarnished, demotic terms. Set to the tune of the popular ballad, ‘The Gipsy King’,\(^{34}\) the role of the amiable gipsy is taken by a landowner whose deliberate cruelty is darkened by the contrast. The first verse of ‘The Exterminator’s Song’ sets the scene:

‘Tis I am the poor man’s scourge,
And where is the scourge like me?
My land from all Papists I purge,
Who think that their votes should be free! (R)
For huts only fitted for brutes,
My agent the last penny wrings;
And my serfs live on water and roots,
While I feast on the best of good things!
For I am the poor man’s scourge! (R)

(Chorus of the Editors of THE NATION)
Yes, you are the poor man’s scourge!
But of such the whole island we’ll purge.\(^{35}\)

Readers familiar with the original ballad would remember the gipsy’s conviviality and his ‘kingdom’ wherein,

[… ] there is but one table,
All my subjects partake of my cheer,
We would drink Champagne were we able,
As it is we have plenty of beer!

The poem continues to parallel the ballad, drawing contrast after bitter contrast. The gipsy relaxes in his egalitarian ‘court’ where,

\(^{33}\) ‘Our First Number’, Nation, p. 9.
\(^{34}\) All quotations from ‘The Gipsy King’ are taken from Broadside Ballads Online <http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/static/images/sheets/10000/09627.gif> [2 Feb. 2016].
\(^{35}\) ‘Poet’s Corner’, Nation, p. 10.
No conspiracy I apprehend,
Among brothers and equals I rule,
while the ‘Exterminator’ is on the alert for insubordination, and,

If conspiracies I apprehend,
To throw off my rack-renting rule,
For a “Special Commission” I send,
To my friends of the old Tory school!

The gypsy’s colourful life includes flirtation, and in the third verse he contends that his ‘subjects’ do not ‘grudge’ him having ‘the prettiest lass’ on his knee. The parallel verse in ‘The Exterminator’s Song’ suggests a less amiable enactment of droit du seigneur:

My cottiers must all cringe to me,
Nor grudge me the prettiest lass;
Or they know very well that they’ll see
Their hovels as flat as the grass!

The ballad form is a powerful tool for making memorable this catalogue of key grudges against British administration, and, true to the Nation’s desire to energise rather than dispirit its readership, the chorus insists on hope.

The third original poem in the first edition of the Nation communicates more explicitly a repudiation of backward-looking nationhood. ‘We Want no Swords’ is written for the air of one of Moore’s Irish Melodies, ‘Oh! For the swords of former times’, a song which laments the loss of Ireland’s Gaelic Order, when,

The best honours worn by Man
Were those which Virtue gave him.36

The poem rejects Moore’s implication that virtuous nationhood is a thing of the past, dependent on superior force of arms, and offers the prospect of:

A purer brand - the arm of right -
Will manhood’s lesson read ‘em;
With conquering MIND alone we fight -
’Tis all we need for freedom!37

For the Young Irelanders, recognition of national virtue and intellect was one of the means by which Ireland could be differenced from England, whose vices were considered to be materialism, greed and misconduct in warfare.38 In contrast to the Irish nationhood Maclise

36 Moore, Moore’s Irish Melodies, p. 127.
37 ‘Songs of the Nation’, Nation, p. 10.
38 Examples of accusations of materialism and greed have been given above. Regarding warfare, the first edition of the Nation ventriloquized Britain’s call to Irish soldiers to serve in Afghanistan: ‘The path to Cabul must open to our money or our swords. Its harems and bazaars shall repay your toil. When we pierce its walls your motto shall be our old one, “booty and beauty”’. The note appended
presented as resignation to suffering, these writers, still idealistic in 1842, were convinced that the rebuilding of national pride amongst Irish people of all classes and creeds was the cure for the country’s ills. They believed, along with Maclise, that romance was an Irish trait, but rather than telling this to an English audience, they asserted that, ‘The people of Ireland must have […] food for their imaginations as well as their stomachs’. Their focus was on accessible and dramatic verse whose ‘music - the universal literature of mankind’ would convey the theme of nation to all inhabitants of the island. This was a vital ingredient in making the Nation ‘the highest circulated newspaper in Ireland’.40

It appears that Maclise, by contrast, engaged only passively in the cultural nourishment of the Irish people. In 1842, the Irish Art-Union was on a mission to rebuild the arts in Ireland through the formation of a permanent National Collection. The endeavour was characterised by a forward-looking inclusivity: ‘the Society throws open annually its exhibition […] to the public at large. For the last fortnight this has been daily thronged by crowds of all classes […]’.41 Maclise ‘cordially responded’42 to a request for permission to make an engraving of one of his paintings43 for the collection, but his contribution was limited to persuading the painting’s owner to submit it to the English engraver,44 who failed to complete the commission until after the demise of the Art-Union.45 Weston contends that Maclise wanted to paint Irish subjects,46 but dependent as he was on an English market which disliked them, had adopted, in the 1840s, ‘a strategy of disguised Irishness’.47 This theory would explain why he chose to paint in oil one of the songs he was preparing to illustrate for a new edition of the Melodies.48 However, the disguise was arguably too thorough to communicate a ‘cohesive’,49 yet ‘amiable’50 ‘Celtic culture’51 to the English. On his death, the London press deemed it good taste to avoid the word ‘Irish’ in his obituaries,52 and lauded him for illustrating ‘the glories of England in war’.53 Three years later, the Origin was regarded by an English enthusiast simply as, ‘a poetical illustration of a poetical idea’54

39 ‘Literature’, Nation, p. 11.
42 ‘Royal Irish Art Union’, Freeman’s Journal, (11 July 1842), p. 3.
43 The painting was A Peep into Futurity, an Irish genre scene.
44 Richard Golding (1785–1865).
45 The Irish Art-Union was terminated in 1851, and the engraving completed 1854-9.
46 Weston, Daniel Maclise, p. 79.
47 Weston, Daniel Maclise, p. 144.
48 Weston tells us that Charles Dickens indicated in September 1843 that the illustrated volume would be published ‘one of these days’, Weston, Daniel Maclise, p. 156.
49 Weston, Daniel Maclise, p. 158.
50 Weston, Daniel Maclise, p. 162.
51 Weston, Daniel Maclise, p. 158.
52 Obituaries in The Morning Post, (27 April, 1870), p. 3 and The Daily News, (27 April 1870), p. 3 describe Maclise as born in Cork, of Scottish descent.
and by 1894 it had become the subject for what must have been a quasi-pornographic tableau vivant at the Palace Theatre.55

There is no doubt that the Nation, on the other hand, fulfilled its purpose in the pre-Famine years. It helped to foster in Irish people of different classes and creeds a sense of nationhood which made justice seem, for a moment in 1843,56 within reach. Dissent within the Repeal Movement, opposition from London, and the coming of An Gorta Mór57 ended this moment. Roy Foster speaks of ‘the theme of the missed chance’58 in Irish history, and it is tempting to see the early 1840s in this way. In retrospect, however, we know that the system under which Ireland laboured in 1842 was already too ‘rotten’59 for the cure of nationality, and the loss of a quarter of the population between 1845 and 1851 would harden attitudes as well as actualities. Few open the pages of the Nation now, but those who do find the early editions crackling with optimism. The Ireland of 1842 comes alive in the musical voices which express anger, humour and love of country with the vigour of youth, while Maclise’s siren floats timelessly in the dark.60 Painted for English viewers, the Origin perhaps represents an English view of Irish nationhood now as well as ever: inscrutable, imperfectly acknowledged, quiescent.

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59 Tim Pat Coogan describes the report of the Devon Commission (1843-5) as containing ‘glaring evidence that the land system in Ireland was rotten to the core and was a disaster waiting to happen’, in Tim Pat Coogan, *The Famine Plot: England’s Role in Ireland’s Greatest Tragedy* (New York, 2012), p. 50.

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1. Daniel Maclise, The Origin of the Harp, 1842, oil on canvas, 110.4cm x 85.0cm, Manchester City Art Gallery. Image courtesy of Manchester City Art Gallery.
Edouard Manet and George Meredith: Two Interpretations of ‘The Heroic in History’

HANNES FREY

The American Civil War challenged the political imagination of Victorian elites. Abolition emerged as a primary concern, yet other issues resonated as well, including political liberty, the right to self-determination and imperial policy. In Britain, the outcome of the war was seen to be relevant to the domestic struggle over the expansion of the voting franchise. Beyond political calculations, attitudes were shaped by deep cultural affinities, including an association of heroism and chivalry with the Southern cause. In 1864, a naval engagement between two American warships—USS Kearsarge and CSS Alabama—took place in the English Channel. It was closely watched by the French and British press and elicited a range of artistic responses. Within weeks of the battle, a painting by the French Impressionist Edouard Manet and a text by the British poet and novelist George Meredith offered dramatically different interpretations of the event. Comparing the two artefacts, this article explores how notions of heroism were constructed and challenged in a rapidly evolving political culture.

A battle at sea has the power to fire up the imagination, especially if it takes place in the public eye. On Sunday, 19 June 1864, USS Kearsarge caught up with the elusive Confederate raider CSS Alabama. A few days earlier, the Alabama had entered the neutral port of Cherbourg, France, to resupply and make long-needed repairs. Trapped in port, her captain, Raphael Semmes, decided to steam out and meet the Kearsarge. The two ships were roughly equal in terms of size, crew and guns. Outside French territorial waters but still within sight of land, the Alabama opened fire; the Kearsarge responded. For about an hour, the two warships steamed in a wide circle, firing at each other until the Kearsarge’s superior gunnery gained the upper hand. The Alabama was destroyed. It was a spectacular event that attracted great attention.1

The French impressionist painter Edouard Manet and the British novelist George Meredith created contemporary interpretations of the event that allow us to explore the political imagination of European elites.2 The American civil war forced European observers to choose. Abolition was a primary concern, yet other issues were important as well: political liberty and the right to self-determination, the preservation of national union, the opportunities and challenges of industrial modernisation, and the cultural threat to pre-industrial lifestyles and values. In Britain, these issues were seen to be relevant to the

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2 Edouard Manet, The Battle of USS ‘Kearsarge’ and CSS ‘Alabama’, oil on canvas, Philadelphia Museum of Art; for Meredith’s text, see last chapter of Cruise of the Alabama, which was written by Meredith.
domestic struggle over the expansion of the voting franchise. British audiences were also concerned about the war’s implications for the balance of power in the Atlantic arena, the status of Canada and British Caribbean possessions, the supply of Southern cotton for the British textile industry, the economic restrictions imposed by Britain’s policy of neutrality, and the application of international maritime law.

Manet’s and Meredith’s interpretations of the battle allow us to isolate one cultural aspect of the war that tends to get neglected in modern political histories: the association of heroism and chivalry with the Southern cause. American historians are familiar with the trope of the ‘Lost Cause’ that emerged from the commemoration process in the decades after the war.³ In Britain and France, notions of heroism and chivalry already had deep cultural roots. As has been demonstrated for Britain by Angus Hawkins, ‘the politics of historical memory suffused Victorian public debate’.⁴ The case of Captain Semmes and the Alabama provides a closer look at this phenomenon. Victorian audiences celebrated heroes with enthusiasm; they were prepared to discuss the fine points of conduct yet were equally ready to suspect cynicism, dismiss heroism as hopelessly dusty and outdated, or delight in its comical aspects. Regardless of the specific issue at stake, evocations of heroism rarely failed to energise the public debate.

The battle between the Kearsarge and the Alabama was a spectacle, a staged event, an early modern tourist attraction with thousands of spectators. The British and French press covered the engagement intensively for about two weeks, with London papers reporting on the coverage in Paris. Manet and Meredith produced their works independently within a month. Their viewers and readers would have been familiar with the names and backstories of the two ships and captains. Manet himself was probably not present at the event, yet he had access to the newspapers in Paris and possessed thorough knowledge of ships and the sea.⁵ Meredith’s publisher traveled to Cherbourg just before the fight. He met Semmes who entrusted him with his logbook and correspondence. Meredith, who was working in publishing, agreed to write an introduction and a final chapter. The resulting book—largely a paraphrase of Semmes’ log and correspondence—became a hot journalistic property. From 24 June on, it was widely advertised. It became available in bookstores on 16 July, was well received and went through several editions. Meredith’s involvement was not mentioned; we know about it from a private letter.⁶

I saw Edouard Manet’s painting The Battle of the USS Kearsarge and CSS Alabama a few weeks ago at the Philadelphia Museum of Art where it occupies a prominent place among the museum’s superb collection of European nineteenth century art (fig. 1). It was brought to Philadelphia by John G. Johnson, a successful lawyer and important American collector of impressionism and European art.

⁵ Beth Archer Brombert, Edouard Manet: Rebel in a Frock Coat (Chicago, 1996), pp. 159-60.
Philadelphia provides an interesting context. During the civil war, the city was a primary centre of industrial production and a source of civic strength for the Northern cause. The Union League of Philadelphia, a political society established to support Lincoln’s policies, displays a traditional interpretation of the *Kearsarge and Alabama* in its beautiful club building. The League’s version of the battle, acquired in 1906, was painted by Xanthus Smith, a

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former officer in the Union Navy, in a highly detailed historiographical style. The contrast to Manet’s approach is striking. Manet’s *Kearsarge and Alabama* is part of a very different artistic tradition that represents a break from traditional history painting and commemorations of the heroic.

Behind a veil of ageing varnish, Manet’s painting draws the viewer into a scene of wind and flying salt spray, of waves crashing against the hull and the low thunder of guns. Bright summer sunlight sparkles on the horizon beyond the hulking shapes of the two fighting ships; clouds of smoke and steam obscure the blue sky. The perspective is unusual. The viewer’s position is high above the water, at the level of a mast top. The horizon line is near the upper edge of the canvas. X-radiography of the painting suggests that Manet reworked the composition extensively.\(^8\)

The ships are identified by their flags. In the middle distance, the Alabama occupies the centre of the canvas. She is evidently in distress. Waves are washing over the stern; two fountains of green seawater mark the impact of shells. The Confederate flag—white ensign with stars and bars—has been lowered. Behind the Alabama, and partially obscured by smoke, steam and rigging, the Kearsarge is flying the Stars and Stripes. Her guns are still firing on the Alabama. On the far right in the distance, a smaller ship with a red ensign, furled sails and a tall smokestack is standing by. This is the Deerhound, the yacht of a wealthy British businessman, who is about to pick up survivors of the Alabama.

A small sailboat in the foreground completes the narrative. Entering from the left, it appears to be rushing into the scene. Its diagonal course draws the eye and the mind towards the centre of the action: the sinking Alabama. A white flag with a blue frame identifies the sailboat as a pilot boat. The French flag is flying from the gaff. The helmsman in the stovepipe hat is angling his head to the right where a drowning man is clinging to a plank. A man in foul weather gear is standing at the gunwale, readying a boom with a rope attached to it. Another man is standing on top of the boom next to the forward mast, controlling the halyards. The dinghy is out of alignment with the keel of the pilot boat, which implies that the pilot boat has initiated a turn to starboard. The main sail is close-hauled to support the turn; its rear edge is catching sunlight. The viewer is led to anticipate a man-over-board manoeuvre. If all goes well, the boat will shoot forward into the wind, come to rest next to the sailor in the water, and the man at the gunwale will pull the sailor from the water.

Despite the rough brush work, contemporary viewers would have been able to recognise the artist’s accuracy. Wind, water, movement and light are just right. Manet accomplishes three things simultaneously with this painting. First, he emphasises the physical aspects of the event. His seascape, a departure from traditional history painting, is a milestone of the emerging Impressionist movement.\(^9\) Second, by emphasising the physical side, Manet makes a broader cultural comment about the limits of heroism. The work anticipates his *Execution of Maximilian* in its several versions, showing meaningless death in a distant conflict. It also

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relates to two paintings that he contributed to the regular Salon in 1864: *Incident in the Bullring* with its dead toreador, and *Christ with Angels* with its wounded Christ. A distant echo resonates in *Olympia*, whose depiction of a prostitute in the guise of Venus caused a scandal at the Salon of 1865. In each case, Manet reveals the physical limitations of a culturally constructed persona.10

Third, by ignoring and thus deflating the heroic, Manet comments on French domestic politics. It is known that Manet’s politics were anti-Napoleonic. By placing the French pilot boat at the centre of the action, he suggests that imperial posturing is futile — lost battles are empty gestures. The artistic qualities of the painting were recognised when it was shown to a broader public at the Salon of 1872.11

Meredith’s approach to the event is different in important aspects. Relying on the facts provided by the press, he utilises the medium of text to develop an argument. The structure is built on the formal elements of heroic combat: issuance of a challenge; assessment of the odds; acceptance of the challenge; address to the troops; hand-to-hand struggle; and finally defiance in defeat. In Meredith’s interpretation, Semmes is a tragic hero, doomed to lose the fight yet triumphant in defeat due to the nobility of his conduct.

Setting the stage, Meredith establishes the South’s legitimacy. He refers to ‘the defence of Southern liberty’ where ‘valour is a national inheritance’ and justifies the mission of the Confederate commerce raiders.12 The reader is encouraged to identify rationally and emotionally with the South.

Meredith begins the final chapter with the portentous statement ‘It was written that the Alabama was never to behold the ports of her country.’13 Her raiding career is an epic quest. The appearance of the Kearsarge at Cherbourg is presented as the culminating challenge that Semmes could not refuse:

French officers agreed with Captain Semmes in thinking that there was marked offence and defiance in the manoeuvres of the Kearsage,14 and that he could hardly do less than go out and meet her.15

Despite the odds, the Alabama’s crew was eager to fight:

They were fortified by the assurance of mighty service done to their country. They knew that they inflicted tremendous damage upon their giant foe. They were, perhaps, supported by the sense that their captain’s unrivalled audacity had done more harm to the United States than the operations of many thousand men.

10 Brombert, pp. 153, 158; John Elderfield, Manet and the Execution of Maximilian (New York, 2006); Tinterow and Loyrette, Origins of Impressionism, pp. 393, 402, 403, 405-406.
14 Kearsarge is misspelled ‘Kearsage’ throughout the book, reflecting French usage.
15 This and the following quotes about the fight are taken from Cruise of the Alabama, vol II, pp. 278-98.
The fighting spirit of the Alabama was not simply the result of pride; it was animated by far nobler sentiments:

The chivalrous give and take of battle was glorious to men who had alternately fled and hunted for so dreary a term. They trusted for victory; but defeat itself was to be a vindication of their whole career, and they welcomed the chances gladly.

The odds were grave. As Semmes was to discover during the fight, the wooden flanks of the Kearsarge were protected by anchor chains:

He knew his opponent to be heavier in ship, battery, and crew, but "I did not know that she was also ironclad," he says. Personally, he desired the battle; the instigations of an enthusiastic crew, unanimous for action, as also of friendly officers, are to be taken into account.

On Sunday morning, the Alabama steamed out of port. The setting enhanced the significance of the event:

All Cherbourg was on the heights above town and along the bastions and the mole. Never did knightly tournament boast a more eager multitude of spectators.

Just before the fighting began, Captain Semmes addressed the crew:

The name of your ship has become a household word wherever civilization extends. Shall that name be tarnished by defeat?

He put the fight in historical context:

Remember that you are in the English Channel, the theatre of so much of the naval glory of our race, and that the eyes of all Europe are at this moment upon you.

Semmes’ appeal to the English ‘race’ was addressed to a broader audience, not just his crew. He was placing himself on the stage of history and he was determined to play the part of an English hero. With his final fight, Semmes sought to anchor the cause of the Confederacy in the narrative tradition of English heroism. As Meredith recognises, the battle was a literary gesture as much as it was naval strategy.

Yet despite the alleged righteousness of her cause, her captain’s leadership, and her crew’s fighting spirit, the Alabama was doomed:

In fact, the Alabama entered the lists when she should have been lying in dock. She fought with an exhausted frame. She had the heroism to decide upon the conflict, without the strength to choose the form of it.

Semmes and his crew showed defiance to the very end. As they were abandoning the sinking ship, they denied the enemy the trophies of victory:
The captain and his officers dropped their swords into the deep; the men drove their oars into the bottoms of the boats. One spirit—the spirit of the unconquerable Confederation of the Southern States—animated all. Not a man who was able to support himself in the water swam towards the Kearsage.

At this moment, the Deerhound swept in and carried Semmes and his officers off to safety in England, bringing the epic to its inevitable conclusion:

So sank the Alabama. It would have been glorious for her to have won, but it was not disgraceful that the day went against her.

Glory over disgrace—the stakes are defined in chivalric terms.

After the fight, Semmes was both celebrated and criticised. A group of British naval officers collected money to present him with a new sword that he would treasure for the rest of his life. Newspaper commentators chastised him for not surrendering his sword to Captain Winslow of the Kearsarge and for escaping after having struck the flag, rather than facing the consequences. Meredith’s text is a response on Semmes’ behalf. Winslow was criticised for continuing to fire after the Alabama had struck her flag, for not picking up the survivors right away, and for letting Semmes get away. No attempt was made in Britain to celebrate Captain Winslow as a hero. Apparently, only a renegade Southerner could qualify for heroic consideration, which suggests a deeply fractured view of the United States.

Victorian audiences were primed to accept naval officers as ‘professional heroes’. The naval profession was defined by a tightly circumscribed interpretative framework; within this framework, officers were free to pursue heroic action. At sea, they could achieve magnificent things or do serious damage. For society, the conflict potential was limited as long as the hero stuck to his trade. Accordingly, Meredith and the British press restricted their praise and criticism of Semmes’ to his conduct as naval officer. His contribution to the cause of slavery was barely addressed.

Semmes himself was not happy with Meredith’s narrative effort. He thought it was ‘a meager and barren record’. In his own memoir, he went on to explore the naval and legal aspects of the story much more thoroughly. Yet from the vantage point of today, Meredith has achieved his artistic goal. Captain Semmes is well regarded in naval historiography, despite having done irrecoverable damage to American trade and prolonging the war.

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17 For many, see Ephraim Douglass Adams, Great Britain and the American Civil War (New York, [n.d.], reprint of the 1925 edition); R.J.M. Blackett, Divided Hearts: Britain and the American Civil War (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 2001); Duncan Andrew Campbell, English Public Opinion and the American Civil War (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2003).
19 Semmes, Preface to Adventures Afloat, pp. iii–iv.
A few years later, Meredith revisited the topic of heroism in great depth in his novel *Beauchamp’s Career*, the story of Nevil Beauchamp, a successful naval officer, who stands for parliament yet fails to gain a seat because he can’t quite figure out how to translate his chivalrous sentiments into effective politicking.20 Beauchamp is preoccupied with Thomas Carlyle’s notions of heroism.21 Meredith mocks Beauchamp gently, as he mocks Beauchamp’s aristocratic uncle who is ‘in mind a medieaval baron’.22 Meredith acknowledges that heroes are out of tune with the times, yet his affection for them shines through. Guided by the ‘spirit of comedy’, a concept he developed in a contemporaneous essay, Meredith now eases his hero into the new age.23 He no longer glorifies the hero as Carlyle proposes, yet he does not deflate him like Manet does. Instead, he simply pays homage to the continuing presence of the heroic in the English imagination.

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**LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS**

Figure 1. Edouard Manet, *The Battle of the USS ‘Kearsarge’ and the CSS ‘Alabama’,* 1864

Oil on canvas, 137.8 cm by 128.9 cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art; John G. Johnson Collection, 1917.
The Age of Nature: Tracing the influence of Émile on the representation of boyhood in The Brummell Children and the opening chapters of Tom Brown’s Schooldays

MARK GROGAN

No summary can do justice to the diversity of formative experience available in the late eighteenth to mid nineteenth century to the children of the ruling elite. In this article, I hope to explore the influence of Émile, or On Education by Jean-Jacques Rousseau on the representation of three pre-adolescent boys from two distinct eras. Joshua Reynolds’s portrait of The Brummell Children, commissioned in 1781, depicts the two sons of the senior civil servant William Brummell. The comparative text is the semi-autobiographical recreation of the boyhood of Thomas Hughes in his novel Tom Brown’s Schooldays, first published in 1857.

Boyhood: n.f. [from boy.] The state of being a boy; the part of life in which we are boys. This is perhaps an arbitrary word. - Samuel Johnson, A Dictionary of the English Language (1755)

The publication of Émile, or On Education in 1762 by Jean-Jacques Rousseau remains a significant milestone on the journey towards the more enlightened view of childhood that had emerged by the publication of Thomas Hughes’s famous school story. Before 1762, to breastfeed your own child was ‘swinish’, babies were tightly swaddled, and parents of means would keep their young children at a distance. Until the age of three or four years old, children of wealthy parents living in town were typically sent to a wet nurse in the country, or, if based in the country, cared for by specialist domestic servants on the family estate to be protected from the twin evils of fresh air and exercise. The absence of any mention of the infancy of ‘little Tom’ Brown suggests that this practice remained typical well into the nineteenth century.

Child portraits of the eighteenth century tend to share the optimistic tone and moral simplicity of children’s novels from the nineteenth. Hughes concedes the main lesson of Tom Brown’s Schooldays in his Preface to the Sixth Edition (1869): ‘My sole object in writing was to preach to boys’. The novel reflects the author’s hearty plainness: ‘Be straightforward, honest, and self-reliant, and use your strength and power under God in the service of others’. This simple message was shaped to appeal to his intended audience of mid-

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1 Samuel Johnson, A Dictionary of the English Language (London, 1755; reprint, New York, 1979), s.v. ‘boyhood’.
3 Hughes, 2008, p. xl.
Victorian public schoolboys boys who he named, ‘England! Young England!’ Boys like his own son:

Thinking over what I should like to say to him before he went to school…I took to writing a story, as the easiest way of bringing out what I wanted. Hughes was offering them the kind of direction he had received from his Headmaster, Thomas Arnold when he was at Rugby: a guiding hand, a word of encouragement, an ‘unworned zeal in creating “moral thoughtfulness”’. Sir Joshua Reynolds also believed his profession had a higher calling. The ‘genuine painter…instead of endeavoring to amuse mankind with the minute neatness of his imitations, he must endeavor to improve them by the grandeur of his ideas’. Painting for Reynolds, like writing novels for Hughes, was a moral as well as creative vocation.

The portrait of William and George Brummell, aged five and three respectively, was commissioned by their father, William ‘Billy’ Brummell, in December 1781 (fig. 1). The picture is an idealistic statement of playful innocence, a précis of eighteenth-century attitudes towards children as well as a theatrical representation of two young boys over the three months of their sittings. Just as Tom Brown’s Schooldays is now a social and educational document and manifesto for the muscular Christian Socialism of Thomas Hughes in print.

Master William would follow his father into the Tory squirearchy, attending Eton and Oriel College, Oxford, before marrying the daughter of a senior civil servant and settling down to a life of public service on the Wivenhoe Estate in Essex. Master George would follow a less traditional path after Oxford. Better known as ‘Beau’ Brummell, he too went to Eton where he began a celebrated friendship with the Prince of Wales, later George IV. Master George began to establish himself as the bachelor monarch de la mode even at school, gaining his first sobriquet ‘Buck’ as a result of ‘the anxiety with which he eschewed the dirty streets on a rainy day, his white sock with a bright gold buckle behind, and the measured dignity of his step’.

At the time of the painting’s commission, Billy Brummell was Private Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lord North, a position he held until the administration ended in March 1782 following the defeat of the British forces at Yorktown and the resulting loss of the American Revolutionary War. Despite the government’s downfall, Brummell’s ‘unremitting attention to business, strict integrity and amiable disposition’ secured him a sufficient number of sinecures to retire to The Grove, an eighteenth-century Gothic house neighbouring Donnington Castle, in the real Berkshire, about 20 miles south of where the young Tom Brown takes his fictionalized steps in Hughes’s cherished Vale of the White Horse.

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5 Hughes, 2008, p. 6.
7 Hughes, 2008, p.xlii.
10 Gentlemen’s Magazine quoted in Campbell, 1948, p.16.
Figure 1. Sir Joshua Reynolds, *The Brummell Children*, 1781-82, oil on canvas, 142.3 x 111.8 cm, Kenwood House, London. © English Heritage
Traditionally, between the ages of about four and seven, boys from the family of former senior civil servants like Brummell, or the character of Tom’s father, Squire Brown, were home tutored. Though there is no record of the early years of William and George, Tom Brown’s nurse does make an appearance. Charity Lamb is ‘a good hearted, tearful, scatter-brained girl’ against whose ‘yoke and authority’ Tom was already agitating by the age of four. Unlike the urban upbringing of their father, the early life of the Brummell boys was spent, like Tom Brown, among the sights and sounds of a rural shire, sons of a country squire.

Previously the Brummell family had lived in London’s Bloomsbury district for at least two generations. Billy Brummell’s childhood remains lost. All that is known of his father’s occupation is that he was ‘in business in Bury-street, St. James, and might have been a confectioner’; a trade that would place him at the heart of the metropolitan ‘middling sort’, a term coined to ‘describe the independent craftsmen or tradesman who stood between the civic élite and the urban poor’. Billy must have received some childhood tutoring as Lord Hawkesbury, then Joint Secretary of the Treasury and lodging in the Brummell family home, picked Billy to be his amanuensis because of his ‘perfect penmanship [and] active disposition’. Whatever Billy Brummell’s education had been, it led to an opportunity to exceed his father’s tradesman background and elevate himself into this ‘civic élite’. Billy’s promotion is paralleled not only in the family’s relocation to their Berkshire estate, one that they enlarged and extended over the next four years, but also in leaving Bloomsbury behind. If Billy Brummell’s migration west to the more fashionable Berkeley Square exposes the virtues necessary for advancement in the heart of the metropolis, the Browns are rooted in the heart of England and are in possession of idealized English virtues.

The opening three chapters of Tom Brown’s Schooldays follow the life of the eponymous lead ‘from his earliest babyhood…till he first went to school when nearly eight years of age’. It is a period of innocence, an apprenticeship to prepare the child to become a man, away from parental influence at public school. Hughes foregrounds that Tom was ‘a hearty strong boy from the first’ and ‘exhibited the family characteristics in great strength’. The Browns are combative, hard working, clannish, argumentative, resolute, and ‘scattered over the whole empire on which the sun never sets [and] the chief cause of that empire’s stability’. In the introductory chapter Hughes carefully maps the landscape the Brown’s have inhabited for generations, tracing, like a contour line, their breeding and unheralded, but central place in England’s social and military history. Berkshire is ‘sacred ground for Englishmen’ and indeed the Browns are their representatives, a Saxon ‘Everyman’ who has fought in British wars from America to Australia, and in English battles since ‘Cressy and Agincourt…doing

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11 Hughes, 2008, p.22.
12 Jesse, 1844, p.18.
14 Jesse, 1844, p.19.
15 Hughes, 2008, p. 17.
16 Hughes, 2008, p. 17.
17 Hughes, 2008, p. 5.
18 Hughes, 2008, p. 10.
It is within this landscape that the young Tom Brown will be permitted to follow Rousseau’s advice to ‘receive no verbal lessons [and] be taught by experience alone’.20

The pastoral setting of The Brummell Children is typical of a Reynolds portrait. The parkland stretching away to the dawn light on the blue hills is indeterminate, but provides focal depth. The strong vertical of the birch tree over hanging on the right allows Reynolds to create the effect of dappled sunlight, here fashioned by applying rapidly worked firm paint across a surface of broken brushstrokes. He used this technique extensively in his society portraits and Reynolds’ mastery in handling paint here is evidence of his mature style at the beginning of his last decade as an artist.

Once Squire Brown decides Tom is the right age to be sent to Rugby, Chapter IV takes us immediately to the Peacock Inn, Islington, about two miles north-west of the Brummell’s former home in Bloomsbury. It is Tom’s first time in London and all that can keep him from roving ‘those endless, mysterious gas-lit streets…with their glare and hum and moving crowds’ is the excitement of becoming ‘a public school-boy as fast as possible’.21 We get a glimpse, like Tom, of the great metropolis and the network of coaches, roads, and inns that united town and country before the arrival of affordable rail travel. Neither the growing influence of London, the arrival of the Great Western Railway reshaping the Ock Valley, nor ‘the red brick cottages multiplying’22 as a result of industrialization coming to the Vale seem to sit comfortably with the narrator of Tom Brown’s Schooldays. He bemoans the ‘young cosmopolites, belonging to all counties and no counties’,23 with ‘their hearts in London Club-life, or so-called Society’24 and the loss of social cohesion brought about by the growing consumer society following ‘twenty years of buying cheap and selling dear’25 that has led to ‘Too much over-civilization, and deceitfulness of riches’.26

Rousseau also offered ‘the rustic simplicity of the country’27 as a palliative to the threat of towns on children ‘that will give rise to fevers, and eventually kill them’.28 Both Rousseau and Hughes share a dislike, even a fear, of the damaging effects of town life on the individual. Rousseau goes as far as suggesting that children brought up in towns will ‘acquire [a] hesitating stammer’.29 Despite subordinating the educational aspects of his text, viewing Émile as ‘a philosophical work on the principle…that man is naturally good’, in it Rousseau reasons that mothers should breastfeed their babies, swaddling should be abandoned, cold water baths were stimulating, and that children should be allowed to develop in the countryside, and lead a vigorous, active life; adding his voice to a chorus that had been growing for

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19 Hughes, 2008, p. 2.
21 Hughes, 2008, p.70.
24 Hughes, 2008, p. 41.
26 Hughes, 2008, p. 43.
27 Rousseau, 1995, p. 46.
29 Rousseau, 1995, p. 46.
decades. To comment On Education at this time meant not only opining on a child’s academic curriculum but the whole process of child rearing, and it is to this holistic view that the opening chapters of Tom Brown’s Schooldays subscribes. Tom is allowed to roam ‘the quiet old-fashioned country village, under the shadow of the everlasting hills’ free from any scholastic influence.

Though Hughes also shares an anti-intellectual attitude with Rousseau, at times he seems closer in spirit to Locke’s view of the mind as a tabula rasa than a Wordsworthian vision of nature as moral paradigm. Nevertheless, Hughes direct quotes Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood: “The child is father to the man;” à fortiori, therefore, he must be father to the boy. Where Hughes’s novel definitively departs from Wordsworth’s and Rousseau’s thinking on ‘natural education’ is in the details. One example is indicative; Rousseau strongly advocates ‘one tutor [who] should be young’, whereas Hughes views a variety of formative influences as essential. Tom has a series of guiding hands included those offered by ‘a couple of old boys, Noah and Benjamin by name, who… expended much time upon his education’. Noah ‘a keen dry old man of almost ninety [while] old Benjy…was scarce seventy years old’.

Broadly speaking, until the publication of John Locke’s Some Thoughts Concerning Education (1693), little consideration was given to a child’s physical education, or to the idea of education being an enjoyable process connected to the different developmental stages of childhood. Small children, born sinful as a result of mankind’s ‘Fall’, were at the mercy of fragile health and an active and vigorous devil. Viewed as:

[O]nly a simple plaything, as a simple animal, or a miniature adult who dressed, played and was supposed to act like his elders…Their ages were unimportant and therefore seldom known. Their education was undifferentiated, either by age, ability or intended occupation.

True, Locke’s treatise was ‘self-consciously snobbish…designed implicitly for males from upper social groups’ but it was perfect for the upwardly mobile Brummells and the ‘true blue Tory to the backbone… Squire Brown’. Locke’s key message was hugely influential:

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31 Hughes, 2008, p. 17.
33 Rousseau, 1995, p. 22.
37 One exception is Sir Thomas Elyot’s The Governour, first published in 1531, where Elyot recommends different inducements, directed at different age groups, to avoid ‘the childe to be fatigate with continuall studie or lernyng’, vol. I (London, 1883), p.38, ebook.
38 James Axtell, The Educational Writings of John Locke (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 63-64.
40 Hughes, 2008, p. 52.
‘aiming to produce an English gentleman’, childhood was an apprenticeship, and his central image of the child as a plant to be cultivated was innovative and hugely popular.41

In the 1750s Reynolds, as part of his apprenticeship as a portrait painter to the English élite executed ‘at least half a dozen unpretentious and wholly charming portraits of children’,42 all of them stiff, formal, posed and influenced by Van Dyck’s little adults.43 Yet, by the 1780s, ‘This deaf middle-aged man seems to have been one of the first people to understand that children have private and separate minds’.44 His portrait of the Brummell boys is suggestive of all the playful innocence Rousseau insisted be encouraged in the young. Reynolds’s gift was his ability to capture ‘the vitality of children and their spontaneous but telling gestures’.45

The painting captures a moment when the conventional pose of a boy, here the younger George sitting on a log with his fluffy white dog, has been interrupted by a playful Blenheim spaniel, jerking his pink sash, a century and a half before the colour became gender specific, and forcing his smock off his shoulder. The older brother William has come to George’s rescue and protectively shields his head of blonde curls with one hand whilst tugging on the sash to prevent the spaniel disappearing with it into that grassy panorama. ‘Refreshing and spirited as it appears, the romping composition in fact forms a perfect stable triangle, with both boys facing the viewer’.46 The two brothers attended thirteen appointments over three months before their mother, Mary, visited Reynolds’s studio to see the finished painting. Reynolds had been painting portraits for over forty years to be able to make spontaneity seem so artless. His assistant James Northcote gives us an insight into how he managed it:

> [G]rand rackets there used to be at Sir Joshua’s when the children were with him! He used to romp and play with them, and talk to them in their own way; and, whilst all this was going on, he actually snatched these exquisite touches of expression which make his portraits of children so captivating...It was a beautiful sight to see Sir Joshua paint, for he did it with such a graceful facility.47

Locke’s views only began to lose traction in the mid eighteenth century when, after Rousseau, Romanticism became a more dynamic influence and childhood began to be associated with increasingly positive meanings, attributes that are implicit in Reynolds’s portrait of the Brummell children: ‘innocence, freedom, creativity, emotion, spontaneity.’48 What could be natural than two boys, caught playing with their two dogs in a pastoral

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landscape, unfettered by breeches. Certainly, the painting is striking in its nonconformity to current expectations of clothing and gender. The boys radiate a sense of freedom, not only in their age and aspects, but also in their free flowing nursery skirts.

The idea of loose clothing for open-air play suggested by both Locke and Rousseau is exemplified here. The lack of breeches signals these are still children rather than boys, or at least young boys fulfilling a less prescribed version of masculinity. Breeching ‘might occur at any time from the age of three’ and was a rite of passage for boys as irrevocable as being sent to school, both signifying masculinity and maturity. It was a moment to signal and lament, not, like Reynolds’s portraits of adults, simply a chance to role-play, but a change in role that was permanent, and worthy of record.

Wealthy families like the Brummells and Browns would breech later than the lower ranks, dependent on when and if a boy went to school, on their toilet training and, as breeches were costly, if the family could afford to replace them as the child grew. Clothing is ‘itself a kind of discourse [reinscribing] a person’s sex, rank, age, occupation—all the distinctive features of the self’. By the time of Émile, many of Locke’s ideas had become accepted; what made Rousseau’s work stand out was that it focussed not on details of education like utility or reasoning clarified by Locke, but on ‘an overall conception of man and of the development proper to him’, and dress was just one part of that development.

The first two books of Émile take us from birth, where Rousseau broadly concurs with earlier religious opinion that infants are not yet truly human, up to the age of about twelve; what he called in his manuscript plan ‘the Age of Nature’. At this age, to contrast with the extensive academic training to which children were then subjected, Rousseau aligned himself with many mid to late eighteenth century educationalists. In rejecting the rationalist, Cartesian doctrine of innate ideas, he reasserts Locke’s theory that ‘sense experience is the ultimate source of all our concepts and knowledge’. Rousseau suggests you should suspend the education of a boys’ intellect and instead: ‘Exercise his body, his limbs, his senses, his strength, but keep his mind idle as long as you can’. The irony of the mind remaining idle as the boy is sent to school could not have been lost on the ‘almost pointedly anti-intellectual’ Thomas Hughes or his intended audience. Hughes makes clear on several occasions: ‘The object of schools is not to ram Latin and Greek into boys; but to make them good English boys, good future citizens’.

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53 Rousseau, 1995, p. 68.
55 Hughes, 2008, p. 63.
The end of Lord North’s administration proved to be a watershed for the aristocracy in Britain as a ‘British army led by a succession of patrician generals…and an administration under the leadership of the eldest son of a peer… suffered a humiliating defeat’. Yet, between 1783 and 1857, the ruling élite regrouped in a remarkable way, and Billy Brummell’s ascent seems indicative of this recovery. The seventy years that followed the cessation of the American Revolutionary War was a turbulent period in modern British history. Despite industrialization, urbanization, demands for political reform, revolution in France, and a European war: ‘Britain’s ruling class would actually increase in size, in homogeneity, in wealth and in range of power…From the 1780s onwards, its members would set about re-ordering their authority, their image, their ideas and their composition’. The public school system of Dr. Arnold at Rugby may have helped ensure its homogeneity, but the piecemeal inclusion of smart, ambitious, individuals like the Brummell family into the civic élite, alongside the continued commitment of the fictional Brown clan ‘scattered over the whole empire on which the sun never sets’, helped ensure that, for a while at least, the sun continued to shine. Just as Tom Brown is sent to Rugby at around ten years old, and into literary history, the Brummell boys were also dispatched to public school: William in 1786, aged ten, followed by George in 1790, aged eleven. Brummell had retained an impressive list of contacts after departing the capital. Guests of the calibre of Charles James Fox, Old Etonian and leading Whig politician, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Old Harrovian and Irish playwright frequently visited him at The Grove. Reynolds painted both men at about the same time as he completed *The Brummell Children*. This was the society that the Brummells now moved in, remarkable considering he began his career in a servant’s flat at Hampton Court.

Though Rousseau advocated an extended ‘age of Nature’ to allow for his model pupil to develop appropriately before instruction should begin, both he and Locke, and Hughes and Billy Brummell are all complicit, in diverse ways, in prohibiting girls from this formative process. But their prohibitions extend also to class: Émile, Locke’s young gentleman, The Brummell boys and Tom Brown, are all wealthy, and to follow Rousseau’s model, they would need to be. Hughes writes to public schoolboys ‘old and young’, even those ‘who have belonged, or do belong, to other schools’, about a separate world, accessible to approximately 1 in 250 children. It is access to capital that allows Rousseau’s Émile to be cultivated, for Tom Brown to ‘wander all over the neighbourhood’, and the Brummell boys to be depicted in their bucolic idyll. Nominated by their father’s patron, Lord North, it seems remarkable that the grandsons of a tradesman were able to gain access to the public school not of the landed gentry, but the nobility. This, and the exhibition of his sons’ portrait

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57 Colley, 1992, p. 149.
58 Hughes, 2008, p. 5.
60 Hughes, 2008, p. 59.
at the 1783 Royal Academy Summer Exhibition ‘may be seen as his crowning achievement, setting the seal on a remarkable career by using art to launch his family into society’.61

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**LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS**

Figure 1. Sir Joshua Reynolds, *The Brummell Children*, 1781-82, oil on canvas, 142.3 x 111.8 cm, Kenwood House, London © English Heritage
This article will discuss a poem written by Krishnabhabini Das, first published in Calcutta in 1885. The poem selected reveals a desperately emotive account of Krishnabhabini’s inner struggles concerning her maiden voyage to England. The poem imparts Krishnabhabini’s erroneous perception of the nature of female educational emancipation in Britain. Her poem will be juxtaposed with a newspaper article published in London in 1889 documenting the first English lady doctor, Mary Scharlieb who successfully passed the M.D. examination of the University of London, yet, achieved her primary medical qualification in India. This article will discuss the nature and development of female university education, particularly medical education, and the role of India.

The Calcutta School Society ascertained in 1818 that no provision of any kind existed for the education of women in India. The traditional social customs of India included limited or no formal education and child marriage, often resulting in the seclusion of well-to-do married women. Life was confined behind the purdah, restricting access to the majority including medical professionals because doctors were male. Krishnabhabini Das a middle-class, Bengali Hindu lady with little formal education, was married at the age of nine and first travelled to England in 1882 with her husband to further his studies. Within three years of her eight-year stay, Krishnabhabini wrote an account of Victorian life, which was published in Bengali, anonymously in Calcutta in 1885 with the intention of enlightening her Indian female compatriots who lacked the opportunity to engage in such pursuits themselves.

In 2015 Krishnabhabini’s work was first translated and published in English, 130 years after original conception, and for the first time accessible in the land of its subject matter, England. Krishnabhabini’s narrative prose is interjected with poetry that is infused with the fervency of a Bengali woman, frustrated by the lack of educational opportunity available to women in Colonial India in stark contrast with those available to Indian men ‘How many of your sons go to get educated there Mother! […] being your children why can’t we do the same thing Mother! Go to that country, to fill our hearts with the wealth of knowledge after seeing the independent British daughter!’ (XI-XII) (fig.1).

1 Minna Cowan, *The Education of the Women of India*, (Edinburgh & London, [1912]), p. 34. No date of publication is listed in the book. However, the preface is dated 1912.
2 My analysis of the poem is based on Mandal’s English translation.
Farewell

I
My favourite land! The jewelled land!
Leaving you for a long time.
Do not worry, mother! This unfortunate daughter
Is useless for you.

II
I had wished that along with my beloved
I will nurture you for your good
But that desire remains unfulfilled
Still in the secret of my heart

III
The fire of that hope is gradually dying
But mother! Cannot bring back memories
Hence mother, my pain
Remains hidden like poison in the heart.

IV
You will ask for the reason
Why we are deserting India; For you
I cannot find the answer within,
But am going abroad with many hopes.

V
For many years there is in my heart
A secret vein of hope
To see beloved freedom,
To go to the land where it resides

VI
I will go where the goddess independence
Resides in every house
With happiness in their wide hearts
Where everyone wanders with happy breath

VII
No mother! Our country is bound in strong fetters
With the rope of servitude on every human neck.
With the power of independence and free life
Are the children of Britain ensconced.

VIII
With a lot of desire, I want to see
With what power Britain is so worshipped
Trampling poor India with her feet
Clutching education and civilisation to her heart

IX
I will see with what might
That very small rain-encircled place
Sends piercing sharp weapons at different
countries
And defeats everyone with pride and might

X
Seeing the religious wisdom of Britain
Will write it layer by layer in my heart
Will take pains to learn then
If possible, her courage and bravery

XI
How many of your sons go to get educated there
Mother! Leaving their near and dear ones in
England
Enriching themselves with so much knowledge
They once again come back home

XII
Being your children, why can’t we do the same thing
Mother! To go to that country!
To fill our hearts with the wealth of knowledge
After seeing the independent British daughter!

XIII
Seeing your suffering day and night
I think alas! We too being humans
Stay blind in cages
Without offering any help.

XIV
So breaking the cage with a lot of effort
I have come out to gather wisdom
Hiding the pain within
Always wiping tears, fearing someone will see it.

XV
No one knows my pain
Neither do I want it be known
What is the point, when none will understand it
Tears come out from a broken heart.

XVI
Binding my heart with great pains
Bharat! Mother! Loving land of my birth!
Do not think me heartless
With great pains I take leave today

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The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 made travel to Europe more accessible and the British Indian Association, an association loyal to British rule in India, established a department for encouraging both Muslim and Hindu men to travel to Britain, not for trade or legal reasons, but for educational and scientific purposes.³ It was not conventional for women to travel and Krishnabhabini’s husband faced significant opposition from relatives after deciding to take Krishnabhabini to England with him.

Her eulogistic writing clearly places England on a pedestal suggesting that she viewed her visit to England as a form of intellectual emancipation to emulate the independent and educated English woman, ‘with a lot of desire, I want to see with what power Britain is so worshipped trampling poor India with her feet clutching education and civilisation to her heart’ (VIII). In 1898 Professor Gokhale declared that the highest education in sciences and arts is freely available to British women and is freely availed of by them.⁴ Both Krishnabhabini and Gokhale labour under a misconception regarding British higher education and female access to it. By 1898 higher education was available to British women but was a very recent introduction and not widely applauded. Before this time and similarly in India, British women’s instruction was geared towards domesticity, marriage and motherhood. A suitable British middle and upper class education consisted of needlework, drawing, music and foreign languages, often taught by governesses (beautifully illustrated by Jane Eyre, Charlotte Bronte’s ground-breaking novel published in 1847) arming them with accomplishments required to attract and entertain an eligible husband. From 1878, domestic economy was made a compulsory subject for working-class female education.⁵ Krishnabhabini writes ‘I will go where the goddess of independence resides in every house’ (VI) yet the British reality was the construction of the domestic goddess as opposed to an independent one.

The census of 1851 in England revealed that adult women outnumbered men in the population, therefore marriage was statistically not possible for many women, and alternative socially acceptable avenues providing financial sustenance were required. This became significant in the development of vocational education for women.⁶ Before 1850, the only respectable occupation open to unmarried women on the margins of middle-class society was the position of governess.⁷ Florence Nightingale’s actions in the Crimean War in 1854 established the importance and value of professional nurses and in 1860 for the first time, St Thomas’ Hospital, London, opened its training school for nurses.⁸ Krishnabhabini writes

⁷ McDermid, p. 109.
'our country is bound in strong fetters with the rope of servitude on every human neck. With the power of independence and free life are the children of Britain ensconed' (VII). Krishnabhabini refers to the colonial servitude experienced by her fellow Indians but again the reality for British women was not overly dissimilar as they were viewed as socially and legally inferior. Wife, nurse and governess all upheld the ‘Angel in the House’ paradigm, masquerading as roles of liberation but were other forms of subjugation, their legal rights were severely limited and their positions utterly dependent on men. These roles were socially acceptable for British women but highlighted that many did not ‘wander with happy breath’ (VI).

By 1878, the University of London finally established a new charter awarding degrees to women on the same basis as men. Women were finally entering a new world of educational independence and opportunity free from the shackles of the domestic veil. This resulted in the souring perception of nurses and governess during the late nineteenth century as shown in George Gissing’s novel *The Odd Women* published in 1893,

> An excellent governess, a perfect hospital nurse, do work which is invaluable: but for our cause of emancipation they are no good—nay, they are harmful. Men point to them, and say, imitate these, keep to your proper world. Our proper world is the world of intelligence, of honest effort, of moral strength. The old types of womanly perfection are no longer helpful to us […] They are no longer educational. We have to ask ourselves, what course of training will wake women up, make them conscious of their souls.\(^{10}\)

Rhoda Nunn.

Despite this, the resistance to higher education for women was strong and came from several groups of people, doctors who insisted that female students health would suffer from serious study and parents who feared that their daughters would be radically transformed, believing that a girl’s proper university was her home.\(^{11}\)

Professor Gokhale asserted that ‘Education, enlightened freedom, and an honoured position in Society, these and not enforced seclusion and ignorance are the rightful inheritance of Indian women.’\(^{12}\) Yet these factors were denied to not only Krishnabhabini but also her daughter Tilottama. She was not permitted to travel with her mother to England by Krishnabhabini’s in-laws and was instead, married off at the age of ten while Krishnabhabini was abroad. Sadly, Krishnabhabini was unable to see her daughter after she returned to India and remained estranged from her for the remainder of her life.\(^{13}\) England to Krishnabhabini therefore became the key to freedom, independence and education. Through education one was given choices and a chance for an alternative reality, a luxury

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11 McDermid, p. 112.
12 Gokhle, p. 260.
that Krishnabhabi, her daughter and a large proportion of Indian women were unable to enjoy. Provoked by the anguish that comes with the severing of a bond between mother and child, Krishnabhabi endeavoured to improve the lives of Indian women but knew this was not possible if she remained in India ‘I had wished that along with my beloved I will nurture you for your good, but that desire remains unfulfilled […] the fire of that hope is gradually dying […] my pain remains hidden like poison in the heart’ (II-III). Through her writing particularly her poetry, Krishnabhabini attempts to articulate the pain that has arisen through the intersection of her race and gender and presents the justification for her writing, ‘you will ask for the reason why we are deserting India, for you, I cannot find the answer within but am going abroad with many hopes’ (IV).

When British women decided to exercise their right to train as doctors to aid female patients they met significant resistance. Figure 2 is a newspaper article from June 1989 celebrating the achievement of Mary Scharlieb, the first lady doctor who qualified from the University of London in 1989 yet received her primary medical qualification in India. Scharlieb married and travelled to India in 1866 with her husband a barrister in Madras. During her time in India, Scharlieb heard many stories from her servants and others of the agonizing suffering of Indian women during childbirth especially as male doctors were not permitted to help.14 The death of new mothers and the restrictions imposed by the purdah on Indian women gave Scharlieb the final impetus to study medicine in order to save other women from a similar fate, ‘seeing you suffering day and night I think alas! We too being humans stay blind in cages without offering any help’ (XIII).

Scharlieb a deeply religious woman refused to see women suffer on account of religious restrictions. She had found her calling and decided to become a fully trained doctor and surgeon. At this time no medical schools in Britain were awarding medical qualifications to women. The introduction of women as doctors in the British medical profession was a particularly fraught one leading to the Surgeon’s Hall riot at the University of Edinburgh Medical School on 18 November 1870 in opposition to the first seven female medical students admitted in 1869, ‘the seven women, whom to crush the noble hundreds onward rush, undaunted to the fray! […] to guard their craft from female hand, in nineteenth century! […] we’ll drive these errant damsels home, for hospitality!’15 Women were considered distasteful if they wanted to learn anatomy16 and condescension was rife, with many preferring the return of women to their rightful place within domesticity.

Yet Sophie Jex-Blake, one of the seven students and one of the pioneers of female medical educational reform, astutely observes,

It has always struck me as a curious inconsistency, that while almost everybody applauds and respects Miss Nightingale and her followers for their brave disregard of conventionalities on behalf of suffering humanity, and while hardly any one would pretend that there was any want of feminine delicacy in their going amongst the foulest sights and most painful scenes to succour, not their own sex, but the other, [...] why is she to be condemned as indelicate when she professes her willingness to go through an ordeal, certainly no greater, to obtain the education necessary for a medical practitioner?17

Despite the Edinburgh struggles, the battle of legally allowing women to qualify as doctors in Britain was protracted and arduous and Jex-Blake’s efforts were unsuccessful.

Scharlieb however with the help of the sympathetic Surgeon-General Balfour, the supreme head of the Medical Service in Madras, a memorandum dated April 16th 1872 was sent to the Madras government, advising them to admit women to the Medical College at Madras.

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Despite initial rejection, the decision was eventually overturned in 1875 allowing Scharlieb and five other women to become the inaugural female medical cohort at Madras Medical College\textsuperscript{18} suffering no opposition from their male peers in contrast to Edinburgh,\textsuperscript{19} ‘so breaking the cage with a lot of effort I have come out to gather wisdom’ (XIV). The irony of this statement is that while Krishnabhabini is referring to the double marginalisation that Indian women were forced to endure, with the intersection of their race and gender, Scharlieb and Jex-Blake had a similar and equally challenging battle over their gender only, but against those of the same race, ‘Great Britain now stands almost alone in refusing to admit her daughters to most of the national universities, and in denying them the opportunity of proving experimentally whether “the male mind of the Caucasian race is indeed so immeasurably superior to its feminine counterpart.”\textsuperscript{20}

Working under the same ethos as Surgeon-General Balfour, Jex-Blake discusses Professor Charteris who remarked ‘…amongst the women of the very rank from which come most of the female patients in infirmaries, there is a shrinking from uttering their ailments to a man doctor, and a craving for competent female counsel.’\textsuperscript{21} The purdah may have presented a huge barrier to female access to medical care in India, but a similarly restrictive societal purdah presented a major affliction for British women in their access to much needed British health-care.

In 1875, the Medical Acts Amendment (College of Surgeons Act) empowered a medical college to admit women to examinations but did not obligate them to confer degrees. In 1876 Charles Reade a well-established Victorian novelist, put his literary weight behind the female medical movement and serialised his novel \textit{The Woman-Hater}, a thinly veiled polemical plea in support of female medical reform in Blackwood’s Magazine between June 1876 and June 1977.\textsuperscript{22} Blackwood’s publication was based in Edinburgh, considered a major intellectual capital; and the site of Jex-Blake’s fight with the medical establishment. Writing for Blackwood was Reade’s strategic attempt of infiltrating the enemy stronghold and initiating subversion from within.\textsuperscript{23}

In 1876 the Medical Qualifications Act, finally allowed the granting of medical degrees to suitably qualified applicants regardless of sex, yet despite this, women were still unable to qualify as doctors without the necessary clinical training. However by 1878 Scharlieb had already gained the Medical Practitioners’ Certificate in Madras and returned to England becoming the first Indian qualified doctor, enrolling onto the M.B course at London School of Medicine for Women. We see the fallacy of Krishnabhabini’s perceptions of Britain, she journeys from India to this land which clutches education and civilisation to her heart (VIII) yet it is India that gives Scharlieb her medical qualification ahead of Britain and it is Britain that presented the greatest resistance to the movement than India. Though it must be

\textsuperscript{18} Bell, p. 115.  
\textsuperscript{19} Bell, p. 115.  
\textsuperscript{20} Jex-Blake, p. 52.  
\textsuperscript{21} Jex-Blake, p. 100.  
\textsuperscript{23} Finkelstein, p. 338.
remembered that Scharlieb’s admittance to Madras Medical College was the result of a colonial making a request of his so called native subject, perhaps a more favourable situation than the one concerning Jex-Blake who would be viewed as a subordinate asking permission from her superior. In one letter written by Jex-Blake and the six other female students to the medical school authorities, they use the phrase ‘we beg respectfully’. The oxymoronic nature of this simple statement reflects the true dichotomy in Krishnabhabini’s perception of British education for women. From this perspective, the difference between India and Britain do not appear so far apart.

Despite Scharlieb’s medical distinctions, which are listed in fig. 2, the drawing of her in figure 2 presents an image of a nurse as opposed to a distinguished doctor. A photograph of her from 1895 (fig.3) shows that the pictorial representation of her in fig. 2 although accurate, still associates her with a Florence Nightingale nursing figure as opposed to a qualified doctor and surgeon. Crucially Scharlieb unlike Mary Worley in fig. 2 is not presented wearing the tassel, the iconic symbol of university accreditation. Worley won the Gold Medal in Classics, a humanities subject perhaps considered more in keeping with acceptable female endeavours, but more importantly not considered any form of threat to a traditionally masculine profession. Scharlieb however represented a destabilising figure in the medical establishment, one that demanded equality. She was a professional woman who could administer independent decisions and although she was commended for her achievement, her visual appearance with the deliberate exclusion of graduation robes and a tassel, undermines the magnitude of her achievement. This supports David Finkelstein’s assertion that nurses were seen as less of a threat to the medical profession, and thereby by presenting Scharlieb in this fashion, her success is shrouded with a nurse’s veil.

Newly imbued with British medical instruction, Scharlieb travelled back to India in 1883 and established a hospital in Madras ‘for high Caste and Gosha women’ called the Royal Victoria Hospital opened in 1885-86 under the patronage of Queen Victoria (fig. 2). Scharlieb’s influence was significant and in 1883 when Lord Dufferin became Viceroy of India, his wife Lady Dufferin established the Dufferin Fund in 1885 to supply qualified women doctors from Europe, and train Indian women as medical practitioners. Scharlieb’s efforts were recognised and commended by Sophia Jex-Blake and the Countess of Warwick for her work in India,

The hopeful view taken of the future of medical work in India by so distinguished an authority as Mrs Scharlieb is encouraging. The greater facilities offered to native women in connection with the study of medicine and the growth of public opinion in favour of native doctors may lead to a solution of the difficulty.

Scharlieb represents a significant and possible revolutionary influence in the transformation of gynaecological healthcare one that was sensitive to the cultural agenda that defined female

24 Jex-Blake, p. 63, note O.
25 Finkelstein, p. 333.
India at the time. Scharlieb permanently returned to England in 1887 and wrote prolifically on women’s health in England and India in an effort to educate and inform, ‘it is as a wife addressing her sisters, and as a mother her daughters, that I venture to lift the veil from the sacred and delicate reticence that should always enwrap the pure and modest woman’.27

Jacqueline Devries affirms that the professionalization of medicine resulted in obstetrics and gynaecology becoming a more advanced medical speciality,28 leading to the founding of the British Gynaecological society in 1885. In 1895, the novel Mona Maclean: Medical Student was written by Margaret Todd under the pseudonym Graham Travers. Todd was the life-partner of Sophie Jex-Blake and was amongst the first female cohort admitted to the Edinburgh School of Medicine for Women in 1886. In the novel Mona meets a character Dickinson Sahib who is supportive of female doctors whom he felt were necessary to take care of women with gynaecological illnesses. Dickenson Sahib eventually marries Mona’s friend Doric, an heiress with feminist politics who helps the medical-woman movement in India. Doric loosely represents Lady Dufferin who became instrumental in canvassing funds and support for the female medical cause but the novel itself becomes a literary landmark forming a historical first-hand account of female medical training and the impact of the

27 Mary Scharlieb, A Woman’s Words to Women, on the care of their health in England and in India (London, 1895), p. 65.
female medical movement in India compensating for the restrictions female doctors faced in Britain.

Despite being deeply religious Scarlieb deliberately chose not to undertake missionary work with her patients. The extensive British missionary presence that existed in British India was often perceived as a form of educational and religious enlightenment for the Indians, ‘seeing the religious wisdom of Britain, will write it layer by layer in my heart’ (X). Her visual appearance in fig. 2 also evokes a missionary quality which coupled with the appearance of a nurse appears to celebrate the conventional and socially acceptable categorisation that existed in the nineteenth century of women working as nurses and teachers to colonial subjects and its associated ‘Angel in the House’ connotations.

The missionary movement was inextricably linked to education with the large number of Christian missionary schools present in India during the nineteenth century. Cornelia Sorabji was an Indian woman of the Christian faith whose father was a Reverend. She was the first female graduate from Bombay University and after expressing an interest in studying in England, she was encouraged by the Christian Mission Society to study medicine, potentially to assist the female medical movement in India. She subsequently enrolled at Somerville College, Oxford in 1889 deciding against medicine, choosing to read Law instead. This was unprecedented and Sorabji became the first woman of any race to read Law at university and the first to sit the Bachelor of Civic Law examinations (despite opposition) eventually becoming a pioneering Lawyer in India. Figure 4 shows Sorabji in a college photograph distinctively wearing her veil. Sorabji is perhaps a unique example of how one Indian woman (who was neither Hindu or Muslim) was able to literally combine the veil with the tassel in the land of her colonial ruler. Sorabji becomes the crowning pinnacle of Krishnabhabini’s dream. She succeeded in going to England, notably unmarried, ‘enriching [herself] with so much knowledge [she] once again comes back home’ (XI) where she utilised her skills to represent women and children predominantly.

As a result of her Indian and British education, Sorabji not only upheld the role of celibate careerist, a marked feature in the late nineteenth century, but also crucially revelled in one aspect that Krishnabhabini craved but never fully enjoyed, the freedom of choice. Yet despite never going to school or college Krishnabhabini had educating herself so much, that in later years she was appointed an examiner of the University of Calcutta. In the last ten years of her life, she took an active role in enhancing female education in India, labouring particularly in educating women from conservative backgrounds. She therefore joins

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29 Devries, p. 9.
31 University of Oxford, however, did not award degrees to women till 1920. Sorabji never returned to Somerville College to obtain her degree retrospectively (confirmed by Somerville College Archives) and therefore never officially had the opportunity to wear an Oxford tassel. The reference to tassel in this instance is highlighting a university education in a professional field.
33 Mandal, p. xviii.
34 Mandal, p. xix.
Sorabji in ‘breaking the cage with a lot of effort’ (XIV) gathering wisdom and returning to ‘[her] favourite land! The jewelled land!’ (I) becoming the contradictory embodiment of her own poetic self-deprecation. She is no longer an unfortunate daughter who is useless for India (I), instead her writing and her philanthropy, attempts to initiate change, making her hugely relevant.

Despite Krishnabhabini’s perceptions of seeing the land where beloved freedom resides (V), we see a vastly different landscape, one where freedom was severely restricted or comparative at best. We see the journey of the veil from the purdah and English domesticity, overcoming significant struggles both personal and legal to establish female medical reform and the literary representation of these altering roles serving as prosaic, historical references of the changes occurring in female education during this period. Scharlieb becomes the first female physician qualified from the University of London, who was not only propelled to train as a doctor by Indian women, but obtained her primary qualification in India at a time when Britain refused to do so. Scharlieb encapsulates the independent British daughter that Krishnabhabini desperately tries to emulate, the irony being that it is an English lady that returns to India, not the land of her birth but one that she shares a kinship with, to serve the health needs of women deprived by cultural restriction. Scarlieb’s significant impact in medicine and female health was marked by the honours bestowed upon her; the C.B.E in 1917 and Dame of the British Empire in 1927 for her work both medical and social. Jex-Blake declared ‘we know now that high authority declares a perfect surgeon to have an...
‘an eagle’s eye, a lion’s heart, and a lady’s hand’. In 1898, Mr H.M. Birdwood reported that ‘admission to a college is a privilege of which [men] must be worthy and not a right to be claimed without regard to character or conduct. Krishnabhabini, Scharlieb and Sorabji represent worthy nineteenth century examples of women who transcended the barriers of their race and gender to seek education, to utilise it and to encourage its access amongst other women, in the elusive pursuit of true equality and independence.

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35 Jex-Blake, S p.19

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure. 2 ‘First Lady M.D. of the University of London, Honours For Ladies At the University of London,’ The Graphic, London, England, Saturday, June 1, 1889: Issue 1018, The British Library.

Figure. 3 Mrs Mary Anne Dacomb Scharlieb, Wellcome Library, London, circa 1895

Figure. 4 Somerville College Photograph, 1890, Somerville College Archives, University of Oxford.
Picturing the Future: The Feminist Orientation of Portraiture in *The Ebony Frame* and an Example of Victorian Spirit Art

CATHY JEWISON

As a visible expression of Victorian culture, portraiture reflected the many and varied interests of the era, including a preoccupation with death and a possible afterlife, and the growing debate regarding the role of women in society. Portraits often featured in period ghost stories, and also made an appearance in spiritualist art. The ghost story and spiritualism have each been interpreted as a means of linking the Victorian present to its quickly receding past. A comparison of two contrasting portraits, one described in ‘The Ebony Frame’, a ghost story by Edith Nesbit, the other an image drawn by artist-medium Anna Mary Howitt Watts, challenges this perspective. Both demonstrate a feminist orientation that looks forward, rather than backward, envisioning a progressive future rather than a nostalgic past.

Whether they were hanging on the walls of the family drawing room or being described in the pages of the most recent novel, portraits provided a visible expression of the concerns of Victorian society. These many and varied interests included a preoccupation with death and a possible afterlife, as well as the growing debate regarding the role of women in society. The portrait makes frequent appearances in that most quintessential of Victorian literary forms, the ghost story, and is also represented in spirit art, a lesser-known expression of Victorian material culture. Women played an active role in both fields, as accomplished writers of the ghost story and talented spiritualist mediums.

The Victorian ghost story and spiritualism have both been identified as means for a society in transition to cope with its vanishing culture and customs. The ghost story ‘[anchored] the past to an unsettled present by operating in a continuum of life and death’, while spiritualism connected past and present by reconciling traditional religious belief with new evidence presented by science and technology. A comparison of two contrasting portraits, one described in ‘The Ebony Frame’, a ghost story by Edith Nesbit, published in 1891, the other an image drawn by artist-medium Anna Mary Howitt Watts between 1856 and 1884, shows a different orientation, however. Both express a feminist perspective that looks forward, rather than backward. It can therefore be argued that these images connected the Victorian present not to a sentimental past, but to a vibrant future that pictured the greater participation of women.

‘The Ebony Frame’ tells the story of Mr. Devigne, a rakish newspaper reporter who inherits his aunt’s London house and all of its contents. Upon taking possession, he notices over the dining-room fireplace a newly installed print set in a frame of ‘fine ebony, beautifully and

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curiously carved’. While the print is a recent purchase, the frame has come from the attic, filled with bric-a-brac and ancient furniture. An impulse drives Devigne upstairs, where he finds the oil painting that goes with the frame – a full-length portrait of a Pre-Raphaelite beauty that has been bound face to face with a portrait of a cavalier.

The discovery shocks Devigne on two fronts. Not only is the image of the cavalier an exact representation of Devigne himself, he is immediately smitten with the woman in the companion portrait. The woman – who is never named – has a ‘straight nose, low brows, full lips, thin hands, large deep luminous eyes’. Wearing a black velvet gown, she is seated beside a table cluttered with paraphernalia suggesting arcane knowledge, including compasses, mysterious instruments, a goblet, books and papers. With her arms resting on the table, she holds her head in her hands, and stares directly at the viewer, her gaze a bewildering combination of supplication and command.

Devigne has an understanding with a real-life woman named Mildred, whom he courts because it ‘is very nice to feel that a good little woman is thinking of you’. The woman in the mysterious portrait evokes a different order of emotion, however: he is besotted with her. He restores the painting to the ebony frame and hangs it over the fireplace. One evening, while admiring her by firelight, he invites the woman to step out of the frame and join him. Much to his terror, she does.

She reveals that they had been lovers in a former life. When the cavalier, Devigne’s alter ego, went off to war, she was left unprotected. As a woman who reached beyond the limitations set by society, she was viewed as transgressive and punished decisively. She says: ‘Just because I had looked at the stars and gained more knowledge than they, they must needs bind me to a stake and let me be eaten by the fire’. Despite suspicions of sorcery, she insists she was never in league with the devil until the night before her death. Mad with grief over her lost love, she agreed to sacrifice her soul for the chance to return to earth. The wish was granted, as long as her picture remained in its enchanted frame and as long as a viewer wished for her presence. She adds a proviso – if Devigne is willing to forgo any chance of reaching heaven, she can remain mortal and they can be together.

Devigne has never experienced such perfect happiness, and although he is not convinced he has to lose his place in heaven for her, they agree to confirm arrangements the following evening at midnight. The woman resumes her place in the portrait, and Devigne is condemned to wait. Events are complicated the next day by a visit from Mildred and her mother. Unsettled by Mildred’s inane chatter and his obsession for his true love, Devigne flees into the street. When he returns for the midnight rendezvous, he finds his house in flames. He manages to rescue Mildred, but the haunted portrait is destroyed.
Like the Victorian ghost story itself, portraiture in uncanny stories has been described as a point of contact between past and present. It can, however, also be viewed as a link between the present and future. In ‘The Ebony Frame’, traditional female roles and the possibilities of reform create the point of contact. Victorians generally saw a woman’s role as the ‘angel in the house’, purely domestic and subservient to men. While there is speculation about why women writers were drawn to the ghost story, it has been proposed that because ghostly interaction works outside ‘all the known laws of nature’ – as Devigne himself expresses it – it can likewise work outside the scope of the accepted social order. ‘The Ebony Frame’ reverses traditional gender roles, casting the male as passive and assigning agency to the female protagonist.

It is the woman in black velvet who orchestrates events through her bargain with the devil, setting the stage for a potential reunion. Although Devigne is the catalyst for her return to the material world, it is her beauty and inexplicable stare that compel him to wish for her presence. Indeed, his name suggests that he is simply a conduit for her manifestation. Her education and understanding of the universe outstrips Devigne’s – he comprehends neither the meaning nor use of the mysterious instruments in the painting, which are presumably tools of her arcane activities. Devigne, on the other hand, has shown a distinct lack of ambition, taking a lackadaisical approach to both his career as a ‘Fleet Street hack’ and his courtship of Mildred. Although he instinctively feels passion for the mysterious woman, he has no memory of his past life.

Critics attempting a feminist interpretation of Edith Nesbit’s work can be bedevilled by her stated antipathy towards women’s rights. Nesbit was an accomplished writer who specialised in children’s adventure stories. Her domestic relations were unconventional – she raised two of her husband’s children by another woman – her political views were socialist, and she frequently acted as the major breadwinner in her household. Like her character in ‘The Ebony Frame’, she sought esoteric knowledge, becoming a member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, an organisation that uncovered ancient wisdom for modern spiritual enlightenment. But as much as she embraced her own potential in a changing world, Nesbit opposed women’s suffrage and mocked suffragettes in her writing. She once

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8 Mary Patricia Kane, quoted in Andrew Smith, The Ghost Story 1840-1920: A Cultural History (Manchester, 2010), p. 79.
11 Nesbit, p. 609.
15 Alex Owen, The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern (Chicago & London, 2004), ebook, p. 3.
accepted an invitation to speak to the Fabian Society about balancing motherhood and career, but ended up delivering a lecture called ‘The Natural Disabilities of Women’.16

Some critics reconcile such disparities by arguing that merely by drawing attention to the plight of her female protagonists, Nesbit highlights a patriarchal society’s disregard for the potential of women.17 Stories like ‘The Ebony Frame’, which ‘feature dead women attempting in vain to return to the land of the living’, can be considered ‘symbolic of women’s exclusion from the social realm’.18 Further, the visual elements of Nesbit’s uncanny stories have been identified as particularly powerful means of illustrating the marginal status of women in society.19

The style of the mysterious painting supports the notion that ‘The Ebony Frame’ makes a subversive statement. The narrator is specific that portrait is painted in the style of Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood,20 a group that rejected the highly formal approach favoured by Victorian society, and took the controversial decision to draw inspiration from style of late medieval or early modern painting.21 Devigne references the work of Edward Burne-Jones and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and indeed, the description of the woman in black velvet bears a striking resemblance to Jane Burden, Rossetti’s long-time model and lover. The posture of the woman suggests Rossetti’s painting of Burden entitled ‘The Blue Silk Dress’, while her direct gaze evokes some of Burne-Jones’s more unsettling depictions of the transgressive female, such as the fatal mermaid in ‘The Depths of the Sea’. Aligning the story with avant-garde art in this way reinforces its progressive perspective.

Unlike the female-authored ghost story, which often strayed into subversive territory, spiritualism was much more concerned with conventional respectability. Women were central to the spiritualist movement and were adept as mediums, often surpassing their male counterparts in the development of their abilities.22 The gift, ironically, provided greater agency for women while also strengthening constraints on them. While female mediums were generally respected and achieved a social status that was otherwise unattainable,23 it was accepted that their spiritual authority centred on the home, thus reinforcing their confinement to the domestic sphere. Further, women’s success was believed to be expedited by a natural tendency to be passive and their ability to renounce the self.24

The best-known expressions of Victorian mediumship were seances, which gathered together groups of people to summon the dead. Other types of mediumship included automatic writing and automatic drawing, which occurred when the hand of a medium was guided by a spirit power, creating either words or a design, without the medium exerting her will.

17 Margree, p. 427.
18 Margree, p. 433.
19 Margree, pp. 432-33.
20 Nesbit, p. 607.
22 Owen, The Darkened Room, p. 5.
23 Owen, The Darkened Room, p. 4.
Like Edith Nesbit’s haunted painting, the spirit art of Anna Mary Howitt Watts makes a statement about the experience of being female in Victorian society, while suggesting possibilities for the future. As a young woman, Howitt Watts trained at Henry Sass’s art academy. Her promise was such that when her family went bankrupt in 1846 and could no longer afford tuition, the school’s principal arranged for her to stay on. Continuing her education after Sass’s required some determination – since the Royal Academy refused to admit women, Howitt Watts had to travel to Munich to study.25

As in so many areas of endeavour in the Victorian period, the art world became a focal point for a discussion of the role of women in society.26 Raised in a progressive household, Howitt Watts took a feminist position. She counted among her friends women who gathered at Langham Place to discuss reform.27 Her ideas about a collaborative and self-determining community of female artists are articulated in her 1853 novella, The Sisters in Art.

Howitt Watts worked as an illustrator and painter, exhibiting paintings in 1854 and 1855. In 1856, she offered the Royal Academy the large-scale work Boadicea Brooding over her Wrongs, which challenged Victorian notions about the role of women through both its style and content. First, the depiction of the Iceni queen highlighted female agency in a historical context. History painting was an elite genre which was generally the purview of men, since women rarely had the technical training to attempt it. Finally, the model for Boadicea was the formidable and well-known feminist, Barbara Leigh Smith. Rejected by the academy, it was instead exhibited at the Crystal Palace, to mixed reviews. The most damaging criticism came from John Ruskin, who questioned Howitt Watt’s authority to paint a historical subject at all. She suffered a nervous breakdown as a result. After another breakdown the following year, Howitt Watts destroyed all of her paintings, vowed never again to exhibit, and devoted her life to spiritualism.28 Two years later, she married Alaric Alfred Watts, a long-time friend who shared her interest in spiritualism.

For a feminist with a history of exercising her agency in a sometimes hostile environment, the switch to becoming a passive receptacle through spiritualist mediumship appears to be an about-face. Howitt Watts’s first attempts at mediumship involved automatic writing, which initially pleased her with messages from lost loved ones.29 Communications with the spirit world quickly took a disturbing turn, however. Messages announcing the impending deaths of those closest to her started to flow, and she suffered frightening physical effects.30 It was while trying to repress the automatic writing that she picked up a pencil to sketch. Her hand

27 Hirsch, para. 2 of 5.
28 Wettlaufer, pp. 140-43.
30 Howitt Watts, Light in the Valley, pp. 119-20.
started to move on its own, creating her first spirit drawing. She was delighted with her new gift, which had the added benefit of fewer side-effects.

Religious imagery figures prominently in Howitt Watts’s spirit drawings, including ‘heads of Christ, angels, and curious female figures seated within spheres and hearts’. Despite the Christian overtones of her visions, they often had a feminist bend. She describes an image of the New Jerusalem as ‘a majestic woman clothed in wonderful draperies studded with jewels, and wearing many crowns; upon her breast wearing a singular and beautiful breast-plate.’ Likewise, the Last Judgement came to her as ‘a strong celestial woman, hurling down into an abyss a Titanic man, who fell smitten by no sword in the woman’s hand, but by the Word of Truth which proceeded from her lips.’

Despite the agency of the women in such visions, other images suggest martyrdom. One of these is a delicate drawing of a light-bearer (fig. 1), who wears a long, red dress, her peplum skirt and puffy sleeves speaking more to the everyday than to the mythic. Her waist is cinched with a green belt. The long, blue sash that floats diagonally across her skirt and forms an ornate loop by her knee emphasises feminine delicacy. She stands on a red, tulip-like flower that is surrounded by spiky fronds. Her head is framed by a tear-drop shaped leaf, while her upper body is surrounded by sharp-edged leaves. The light-bearer’s arms are outstretched, her posture much like the crucified Christ. A flame burns upward from the top of her head.

Howitt Watts left no interpretation of the image, but her husband advised in an 1889 edition of *Light* that the figure signifies enlightenment, ‘the Divine gift of being [a diffuser] of light or knowledge’. That spiritual illumination is hard won is suggested by the thorny vegetation on which she stands, which illustrates that suffering is the foundation of wisdom. This suffering is reflected in the pain on the light-bearer’s face.

The drawing provides an interesting counterpoint to Nesbit’s ghostly painting. With its subtle style and muted colours, it imparts a sense of the ethereal. The leaf framing the light-bearer’s head hints at a halo, while the spikes spreading behind her upper body seem like angelic wings. Pale leaves dance around her head like attending spirits. With her slight figure and domestic dress, she could be the angel in the house. In contrast, the description of Nesbit’s painting evokes the bright colours and strong lines of a Rossetti painting, expressing vitality, while the dark hair and dress of the phantom woman suggests the demonic. Nesbit’s entity is corporeal – her hand is warm when she touches Devigne, and his comment that they

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36 Nesbit, p. 609.
Figure 1. Anna Mary Howitt Watts, untitled spirit drawing of a light-bearer. Image courtesy of the Cambridge University Library/Society for Psychical Research, MS SPR 65/9/36
‘made such cheer each of the other as true lovers may after long parting’\(^{37}\) emphasises physicality. That such vigour is desirable is overt in ‘The Ebony Frame’. Once Devigne has experienced the woman in black velvet, he is repelled by Mildred’s constraining domesticity, her ‘ridiculous flounces’ and ‘her rather pinched waist, her rather tight boots’,\(^ {38}\) a description coincidentally close to Howitt Watts’s light-bearer. Although his phantom lover’s spirit transcended the flames 250 years previously, there is no escape for the transgressive female in the Victorian era. The lack-lustre life Devigne leads after the haunted painting is lost signals a society diminished by the constraints it places on women.

While ‘The Ebony Frame’ highlights the destruction of the active, transgressive female, the light-bearer leaves the equally distressing impression of martyred domesticity. There is a message beyond this immediate suggestion, however. Female agency through the pursuit of knowledge has not resulted in extinguishment in this case, but in the capacity to burn brighter. Further, Howitt Watts’s spirit drawings tend to depict the risen Christ as almost exclusively female.\(^ {39}\) There were those in the Victorian spiritualist movement, certainly, who supported the notion of an androgynous, ‘dual-principled Christ or God-Spirit’.\(^ {40}\) The triumph of the divine feminine is inherent in the light-bearer’s association with the living Christ, and the implied reconciliation between the spheres of male and female agency. With her domestic nature, the light-bearer functions as a type of ‘Everywoman’, so this reconciliation encompasses all women.

It has been suggested that portraiture in some female-authored uncanny tales of the Victorian era uncover ‘stories that had been left in the shadows or suppressed’.\(^ {41}\) Edith Nesbit’s portrait of a marginalised character casts light on the uncomfortable repercussions of female agency. As a work of spirit art, the light-bearer cannot be considered a self-portrait of Anna Mary Howitt Watts, even so, the image’s martyred posture reflects the artist’s experience when she stepped outside accepted social constraints. While ‘The Ebony Frame’ and the light-bearer approach the issue from very different directions, they both promote greater agency for women. The extinguishment of Nesbit’s ghost creates a negative space, leaving the reader to ponder unfulfilled potential, while the light-bearer proposes a positive alternative by turning suffering into wisdom, and by integrating male and female principles. In this way, these works move beyond the view of the Victorian ghost story and spiritualism as means to connect with the past, and instead show how they could envision a progressive future.

\(^{37}\) Nesbit, p. 610.
\(^{38}\) Nesbit, p. 613.
\(^{39}\) Howitt Watts and Watts, *Light*, p. 204.
\(^{40}\) Owen, *The Darkened Room*, p. 13.
\(^{41}\) Mary Patricia Kane, quoted in Smith, p. 79.
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Figure 1. Anna Mary Howitt Watts, untitled spirit drawing of a light-bearer. Image courtesy of the Cambridge University Library/Society for Psychical Research, MS SPR 65/9/36
Pomp and Privation in Victorian India

KAPIL KOMIREDDI

This essay examines British colonial rule in late nineteenth-century India through the lens of two contemporaneous artefacts. Each vivifies a reality that complicates the message sought to be advanced by the other. The first artefact, a lavishly illustrated book commemorating the opulent Proclamation Durbar of 1877, clarifies the self-image of a benignant empire in India crafted by the colonial apparatus for audiences in Britain. The second, a photograph of starving children during the Great Famine of 1876-1878—through the course of which an estimated ten million Indians perished—conveys the experiences of the colonised peoples under the reign of Queen Victoria as she formally assumed the title of Empress of India.

Pomp returned to Delhi on New Year’s Day of 1887, when the former capital of the Mughals, reduced only two decades before to nonentity by the British in retaliation for the Great Rebellion of 1857, hosted the most extravagant spectacle in the subcontinent’s living memory: the Proclamation Durbar.¹ The principal function of the of the 1877 Durbar, at which Queen Victoria was formally proclaimed Kaiser-e-Hind,² was the solemnisation, through elaborate ritual, of India’s reconfigured relationship to Britain. In choosing Delhi—a city ‘for ever bound up with the history of India’—as the site of the investiture ceremony, the British were seeking to project their rule as a continuation of, not a departure from, India’s past and traditions, which, after the Durbar, would become ‘interwoven with those of the English people’.³

The official history of the Durbar was published the same year in the form of a handsome book. Written by J. Talboys Wheeler, The History of the Imperial Assemblage at Delhi, Held on the 1st January, 1877, to Celebrate the Assumption of the title of Empress of India by Her Majesty the Queen: Including Historical Sketches of India and Her Princes Past and Present (fig. 1) was sumptuously illustrated with 26 mounted Woodburytypes; a studio portrait each of Queen Victoria, Lord Lytton,⁴ and eleven Indian ‘chieftains’; scenes of the Durbar; and maps and views of Delhi. The book was bound in royal blue cloth, and the title and accompanying cover decorations engraved in ornate gilt. As a commodity, it was a fitting tribute to the splendour of the event it memorialised.

¹ The Durbars were a colonial invention – pre-colonial traditions of court borrowed as templates for the public consecration of relations between the British crown and its native agents. The Proclamation Durbar was known also as the Imperial Assemblage. For a brisk account of the Durbars of the Raj, see Pran Neville, Sahibs’ India: Vignettes from the Raj (Delhi, 2010), pp. 120-131.
² Empress of India.
³ J.T. Wheeler, The History of the Imperial Assemblage at Delhi, Held on the 1st January, 1877, to Celebrate the Assumption of the title of Empress of India by Her Majesty the Queen: Including Historical Sketches of India and Her Princes Past and Present (London, 1877), pp. 2-3.
⁴ Viceroy and Governor-General of India (1876-1880).
The book was more than a mere chronicle of the Durbar, however. Wheeler, having already published several histories of India, was averse to confining himself to the production of an ‘official narrative’. His ambition was to use the book as a vehicle to propagate ‘a history’ of the Durbar, written ‘by the light of the history of India’, that depicted the British as the rightful custodians of India’s heritage, distinct from, and superior to, the Mughals. Wheeler believed that India’s pre-colonial Muslim rulers operated a ‘monstrous system of oppression and extortion, which none but Asiatics could have practiced or endured’, a system in which ‘the Hindoos were slaves in the hands of grinding task masters, foreigners who knew not how to pity or to spare’. In contrast, the nineteenth century—characterised by the ascent of the British—‘witnessed the regeneration of India’. The Proclamation Durbar, symbolising the completion of India’s transition from the barbaric reign of the Mughals to the enlightened rule of the British, was therefore ‘the crowning event of the century’.

Wheeler’s energetic survey of India’s history—covering with the Sanskrit epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and the major pre-colonial powers: Rajput, Maratha, Mughal—was followed by a relatively concise but evocative description of the Proclamation Day. At the site of the proclamation, a turf-covered plain on the outskirts of Delhi, three imposing tented structures had been erected. The centrepiece of the arrangement—a plush hexagonal tent 240 feet in diameter, mounted on an elevated base of masonry, and draped in blue, red and gold—was the Throne Pavilion, designated for use by the Viceroy. Facing the Throne Pavilion was a semi-circular ‘Amphitheatre’—roughly 800 feet long and divided into thirty-six compartments, each pillar and every corner of the structure displaying an imperial crown—for the reception of European officials and Indian nobility. Behind the Throne Pavilion was a raised blue tent for the invited spectators. At noon on 1 January 1877 Lytton, accompanied by his entourage, arrived at the scene of the proclamation. The guests rose. The bands played the national anthem as the Viceroy inspected the guard of honour. He then proceeded to the Throne Pavilion where Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India.

The History of the Imperial Assemblage confers dignity on the Durbar by treating it not as an event but as a process—the intermingling of cultures and races ‘as was never witnessed before’. It endows the colonial adventure with the grandeur of a civilising purpose, on account of which ‘India of the nineteenth century is becoming like England of to-day’. What Wheeler understated was the extravagance of the Durbar, alluding only to ‘hospitalities’ that were limited to dinners for 120 persons at a time, when in fact the celebrations gained notoriety

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6 The Times of India (31 Jan 1876).
7 Wheeler, The History of the Imperial Assemblage, p. 70.
10 Wheeler, The History of the Imperial Assemblage, p. 73.
for providing ‘the most colossal and expensive meal in world history’: a week-long feast for 68,000 guests. Mention of the Great Famine, which was worsening as Wheeler completed his assignment, is rare in The History of the Imperial Assemblage, straying into the narrative on no more than three occasions, in glozing passages that, far from even hinting at the extent of the crisis in the country, portray Lord Lytton as a competent and caring leader.

Wheeler’s book was a commercial and critical success in its intended market. No sooner had it been published than The Times of London pitched it to the newspaper’s readers as the ‘present for the year’. Within India, however, away from Delhi, the Proclamation Durbar was viewed with antipathy. The native newspaper Shivaji, printed in Marathi, called the celebrations a symptom of ‘Excessive Pride’, expressing astonishment that the government selected a year of ‘dire calamities to celebrate the proclamation of a new pompous title by grand and gorgeous ceremonies and to squander about two crore rupees on these tamashas and festivities’. Even the Madras Times, a British-run newspaper sympathetic to the government, was appalled, warning in ‘unmistakable terms that there is a time for weeping as well as for rejoicing’.

To William Digby, an official of the British crown in the Madras Presidency, the ‘spectacular splendour’ of the Proclamation Durbar was matched only by the ‘unequalled scenes of death and disaster’ occurring concurrently in peninsular India. Digby estimated that 65,000 subjects of the Queen-Empress died of starvation’ even as ‘preparations were being made for the proclamation of Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain as Empress of India, and whilst the ceremonies were actually in progress’.

One of the most haunting photographs of the effects of the starvation alluded to by Digby is also among the most choreographed images of the Great Famine. ‘Forsaken’ (fig. 2) was taken in the early months of 1877 in Bellary, in southern India, by W.W Hooper, a colonel in the British Army with a stellar reputation for photography. Hooper had arrived in India in 1858, the year in which the subcontinent became a crown colony. Lord Canning, Britain’s first Viceroy in India, had by then begun a collection of photographs with the aim of cataloguing extensively India and its peoples. Hooper’s contributions to the eight-volume

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14 Also known as the Great Madras Famine of 1876-1878.
17 Quoted in NN Rao, Famines and Relief Administration: A Case Study of Coastal Andhra, 1858-1901 (Delhi, 1997), p. 120.
18 Quoted in Rao, Famines and Relief Administration, p. 120.
book that emerged from Canning’s efforts were substantial. By the time famine erupted in southern India, Cooper had attained considerable recognition.20

Cooper arrived on the scene in Madras just as an aid worker complained to Digby that nothing ‘but a photographic picture could convey an adequate representation’ of the starving people.21 The photographs of the Great Famine taken by Hooper, however, were mostly staged. The purpose of the photographs was not solely to stir the conscience of Britain. They were commercial products intended to lend depth to newspaper stories about the famine—and perhaps even to satisfy the ‘morbid curiosity’ of readers.22

‘Forsaken’ is freighted with the weight of Hooper’s ambition. The landscape is parched, and terrifyingly bleak. The vacancy in the background is only accentuated by the desiccated trunk and roots of the peepul.23 At the base of the trunk are two severely malnourished children, like skeletons with skin pulled over them. One is lying down, possibly asleep, on what looks like an emptied out sack of grain. The other, perched in an alcove in the roots, stares hypnotically in the direction of the camera. To his left are fragments of cookware. To his right, standing on an exposed root and intently studying the scene before it, is a crow. The sinuous roots of the peepul are like the tresses of death, poised to engulf the children sheltering in their shade.

Very little is known about ‘Forsaken’; but what is difficult to conceal is the heavy ‘artistry’ of its composition. It is Hooper’s pursuit of perfection—prompting him to place suffering people in service of the ideal shot—rather than fidelity to the truth that is the dominant theme of this photograph. Hooper was known to spend a long time composing shots, and he dispersed his subjects without paying or feeding them. His methods were satirised and attacked in the London press.24

It may be tempting to dismiss Hooper as a precursor to the modern, camera-bearing ‘spectator of calamities’.25 But, at the time, ‘Forsaken’ formed an important part of a set of Hooper’s photographs that helped intensify the campaign to spread awareness in civilian Britain of the Madras Famine—and challenge the sceptics who, invested emotionally in ideas of a gallant and benign empire absorbed from such roseate portraits as Wheeler’s The History of the Imperial Assemblage, had reacted from the beginning with scepticism to the tales of horror emanating from southern India. As one newspaper commented on Hooper’s photographs:

We have now before us some of those photographs, and it is much to be wished that people who still delude themselves with the idea that the

23 Bo tree.
24 Chaudhary, Afterimage of Empire, p.169; Howe, p. 713; Hooper was the subject a controversy arising from photographs he took in Burma after leaving in India.
famine, if it has any existence at all, has been greatly exaggerated, could see them, and they would lay aside that notion for good.26

Hopes that the state might intervene in Madras ‘if members of Government [saw] the living skeletons’ did not, however, materialise.27 Hooper’s visual representations of the famine, including ‘Forsaken’, proved as futile in provoking governmental action as handwritten petitions. This was largely because powerful organs in Britain and in India pushed the view that interfering to alleviate the economic condition of the starving masses would only encourage sloth among the native populace. Sir Richard Temple, lieutenant-governor of the Bengal Presidency, was severely rebuked for his relief effort during the 1874 famine in Bengal. *The Economist* upbraided him for ‘undertak[ing] to say to an Oriental nation … that it is the duty of the Government to keep them alive, and we have yet to learn what an effect this sudden policy may have in diminishing the ingrained prudence which is their principal virtue’.28 Sir Richard, nominated by Lord Lytton at the Proclamation Durbar to report on the Madras Famine,29 set about redeeming his reputation among advocates of the free market by making it practically impossible for those affected by famine to obtain relief.30

Wheeler had justified tacitly the commencement of the Proclamation Durbar during a famine by adducing the excesses of the Mughal durbars—‘often little better than excuses for extortion’—which required the ‘princes and nobles of India … to impoverish themselves’.31 But, as a contemporary of Wheeler’s found, the misery experienced by Indians during the Great Famine was virtually unprecedented because of the added burden of financing Lord Lytton’s war in Afghanistan.32 The famine spread to the North-West Provinces where, it was alleged in Parliament, ‘no less than a million and a quarter of men, women, and children perished of hunger’, unable to pay the revenue collectors who had been dispatched to ‘wring the utmost farthing that was due from them’.33

The railways, celebrated by Wheeler in his history of the Durbar as a momentous British gift to India that was ‘helping to draw people nearer and nearer to the paramount’,34 in fact compounded the effects of the famine by enabling the rapid transfer of grain away from areas that most needed it.35 Juland Danvers, director of Indian Railways, explained in a report published in 1877 that, just as Britain had extracted jute from India during the Crimean war, the ‘same may now happen with respect to wheat … with the assistance of regular and cheap

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26 Quoted in Francoise Reynaud, *The Tree in Photographs* (Getty, 2010), p. 12.
30 Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts*, pp. 36-43.
32 The Second Anglo-Afghan War, 1878-1880.
33 H.C. Deb, vol. 53 (22 February 1898), cc 1384-428.
transport, [India] will be ready to meet any demand that may be made upon it’. At the height of the famine, India’s wheat exports to Britain doubled (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Export (1000s of quarters)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>308</td>
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<td>1876</td>
<td>757</td>
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Table 1. India’s wheat exports to Britain (1000s of quarters)

An estimated ten million Indians died in the Great Famine of 1866-1868. When the part played by the British Empire in the 19th century is regarded by the historian 50 years hence, William Digby trenchantly noted in 1878, ‘the unnecessary deaths of millions of Indians would be its principal and most notorious monument’. The famine led to a period of deep introspection, resulting in the creation of a comprehensive famine code, but it did not significantly erode the profound belief within Britain that colonial rule existed to ameliorate the lives of the colonised. In the contest between the comforting self-image of the British Empire in India, exemplified by Wheeler’s history of the Proclamation Durbar, and the vast potential for human suffering contained in its *laissez-faire* policies—epitomised by Hooper’s ‘Forsaken’—the former proved more formidable than the latter. This helps explains why, in 1943, more than half a century after the Great Famine and roughly the point at which Digby prophesied a mass remembrance of the victims of the Great Famine of 1876-1878, three million Indians were allowed to perish in yet another famine in Bengal.

Winston Churchill, head of the government during the Bengal Famine of 1943, embodied Wheeler’s romantic view of the empire and Sir Richard Temple’s indifference to the plight of its subjects. Churchill’s claim have ‘the keenest realisation of the great work which England [is] doing in India’—and his deference for Britain’s ‘high mission to rule [India’s] primitive but agreeable races for their welfare’—existed alongside an intransigent disregard for the persistent appeals for famine relief from India.

Collectively, Wheeler’s *The History of the Imperial Assemblage* and Hooper’s “Forsaken” shed light on the deeply conflicting ways in which the Raj in Victorian India was experienced by its British supervisors and Indian agents, and the ordinary subjects who financed its survival. They reveal too the capacity of grand narratives to corrupt their consumers—to breed a vision capable simultaneously of conceiving civilising enterprises and inflicting irremediable harm on civilisations.

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39 Quoted in Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts*, p. 8.
42 Quoted in Arthur Herman, *Gandhi and Churchill: The Rivalry that Destroyed an Empire and Forged Our Age* (London, 2009), p. 92. For a detailed account of Churchill’s role in the Bengal Famine, see Madhusree Mukherjee, *Churchill’s Secret War: The British Empire and the Ravaging of India During World War II* (New York, 2010).
Figure 1. J. Talboys Wheeler, *The History of the Imperial Assemblage at Delhi, held on the 1st January 1877*, British Library, London. Photo by Author.

Figure 2. William Willoughby Hooper, *Forsaken*, 1877, photographic print. Bellary, India. Out of copyright.
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Figure 1. J. Talboys Wheeler, *The History of the Imperial Assemblage at Delhi*, cover, 32cm x 5cm, British Library Collections

Figure 2. W.W. Hooper, *Forsaken*, 1877, out of copyright, obtained from Wikimedia
   <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6d/Forsaken_by_WW_Hooper%2C_1877.jpg>
This article juxtaposes Coventry Patmore’s poem ‘The Angel in the House’ and William Holman Hunt’s painting ‘The Awakening Conscience’, examining how they contributed to and illustrate the labelling of women in 19th century society as a means of regaining control over them in a changing society. The meaning of the terms Angel in the House and Fallen Woman will be analysed within their historical context, arguing that women in both categories had perhaps more in common than one would assume. I will conclude that neither the idea of the domestic angel, nor that of the ostracised fallen women could have existed in such an extreme form without their respective counterpart and that only the emergence of a third category, namely the New Woman, allowed women to slowly gain their independence.

When we think about women in Victorian England, certain terms immediately spring to mind: Perhaps best known today is the term The New Woman, an elusive label that embodies everything vaguely connected to female emancipation and suffrage. The Fallen Woman is another term, which is somewhat vague in that it encompasses several conditions in which a Victorian woman could find herself, but which formed a very significant, if negative part of Victorian social life. Lastly there is the term of The Angel in the House, which itself may not be as well known today as the previous two, but which represents the perfect housewife, the domestic goddess of the middle class that we nowadays strongly associate with the 19th century and that in some ways haunts us to this day. These terms, or labels, as well as the ideas behind them were an important part of Victorian life and were not just reflected but also actively propagated in the arts and literature of the time. Two such examples are the painting The Awakening Conscience by William Holman Hunt, which depicts the situation of and indirectly also certain attitudes towards a fallen woman, and the poem The Angel in the House by Coventry Patmore, the title of which actually coined the aforementioned term for the Victorian middle class housewife. With the help of these two examples, this article will discuss the meaning and significance of the labels Fallen Woman and Angel in the House, and will explore the interconnections between these seemingly opposing terms.

Where did this need for labelling, for categorizing and stereotyping women arise from in the 19th century? Of course, it was not an entirely new phenomenon. Arguably, the first two female stereotypes in Western Christian cultures were Mary and Eve. The holy Virgin, pure and good, willing to sacrifice and to be made an instrument of God versus the temptress, herself seduced by the Devil, carnal in her sinfulness, who defies the rules lain down to her and thereby causes not just her own fall but the fall of man, the expulsion from Paradise. These two biblical women represent a kind of female duality, the two core qualities that have
traditionally been assigned to women. However, this contrast between Mary and Eve is also a relatively abstract concept, which, although it informed most ideas about femininity, probably would not have had a very great bearing on every day life for most women. But in the 19th century, particularly in the second half, things started to change dramatically. Enough has been written about the effect of industrialization and urbanisation on society and the subsequent rise of a new middle class for it not to be necessary to be elaborated on in great detail. What is clear is that society was in upheaval and certain norms and traditions, roles within society, expectations and duties had to be redefined or confirmed. Therefore creating categories and propagating certain stereotypes was a way of reacting to all of these new developments and also, feminists would argue, a way for men to try and regain control over women, who suddenly challenged their assigned roles and tried to break free of the restrictions that society imposed on them. It certainly is no coincidence that the moment the ‘new women’ started to demand their independence, the glorification of the housewife, of the angel in the house, took hold of society with unprecedented vigour. As Suzanne Cooper points out, on top of the issue of regaining control, the attempt to limit women to certain roles was part of the much larger Victorian obsession with respectability and its definition. To be respectable meant everything as a member of the Victorian middle class and those who had lost their respectability were shunned, such as fallen women, who were ostracised from society and left with few other options but to either go to the workhouse or work as prostitutes. The 19th century term ‘prostitute’, however, encompassed not just street whores, but everything from unmarried women who were in relationships with men, unmarried mothers, unfaithful wives and mistresses to artists’ models and certain kinds of actresses. Consequently it is difficult to know exactly how many prostitutes in the modern sense really did work in London, since records of the time do not specify what ‘kind’ of prostitutes were taken into account for the projections, nevertheless, there are estimates that around 1870-80 up to 80,000 prostitutes worked in London, which at that time had a population of 3 million. In any case this was a new peak of the dichotomy of the two qualities of women: the good and chaste, and the sinful but sensual. It is therefore hardly surprising, that in art as well as literature of the time both ‘types’ of women featured very heavily.

The Angel in the House is a long, semi-autobiographical narrative poem, written by Coventry Patmore and first published in 1854. It was inspired by Patmore’s love for his wife Emily and tells the tale of how the narrator met, courted and married the love of his life, with a second volume continuing the tale ten years into the marriage. When the poem was first published, reviews were disastrous and even today it is regarded more as a valuable piece of evidence of social history than as a great piece of literature. What the poem does very successfully is describe in great detail the many wonderful qualities that make Honoria, the female

2 Luxemburg, Faith and Gender
protagonist, a perfect bride and wife. She is modest, chaste and innocent, she unconditionally
loves and supports her husband, submits to him completely and is a caring mother to her
children.

The following excerpt is only one example of that:

Man must be pleased; but him to please
Is woman's pleasure; down the gulf
Of his condoled necessities
She casts her best, she flings herself.

...And whilst his love has any life,
Or any eye to see her charms,
At any time, she's still his wife,
Dearly devoted to his arms;
She loves with love that cannot tire;
And when, ah woe, she loves alone,
Through passionate duty love springs higher,
As grass grows taller round a stone.6

The poem puts the ideal wife on a pedestal, a not quite earthly being that knows no
selfishness or anger, always good, always anxious to help the husband to be his best self. To a
modern reader the poem appears very far removed from any conceivable reality, it seems to
fetishize a type of woman that could not possibly exists in the real world. And yet despite its
original failure, the poem did eventually strike a cord with the British public, it gained great
popularity and its title became synonymous with the ideal Victorian housewife. One of the
first people to admire and publicly praise the poem was John Ruskin. In November 1854
Ruskin wrote to Patmore: ‘I cannot tell you how much I admire your book. I had no idea
you had power of this high kind. I think it will at all events it ought to become one of the
most popular books in the language — and blessedly popular, doing good wherever read’.7
Ten years later Ruskin himself propagated very similar views in his lecture Of Queen’s Gardens,
in which he also praised Patmore’s work again.8 Both Patmore and Ruskin firmly believed
that a woman’s place was at home caring for her family and looking after the household,
while her husband was out working, earning money and protecting the family. It had
become a symbol of a respectable status, when the women (both wife and daughters) did not
need to go out and work but could stay at home and hone skills that became a lady such as
painting, singing and fine needlework.9 It was also a way of trying to protect their innocence
by keeping them away from any potential bad influences and temptations. Sex was not a
topic that was openly discussed, many girls did indeed live in total ignorance until the day of

<http://dbooks.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/books/PDFs/590767707.pdf> [19 Feb. 2016].
8 J. Ruskin, Sesame and Lilies. Lecture II. Lilies: Of Queens’ Gardens
9 Cooper, The Victorian Woman, p. 12.
their wedding and sex was not regarded as something that ladies should enjoy. Although its origins are somewhat unclear, Lady Hillingdon has become famous for her quote: ‘When I hear his steps outside my door I lie down on my bed, open my legs and think of England’. Marital sex was a duty, which at least in theory served the sole purpose of procreation, not something to be indulged in for pleasure. The more chaste and innocent a young woman and even a wife was, the more she lived up to the ideal that is also described in The Angel in the House. It is the paradox of Victorian times that society was at the same time prudish in an unprecedented way but at the same time obsessed with sex and its consequences. While chastity was expected and idealised as a female virtue, pre- and extramarital sex was a reality, even if one did not talk about it in polite society. Studies of mid-Victorian parish registers comparing dates of marriages and baptisms have even shown, that up to half of the brides were pregnant, when they got married. Whether these results uncover Victorian hypocrisy or whether they show that ignorance about the matter worsened rather than improved the situation for young girls, it is certainly clear that no matter their upbringing and sheltered lives, young girls could not always be protected from being seduced and this is made obvious in Hunt’s The Awakening Conscience (fig. 1).

Coventry Patmore’s house, the family haven of love that his own angel Emily had created, was also the meeting place of many aspiring writers and painters and it was here that he became associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The Awakening Conscience was painted by one of the founding members and a friend of Patmore, William Holman Hunt, in 1853, one year before The Angel of the House was published. At first glance the painting could almost be a depiction of such marital bliss as Patmore describes it, with a husband and his wife sharing an intimate moment, singing together in there pretty home. It does not depict a street whore or a desperate woman, who has already been outcast, but a young woman, who one can easily imagine to have come from a respectable background and to have been very innocent and pure once. However, she has been seduced by the man next to her and at this very moment realizes the awful mistake she has made. While Patmore’s poem is very straightforward in the way it delivers its message, Hunt’s painting is much less easy to decipher. It is a puzzle that only reveals the whole story if one carefully examines all the little details and clues that have been included in the picture.

For example upon close examination one can see that the song they have been singing is Thomas Moore’s ballad Oft in the Stilly Night, which has been interpreted as a trigger that brings back to the woman memories of her innocent childhood and makes her reflect on her situation. The cat toying with the bird mirrors the situation the woman finds herself in with her lover and John Ruskin vividly draws a picture of her future when he describes how ‘the

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11 Cooper, The Victorian Woman, p. 30.
12 Anstruther, Coventry Patmore’s Angel, p. 6.
Figure 1. William Holman Hunt, *The Awakening Conscience*, 1853, oil on canvas, 76.2cm x 55.9cm, Tate Britain, London. Image courtesy of the Tate.
very hem of the poor girl’s dress, at which the painter has laboured so closely, thread by thread has a story in it if we think how soon its pure whiteness may be soiled with dust and rain, the outcast feet failing in the street’. And yet the painting still offers a glimmer of hope, a way out for this misguided young woman, who has come to her senses and judging by the look on her face is full of repentance. Nevertheless, a woman once fallen was an outcast of Victorian society. While it was generally accepted that men had sex before they got married and that married men might frequent prostitutes every now and then, women were taught that there was no greater sin than to be with a man who was not their husband and if they were exposed their reputation was ruined. They were immediately put into the category of a fallen woman and to redeem themselves after that was nearly impossible. A little book from 1791 has the expressive title ‘Advice to unmarried women: to recover and reclaim the fallen; and to prevent the fall of others, into the snares and consequences of seduction’. While it actually offers some sympathy to the women who were genuinely misled by a man and suggests rigorous exercises of repentance as a way to redeem themselves, the author also makes it very clear, that fallen women will find it very hard to ever be accepted even for a maid’s position in any respectable household and are probably looking at very bleak prospects indeed. *The Awakening Conscience* depicts a woman exactly in the situation that little advice book addresses, in that it shows a young woman, who has been seduced, but has seen the error of her ways and appears to be seeking redemption. But like the advice book the picture leaves no doubt that she has thrown away her life and even though she may be forgiven in the Afterlife if she truly repents, it is not likely that she will ever be able to fully redeem herself in this world.

Having discussed both *The Angel in the House* and *The Awakening Conscience* within their historical context, it becomes clear that there was almost no way for middle class women of escaping these labels, since they either complied to social expectations and became some sort of chaste, obedient domestic angel or they almost certainly fell within the category of a fallen woman. Women who dared to rebel against this status quo even risked being put into asylums for being ‘mentally unstable’. Thereby they were firmly assigned their places in society, places, which appear to have nothing in common. However, when we consider the two examples discussed here, we can come to the conclusion that there are several things that connect their subjects beyond the fact that their creators moved within the same circle of friends. We have seen before, that at first glance, Hunt’s painting can look like a normal domestic scene and in a way all that is lacking in order for it to be one is a wedding ring on the woman’s finger. But furthermore, what unites the woman in the picture with Honoria...
and every other married woman is that neither of them are truly free. A wife may have been respectable and if all went well also safe, but until reforms, such as the Married Women’s Property Act of 1870, everything a woman owned belonged to her husband and she was therefore completely at his mercy. If the marriage did not work out it was nearly impossible for a woman to get a divorce and to keep any money. A mistress on the other hand remained more independent financially, but socially she had no safety net and was, as the painting shows through little details such as the clock under the bell cover, a kept woman in more than the figurative sense. Finally, as their presentation in both the poem and the painting illustrate, both wife and mistress are objects of male desire existing only to please, the wife, if she adheres to the ideal, as a status symbol, the mistress to provide the things that a marriage with such a saintly figure is probably lacking, each in a way creating a greater demand for the other. In fact one can say, that it would have been impossible for one to exist without the other. In other words, in order for the categories to be most effective, women needed to be pushed to the extreme ends of the spectrum- the domestic angels needed to be glorified in order for the transgressions of the fallen women to appear more shameful, so the differences between them would appear insurmountable. While the New Woman initially served as much as a counter part to the Angel in the House, eventually this new category provided a way out of this confining opposition and allowed women to slowly redefine who they wanted to be. Nevertheless, the tendency to put labels on women continued together with certain expectations of women’s roles in society and one could rightfully ask, whether we have really come very far, when labels like stay-at-home-mum, working mum or career woman are still being used as defining descriptions for women.

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Figure 1. William Holman Hunt, *The Awakening Conscience*, 1853, oil on canvas, 76.2cm x 55.9cm, Tate Britain, London. Image courtesy of the Tate.
Protesting Peterloo: The ‘Fanciful’ and the ‘Domestic’

HELEN LEACH

This essay will explore two artefacts produced in response to the Peterloo Massacre in 1819; Percy Bysshe Shelley’s The Masque of Anarchy and John Slack’s engraving of The Events at St Peter’s Fields, reproduced on a handkerchief. The items will be examined to find a synthesis between them which illustrates the extent to which Reformist protest was curtailed and suppressed by the restrictive legislation of the early decades of the nineteenth century. The manner in which the artefacts collectively demonstrate the significance of class and social status, even within the Reformist movement, will then be discussed. It will reflect on the impact that illiteracy had on works of protest for the working classes, considering the manner in which literary works excluded huge numbers and the extent to which it predicated a need for visual, domestic items of protest as opposed to more fanciful, esoteric, literary works.

On 16 August 1819, a meeting of tens of thousands was held at St Peter’s Place, Manchester, to protest harsh industrial working conditions, squalid living arrangements and most significantly, the lack of political representation. At the orders of the local Magistrates, the yeomanry brutally dispersed the crowds with fatal results. At least seventeen were killed or subsequently died and many hundreds more were injured. Falling shortly after Waterloo, the events became notorious and in the ensuing public outcry, the massacre was ironically christened, ‘Peterloo’. The arts and literary community responded, producing works to reflect the widespread sense of outrage.

Within six weeks of the attack, Percy Bysshe Shelley had written The Masque of Anarchy, a scathing attack on the establishment and an exhortation to the people to obtain reform by peaceful means. Shelley, ‘the torrent of indignation …boiling in [his] veins’ sent the poem to his friend and publisher of The Examiner, radical journalist, Leigh Hunt, instructing him to publish when he ‘thought fit’.

The Masque is written in 91 stanzas in a lyric, ballad form. Utilising the aristocratic convention of a Masque, it satirises the Government who are portrayed in grotesque form ‘drunk with… the wine of desolation’ they had caused, critiquing the damage they inflict upon society and subverting its concern that the Reformists were the instigators of Anarchy. It envisages a day when people ‘from the corners uttermost’ of England would be liberated, assuring them that they ‘Are as God has made [them] free’ and encouraging them to

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3 Leigh Hunt, Preface to The Masque of Anarchy (London, 1832), p. 3.
5 Shelley, Masque, line 280, stanza LXVII, p. 19.
6 Shelley, Masque, line 308, stanza LXXIII, p. 19.
radically, stand ‘calm and resolute’ against their oppressors. It is both damning of the Government and a rallying call to the masses. It was considered highly incendiary and subversive, for this reason Hunt chose to not to publish it until 1832, the year of the Great Reform Act.

Manchester Artist, John Slack, produced an engraving of The Events at St Peter’s Place depicting the brutality of the attack by the yeomanry on the massed crowds. Peterloo predates the split into middle class and working class political movements, Britain at that time, dividing into ‘two furious irreconcilable parties, the established parties and the radicals’. The meeting at St Peter’s Fields was therefore a unifying moment for reformists, standing shoulder to shoulder, united in their desire for change. To reflect this, Slack’s engraving was subsequently adapted to suit differing tastes, social status and class and reproduced as both a cabinet picture and a handkerchief.

Figure 1. John Slack, Peterloo Hankerchief, 1819, Fabric Print, 50cmx60cm, People’s History Museum, Manchester. Copyright Trustees of the British Museum.

7 Shelley, Masque, line 329, stanza LXXIX, p. 21.
The handkerchief (fig. 1) is a print of Slack’s engraving on cotton and depicts the events at St Peter’s Place. It measures 50cm x 60cm. It is, like Shelley’s Masque, an overt attack on the actions of the Governing forces. The words ‘A Representation of the Manchester Reform Meeting Dispersed by the Civil and Military Power August 16th 1819’ are emblazoned across the top. Under gathering storm clouds, the speaker Henry Hunt, is shown addressing the vast crowds who are being dispersed by the Yeomanry. Alongside Hunt are several figures including a woman, symbolically dressed in white and wearing a cap of Liberty.

The crowds are depicted fleeing; it is a panicked scene. The yeomanry on horseback are foregrounded, sabres aloft and in some instances directly attacking the crowds. Vast numbers of militia are depicted at the edge of the fields adding a further ominous presence. Several foregrounded figures are shown in a prone position, notably an elderly man and at the extreme right, a young woman. Several figures are depicted being crushed. A variety of banners are held aloft in the crowd, bearing the names of Unions and slogans such as ‘Universal Suffrage’ and ‘Reform’. Framing the scene and printed around edge of the handkerchief are the reformists demands; again ‘Universal Suffrage’ and ‘Annual Parliamentary Election’. It is both a show of solidarity with Reformists and an explicit declaration of their demands.

Given the brutality depicted, allied with the demands for reform on the handkerchief, Shelley’s grotesque caricaturing of named Government Ministers and the exhortation to ‘Rise like lions…in unvanquishable number’ both works were considered inflammatory and seditious. Following the revolutions in France and the United States, the Government had a fear of uprising, resulting in the actions at Peterloo. This is evidenced in the tension and activity around the calling of the protest meeting during July and August 1819. The meeting was called by Henry Hunt in the local newspaper. Following a meeting of the Magistrates, it was declared illegal and cancelled. The meeting was rearranged for a new date, 16th August 1819.

In the months following Peterloo, the government outlawed radical political activity passing a raft of legislation to ensure compliance. Meetings were curbed, powers of search widened, public gatherings banned, publications taxed and the powers to act against seditious or libel widened. The effect of this legislation was to restrict protest and debate about Peterloo bringing about a climate of hostility and suppression, which is illustrated through these two very different artefacts. Hunt, having served a prison sentence chose not to publish The Masque, later legitimising his decision. In doing this, he stifled Shelley’s voice and ensured...
that those whom Shelley was so anxious to address, would not yet become ‘Heroes of [their] unwritten story’.16

In reproducing Slack’s work as both a cabinet picture and a handkerchief, whilst not explicitly censoring it, ensured a very restricted, private, audience. Its owner was afforded a sense of solidarity with the reformers, and was enabled to commemorate the events in a safe, contained manner. The cabinet picture closeted away and the handkerchief, an intimate item, privately pocketed. A physical representation of principles, in the case of the handkerchief literally, held close to the owner’s heart.

Whilst protest has a unifying aspect, both artefacts demonstrate the divisiveness of social status and the extent of class division even amongst those seeking reform. This is particularly true when considering Shelley’s Masque. Hunt’s patronising justification for censorship, retrospectively suggested that the lower classes lacked the sophistication to deal with its content as the ‘public … had not become sufficiently discerning… to do justice to … this flaming robe of verse’.17 Hunt’s attitude sits ambiguously with the aristocratic Shelley’s, well-intentioned but ultimately naïve attempt to suppress ‘his own voice in search of the anonymous authority of the broad sheet balladeer’18 and directly address the ‘Men of England’.19

Given the high levels of illiteracy, literature was increasingly ‘the propaganda of some victorious minority’20 excluding vast numbers of illiterate, usually poor.21 To address this, Shelley deliberately adopted a ‘lax and familiar measure’22 to ensure the broader appeal of his work. The poor’s lack of literacy predicated a reliance on oral tradition and as such, sung ballads were part of ‘the oral culture which still pervaded [their] life’.23 Shelley attempted to emulate this with the style he adopted for the Masque. If his intention was to engender change however, he chose a ‘form of expression with a severely limited and in many ways radically inappropriate audience’.24

Whilst illiteracy clearly excluded them from accessing the written word, social status was equally exclusionary. Despite Shelley’s attempts to unify himself stylistically with those in the lower orders, the gulf between them is insurmountable. As the poem builds to the final rousing stanzas Shelley repeatedly distances himself utilising ‘Ye’25 and ‘Your’26 not the

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16 Shelley, Masque, line 148, stanza XXXVII, p. 15.
17 Hunt, Preface to Masque, p. 3.
19 Shelley, Masque, line 147, stanza XXXVII, p.15.
22 Hunt, Preface to Masque, p. 3.
25 Shelley, Masque, line 372, stanza XCI, p. 22.
26 Shelley, Masque, line 370, stanza XCI, p. 22.
collective ‘We’ to address them. Finally, he creates two distinct groups, from both of which he separates himself, ‘Ye are many/They are few’.27 The class distinction is evident throughout the poem and the final exhortation to ‘Rise’,28 becomes an instruction imposed by someone with privilege, not a collective call to action.

Shelley declared the *Masque* to be ‘exoteric’,29 believing its stylistic form made it accessible to all. In adopting the rhythm of the folk ballad, Shelley ensured a familiar style, but its content would have failed to cross the class divide. The imagery employed is profoundly esoteric, littered with allegory and literary reference, which required a level of literary sophistication to access.

Shelley’s original manuscript used ‘Mask’ as opposed to ‘Masque’, later adopted by Hunt. Both versions of the word could allude to a Masque pageant, an aristocratic convention, unfamiliar to those in the lower orders. Shelley’s spelling also allows him to play with the notion of a mask, subverting the common notion of an item of disguise. Whilst a mask is often adopted to conceal an identity or denote a specific characteristic, Shelley suggests that certain characteristics; murder, fraud and hypocrisy are timeless. These characteristics adopt a temporary ‘mask’30 or are ‘clothed’31 in the temporal appearance of specific people32. The collective effect of this is to produce ‘Anarchy’.33 Anarchy, for Shelley is not personified in any specific individual, it is ‘God and King and Law’,34 the institutions which govern society.

Shelley also incorporates many allusions to the book of Revelation, from the dreamlike introduction to the apocalyptic nightmare which follows.35 ‘Murder, Fraud, Hypocrisy and Anarchy’ clearly allude to the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, wreaking misery, death and destruction.36 The appearance of Anarchy, ‘the skeleton’ on his white horse, emulating Death, the rider on a pale horse. Murder’s seven bloodhounds, fat from the ‘human hearts’37 they’ve consumed reference the repeated, symbolic use of the number seven throughout Revelation.38 Despite Shelley’s belief in its exotericism, had it been published, it would have been utterly impenetrable to the masses he sought to address.

The visual rendering of Slack’s print on a domestic item, such as the handkerchief, would have been a more readily accessible form of protest for the majority of those seeking reform than Shelley’s allegorical offering. Mass produced by the Lancashire cotton industry, it would have resonated strongly, particularly for those in Lancashire, personally affected by the

32 Shelley personifies Castlereagh, Eldon and Sidmouth, respectively the Foreign Secretary, the Home Secretary and the Lord Chancellor as Murder, Fraud and Hypocrisy.
35 *The Good News Bible*, Revelation 1: 10 (Glasgow, 1994).
37 Shelley, *The Masque*, lines 8-12, stanza III, p. 11.
38 The number seven is believed to symbolise completeness and is repeatedly used in Revelation, seven stars (1: 16), seven-headed dragon (12: 3), seven plagues (15: 1), seven bowls of God’s wrath (15: 7).
events at Peterloo. Given its production by cotton workers, it was a physical rendering in the medium which provided the fabric of their daily lives, shaping every aspect of their existence and whilst they were mass producing the handkerchief, ensuring its image was seared into their minds.

For the lower classes, this was a truly exoteric artefact. Given the widespread levels of illiteracy, a ‘politics of sight’\(^{39}\) was necessary to inform and educate. Political demonstrations such as Peterloo had a strong visual aspect, an element of theatricality incorporating ‘a rich repertoire of symbols, ritual iconography, a language of class without words’\(^{40}\) to appeal to those who could not access written literature. Given the restrictions imposed by the heavy taxation of printed publication, for those few who could access it, the strong imagery and limited written text on the handkerchief was an accessible way of promoting reform otherwise.

\[\text{Figure 2. John Slack, A View of St Peter's Place, Cabinet Picture, Print, 23.5x28 cm, John Rylands Library, Manchester. Copyright University of Manchester.}\]

At a cursory glance, the images in the cabinet picture (fig.2) and handkerchief (fig.1) are one and the same, the handkerchief print however, has important differences most notably, in the depiction of the crowd. Whilst a significant number of the foregrounded figures in the

\(^{39}\) Vernon, Politics, p. 107.
cabinet picture are women, they are virtually eradicated in the handkerchief print. The figures in the handkerchief print are predominantly male, of a wider generational spectrum (fig.4) with one solitary woman depicted at the extreme edge of the image. The central, foregrounded figure is an elderly man. He is surrounded by figures from a broad spectrum of age and social groups. Whilst both male and female figures in the cabinet print are largely depicted from a higher social class (fig.3), the dress of the men in the handkerchief image introduces a wider spectrum generally and a significantly larger proportion of men of the lower orders; cravats are replaced by neckerchiefs and Top Hats by the ‘shapeless round’, the headgear of the working class man until the late nineteenth century.

Figure 3. John Slack, A View of St Peter's Place, 1819, print, 23.5x28 cm, John Rylands Library, Manchester. Author’s own photograph.

Figure 4. John Slack, Peterloo Hankerchief, 1819, 50x60 cm, People’s History Museum, Manchester. Author’s own photograph.

The class distinction in the handkerchief print emphasises the ever-present awareness of social rank in the nineteenth century. This commodification of protest artefacts, recognised and capitalised upon the growing desire for social mobility within the wide range of people seeking reform. Given ‘the ascendency of the manufacturing wealth and population’, the cabinet picture would have appealed to the aspirational tendencies of the manufacturing, middle class and the cheaper, mass produced handkerchief to the lower classes and significantly, the largely illiterate work force within the cotton manufacturing industry.

There is currently some debate as to whether the item is a handkerchief or in fact, a headscarf. Given the climate of political repression around Reformists, the wearing of this item as a headscarf would be a radical move. Headwear was an immediate, visual indicator of social status and so wearing it would have been a bold statement. Most significantly, as a headscarf, it would have become an exclusively feminine item.

Considering the manner in which the significance of women at Peterloo is undermined in the handkerchief print, their presence being moved to the sidelines, it is doubtful that it was produced in huge numbers for women. The role of women in political protest at that time, was fairly insignificant. Women were ‘more likely to be used as allegorical symbols’ than actively participate in protest themselves. The vulnerable, feminine form provided a trope which was repeatedly used in the art of the period and is echoed in Shelley’s portrayal of Hope, feminised and dressed in white ‘a [disempowered] maniac maid … [looking] more like despair’. In the context of this subjugation, it seems highly unlikely that significant numbers of women would have outwardly supported such a radical stance. Passage of time allows new audiences to re-appropriate objects, to enhance a more radical contemporary perspective and this may be the situation here.

In a similar manner, on its publication in 1832, Hunt re-appropriated the Masque for the newly emancipated generation. Free from the restrictions on publication, Hunt retrospectively claimed Shelley’s prescient vision for the events which unfolded in 1832. He claims the Masque as a beautiful and moral triumph, which successfully combines the ‘domestic with … the fanciful’ to great effect. Hunt ultimately enshrines the Masque as a call to passive resistance, re-appropriating the content for a more stable time and less incendiary purpose. It was no longer a declaration of intent, it had become, a celebration of emancipation, its subversive aspect neutralised by the intervening years.

It is indisputable that the Masque of Anarchy has been of far greater significance to posterity than to its intended audience. It has been described as ‘the greatest poem of political protest ever written’, a call for social justice which will sadly, need to be ‘heard, again- again – again’. Peterloo and by extension, its art, is poured over and considered a pivotal moment in the struggle for democratic reform in Great Britain. The Masque now serves as a timeless, clarion call to passive resistance and the Peterloo imagery screams to a modern audience of injustice and repression. For contemporary audiences of these works however, given the climate in which they were produced, the clarion was silenced and the screams of injustice subdued to a quiet whisper, in the struggle for reform.

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43 The item is referenced in Salford’s Working Class Movement Library, which holds a huge collection of artefacts, writing and documentation from Peterloo, as a Headscarf.
44 The procession into St Peter’s fields was led by women. Bamford, Passages, pp. 24 - 25.
45 Vernon, Politics, p. 118.
47 Hunt, Preface, p. 5.
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Figure 1. John Slack, *Peterloo Handkerchief*, 1819, Fabric Print, 50cmx60cm, People's History Museum, Manchester. Copyright Trustees of the British Museum.

Figure 2. John Slack, *A View of St Peter’s Place*, Cabinet Picture, Print, 23.5x28 cm, John Rylands Library, Manchester. Copyright University of Manchester.

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Figure 4. John Slack, *Peterloo Handkerchief*, 1819, 50x60 cm, People's History Museum, Manchester. Author's own photograph.
The Understanding of Time in the Nineteenth Century: Big Ben and the Procedural Reforms Adopted by Parliament

CAROLINE LECLERC

Whilst the first clocks date back to the end of the Middle Ages, the understanding of time transformed society in the nineteenth century. The erection of Big Ben at the end of the century illustrated the increasing emphasis on the development of a standardised time in England. The new understanding of time first transformed society, before then reaching the political world. The procedural reform enacted by Parliament in 1882 eventually made the House of Commons more time efficient. This essay attempts to analyse why it took a long time for Parliament to be changed by our new understanding of time. Although time scarcity was debated in the House of Commons at the beginning of the century, no real measure was passed to reform the House until the end of the century. Procedural reforms making the House more time efficient came after a century of debates regularly being brought forward yet regularly dismissed.

The erection of Big Ben in the mid nineteenth century embodied the new emphasis on time in England. During the previous centuries, clocks were predominantly luxury items, symbolising status and wealth rather than being used as timekeepers. The major change in usage came with technological advances that allowed watches to keep good time, namely to be accurate and reliable. The use of an accurate timekeeping system spread over the century thanks to technical progresses coming from advances in nautical navigation, an area in which England excelled. Indeed, in the nineteenth century, the British Empire was the most advanced in the world regarding navigation techniques and tools. Because of its supremacy, the Washington conference of 1884, known as the International Prime Meridian Conference, established Greenwich England as the universal standard time. They recognized Greenwich’s longitude as the global spatial and temporal origin, the prime meridian. Barrows refers to the legislative creation of a world standard time through the creation of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). The British advancement in timekeeping at sea came from the invention of elaborated marine chronometers, which enabled sailors to determine their exact position of ships at sea for the first time.

With the development of mass production thanks to industrialisation, the use of clocks and watches gradually spread throughout the country. Furthermore, the development of the railway imposed a standardised time. England saw the first railway passenger in 1825; it became a common means of travelling for all the social classes in the 1840’s. These factors transformed society’s understanding of time. Instead of living by the rhythm of the sun and the seasons, with one clock per village giving a ‘local time’, the standardisation of time gave

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rise to the unification of the country, living at the same pace for the first time. This new understanding of time coincided with the emergence of concepts of efficiency and the possibility of ‘wasting time’. Barrows states that British clocks had been synchronized since the mid-1850s. However, Gray argues that it is only in the early twentieth century that accurate timekeeping and distribution of time became a reality. Indeed, if telegraphs enabled Greenwich Observatory to send the exact time to the different stations of the country, the local clocks were rarely adjusted because of lack of maintenance. This explains why, despite the ability to accurately give the time, the clocks were not synchronised and the country was not living at the exact same pace before the beginning of the twentieth century.

The most striking instance of timekeeping’s influence on politics was embodied in the architectural achievement of the newly built Parliament. In 1834, a devastating fire entirely destroyed the Palace of Westminster. It was rebuilt a few years later with a significant new addition. Victoria’s tower, officially named after the ruling Queen but more commonly known as Big Ben, was erected at the North end of the newly built Parliament. Sir Charles Barry was the architect in charge of designing the new Parliament and was commissioned by Parliament itself to erect the massive clock tower. The inhabitants of Westminster heard the sound of Big Ben for the first time in 11 July 1859.

![Figure 1. The Parliament and Big Ben from the river Thames. Photography](image)

In the second half of the Nineteenth-century British Members of Parliament (MPs) were accustomed to hearing the bell ring every hour. This reminded them of time passing. This clock was special in many ways. Firstly, it was the largest clock in existence in the world at that point. Secondly, and most importantly, despite its size, the clock struck the hours with extreme precision, being accurate to within one second.

3 Barrows, *Cosmic Time of Empire*, p. 8.
The former Parliament building did not give reporters any official space to listen and transcribe parliamentary debates. Some of them reported from the backbench of the Stranger’s Gallery. Charles Barry added galleries for reporters in the newly built parliament that significantly increased the number of reporters. MPs were now aware of being watched by the country’s newspapers, which transcribed their speeches for the public. It added pressure to the MPs who were also forced to show themselves as being more active. Newspapers organised a rotating system to cover the debates. Reporters were scheduled on precise shifts and immediately after went to the office to type their articles. Such an efficiency of reporting had never been seen before. A contemporary author wrote that ‘a large portion of a long speech is in print before the orator is thinking his peroration’. Thomas Erskine May researched the evolution of Parliamentary activity and discovered that the number of speeches given in the House of Commons increased from 1,194 to 5,332 between 1810 and 1847. MPs’ behaviors, attendance and speeches were now accurately reported and any citizen could read about the activity of the MP of his constituency in the daily newspapers.

The importance of time passing and efficiency were affecting the society as a whole. Samuel Smiles, famous Scottish author, wrote in the nineteenth century: ‘Lost wealth may be replaced by industry, lost knowledge by study, lost health by temperance or medicine, but lost time is gone forever’. The concept of wasting time became a predominant idea with industrialisation. This change gave birth to schedules and timetables as known today. The transformation of almanacs during that period is a graphic example of this change. Almanacs were entirely filled, with each day giving the names of patrons, the holy-days, the tides as well as the position of the moon and its effects on body and health. Editors cleared these spaces and eventually emptied days to give people space to write things. The ability to schedule precise appointments and to plan the future led to the creation of modern calendars. Another important trend came from the generally widespread idea that like all known empires, the British Empire was declining. Efficiency was meant to save the Empire from its coming fall and was commonly praised by authors as the only solution. G.R. Searle quotes a contemporary author writing in the journal Spectator: ‘Everywhere the same cry is heard… give us efficiency, or we die’. This idea, applied to the closely watched House of Commons, spawned numerous critiques of MPs working habits from the contemporary authors and the reporters. In the journal ‘Reynolds’ in 1882, MP’s were described as people whose ‘predominant idea is not work, but display’.

Critics alternatively decried the MPs and the House of Commons as unproductive throughout the century. Parliament struggled over the implementation of a more standardised and rationalised way of passing legislation in 1882. The complaints about the House of Commons were gradually increasing in the press, commonly describing the House

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3 Vieira, Time and Politics, p. 23.
10 Reynolds’ Newspaper (12 February 1882), p. 4.
as inefficient. Public opinion was demanding for a modernisation of the House. The law-making process was old and ill-adapted to the modern era of efficient time keeping. Between the 1830’s and 1880’s, Parliament appointed several committees to work on how to transform the procedure in order to expedite the business of the House, without ever managing to reach consensus.\footnote{Vieira, \textit{Time and Politics}, p. 11.} The committees appointed to consider procedural reforms produced various reports, the findings of which denied the necessity of such reforms. In 1861, the final report was very clear:

Your Committee, like preceding Committees on the same subject, have passed in review many suggested alterations, but like them have come to the conclusion that the old rules and orders, when carefully considered and narrowly investigated, are found to be the safeguard of freedom of debate, and a sure defence against the oppression of overpowering majorities. Extreme caution, therefore, in recommending or introducing changes is dictated by prudence. These rules and orders are the fruit of long experience: a day may break down the prescription of centuries. It is easy to destroy; it is difficult to reconstruct … it is the first duty of the House to maintain these rules inviolate, and to resist every attempt to encroach upon them.\footnote{‘Report from the Select Committee on the Business of the House’, \textit{Parliamentary Papers}, 173 (1861), iii, xi.}

Thus, the freedom of debate and the claim for democracy were firmly opposed to the call for efficiency. Nevertheless, other factors added to the increasing necessity of reform. The statistics given by Vieira proved that the House workload increased year after year whilst the sitting time remained approximately the same. Between 1845 and 1895, the average duration of sitting in the House went from 7.75 hours to 8.5 hours.\footnote{House of Commons Journal Office, \textit{Records of the House of Commons: Journal Office Book of Statistics}, PA, HC/CL/JO/23/1.} This situation meant that the House was unable to process all the bills and most of them died due to lack of time. Furthermore, the Second Reform Act passed in 1867 modified the hours and minutes of the House, reducing Parliament’s time\footnote{Vieira, \textit{Time and Politics}, p. 79.}. Thus, the need for reform intensified over the years.

In the satirical periodical \textit{Punch, or the London Charivari}, many cartoons referred to the slow parliamentary rhythm. Punch described in a humoristic way the increasing gap between the nation’s pace and the rhythm of parliamentary activity. In 1848, the periodical displayed a cartoon titled ‘The Hour and The Man’ depicting Russell sitting on his luggage on a platform. The train with the label ‘Reform’ written on it is ready to set off. Cobden depicted as the conductor addresses Russell in these terms: ‘\textit{NOW, SIR, ARE YOU GOING BY US?}’ to which Russell answers ‘\textit{NO, THANK YOU; YOU ’RE TOO FAST FOR ME; I SHALL GO BY THE PARLIAMENTARY TRAIN’}. Since the railway was one of the major factors leading to the unification of time in the country, it is a powerful image, combining spatial and temporal scales.\footnote{‘The Hour and the Man’, \textit{Punch}, XIV (1848), p. 211.} The parallel was commonly made between the Parliament and a machine that had to be constantly fixed, rather than an institution standing...
on historical roots which cannot be changed. Many of England’s neighbours reformed their parliamentary procedure including France and the United States. These reforms included rules, which removed and restricted debate in order to be more efficient. Overall, parliamentary resistance towards change brought more and more difficult working conditions to the MP’s. Due to increasing amounts of work combined with time scarcity and sessions ending at very late hours every day, absenteeism became more prevalent.\textsuperscript{16} In 1868, Edward Webster published several books on procedural reforms in Parliament. \textit{The Members of Parliament’s Assistant in Procedure at the House and The Public and Private Business of the House of Commons Considered in Relation to the Economization of the Time of the House and its Members are amongst them. In the latter, he fully rejected the idea of preserving the sacred historical roots of Parliament regarding procedure. In the 1870’s, further select committees were appointed to reform the legislative procedure and make the House more efficient. For the first time, they produced reports that did not defend idea that the House must respect the traditional organisational structure built over the centuries.\textsuperscript{17} Eventually, the parliamentary conflict between past traditions and modern efficiency came to an end.

As mentioned before, successive Prime Ministers tried to implement new rules to regulate debate since the 1810’s in order to make the House of Commons more time efficient. Eventually, it was William Gladstone who implemented reforms in 1882. It was inspired by the previous regulations proposed to the house, some of which had already been in operation for a short period of time. Gladstone introduced the reform in these terms: ‘These Rules are substantially the same as those framed by me, in the last Session; and which were, for some time, in-operation, with the addition of one Rule relating to the Proceedings in Committees of the whole House’.\textsuperscript{18} The reform was divided in two parts. The first part was the rules framed by Mr. Speaker for the regulation of the business of the house, while the state of public business is urgent. The second part was the rules regulating the proceedings of a Committee of the whole House upon any bill, or other matter declared urgent.\textsuperscript{19} The first part was the most controversial since it endowed the speaker of the House with more power. It enabled him to ‘call the attention of the House to continued irrelevance or tedious repetition on the part of a Member; and may direct the Member to discontinue his Speech.’ Thus, the speaker gained the power to stop any MP’s speech in case of irrelevancy or repetition. The second important power given to the Speaker was the ability to bring forward the motion ‘that the question be now put’. The power of putting the question meant calling an end to the debate and commencing voting. Therefore, it considerably extended the role of the Speaker at the expense of debate. These new rules also regulated the motions for adjournment, the consideration of Bills as amended and the divisions. A division was the actual vote made by ‘dividing the House’. It required all the MP’s to rise from their seat and walk through the ‘yes’ or the ‘no’ door of the Chamber according to their vote. Thus, the ‘Ayes’ and the ‘Noes’ votes could be counted. Understandably, this process was time


\textsuperscript{17} Vieira, \textit{Time and Politics}, p. 81.

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Journals of the House of Commons}, 137 (1882), p. 640.

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Journals of the House of Commons}, 137 (1882), p. 640.
consuming. In 1833, an MP discussed this issue, establishing that ‘if on divisions we could save half an hour it would be a matter of very considerable importance, pressed as we are with a variety of business’.20 In his reform, Gladstone introduced a new procedure before each division: ‘Mr. Speaker may call upon the Member challenging it [the House motion] to rise in their places; and if they do not exceed twenty, he may forthwith declare the determination of the House’.21 These regulations, which framed the debate, were the most significant procedural reforms that had been made to Parliamentary procedure.

To conclude, this shift in Parliamentary procedure was obviously the result of combined influences. Among the major factors are the Reform Acts which gave rise to democracy, and the two party system, which led to an increasingly fierce opposition, and the growth of parliamentary workload.22 Indeed, the opposition (regardless of political stripe) was making use of debate to obstruct parliamentary work. Beside these well documented causes, the influence of the new understanding of time, cannot be denied. The call for a more efficient House of Commons appeared clearly in contemporary writings as well as daily and satirical newspapers. The revolution that came with the understanding of time in the nineteenth century also clearly appeared in the literature of that period. In 1865, the novel Alice in Wonderland written by Lewis Caroll begins with a rabbit running with a pocket watch in his hand, worrying about Time, written with a capital ‘T’. It was only a few years later, in 1873, that Jules Verne published Around the World in Eighty Days.

In the early twentieth century, procedural reforms went further. In 1902, the Prime Minister Arthur Balfour introduced new regulations which increased further the power of the Speaker in order to control the debates. It gave him the possibility to end a sitting without putting the question but also the ability to refuse to take a division, among others.23 Reforms gradually transformed the House into a legislation engine maker more than a debating chamber. Many contemporary authors argued that increasing time control and efficiency diminished democracy as Hobhouse who wrote that ‘the doctrine of democratic rights has been replaced by the demand for efficiency’.24

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20 House of Commons Debates, 16 (7 March 1833), p. 372.
22 Vieira, Time and Politics, p. 3.
23 Vieira, Time and Politics, p. 122.
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4th July.
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Reynolds Newspaper (12 February 1882).


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Figure 3. Journals of the House of Commons From FEBRUARY the 7th, 1882, In the FORTY-FIFTH YEAR of the Reign of QUEEN VICTORIA, To DECEMBER the 2nd, 1882, In the FORTY-SIXTH YEAR of the Reign of QUEEN VICTORIA. SESSION 1882. Printed by Order of The House of Commons, BY HENRY HANSARD AND SON, PRINTERS TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS. Volume 137. p.641 'HOUSE- URGENCY- continued'
The Female Artist in the mid-Victorian Period: Emily Mary Osborn’s *Nameless and Friendless* (1857) and the 1859 Petition to the Royal Academy

ADRIENNE MCKENNA

*The 1857 painting by Emily Mary Osborn titled ‘Nameless and Friendless’ and the 1859 petition to the Royal Academy to provide tuition to female students offer, in many respects, similarities and contrasts. Both concern challenges faced by women artists in the mid-Victorian period but they initially appear to be radically different forms of representation; submissive and assertive respectively. This paper probes these representations through the shared themes of money and patriarchy. Ultimately the paper seeks to argue that each artefact is more nuanced than first impressions suggest.*
Both the art world and female ambitions were shifting during the mid-Victorian period. Various factors such as the 'general advance in education and liberal opinions' influenced the aspirations of women who were remonstrating for a professional life in, for example, the fine arts. As modern critics such as Pamela Gerrish Nunn and Deborah Cherry have observed, women were working to 'change the prevailing concepts of middle-class femininity that defined women as dependent and self-less'. An example of a document seeking to alter such definitions is the 1859 petition to the Royal Academy by thirty-eight female signatories. This petition was a request to be granted a right based on a rational, and not emotional, appeal. In contrast Emily Mary Osborn’s realist painting Nameless and Friendless (1857), portraying a female artist in the character of a distressed gentlewoman, appears to be the opposite. Contemporaries saw this as an appeal to the emotions showing a woman’s suffering as a consequence of contravening conventional mores. The female artist’s downcast gaze is a striking contrast with the direct and unabashed address of the petition: ‘Sir, - We appeal to you’ (l. 1). This paper probes such contrasts through the shared themes of money and patriarchy arguing that both petition and painting simultaneously support and subvert the expectations created by their initial impact.

Sections of the petition make it clear that financial considerations were key in the motivation of the signatories’ request for free tuition comparable to that ‘given gratuitously’ to ‘young men’ (l. 25) (fig. 2). The first is a short sentence that alludes, in a careful composition, to longer term financial gain. The second section composes multiple explicit references to money and the unequal treatment of women. Considering first the allusion, the petition’s reference to the fact that, with the Academy’s training, women would be enabled to attain ‘the position for which their talents might qualify them’ (ll. 29-30). This sentence is worded as if the request is irrefutably reasonable, invoking with the word ‘talents’ the Christian idea, still prevalent in Victorian times, of God-given gifts and their appropriate use. But equally the sentence’s ambiguity, in relation to ‘position’, is sufficient for the signatories or readers to interpret according to their personal ideology. (The critic and artist John Ruskin and the novelist Dinah Craik, in a non-fiction work, provide evidence that many believed that, for different reasons, art ‘in its highest form’ - the Victorian cultural definition of the nude - was ‘impossible for women’). Supporting the idea that, in order to further the petition’s cause, this sentence was disingenuous is the fact that amongst the ranks of the signatories were experienced and skillful negotiators.

1 *The Athenaeum*, (30 April 1859), (p. 581, ll. 9-10).
3 Deborah Cherry, *Beyond the Frame* (Subsequent references to Cherry’s text, Frame, refer to this edition).
5 *Athenaeum*, (30 April 1859), p. 308.
7 John Ruskin, *The life and letters and complete works of John Ruskin* (London, 1907), vol., p. M. (Subsequent references within the text to Ruskin refer to this edition).
8 Dinah Maria Mulock Craik, *A Woman’s thoughts upon Women* (London, 1859), p. 50. 200
Barbara Leigh Smith, Eliza Fox, Anna Jameson and Anna Mary Howitt, all signatories to the 1839 petition, had participated in ‘the well-publicised and highly debated campaign to reform the laws in relation to married women’s property’. This campaign included securing 26,000 – 28,000 signatures for a petition presented to Parliament on 14 March 1836. In a sense, as Cherry observes, the petition was a continuation of the same feminist agenda that...
began when ‘the politics of feminism connected to the practice of art’. If the word ‘position’ is accepted to be ambiguous, then this is evidence of a sophisticated form of self-presentation. In order to win over the greatest constituency of Academicians, including members sympathetic to the idea that women were intellectually and artistically limited by divine ordinance, the signatories created a wording capable of multiple interpretations. One possible interpretation of ‘position’ - that which accords with feminine humility - suggests that the signatories were willing to appear to conform to stereotypes in order to achieve their long-term goal.

In the second section, relating to money, the petition explicitly addresses the financial inequalities for female artists compared to their male counterparts. That is, the ‘expense of obtaining good instruction’ (l. 26), the ‘education’ given ‘gratuitously to men’ (l. 25) and the ‘expenditure required to afford women artists the same opportunities’ (l. 36 - 37). This emphasis, achieved via three repetitions within a short column of text arranged over thirty-nine lines, stresses the signatories’ competent grasp of their independent financial affairs. The necessity to underline a firm grasp of finances stems from the social, cultural and political context for women’s financial affairs. For example, until the introduction of the Married Woman’s Property Act (1870) women’s finances remained legally under their husband’s control. Added to this were the stereotyped contemporary views articulated in works such as Coventry Patmore’s Angel in the House (1854) and Alfred, Lord Tennyson’s The Princess (1847):

Man for the field and woman for the hearth:
Man for the sword and for the needle she:
Man with the head and woman with the heart:
Man to command and woman to obey. (ll. 437-440)

The poem’s reversal of the standard opening of iambic pentameter reinforces a sense of patriarchy. By placing the stress on the first syllable of ‘man’ male causality for the female sphere of ‘hearth’/‘needle’/‘heart’ is both foregrounded and emphasised, reinforcing a sense of patriarchy. In particular, the petition works to dismantle the ideas contained in line three. Compared to the acknowledged emotional impact of Nameless and Friendless, evidenced by the critic of the Art Journal quoted below, the petition is a rational appeal. It briefly states its request, with the significance of tuition and the background included as relevant to building a coherent argument. The petition eschews the emotive language found in the letters of signatories discussing the petition. For example, in her autobiography Henrietta Ward recorded the position of the Academicians (in withholding free tuition) as ‘pure selfishness’.  

Nameless and Friendless likewise addresses the issue of female artists’ economic position. The painting’s financial references are presented visually, and in the quote provided by Osborn

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9 Frame, p. 9.
for inclusion in *The catalogue of the 1857 Summer Exhibition of the Royal Academy*. The perilous economic position of the female artist in *Nameless and Friendless* was recognised by contemporary critics. The *Art Journal* of 1857 describes her in terms intended as literal; the central artist is a ‘poor girl’. The journal continues to observe her poverty, she ‘has walked far to dispose of’ her work, thus visually connecting the soiled hem of her dress, her umbrella and the dark clouds seen outside the shop. Further, the artist ‘now awaits trembling the decision of a man who is to become rich by the labours of others’. As Cherry observes, Osborn presented the female artist in the specific mode of a distressed gentlewomen, recognised by ‘mourning dress, pale drawn features […] downcast glance’ who ‘worked not from choice but from financial necessity’. Comparison of the final painting (fig. 1) with the preparatory study held by the Ashmolean shows that Osborn added details to reinforce the poverty of the artist and the boy holding a portfolio assumed to contain the work of the artist. (A critical review of the *Spectator* 4 July 1857 assumed that the two figures, woman and boy were linked. Modern critic Caroline Palmer, amongst others, concludes that the boy is ‘probably a younger brother for whom she has responsibility*). The artist’s skirt hem is now mud-splattered, emphasising as the *Art Journal* critic implies, that she has been forced to walk in the rain. The boy’s sleeve is made much shorter and the hem on his trousers exaggerated, both signaling the inability to afford new, well-fitted clothes. Finally, the portfolio cover is noticeably both worn and torn when compared with the cover shown in the study.

The quotation from Proverbs 10:15 likewise emphasises poverty: ‘The rich man’s wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty’. Osborn’s composition includes a realist representation of each of these elements, the strong city beyond the shop (and indeed the shop’s interior), the rich man, wealth (the costumes of the men on the left) the poor and their poverty. Indeed, the composition, that ranges multiple renditions of rich/man/wealth and strong against the sole example of artist and boy, reinforces the sense of an unequal power balance between the strong and weak. The inclusion of a biblical quote may be seen as an invitation to interpret the painting within the framework of Christian teaching and morality on the subject of wealth. Indeed, the quoted passage continues to develop the theme of the spiritual poverty of the rich. Thus, Osborn’s emphasis of each element of power, verging on over-determination, combined with the contrast and central placement of the female artist encourage a view that she is invested with spiritual wealth. However, given the context in which Osborn’s rendition of a female artist was created, it demonstrates a vision and ambition that does not match with stereotypical ideas of female Christian meekness and

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13 The Royal Academy of Arts, *The catalogue of the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition 1857* (London, 1857). Osborn’s painting was exhibit no. 299, Middle Room, p. 16.
15 *Frame*, p. 37.
18 *Drawings*, p. 194.
19 Proverbs 10:15; quotation as reproduced in *The catalogue of the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition 1857*, see note 13 above.
modesty. Firstly, Obsorn’s presentation of a female artist as a distressed gentlewoman was unique. Modern critic Charlotte Yeldham’s review of female Victorian artists found that in the period 1850 – 1869 ‘there were seven works by female artists depicting unspecified women artists […] three of which involved direct social commentary on the conditions of the woman artist and her position in society’. In this sub-group of three commenting on society only one, Osborn, showed the artist as a distressed gentlewoman, and further is ‘the only known picture of a women artist selling her work’. The conventional visual depiction of a distressed gentlewoman was either as a governess or seamstress as in Osborn’s The Governess (1860) and Anna Blunden’s The Seamstress (1854). The painting achieved a coveted place in the Royal Academy summer exhibition, no. 299 in the Middle Room. (Notwithstanding the number of works rejected by the hanging committee, the Art Journal’s annual review of the 1857 exhibition noted: ‘it is understood that 1400 works of Art were rejected “for want of room”’). Within the same review Nameless and Friendless was noted as one of the ‘works of rare merit’. Finally, the fact of Osborn’s conventional upbringing as a clergyman’s daughter. Taking all these factors into account, despite the fact Nameless and Friendless is of an anonymous artist, it displays the same characteristics as self-portraits of the period described by Yeldham: a ‘self-assertion’ that consciously emphasises that ‘the artist is a woman’. A key difference between the painting and the petition is that the artist portrayed within the painting is not a representation of Osborn. (The artist of the painting is, in a sense, a metaphor for the various challenges faced by female artists as a body). In contrast the petition is an attempt, however skillfully edited, to represent the voice of its author(s).

Several aspects of the petition demonstrate the operation of a patriarchy. (A caveat should be added that, within the wider context of Victorian society, opinions on the ‘woman question’ were not divided strictly along gendered lines). Firstly, since the founding of the Royal Academy in 1749 – when two women, Mary Moser and Angelica Kauffman, were appointed – no woman had subsequently been elected. Hence the opening address, to ‘sir’ from ‘we’, is gendered with power residing exclusively with a male Academy. Secondly, there is the fact that a petition was necessary. Despite the fact that women could participate in the Summer Exhibition (Osborn’s painting was such an example) and Lord Lyndhurst’s 1859 speech to the Royal Academy stating that tuition was open to all her Majesty’s subjects, the reality was otherwise. The conciliatory terms in which the request is couched, to grant the request ‘as far as is practical’ (l. 37) and acknowledging the requirement for ‘expenditure’, indicate the sensitivity of the author(s) against antagonising a powerful elite. In a sense this may be said to conform to stereotypes of feminine meekness similar to the discussion above in relation to finances. In contrast, the sentence ‘we feel assured that the gentlemen […] will not grudge

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20 Charlotte Yeldham, Women Artists in the Nineteenth century in France and England (London, 1984), vol. 1, p. 167. (Subsequent references within the text to Artists are to this volume and edition).
21 Deborah Cherry, Painting Women (London, 1993), p. 86. (Subsequent references within the text to Painting refer to this edition).
22 Art Journal, (1857), p. 165. (Subsequent references within the text to Journal refer to this edition).
23 Art Journal, p. 163.
24 Artists, p. 236.
26 Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB), entry for Laura Herford.
the expenditure’ (l. 33 – 35) appears assertive. Yet this phrase likewise introduces elements of stereotypical female behavior since it is an appeal to the concept of gentlemanly behavior. (Such an onus was placed on correct behavior in society that, as early as the eighteenth century, conduct manuals sprung up to cater for “the emerging classes”’ desire for social guidance). In this sentence construction any attempt by the Academicians to deny the petition becomes linked (by alliteration) with the pejorative word ‘grudge’. Where the Academicians perceive a challenge to their honour, the petitioners’ objective is advanced.

The petition’s inclusion of the detail that ‘no less than one hundred and twenty ladies have exhibited their works in the Royal Academy alone, during the last three years’ (ll.11-13) suggests that ‘the profession’ was indeed ‘fairly open to women’ (my italics) (ll. 14 - 15). However, an indication of the subtlety and power of the patriarchal opposition - amounting to unfair treatment - is evident in the correspondence of the hugely influential artist and critic John Ruskin with young female artists writing to him for advice. Thus, Ruskin responds in 1858 to a plea for advice from another 1859 petition signatory Sophia Sinnet:

“You must resolve to be quite a great paintress; the female termination does not exist, there never having been such a being as yet as a lady who could paint. Try and be the first.”

Ruskin wrote a year later in almost identical terms to another signatory Anna Blunden. Modern critic John Batchelor observes that while Ruskin ‘was often generous and encouraging’ to women ‘he expected [and got] obedience’ in relationships with ‘bullying […] demands that were actually a form of constraint’. The extract above typifies this dual encouragement and fearsome discouragement. Thus, while Sinnett is encouraged to ‘try’, she would (according to Ruskin) be doing so in a discouraging art history/context, there ‘never having been such a being yet’. Here Ruskin conflates his world view and prejudices presenting his opinion as received fact. Such views however were typical of the period in which many, including women, thought that women’s constitutional make-up barred them from ‘the highest form of academic art’, that is the portrayal of ‘the female nude’. Nunn notes Ruskin’s introduction of the new term ‘paintress’ as revealing a ‘hegemony where the ostensibly neuter term “painter” would signifying a male artist differentiated from female’. In consequence ‘this approach effectively set women apart from men in the reader’s mind, presenting for consideration a number of works of art and a number of works by women’.

Cherry describes a consequence of this patriarchy thus: ‘women artists did not participate widely in the decision-making processes which established professional standards and categorised exhibitionable (sic) art’. This ‘decision-making process’ is visually expressed in Nameless and Friendless by the critical appraisal of the artist’s work made by the man holding a

28 Ruskin, p. 308.
30 *Painting*, p. 54.
32 *Painting*, p. 65.
framed painting, the second viewing the work from a ladder and, in a sense, by the third who has effectively turned his back. Each of these men stands behind a literal counter that separates the female artist from the male position of authority; a metaphor for the division of the genders in the professional art world. This division is emphasised in the contrast with the hands of the dealer and female artist. The dealer holds the painting in one hand with the support of the metaphorical counter, the painting at some distance from his body. On the little finger of this hand the dealer wears a signet ring, a form of jewelry that could be indicative of club membership; membership that literally excluded women. In contrast the woman toys nervously with a piece of string in both hands and her arms, lacking any support, are comparatively dejected. Her lack of a wedding ring, contrasting with the dealer’s ring, shows her exclusion from the financial and emotional protection of marriage.

The result of this bias in the definition of high culture and the fact that ‘the leading art collectors of the middle decades were men’ was that ‘patrons seldom competed to buy women’s pictures. Questions of merit were not involved, purchases being largely a matter of critical favour and financial investment’. In a survey of the Victorian patrons of female artists Dianne Macleod found no major buyer, indeed few purchasers at all. Thus, placing the appraisal of the art work in male hands is effectively a critique of the ‘patriarchal control over the making and definition of high culture’. A critique that appears to be endorsed by the sense that every element of the composition is prejudicial to the central artist, thus achieving a degree of over-determination. The female artist is simultaneously subjected to critical gazes from the two men on her right and the balanced composition (artistic appraisal from one side and sexual appraisal from the other) suggest that for a female artist the issues of gender, sexual morality and professional abilities were inseparable. The one element of the composition that appears to work counter to the idea of over-determination is the figure of the young man on the ladder. Modern critic Ben Pollit has suggested that on the basis of age, the contrast with the expressions of the other men, and angle of face that echoes the artist’s, this young man may be sympathetic to her plight. However, considering the painting in relation to the theme of patriarchy another interpretation arises. Even men that may be sympathetic still have an advantage unavailable to women.

Each of these artifacts was tailored for an emotional or rational appeal according to the needs of its venue and audience. Notwithstanding these apparently contradictory approaches each contains elements that contribute to a nuanced presentation. Osborn’s painting was exhibited in the Royal Academy in a century where the display policy created challenges for any painting wishing to attract attention. Thomas Rowlandson and Augustus Charles Pugin’s The Exhibition Room at Somerset House (1808), George du Maurier’s Punch cartoon

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34 *Painting*, p. 51.
35 *Painting*, p. 99.
36 *Painting*, p. 54.
37 Ben Pollit <www.khanacademy.org> [Feb. 2016].
Varnishing Day at the Royal Academy (1877)\(^{39}\) and William Powell Frith’s View at the Royal Academy (1881)\(^{40}\) are evidence that, across the century and housed in different locations, the Academy adopted an approach of hanging that crowded paintings over the entire wall space. Despite this disadvantage there is evidence that Osborn correctly read her public, in that Nameless and Friendless appealed to contemporary tastes and was sufficiently distinctive to attract attention. The painting was ‘purchased at the Royal Academy Summer exhibition in 1857’\(^{41}\) for ‘the substantial sum of £250’ by ‘Lady Chetwynd’.\(^{42}\) Since the petition was only one element of a campaign lobbied on several fronts, a campaign that Cherry asserts was ‘brilliantly orchestrated’,\(^{43}\) its success is not best evidenced in isolation. Indeed, no evidence remains that the petition elicited a direct response. However, as part of the larger campaign it may be said to have played a part since the following year the first woman, Laura Herford, was admitted for tuition. Although the petition initially appears to articulate an assertive request for rights, close reading reveals instances where the wording was susceptible to multivalent interpretations depending on the ideology of the reader. That is, the petitioners’ self-presentation was disingenuously feminine and in this respect the petition appealed to the Academicians in a manner not entirely based on reason. In contrast, although Nameless and Friendless places centrally an emblem of female submission, it is also a critique of the generalised conditions of all female artists at the point of composition; a calculation that may be said to be more rational than emotional.

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\(^{39}\) George du Maurier, *Varnishing day at the Royal Academy in Punch, or the London Charivari*, 19 May 1877 (London, 1877), vol. 72, p. 226.

\(^{40}\) William Powell Frith, *A Private view at the Royal Academy* (1888), private collection. However, see British Museum for a photogravura after Frith’s work <www.britishmuseum.org> [Feb. 2016].

\(^{41}\) Provenance details provided by Sotherby for the sale of lot. 118 on 19 November 2008; Emily Mary Osborn’s *Nameless and Friendless* (1857).

\(^{42}\) Alison Smith, entry for ‘Nameless and Friendless’ <www.tate.org.uk> [Feb. 2016].

\(^{43}\) Frame, p. 9.


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Pollitt, Ben, ‘Emily Mary Osborn’s *Nameless and Friendless’* <www.khanacademy.org> [Feb. 2016].


**LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS**

Figure 1. Emily Mary Osborn, *Nameless and Friendless* (1857), oil on canvas, 82.5 x 103.8cm, © Tate, London

Figure 2. *Figure. 2 The Athenaeum*, 30 April 1859, p. 581, © John Johnson Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford
'A Right Royal Tamasha': Imaging Queen Victoria as Kaiser-i-Hind

MALVINA POLLOCK KALIM

This article examines the elevation of Queen Victoria to Empress of India through the prism of John Tenniel’s satirical cartoon ‘New Crowns for Old Ones’ and Val Prinsep’s commemorative painting of the proclamation ceremony in Delhi in 1877. It explores the invented traditions and rituals, fashioned from India’s imagined past and a medievalist aesthetic, that gave political raison d’être to the new title in India and configured the loyalty and legitimacy of the rulers of the Indian princely states to reinforce imperial regime. It looks in particular at how the selected artefacts formed and manipulated perceptions of empire and imaged Victoria’s paramount power.

On New Year’s Day 1877 over 100,000 participants and spectators gathered in Delhi to hear Queen Victoria proclaimed Kaiser-i-Hind, the official translation, selected after much deliberation, of her newly minted title of Empress of India. The ceremony was the culmination of a two-week long pageant that would be the first of three grand ceremonials in Delhi in honour of the British sovereign; the others in 1903 and 1911 formalized the coronations of Victoria’s successors, Edward VII and George V. It has gone down in history as the ‘Proclamation Durbar’ but its principal architect, the Viceroy Lord Lytton, called it an Imperial Assemblage ‘because it will materially and essentially differ from all previous Durbars, besides being on a much larger scale’. Privately he referred to it as ‘our great Tamasha’, which is also how the majority of Victoria’s Indian subjects most probably described it. A Hindustani word, derived from Persian, a ‘tamasha’ is a spectacle, a theatrical entertainment, a veritable commotion.

The proclamation ceremony was officially commemorated in Val Prinsep’s group portrait entitled The Imperial Assemblage. This vast, 723 centimetre long, 305 centimetre high painting includes over 150 recognizable personages, took three years to complete, forced the artist to enlarge his Holland Park studio to accommodate the canvas and occupied an entire wall of the Royal Academy when it was exhibited in 1880. It was one of the most expensive and prestigious commissions ever granted by the Indian colonial government: Prinsep received £10,000 in fee and expenses, roughly equivalent to £250,000 today. The painting was a gift to Victoria from the Indian princes, with the names of the subscribers engraved around the frame, and in her day it adorned the walls of Buckingham Palace. Still in the Royal Collection the painting now hangs, a relic of lost empire and largely forgotten, in the Banqueting Hall at St. James Palace.

When Victoria emerged from a fifteen-year period of mourning to express the desire for the title of Empress she was totally unprepared for the storm of criticism it unleashed. Objection to the proposal was vehement and the Royal Titles Act had a difficult passage before Parliament approved it, by a slender majority, in April 1876, on condition the new title applied only to India.\(^3\) To British ears the appellation evoked despotic powers in Napoleonic France and Russia and practices entirely contrary to the democratic spirit enshrined in the Reform Acts of 1832 and 1867. Could the dignity of the Crown be enhanced by an imperial title? The Liberal Opposition claimed it would be ‘electroplating.’ Stripped to fundamentals the acrimonious debate reflected divergent Tory and Liberal views on foreign policy and the contradictions inherent in reconciling metropolitan democracy with the justification for overt imperial rule abroad.

The impetus for elevation of the Queen’s title was widely believed to come from her Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli: a manifestation of his own grandiose designs. He had after all declared the imposition of Crown rule in India in 1858 merely ‘an anti-chamber to an imperial palace’.\(^4\) The truth was more nuanced. The Queen’s desire for an imperial title to match those of other European rulers had been suggested as early as 1843.\(^5\) Britain’s purchase of Suez Canal shares coupled with the rapid extension of the sub-continent’s railway and telegraph system had brought India closer. This raised expectations of integration and increased status among Indian rulers who had hailed the Prince of Wales as ‘our future Emperor’ during his official visit to India in 1875.\(^6\) Nevertheless, Disraeli’s perceived fascination with the trappings of empire fuelled a strident critique and outpouring of articles and images with overt, anti-Semitic, overtones exemplified in John Tenniel’s cartoon ‘New Crowns for Old Ones! (Aladdin Adapted)’ published in Punch in April 1876.

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\(^3\) The Royal Titles Bill was presented to the House of Commons on 17 Feb. 1876. Debates in both chambers of the British parliament took place from February until April 1876.


\(^5\) C. C. Davies, ‘India and Queen Victoria’, *Journal of the East India Association*, XXVIII (1937).

The cartoon depicts a turbaned Disraeli as the power-seeking sorcerer Abanazar, from the story of Aladdin, trading a gaudy piece of domed oriental headgear in return for the English crown Victoria holds in her hands. The title parodies the cries of itinerant Jewish peddlers who roamed the city streets collecting old clothes to sell and draws attention to Disraeli’s origins. The Queen is portrayed as victim to Disraeli’s beguiling charms and the kabalistic magic hidden in the box of tricks he holds. The notion that Disraeli’s ethnicity was linked to hocus-pocus politics and a ‘conjuring’ political agency that could simultaneously master mass democracy and imperial expansion had wide currency. He was the alien ‘other’, the manipulative mountebank ready to bargain away the nation’s authentic English identity to put into reality his own exotic vision:

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Let the Queen of the English collect a great fleet, let her stow away all her treasure, bullion, gold plate, and precious arms; be accompanied by all her court and chief people, and transfer the seat of her empire from London to Delhi.8

Victoria is hesitant to surrender the traditional, modest, English crown that befits the sovereign of a liberal democracy for the far more ornate Indian one of Bahadur Shah.9 Her reticence reflects widespread concern over corrupting influences that would either degrade her as the successor to a weak and degenerate Mughal ruler or encourage her to turn into an ‘Eastern potentate’.

Constitutionally, Victoria had been monarch of India since 1858 when the East India Company was dissolved, following the seismic upheavals of 1857. The uprising had made plain the 600 or so princes and chiefs who ruled over two fifths of India, some with states larger than Britain, and who had, by and large, opposed the rebels, must be embraced.10 The Government of India Act of 1858 unveiled a new doctrine of imperial rule in which the princes became central to British Indian polity. It was a marriage of convenience that would endure for ninety years, until independence and partition. The Royal Titles Act was a reaffirmation of the desire to bind together the Indian people and princes in common and personal loyalty to Victoria and further consolidate and popularize British rule.11 It also served notice to the world that Britain was now an imperial power and to subjects at home that Victoria was not affected by the derisive outcry of a minority in Parliament.

The pageant in Delhi was primarily the creation of Lord Lytton, son of Disraeli’s friend and mentor, Bulwer Lytton, and an unlikely but fortuitous choice of Viceroy, selected only after three other candidates turned down the position.12 Scion of a family whose lineage traced back to the Crusaders, a poet, under the nom de plume Owen Meredith, and seduced by India, a land multitudinous in its traditions;

From whose sun-bright womb,
Sprang giants which are no more.13

A dandy, in the Baudelaire mode, with a theatrical persona to match Disraeli’s, he would be widely criticized for his handling of famine relief, his crackdown on the vernacular press and failed policies during the Second Afghan War. But, this new Viceroy was perfectly suited to the task of imaging Victoria as Kaiser-i-Hind with utmost pomp and magnificence.14

The ‘pseudo-medieval’ extravaganza that Lytton designed was rooted in a feudal vision of Indian society where: ‘from the remotest antiquity the Rajas and princes of India have

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9 Mirza Abu Zafar Sirajuddin Muhammad Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Mughal emperor. Deposed by the British in 1857 and exiled to Burma.
10 Barbara Ramusack, The Indian Princes and Their States (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 84-85.
12 Edward Bulwer-Lytton, novelist, playwright and politician, 1803-1873.
13 Owen Meredith, Lucile, Part I, canto VI, verse XXV.
14 Charles Baudelaire, Le peintre de la vie moderne (Paris, 1863), defined a dandy as ‘one who elevated aesthetics to a living religion’.
assembled to celebrate the establishment of a new empire ---. The story of such gatherings is
told in the earliest traditions of the two famous Hindu epics, the Ramayana and
Mahabharata'. This construction enabled Britain to claim the legitimacy that longevity
could impart and to demonstrate the superiority of its own advancement from the feudal
state, thereby justifying its control over India’s future. It was also an aesthetic that chimed
with Victorian Britain’s own neo-gothic ideals for a stable society.

Prinsep’s painting (fig. 1) depicts the proclamation ceremony held on New Year’s Day 1877.
The focal point is the red and gold hexagonal throne pavilion, where the Viceroy is seated,
beneath a large portrait of the Queen-Empress, wearing the mantle of the Grand Master of
the order of the Star of India: Lady Lytton and their daughters beside him. The princes,
representatives of foreign governments and distinguished British officials face him, attired in
ornate native costume, dress uniforms or the blue mantle of the Indian order of knighthood.
Forming the backdrop are the large armorial banners of the sixty-three most illustrious
princes in attendance, presented to each of them by the Viceroy prior to the ceremony, to
signify the personal bond between the Queen-Empress and the prince. The fanfare has
sounded and the Chief Herald, Major Barnes, said to be the tallest man in the British army,
is reading the proclamation.

Though massive, the painting fails to do justice to the size and scale of the scene. The centre
of the amphitheatre’s arc appears to be about thirty feet from the throne pavilion; in fact it
was 226 feet. Similarly, each hexagonal side of the throne pavilion was forty feet wide, not
six, as the picture suggests. The overall decoration was elaborate in the extreme. Like
Diocletian, Lytton believed ‘ostentation of splendour and luxury could subjugate the
imagination of the multitude.’ Disraeli, not known for moderation, found the proclamation
schemes read like The Thousand and One Nights and felt compelled to rein in some excessive
flights of fancy. Prinsep, clearly daunted by his task, declared; ‘Oh Horror! What have I to
paint? A kind of thing that out does the Crystal Palace in hideosity … Never was such a
brummagem ornament, or more atrocious taste’.

The ceremony has been read as a traditional Mughal durbar denuded of its central element,
the gift exchange: nazar (gold coins) offered by the one being honoured and khilat (clothes)
given by Mughal to signal incorporation into his body. Prinsep’s painting reveals Lytton
staged it as an investiture into a chivalric order of knighthood, with attendant rituals of
homage and incorporation. The pillars supporting the throne pavilion are decorated with
the colours and insignia of the prestigious British orders of knighthood of which the Exalted

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Order of the Star of India, instituted in 1861, ranked fourth. The distinctive blue, white and gold colours of the order and its star-shaped insignia are a dominant design motif of the decoration. Victoria, like her predecessors, recognized the desirable political effect of chivalric orders to forge bonds of loyalty, and conciliated the princes with this and other hierarchical trappings like gun salutes.

The Viceroy’s elevated throne affirms his sovereign as the paramount power. At his feet, the ornate dress and extravagant jewels of the princes flaunt their wealth and lineage but also demarcate the ornate Indian body as ‘an imperial masquerade’. The banners say it all. At the apex the Imperial Crown of Henry VIII who declared his kingdom an empire, not subject to the authority of any other power. Beneath it the insignia of the ‘Star of India’ with its legend ‘Heaven’s light our Guide,’ and below the name of the recipient over whom the protection of the British sovereign is extended and from whom the oath of loyalty is demanded.

Despite the feudal imagery there is little ‘oriental’ in the construct: only the riot of colour from the juxtaposition of native costumes and British uniforms gives the illusion it may be so. Traditional durbar halls were rectangular, and the seating precedent strictly defined. Here the amphitheatre, designed by Ganga Ram, is a democratic semi-circle with the princes all seated equidistant from the throne, thereby levelled and united as a collective body. British mores prevailed. Lytton refused to conform ‘to the standard of those whose masters we are by reason of our superior social enlightenment’ and overturned protocol denying female members of the Vice-regal family the right to attend state functions for fear of offending high-ranking natives. ‘I have been more brought forward than any lady yet in India’, Lady Lytton recorded in her dairy. The Begum of Bhopal, the sole female ruler in India, was similarly ‘brought forward’, and seated directly in front of the throne, her blue ‘Star of India’ mantle mirroring the Viceroy’s.

The initial reaction to the Imperial Assemblage was largely negative. The eyewitness account telegraphed to the London Times of 2 January 1877 described in as a mixture of splendour and squalor, exacerbating British concerns of being ‘infected’ by oriental notions and an exotic and dangerous empire that, thanks to modern technology, now seemed dangerously close to home. In India criticism focused on the gross misuse of public funds at a time the country was ravaged by famine. Punch, had a field day satirizing Disraeli and Lytton’s ‘pantomime’

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21 In order of precedence: The Garter, the Thistle, the St. Patrick and the Star of India.
23 A graduate of Roorkee College of Civil Engineering: founded by the British administration in 1847. He became one of Lahore’s richest and most generous philanthropists.
26 Begum Shah Jehan, the second successive ruler of Bhopal to be invested as a Knight Commander of the Star of India. Her mother, Begum Sikander, received this honour at the first investiture in 1861.
and when Prinsep’s painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy the art establishment’s consensus was ‘the tinselled ceremony was a fiasco artistically’.

Over time Lytton was vindicated. The invented traditions of his ‘Assemblage’ became the template for subsequent coronation durbars and elements are still recognizable today when Britain ‘puts on a show’. In India he was credited in some quarters with fostering the first nascent strands of national unity and the armorial arms live on as the state emblems of several modern-day Indian states. When Victoria celebrated her Diamond Jubilee in 1897 Britain declared it ‘a celebration of Empire’ and she went to her service of thanksgiving escorted by a troop of Indian cavalry. By then Victoria Regina Imperatrix, the title deemed ‘for external use only’ was on every coin of the realm.

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Figure 1. Val. C. Prinsep, *The Imperial Assemblage* 1877-1880, oil on canvas 304.8 x 723 cm, Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2016

Figure 2. John Tenniel, ‘New Crowns for Old Ones’ (*Aladdin Adapted*), Punch, v. [33.84], 15 April 1876, [pp. 76-77]. © Punch.
William Ewart Gladstone in Two Perspectives: John Everett Millais’ Private Portrait and John Tenniel’s Public Political Cartoons

IAN M. WILLIAMS

Three pieces of work by John Tenniel in the genre of political cartoons, and a John Everett Millais oil-on-canvas portrait commissioned by Christ Church College, Oxford, have been selected as artefacts for analysis. They will be used to assess the portrayal of William Ewart Gladstone (1809 - 1898), statesman and four-time Prime Minister of Great Britain, within portraiture as well as the public sphere of political cartooning. Gladstone’s image became an icon of Victorian political culture, but there are two distinct perspectives evident in the representation of this national leader. Political cartoons were being published in increasingly popular periodicals such as Punch, while the more traditional portraits were still being commissioned by wealthy benefactors and institutions. Closer examination of these two genres will cast light on both mass public political persuasion and personal image management for Gladstone, at the same time identifying similarities and differences in technique and imagery used to impart and influence opinion and reputation.

Figure 5: John Everett Millais, William Ewart Gladstone, 1885, Oil on canvas, 91.4 x 69.9 cm. By permission of the Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford.
Millais’ portrait of William Gladstone, as pictured in figure 1, is quite a large portrait as its dimensions suggest. This represents the fact that the painting was commissioned to be put on display: whether privately or publically is an initial question that comes to mind. The portrait is currently hanging in the Great Hall of Christ Church College, University of Oxford, and is said to be one of the prized items in the College’s vast collection. The portrait was commissioned by the College but it is likely that Gladstone himself had more input into the nature of his portrayal as he was actually sitting for it. Therefore, the piece retains an element of personal significance for Gladstone. This immediately contrasts with the political cartoons that have been selected: the cartoons were always intended to be for public viewing, and on a much larger scale than any commissioned portrait due to the extensive circulation of periodicals. If Millais’ portrait was not for Gladstone’s personal use and was always intended to be displayed in the College, this would make the portrait a public item, but it could still be considered to be exclusive since it would only be seen by those who attended Christ Church.

From Gladstone’s aged appearance, this painting was done quite late in his life which initiates a debate about the purpose of this painting. Gladstone’s dress is of interest here, it is not the typical attire one would normally associate with the then Prime Minister – more usually represented in an ill-fitting suit with the trademark high collared shirt. He is wearing a voluminous red gown that is covering up the rest of his suit: in paintings of this period, and with other artists such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti, one would associate the use of the colour red as indicating love or passion. However, if that principle was applied here, what could the passion be – politics? The nation? There is nothing else within this painting that can be shown to exhibit such a link to his clothing, and therefore this posit can justifiably be cast out. Consequently, it is perhaps more likely that the red gown could be linked to academic dress: Gladstone had been a student at Christ Church, and therefore it can be purported that this attire was with reference to his emeritus status with the College. This is supported by the fact that the portrait was intended for Great Hall. As an aside, D. A. Hamer also raises the point that Gladstone ‘could be made to look by the artists – like some Old Testament prophet or patriarch’¹, and therefore, the red gown, rather than promoting academic status, could be presenting this image as being a ‘patriarch’. In either case the dress is symbolic.

At the bottom right of the painting, one’s eye is drawn to Gladstone’s hand (fig. 2) - one of only two physical features seen outside his clothing. There is a ring on the fourth finger of the hand that is resting on the book; this is his right hand and is therefore not a wedding ring, and indeed can be absolved of any real significance to this discussion since it is also right at the edge of this portrait. Importantly the hand is resting on a book. It must be something that Millais or by Gladstone himself wanted to be highlighted by how it has been presented. As with the gown, this too can be attributed to his academics and his knowledge. It is very hard to identify exactly what is written on the spine of the book and so one cannot exactly place what it is meant to indicate.

The author of the *Grand Old Man*, a biographical article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, speaks about a dream that Gladstone supposedly had, and within the tale speaks of how ‘everyone had recognised the industry and enthusiasm and insight which marked his “Homer Studies”’. \(^2\) The fact that this was in a published piece for general distribution indicates his penchant. Indeed, it is one of the main topics for one of John Tenniel’s cartoons – ‘My Old Friend Homer’ ([fig. 3](#)). Bringing this back to Millais’ portrait, since there was this obvious affinity with Homer, there is every likelihood that the book is that of Homeric literature. With the combination of the robe and the placement of the hand on the book, the academic connotations of the portrait suggest that Gladstone wanted to be presented as an academic. With little else around him the focus is purely upon him and this representation. Perhaps after all that had happened in his political career, Gladstone did not want any reflection of the events which were constantly being presented in periodicals such as *Punch* – the source of John Tenniel’s cartoons selected for this piece.

Turning to these cartoons to look at the representation of William Gladstone, one must understand clearly what it is that they, as a source, are offering. Thomas Kemnitz, in his study of the cartoon as a source, highlights - through using M. H. Spielman’s idea - that the cartoon is ‘a record of how public matters struck a people, an imperial people, at the instant

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of their happening’. This is an important point to take into consideration, since the portrait of Gladstone is how he himself wanted to be represented. The cartoon shows how the cartoonist and others viewed him and how this was subsequently transferred into the realm of the public sphere.

Kemnitz also breaks down and defines the criteria of cartoons into two – cartoons of opinion and joke cartoons. The selected three cartoons are cartoons of opinion: even though they contain an element of humour, they are ‘primarily visual means of communicating opinions and attitudes summing up situations’. Apart from ‘My Old Friend Homer’ which is looking more at Gladstone himself, the other two cartoons are primarily focused on the events involving Gladstone that were in play in the British political world. Having established that these are cartoons of opinion, one must consider the origins of the political cartoon. ‘Cartooning as we know it today is an outgrowth of caricature’, but then what is the difference between a caricature and a cartoon? Similarly, to the difference between joke cartoons and cartoons of opinion, caricature is the ‘distorted representation of an individual’.

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4 Kemnitz, ‘The Cartoon as a Historical Source’, p. 82.
while cartooning is ‘more or less distorted representation of issues, situations, and ideas’
Johnson’s definition brings an interesting aspect to this inspection: all three can certainly be
defined as ‘cartooning’ since they are all a representation of situations and issues in the
politics of the day. The main concern here, however, is the representation of Gladstone as
an individual and therefore is it really the caricature of Gladstone within these cartoons that
is of importance? The caricature of Gladstone and his physical representation is extremely
important for the purposes of contrasting the portrayal of his image with Millais’ portrait.
Gladstone’s policies influenced his caricature within the cartoons. Consequently, the
juxtaposition of Gladstone and the represented political issues are key when investigating
cartoon portrayal of Gladstone. The situations depicted were a representation of how the
cartoonist as well as Punch’s extensive audience viewed the image of the Prime Minister at
that precise time.

Punch became one of the most ‘popular and powerful periodicals in Britain’. According to
H.J. Miller, Punch’s ‘weekly circulation was 50-60,000 copies in the mid-Victorian period’
and it was also creating a turnover of around £25,000 to £30,000 per annum. This
evidences the considerable scope that the periodical had as well as illustrating that these
Tenniel cartoons would have reached such a huge eclectic audience, even if its humour was
designed for those who had an educated background. With this kind of readership, Punch
was producing cartoons such as ‘Woodman Spare That Tree’ and projecting positivity and
negativity onto the image of Gladstone. The influence of these cartoon images can therefore
be said to have been much greater than Millais’ portrait, consequently impacting on the
public image and representation of Gladstone over which he had no control.

‘Woodman Spare That Tree’ (fig. 4) is a reference to the Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria in
1876. The tree has skeletons hanging from it, skulls beneath it and vipers are hiding in it,
and it clearly says ‘Turkish Rule’ on the trunk of the tree - therefore referencing the Foreign
Policy of the British Government. However, the focus is on Gladstone holding an axe ready
to chop the tree down. As well as his association with Homer, Gladstone was also known to
be partial to tree felling; indeed, in the Grand Old Man he is even referred to as ‘The Grand
Old Woodcutter’. One of his hobbies evidently becomes something with which he is
closely associated in the public’s eye, despite it being something he did to remove himself to
his own privacy. The axe became a symbol that was frequently used to refer to Gladstone’s
political style, as well as the act of tree felling being political imagery and ‘a way of
symbolising the drama of Gladstone’s political life’. Interestingly, in this cartoon is the
representation of Disraeli to the right of Gladstone - and he is the one who is telling
Gladstone to ‘Spare That Tree’. Dressed lavishly, the cartoon could be hinting that there

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Victorian Periodicals Review, 42, 3 (2009), 267-291, (pp. 267, 280).
was an element of corruption in the opposing party leader, since he looks as though he is benefiting from the continued Turkish rule. Placing the focus heavily on Gladstone’s character, he is clearly portrayed as ready to take a swing at the tree and attempt to take it down. The inference here is that Gladstone was a man with the strength of character to not accept what happened and to not let others benefit from continued Turkish rule. This cartoon was clearly designed to attach negative humour to Disraeli and consequently represent Gladstone in a positive way.

It is important to take note that *Punch* in this period was in one of its ‘Liberal phases’. In comparison to other periodicals of the time, it may have represented Gladstone in a more favourable manner since it possibly supported his Liberal policies. Combine this with the notion that ‘Mr Tenniel did full justice to the unselfish nature of Mr Gladstone’s character’, and then the incentives behind the portrayal of Gladstone begin to come into the spotlight. As with Millais’ portrait, were these images, produced by *Punch* and Tenniel, in fact a tool for Gladstone to use to alter how he was perceived by others? This is a little bit speculative. Gladstone was certainly in a position of power and without doubt knew how to manipulate situations, but whether he would have been able to directly influence these cartoons is a moot point. His actions would have been his tool in attempting to influence his perception within periodicals.

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‘Our Protean Premier’ (fig. 5), similarly to ‘Woodman Spare That Tree’, is the representation of a political situation, but casting more of a negative light upon Gladstone. Although it is representing him as the angel of peace - evidenced by the olive branch that he is holding, the white dove of peace on his other hand and with the word ‘peace’ clearly on the neck of his gown - there is definitely an alternative message. On the ground there is armour (bottom right), and then to the left is a sword, and the word ‘Arbitration’ on the cloth hanging from the reading stand. These make one consider that this is what represents a negative side to Gladstone’s character and his government’s actions. It intonates he has been fighting dressed in the armour, then stripped himself of this armour emerging as an angel of peace and an arbitrator in the associated affair. Therefore, it represents an attack on the fact that Gladstone changed his policy towards something, making himself look like he had the intention of peace when really it was a façade - a way to make himself and the government look like they were in the right with any action that they may have already taken?

Political cartoons, whilst used to show - and most of the time mock - situations in current politics, are notorious for also being used as a vehicle to mock the featured character. In these representations of Gladstone this is less so the case. In this period of political cartooning, respectability became a huge factor, and in cartoons such as these the ridiculing of a person’s features was becoming less of a feature. Cartoonists had much more to lose if they took to this kind of ridiculing - it would not only go against the values of the time, but due to the audience that Punch appealed to, it would have also affected the cartoonist’s
respectability within society. The cartoon was a reflection of the public view of Gladstone’s image, not the public opinion of his image. But the cartoonist had to give the public what they wanted as well – it was an interdependent relationship. The Victorian period saw an increase in the prestige and status of journalism and subsequently cartoons. With this prestige surrounding journalistic occupations and cartooning the scope that the cartoons had in reaching the public, put cartoonists on a par with some of the famous artists of the era. Millais himself even drew for Punch’s sister publication Once a Week as well as contributing to Punch itself. Tenniel, one of the important cartoonists in representing political figures with more respectability, had also been an exhibitor at the Royal Academy. This put the two art disciplines on a par and showed how one could influence the other. Therefore, the influence of cartoons were very important in the representation of Gladstone and his tenure as Prime Minister.

This brings us to the identification of Gladstone - without which the cartoons would not have achieved their goals of informing the public of their opinions on a matter and who it was that was involved in what they were depicting. In all three cartoons shown here, even though they were printed in different years, it is very clear that Gladstone is identified by his facial features, most notably his large nose and his hair - features that made him look ‘more and more hawklike and fierce’. He is not ridiculed for these features but their consistent use make it very clear that it is he who is being portrayed.

Figure 10: John Everett Millais, upper left hand quadrant of William Ewart Gladstone, 1885, Oil on canvas, 91.4 x 69.9 cm. By permission of the Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford.

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15 Miller, p. 278.
16 Miller, p. 218.
In the portrait of William Gladstone by Millais (Fig. 1) light is cast on his head. This, together with the fact that Gladstone is looking directly out at the viewer of the portrait (Fig. 6) indicates that his head is the main focus of the painting. But why? As already identified, the portrait was painted after these political cartoons had been printed. Also, it was commissioned and therefore represents what Gladstone himself and the College wanted to be represented. Did the political cartoons influence Gladstone’s decision as to how he was represented? The angle that his face has been painted helps to reduce the portrayal of the size of his nose, whereas the cartoons all depict his face side on and therefore highlight this feature. The cartoons were printed and seen by the public, and it may have been the case that Gladstone tried to ignore them since quite a lot of the time they would have been negative unless the periodical was a supporter of him and his political policies. Periodicals were immensely popular in this period and copies were regularly kept in coffee houses as well as gentlemen’s clubs – places that Gladstone may have frequented. The features that Punch produced were also typically reproduced in other periodicals, sometimes even without permission - most notably appearing in the Times.\footnote{Johnson, ‘The Changing Representation of the Art Public in “Punch”, 1841-1896’, p. 274.} This clearly would have made it difficult for Gladstone to ignore what was being produced and it truly might have had an impact not only on the way that Gladstone wanted to be perceived but also, in retrospect, on how he viewed himself?

As we have seen the cartoons were very personal and used identifying features to provoke thought and sway opinion about Gladstone and his character as well as his politics. Since the portrait was done later in his life, after many periodicals and therefore cartoons had been printed, it is quite likely that Gladstone did not want to have himself represented in a similar way to the cartoons. As suggested earlier, it could be - with the lack of any items within the portrait apart from a book and his red gown - that Gladstone wanted to divorce himself from the stigma that had become attached to the representation of his image. Therefore, showing the personal significance of the painting to Gladstone, the portrait shows how he really wanted to be represented to those who viewed it and he wanted it to be viewed in a way that would remain impartial to the events and his decisions during his tenure as Prime Minister, but all the while remembering the pivotal role he played in politics and the prestige that his image still carried.
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PRIMARY SOURCES


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SECONDARY SOURCES


LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1. John Everett Millais, *William Ewart Gladstone*, 1885, Oil on Canvas, 91.4 x 69.9 cm. By permission of the Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford.

Figure 2. Sectional: Bottom right hand corner, John Everett Millais, *William Ewart Gladstone*, 1885, Oil on canvas, 91.4 x 69.9 cm. By permission of the Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford.

Figure 3. John Tenniel, ‘My Old Friend Homer’, 14th December 1872, printed cartoon.

Figure 4. John Tenniel, ‘Woodman Spare That Tree’, 26th May 1877, printed cartoon.

Figure 5. John Tenniel, ‘Our Protean Premier’, 16th May 1885, printed cartoon.

Figure 6. Sectional: Upper left hand quadrant, John Everett Millais, *William Ewart Gladstone*, 1885, Oil on canvas, 91.4 x 69.9 cm. By permission of the Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford.
Cover image: Paul Sandby, *The Tide Rising at Briton Ferry*, 1773, watercolour over graphite; laid down, 29.7 x 53.1cm.

*Image courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington*