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Foreword

From the President:

The twentieth annual conference of the Georgia Philological Association (GPA) was held online on May 16-17, 2025. We awarded the Vicki Hill Memorial Graduate Recognition Award to Palistha Ranjitkar, a graduate student at New Mexico State University for her paper "Hair, Myth, and Revolt: The Politics of Embodied Resistance," and for the first time, we were pleased to award a certificate of acknowledgment to Ian Fox, an undergraduate student at West Point, for his paper "The Killer Robot Myth: Public Perceptions of AI Through Media."

I have enjoyed serving as President of the GPA for over a decade at this point. The friends I have made through this organization are deeply meaningful to me as are the contributions we've made to the scholarship of our disciplines and the mentorship of young academics. I have learned so much from the presentations at the conferences and the high-quality articles published in this journal. Participating in the GPA has made me a better scholar and a better teacher. I regret that my tenure as President has come to an end, but it is time for me to pass the torch to someone else. I look forward to seeing where new leadership will take the GPA.

I wish that I had different words to offer in this space about the state of global affairs. All those frightening conditions—war, disease, political unrest, environmental disaster—that I mentioned in the foreword to the last volume still dominate our lives. Many of us feel hopeless and helpless about what we see in our communities and on the news. Though we may feel that way, we are not helpless or hopeless. Words have power. Literature has

power. Art has power. We are trained to find meaning and common ground in the words of others, and most of us are teachers who have dedicated our lives to showing our students how to do the same, even if in seemingly small ways. We became academics because we believe the experiences of other people matter and that they can show us something important, not just about those who are different from us, but about ourselves. During these times of unrest, I hope we all find comfort in the power our work gives us to confront and deal with the problems surrounding us. Take care of yourselves and your communities, everyone. It's been an honor serving as your President.

Dr. Lorainne Dubuisson, President
Georgia Philological Association

Introduction

From the Editor:

Dear Readers,

It has been my distinct pleasure to edit this special edition of the *Journal of the Georgia Philological Association* that focuses on the nineteenth century. Much of my time as a student in college was spent in courses that emphasized nineteenth-century literature, history, and culture (both American and British), so this area has long held an allure for me. Much has already been written about this time period—the great variety of its literary works and authors and all of their contradictions as they tried to grapple with the profound social and political changes brought on by the Industrial Revolution—so I will dispense with any other observations about it and move directly to a brief overview of the articles that make up this year's volume.

James Anderson's comparative study of Robert Browning's *Childe Roland* poem and Stephen King's *Dark Tower* series reminds us of the impact the nineteenth century had on twentieth-century writers and how it continues to be relevant to the understanding and appreciation of literature in the twenty-first century. This article is followed by a study authored by Michael Cornelius of Wilson College that introduced me to a genre I had not heard of before: the "college-girl novel." According to Cornelius, books in this genre show how "the main female protagonist and her chums navigate both the classroom and their social lives as quasi-independent actors, away from the constraints of home and family." The author's special focus, in this case, is an 1886 book by Helen Dawes Brown that details the experiences of two young American women at college, one of whom decides

to embark on a journey that will lead her into a decidedly unconventional profession for women at the time—that of a medical doctor.

Fans of Sir Walter Scott and the early period of British literature often labeled as "Romantic" will be pleased to see Jeffrey Jackson's article, "Goodbye to All That: Sir Walter Scott's Poetry and a Case for Post-Scottish-Enlightenment Literature." As the title suggests, this paper offers a clarifying discussion on how Scott transitioned from one literary period to another. According to Jackson, Scott's "poems along with many of their various prefatory and paratextual materials" are a "record of Scott's growing farewell to a locally and historically inflected poetics informed by Scottish Enlightenment ideas."

Jimmy Dean Smith provides us with a look at how the rhetoric of missionaries in the 1890s shaped modern views of Appalachia, in some cases opening the region for exploitation as a fertile wilderness full of natural resources like timber and coal. The focus on American literary culture and history continues with the final peer-reviewed article of the volume: Ani Thomas and Salome Benhur of Mahindra University give another way to interpret Edgar Allan Poe's story "The Tell-Tale Heart" by making use of Henri Bergson's theories on the "literary temporal experience."

Three book reviews complete our collection. The first of these, by Dometa Brothers, takes a closer look at Ann Colley's *Coleridge and the Geometric Idiom*. So many studies tend to emphasize the negative when it comes to Coleridge's personal background, but Colley reminds her readers that one of the great European minds of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries was very aware of the scientific advancements of the day and used them to his advantage when writing poetry. Next, Lorraine Dubuisson reviews the latest biographical study

on Ouida. The author of the book, Helena Esser, dives deeply into the work and the critical tradition of this fascinating Victorian writer and socialite who challenged traditional gender categories. Chip Roger's review of Jeremy Parrott's *David Copperfield Unbound* returns to the importance of names in this, Dickens' favorite novel. For example, Parrott argues that the name for the character Little Em'ly (the unfortunate victim of Steerforth's ruinous seduction) is derived from one of the participants in a notorious affair involving the famous Admiral Horatio Nelson—an actress named Emma Lyon.

Again, I want to emphasize the pleasure that it has given me to edit this volume, and I thank all our contributors as well as the members of the editorial board for working with me to bring it to publication.

Nate Gilbert, Editor-in-Chief
Journal of the Georgia Philological Association

The Hopeless Quest: Artistic Truth in Browning's "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came" and Stephen King's Dark Tower Series

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Professor Emeritus, Johnson & Wales University

Robert Browning's poem "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came" wasn't much read by modern audiences, except students and scholars of British Literature, until Stephen King called attention to it by publishing his Dark Tower series, beginning with *The Gunslinger* in 1982. That novel, and indeed the entire Dark Tower series of eight books, was based on the correlative of the Victorian poem, and included numerous thematic references to it, including the overriding themes of art, creativity, and the imagination. As King has written, "fiction is the truth within the lie" (*Danse* 375), and this notion underlies so very much of King's work. Consciously or unconsciously, King, a former English teacher, may have also revealed the themes and subtexts of the Browning work which inspired his Gunslinger novels. Both Browning and King explore themes of artistic truth in these works, some of them uncomfortable artistic truths such as the effects of the Anthropocene on the environment, cosmic horror, authorship itself, and the fact that the artist, no matter how skilled or talented, can only approach the goal of discovering and unveiling meaning, but never fully attain it.

Browning himself seemed to have no idea what the poem that he had penned was supposed to mean. In 1887 he claimed that "Childe Roland came to me as a kind of a dream . . . I did not know what it meant then . . . and I'm sure I don't know now" (qtd. in DeVane 229). While the poet didn't agree with any of the allegorical interpretations

put forth by the critics, he didn't disagree with them either, consistently remaining neutral about what the poem might mean. As such, Childe Roland is a perfect example of Roland Barthes' "death of the author" theory, which removes an author's intention. Since Browning had no clear intention when writing it, readers have permission to interpret it for themselves, and over the years, critics have done exactly that. In 1915, William Lyon Phelps summarized the criticism at the time: "success is found only in the moment of failure"; "the quest, when found, is worth nothing"; and "the tower is not the quest at all—it is damnation" (233). Contemporary critics have posited a wide range of interpretations. For example, Edward Strickland has interpreted the poem as Browning's "initiation rite into the round table of Romantic visionaries" (300); for Mario L. D'Avanzo, Roland's quest and the memories of his fallen comrades "dramatizes the comfort of fellowship" (708); Anne Williams reads Roland's quest as "a portrayal of the process of dying, from the moment the speaker recognizes the proximity of death to his last breath" (27); and John King McComb proposes the theme of "horror and pain of inescapable memory" (460).

One way to find meaning in the poem is to examine the themes and subtexts of other Browning works where he was more consciously aware of the subject and message he was writing about. A look at the body of his work shows a consistent interest in the theme of art in all its forms—including music, visual art and poetry—as well as in the process involved in creating imaginative work. "A Toccatta of Galuppi's," for example, is an obvious reference to music and the work of the Venetian composer of comic operas. Browning undertook an extensive study of music and played the piano and the organ which enabled him to incorporate music theory into his poems. The subject of "Andrea del Sarto" is a Florentine painter (1486-

1531), and Browning's best known poem, "My Last Duchess," highlights the painting of the narrator's late wife and how this painting, combined with the narrator's monologue, reveals a secret truth. Browning has written extensively about the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, both in his poetry and prose. One of his few nonfiction works is an introduction to the letters of Shelley, which he completed just before writing "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came." About this time, he also was bothered by the poor reception of his latest book, *Christmas-Eve and Easter Day*, which only sold 400 copies. Therefore, examining "Childe Roland" for themes of art, poetry, and creativity would be a logical step in finding meaning in the poem. As W. Craig Turner suggests, "the nature of poetry—and of himself as a poet—was obviously much on Browning's mind . . . as he wrote Childe Roland" (40).

One of the traditional functions of art is the search for meaning and truth. Yet, as Stephen King reminds us, art is not reality and is, instead, an invented lie that may reveal truth, or at least lead to it. Indeed, the opening line of "Childe Roland" begins with a lie as the "hoary cripple" lies about the road in an attempt to trick Roland into following "that ominous tract which, all agree, hides the Dark Tower" (lines 14-15). Although Roland sees through the falsehood, he deliberately takes the bait, believing that even a bad end to his quest is better than no end at all. The nature of Roland's quest is unclear; for some unnamed reason he seeks the Dark Tower, even though he expects to find nothing but failure at the end of this road, and the tower seems to offer no concrete reward for his efforts.

Roland doesn't appear to be the typical knight on a quest to slay a monster or rescue a maiden, common themes for Tennyson and other Victorian poets who tried to recapture the age of chivalry. For one thing, he is labeled "Childe" (a young son of a nobleman striving to become a knight) despite the fact that his quest has taken him on

"world-wide wandering" (line 19) and has been "drawn out thro' years" (line 20). After such a lengthy quest, Roland should have experienced many adventures and gained enough maturity and skill to become a seasoned knight. Yet no mention is made of his battles or conquests, nor is he specifically shown wearing armor or wielding a powerful sword. In fact, the only weapon described is a spear, which he uses as a walking staff to ford a shallow river littered with either rats or corpses of fallen knights (or possibly both). He doesn't ride a horse but instead trudges along on foot. His quest doesn't involve killing a dragon, saving a princess, or even fighting for his king, but merely finding the dark tower, though the purpose for locating this elusive relic is never explained. Roland does not confront a single enemy in the poem, nor does he refer to any previous conflicts with opponents. Instead, he passes through an empty wasteland portrayed with images of death and decay:

> So, on I went. I think I never saw
> Such starved ignoble nature; nothing throve:
> For flowers—as well expect a cedar grove!
> But Cockle, spurge, according to their law
> Might propagate their kind, with none to awe,
> You'd think; a burr had been a treasure trove. (lines 55-60)

The only living thing is a blind, starving horse, and even that "might be dead for aught I know" (line 79). Even his thoughts turn dark as he tries to bolster himself by recalling his comrades. But his memories are of fallen knights—Cathbert, disgraced and shamed, and Giles, branded a traitor and hanged.

When Roland's thoughts return to the present, he encounters a shallow river lined by a "suicidal throng" (line 118) of alders and willows that seem to receive no nourishment from the water. He fords the river, using his spear as a probe, fearing with each step "to set his foot

upon a dead man's cheek" (line 122) and spearing something, perhaps a water rat, that "shrieked like a baby" (line 126). The far side of the river offers no hope either, only a vast plain of mud and mire, probably the result of a great battle, trampled by horses and troops and stained with the long-decayed bodies of the soldiers who fought there. It, too, is a scene of death and decomposition.

The landscape doesn't openly defy or fight against Roland physically but infects his mind. Harold Bloom, Anne Williams, John Willoughby and other critics have suggested that Roland's struggle isn't physical at all, but that his conflict is internal. His thoughts are purely negative and crush all semblance of hope for success that he may have. Failure seems to be the only outcome of this useless quest, which offers no tangible reward or victory. Yet Roland continues to plod along the road until, without warning, he spots the tower, which seems to appear out of nowhere: "Burningly, it came on me all at once, / This was the place!" (lines 175-76). Once he has found it, what is he supposed to do? Attack it? Confront it? Or is just finding it enough? Browning never answers these questions.

So, if Roland isn't a soldier, a dubbed knight, exactly what kind of quest is he undertaking? I would suggest that, like many of the characters in Browning's dramatic monologues, Roland symbolizes the artist, the creative individual who spends a lifetime struggling to discover truth and capture it on a canvas, in a sculpture, in a written text, or in a musical score. As any true artist understands, the creative path is difficult to follow and often leads to little recognition and no reward. Most of the travelers of this road will fail. Many artists suffer from mental illness. Studies have shown, for example, that creative people are eight times more likely to suffer from depression than the general population, and eighteen times more likely to commit suicide (Jamison 65). Artists in all areas face stiff competition, rejection, and the wrath of

critics. It is not a field for the faint of heart. Roland's quest, then, if it is an artistic one, involves trekking through difficult terrain littered by the corpses and memories of those who travelled the road before and failed, since only a small fraction of would-be artists in any field will enjoy financial or critical success—and even fewer will achieve both.

At the end of the poem, Roland sees fallen knights looking down on him from the mountain:

> There they stood, ranged along the hill-sides, met
> To view the last of me, a living frame
> For one more picture! in a sheet of flame
> I saw them and I knew them all. . . . (lines 199-202)

Bloom claims these knights are the Romantic poets: "This swerve is the vision of the end, where *all* the poets of the Romantic tradition are seen as having failed to the degree where they stand together ranged from the living flame, the fire the Promethean quester could not steal but had to burn through" (642). If these unsuccessful knights, the Romantic poets, have not been able to achieve their quest, then Roland the "childe," representing the next generation of artists, must carry on the quest where they left off. It seems, however, that his pursuit is equally hopeless. Or, in the words of the poet Ben Lerner, "the poem is always a record of failure" (18).

This brings us to the Dark Tower itself, which is an obvious symbol for something, even if Browning does not intend it to be or is not aware of exactly what it is. The tower is difficult to find, elusive, and lies at the end of a long, tedious, and challenging road that has claimed many victims who have either given up, been led astray, or perished in the quest to find it. Far from being a beautiful palace or castle, it is nothing but a brown, squat tower, nothing much to look at, a disappointment for a knight

looking for treasure or reward. Yet it is one of a kind, unique, "without a counterpart in the whole world" (lines 183-184).

If Roland personifies the artist, the tower must represent the truth that he and all serious artists seek, and his quest is to capture that truth in his art (just as Browning attempts to capture truth in his poetry). Truth is not always pretty, and is, in fact, most often ugly, disturbing, and frightening. Artists who seek truth find themselves on a difficult path that requires much effort and many years to discover, and once discovered, offers little reward beyond the act of finding it. Most artists fail, as do Roland's comrades. They may disgrace themselves before the critics and the general public, like Cuthbert, and abandon the journey. Or they may "sell out" and become traitors to the truth, like Giles, and settle for financial success at the expense of art. Or they might be destroyed in the battle, or get mired down along the way and lose hope and abandon the quest, as Roland almost does.

While the search for truth is a long, arduous task, when it does appear, it is sudden, coming almost out of nowhere. The tower appears abruptly to Roland when he has all but given up hope of finding it. Ashton Nicholas states that "Roland's final realization as an epiphany is rendered with the fleeting intensity of one moment of clear vision" (83). This eureka moment mirrors Browning's own experience in writing the poem, which he claims came to him in a dream. Nicholas notes that in a letter to his wife, Browning "compared his own poetic impulses to the flashes of light that emerged periodically from the chink in a Mediterranean light house" (84). This is reminiscent, of course, of Roland's finding the tower: "burningly it came on me all at once" (line 175). Creative ideas often emerge when the artist isn't looking for them, as in this Browning poem, Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," and

other works that owe their existence to surprising inspiration. “The essential characteristics of such imaginative moments are that they come suddenly and that when they end the ‘blind wall’ returns” (Nicholas 84).

Browning uses the binary opposition of truth and falsehood to highlight the theme of artistic truth. In “Childe Roland” the path to truth is through the lie, as when the hoary cripple guides Roland to truth by telling a deliberate falsehood. Roland, realizing that he has been duped, follows the path anyway, though he knows it is a hopeless task. His effort implies that the path to truth winds through the imagination, through art; even if complete truth is never fully realized, the quest is a noble one in which every artist must embrace failure and the lie as parts of the journey.

According to Browning, then, capturing truth should be the goal of all serious artists. As Roger Scruton notes, “the essence of poetry is the founding of truth” (18). As an undergraduate English major, I distinctly recall more than one professor saying that a piece of great literature reveals truth for all people and all times. Yet, Browning’s poem reminds us that though we might approach the artistic goal of truth, it can never be reached; if it were, there would be no further need for anyone to create additional art or ever write another poem. In *The Republic,* Plato says there is no place for poetry because poets are rhetoricians who pass off imaginative projections as the truth. “Childe Roland” reminds us, however, that these artistic attempts to recreate reality and capture the meaning of life, though failures, help us to come closer to understanding what Douglas Adams calls “life, the universe, and everything” (120).

The Dark Tower, “blind as a fool’s heart” (line 182), reflects the blindness of those seeking its secrets who fail to realize that the quest comes with a steep price. Roland, by investing his life in such a hopeless search,

gives up whatever hope for joy or happiness he might have had. As Bloom points out, "Roland quested after knowledge rather than love, the punishment to see all things as deformed and broken" (642). Artists undoubtedly suffer for their work, as the biographies of so many creative individuals show: Vincent van Gogh, Sylvia Plath, and Kurt Cobain are just three examples of creative artists who tragically took their own lives.

"The poet is a tragic figure," according to Scruton (18), and a great deal of literature reflects the tragic nature of truth; as one of my professors once said, "no one ever said that great literature was happy stuff."

Browning himself suffered at the hands of critics and never fully enjoyed the recognition that he felt was his due. His wife, Elizabeth, was more successful than he was in the early part of his career; when Wordsworth died she was shortlisted as a candidate for poet-laureate, while Robert was overlooked. At that time, critics claimed Browning's poems were too intellectual and too difficult to understand, even when they did praise his work. Browning, the "not-so-successful poet, must have also been wondering if his own poetic quest would ever meet with success" (Turner 41).

The end of "Childe Roland" has remained a controversial mystery for most critics, but when read as a search for artistic truth, Roland's discovery of the Dark Tower makes more sense. Yes, he finds what he is looking for—the tower that holds the truth; however, the poem ends before he can ever enter it and find what lies inside. Again, the artist comes close to illumination, but universal truths are never revealed; only the minor truth that art is a feeble means of enlightenment comes at the end of the quest. Yet this truth is, perhaps, the only one Browning could imagine in a Victorian world where science was destroying faith, and the answers provided by science only resulted in more mysteries. His poetic struggle as reflected

through “Childe Roland,” is embodied in Shelley’s observation that “the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original concept of the poet” (qtd. in Scruton 31). Childe Roland never enters the tower. To do so would be to discover the ultimate truth to “life, the universe, and everything,” an impossible feat for any artist or poet (Adams 120). Since Browning himself knew he could not comprehend this truth—he consistently questioned religion, the existence of God, and the place of the latest scientific discoveries in the context of faith—neither he, not his surrogate Roland, can provide any answers. Roland, like all artists, will give his life for this quest, hopeless as it might be. Nevertheless, the artist must sound his horn and announce himself, despite the cost, as Roland does when he locates the tower. The poem does not make clear whether he will breach the tower’s walls and find his way inside or perish in the attempt—Bloom believes he is “annihilated” once he finds the Tower (643), with Joyce Meyers and Anne Williams echoing this sentiment (Meyers 335; Williams 27). Roland’s quest, like that of Browning and every other poet, is an impossible one: to capture truth with words. But in raising the horn to his lips, Roland lets the world know that he is here, that he seeks truth, and even if no one listens or understands, he will die trying.

While Roland might not fully understand the implications of what he has discovered, the poem itself does uncover some very disturbing truths. Stephen King, in his Dark Tower books, echoes these themes of Roland’s quest in Browning’s poem and more consciously highlights these uncomfortable truths for a modern audience.

King, one of the most successful authors of all time (at least financially, though critics are still slow to recognize his work), also knows that the key to truth is

through the lie, in his case, the lie of prose fiction rather than poetry. King's vision rejects the "death of the author" and, instead elevates the author to god-like status as the creator of characters, worlds, and even entire universes. His persona in The Dark Tower series is a god, a supernatural being who can create or destroy at will. In the final books of the series, King himself becomes a character, bridging the gap between his fiction and reality, especially with references to his accident in 1999 (*The Dark Tower* 145). While King's intrusion into his own fiction might be "unsettling to some readers" (Burger 109), it does establish the author as the god of his own creation, the overwhelming, driving force that determines the fates of his characters. As Patrick McAleer notes, "nowhere else is the vital function of the author more apparent than in *The Dark Tower* as King becomes a character in his own book and further dictates the outcome of Roland Deschain's journey" (140).

In spite of this authorial control, King's Roland, like Browning's character, can never quite capture truth, though he does find the dark tower and even enters its walls. Instead, he is destined to repeat his quest again and again in an endless loop that will seemingly last for eternity. *The Dark Tower*, the last book of the series, like Browning's poem, ends where it begins with a circular construction. While art is a lie that reveals truth, it never reveals *the* truth, the ultimate meaning of existence. Like the supercomputer in Douglas Adams' *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* novels, an answer in the works of Browning and King only leads to additional questions. The scientific discoveries of Darwin and others plague Browning with unanswerable questions, just as the latest theories of quantum mechanics plague King. Both authors have questioned religion and science, and both have hinted at very unpleasant truths, Browning in his questioning of faith, and King in his novels of cosmic horror.[1]

Allen McDuffie highlights another of these unpleasant truths when he argues that "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came" is a poem of the Anthropocene; through Childe Roland, Browning discloses the environmental effects of industrialization on London and the major cities of Europe (315). While most critics see the poem's landscape as a land of the imagination, we can also view it as a metaphor for the consequences of the Industrial Revolution: "I think I never saw such starved, ignoble nature; nothing throve," says Roland (lines 55-56). The vegetation has been decimated; even the weeds are destroyed. "As for the grass, it grew as scant as hair in leprosy" (lines 73-74). The soil has been trod to mush and the little river resembles a sewer, with bodies and rats (lines 121-125). The land is littered with broken machinery, engines, rusty wheels, and harrows, (lines 139-141), indicating that these are the ravages of man, not nature, through warfare and pollution. Nature Herself cannot help, as she warns "the Last Judgement's fire must cure this place" (line 65). This wasteland, though a rare image in Browning's work, does echo descriptions of industrial pollution found in Dickens and other Victorian authors. Alissa Burger claims that Browning's landscape in Childe Roland "could be the desiccated land following a brutal battle or a post-apocalyptic vista: there are signs of devastation and violence, but no hope" (21).

The Anthropocene and humankind's runaway technology have been a major theme in much of Stephen King's work. *The Stand* presents a view of the world where a man-made super flu wipes out 90% of the population. In *The Mist*, the earth is invaded by beings from a parallel universe after scientists mistakenly open up a wormhole. *The Dead Zone* flirts with the possibility of an American president unleashing thermonuclear war. *11/22/63* depicts what might be one alternate world of total destruction if John F. Kennedy had not been assassinated. The Mid-

world of the Dark Tower books graphically reflects what might be the result of our own universe if science and technology run amok. The opening lines of *The Gunslinger* describe a barren landscape like that traversed by Childe Roland:

> The desert was the apotheosis of all deserts, huge, standing to the sky for what looked like eternity in all directions. It was white and blinding and waterless and without feature save for the faint, cloudy haze of the mountains which sketched themselves on the horizon and the devil-grass which brought sweet dreams, nightmares, death (3).

This vision of the Mohaine Desert is one of the many wastelands of King's Multiverse where, according to Roland, "the beams are breaking down" (King, *Wastelands* 75). These beams, were created by the "Great Old Ones . . . [who] weren't gods but were people who had almost the knowledge of gods" (37). As a result of the destruction and decay of the beams "everything in the world is either coming to rest or falling to pieces" (75), and this affects not just Roland's world, but "a billion others" (75).

In Mid-world alone, Gilead, the walled city that was the center of Roland's ancestors, has been "dust in the wind for a thousand years" (Vincent 410). The great city of Lud, which "dates back to the age of the Great Ones" (415), has been destroyed by wars and contains the wreckage of ancient machinery that no one know how to operate. The city itself is on the brink of ruin: "Most of the buildings were still standing, but they had a dreary, disused look that filled Eddie with an uncharacteristic gloom" (King, *Wastelands* 289). A closer look reveals an apocalyptic landscape:

> Beneath and between the abandoned cars, the gutters were filled with drifts of unidentifiable metal junk and bright glints of glass. Trees had

> been planted at intervals along the sidewalks in some long-gone, happier time, but they were now so emphatically dead that they looked like stark metal sculptures against the cloudy sky. Some of the warehouses had been bombed or had collapsed on their own. (301)

The Badlands are a poisoned wasteland located between Castle Discordia and The Dark Tower. Roland speculates that the Crimson King "murdered this land . . . it's sterile now," probably as a result of radiation, and it is "dishearteningly cold---not deep enough to kill, mayhap, but always there, stealing your energy and your will and your body fat an ounce at a time" (*Dark Tower* 581).

While Robert Browning's Roland may be warning against the possible effects of the Industrial Revolution, Stephen King's Roland sounds a definitive alarm about the effects that humans have upon the planet, in terms of twentieth century warfare, pollution, and unchecked technology. In King's multiverse, humans with god-like knowledge wreak havoc across multiple worlds.

The Victorian world was just beginning to come to grips with the emergence of scientific theories which diminished man's place in the universe. Darwin's theory of Natural Selection, the discovery of dinosaur fossils, Herschel's placement of the earth as part of the Milky Way galaxy, the germ theory of disease, and the measurement of the speed of light—all of these breakthroughs forced Victorians to question their beliefs. This theme of humanity's insignificance, a precursor to the cosmic horror of H.P Lovecraft's work in the early twentieth century, is evidenced in the landscape of "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came" and is carried further in King's Dark Tower books.

The concept that there is no universal truth, and that neither science, religion, nor poetry will ever find it must have been disturbing to the Victorians, as it still is for

many people even today. Nature herself has trouble understanding the landscape in the poem. As Lawana F. Day posits, "man's search for a meaningful design in life is surely futile if Nature itself can do no more than [. . .] endure the misery until some great cataclysm puts an end to it" (10). Although Browning's Roland reaches the tower, he never finds the ultimate answers he seeks, just as the search for truth through art and science alike is an endless quest.

While McAleer and other critics applaud the creativity of the ending of the Dark Tower series, it has drawn the ire of some of King's "Constant Readers" because it, like "Childe Roland," lacks a definitive conclusion. The ending was "too cruel and unfinished [. . .] I spent 13 years with this series and I need a support group," writes Arkady Bogdanov, on the *Goodreads* website. Roland Deschain reaches the tower and even ascends to its inner sanctum, only to be thrown back again to the beginning of his quest to rinse and repeat in what may turn out to be an endless cycle of repetition. Fiction is supposed to tie up the loose ends and leave the reader with a satisfying ending, happy or tragic, but neither Browning nor King do so in their respective works; otherwise, they undermine the theme that there are, in fact, no final answers to anything.

Not only do these works refuse to pose definitive answers, but they also graphically show the insignificance of humankind in the universe at large. As Day points out, in Browning's poem "the landscape is unrelenting [. . .] it confronts him in a steadily accelerating procession with its nightmarish evidence of man's place in a meaningless universe" (11-12). The Victorian God has completely forsaken this land, until, perhaps, "The Last Judgement 's fire must cure this place" (Browning, line 65). It is worth noting that Childe Roland never once asks for divine assistance, never offers up a prayer for himself, nor for his

fallen comrades, nor for the doomed land. This is most unusual for a knight who presumably lives in an age where God is assumed to be all powerful and is in control of every aspect of the world. The wasteland surrounding the tower, however, seems to be the Satan's playground, as evidenced by numerous images of the devil and of hell. Yet in Browning's world, this should come as no surprise, since, as his fellow poet Matthew Arnold wrote:

> The Sea of Faith
> Was once , too, at the full, and round earth's shore
> Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.
> But now I only hear
> It's melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
> Retreating, to the breath
> Of the night-wind, down the vast edge drear
> And naked shingles of the world. (lines 21-28)

This apocalyptic description mirrors the landscape in Browning's "Childe Roland" and reflects the increasing sense of insignificance that educated Victorians felt as a result of scientific discoveries that challenged established religion and the place of humankind as special and privileged beings in a God-centered universe. Therefore, as Arnold says, "the world [. . .] / Hath really neither joy, nor love nor light, / Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain" (lines 30, 33-34). Arnold's "darkling plain" (line 35) seems to be the world that Childe Roland has entered in his hopeless quest for truth.

King's work has taken this concept further with his themes of cosmic horror. *The Institute*, *Under the Dome*, and *It* are just three examples of his novels that explore the idea of humankind as merely a speck in an infinite, uncaring universe. King's Dark Tower books add an interesting adaptation to this theme as they are populated by a pantheon of powerful, immortal creatures, including demons and the Crimson King, but these beings are all malevolent. Gan, the creator of the multiverse, is a distant

rather than warm and fuzzy god, and Stephen King, the author god, is a mere mortal. As Bev Vincent has observed, "Roland has two gods manipulating his actions, though he prays to neither" (301). The traditional Christian God is nowhere in sight. Instead, the characters are guided by *ka*, "a cosmic force akin to destiny" (Burger 101). Vincent sees *ka* as "an enormous wheel, with more momentum than most people can oppose" (291). The characters have no free will and are nothing more than gears in a giant machine. When the characters learn that their real god is none other than Stephen King, the author who has created them solely for the purpose of entertaining readers, it is a humbling experience. Roland and his *ka-tet* must grasp the truth that they aren't even real and can be killed off by an errant plot device or other whim of their author/creator.

By creating a massive multiverse with an enormous cast of characters, and a story that, according to Wikipedia, consists of 1,358,065 words ("Dark Tower Series"), King is fictionally demonstrating the insignificance of any one person in the overall scheme of things. This becomes especially apparent when after over 4,000 pages and the loss of so many lives, Roland fails to find the meaning he had sought and with the stroke of the author/god's pen, is forced to return to the beginning of his quest and start all over again in a cycle that he has already repeated, to no avail. "And for now, he would resume his journey. Somewhere ahead was the Dark Tower" (830). The last line of *The Dark Tower*, the last book, replicates the first line of the first book *The Gunslinger*: "The man in black fled across the desert, and the gunslinger followed."

Robert Browning, in a 204-line poem, creates a fantastic, Arthurian-like world with a knight on a fruitless quest for truth, a quest that demonstrates that the practice of art in all its forms often leads to the revelation of some unpleasant truths even as it fails to find a definitive, all-encompassing answer to life's greatest questions. Stephen

King takes this idea as his objective correlative, demonstrating the same unpleasant truths in Dark Tower series; the only definitive truth is that art, while it may come close, will ultimately fail in its goal to obtain universal truth. Yet both Browning and King celebrate the quest, knowing that the true artist is driven in this pursuit and will never give up, despite its apparent hopelessness. For the artist, then, it is the journey that matters, not the ultimate result.

Note

[1]Browning was raised as a Christian, but his religious beliefs wavered over the years; he briefly became an atheist after reading Shelley's "Queen Mab" and claimed not to be Christian in his later years. King's works also show mixed views of religion, ranging from the depiction of saint-like religious figures such as Mother Abigail in *The Stand* to the charlatan preacher in *Revelation*.

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"A Doctor or a Lady?": Occupation and Metamorphosis in Helen Dawes Brown's *Two College Girls* (1886)

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In her formative study *College Girls: A Century in Fiction*, Shirley Marchalonis identifies Helen Dawes Brown's *Two College Girls* (1886) as one of the first "college girl" books, a genre that became widely popular in the Progressive Era and purported to show the lives of young American women in (usually single-gendered) college settings. In these books, the main female protagonist and her chums navigate both the classroom and their social lives as quasi-independent actors, away from the constraints of home and family; freed, for the first time, from the directive gaze of both their parents and the patriarchy, these young women manage—again, for the first time—their own lives and their own futures. As Kathleen Chamberlain observes, "the books' narratives … help demonstrate … that girls have the power to mold their individual lives" (109).

One unintended consequence of creating a genre that focuses on the education of women and giving girls "the power to mold their individual lives" centers around the question of what these "college girls" should do with their degrees. As Lynn Peril notes, this same question haunted actual women who attended college in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century: "For many college girls, a larger problem … was what to do with their newly minted degrees" (322). For one main character in *Two College*

Girls, the answer to the question of what to do with her degree is to pursue further study in the form of medical school. Though Brown's book was published nearly forty years after Elizabeth Blackwell enrolled in Geneva Medical College, in 1886 the subject of women entering the medical profession was still treated as a source of great fascination and some skepticism. In Brown's narrative it is the protagonist's best friend and roommate, Rosamond Mills, who makes this choice; however, the decision to enter medical school is not easy for her, as Rosamond soon realizes that the expectations placed upon her by society because of her gender are in direct contradiction to her desire to become a doctor. While moving into a profession, at least prior to becoming married, is depicted by Brown as normal for these college girls and, indeed, an obvious outcome of earning a college degree, the situation is not quite the same for Rosamond, who selects an avocation that is viewed in the nineteenth century as being at odds with her sex. In short, the text posits that Rosamond can choose to fulfill her dream of being a doctor or choose to fulfill society's expectation by becoming a wife and mother—but not both. Rosamond ultimately approaches this dilemma through transformation, metamorphosing from a college girl into a doctor (but not into a woman). In essence, she surrenders her gender—at least the social version of it as understood in her day—undergoing a transmutation that highlights the economic and professional tension society apprehended from the higher education of women at the time.

The Economic Function of College

The "college girl" genre focused on the years a girl would spend in post-secondary schooling, frequently at a single-gendered, private institution. The more prominent of these series include Betty Wales (1904-1917), Grace Harlowe (1910-1924), Molly Brown (1912-1921), and

Marjorie Dean (1917-1930).[1] Patrick J. Quinn describes these books as highlighting a "female maturation process [that] is fraught with challenges that the students must wrestle through" (83). Marchalonis agrees that the emphasis in these works focuses on the social development of the main characters as they move inevitably into adulthood, marriage, and motherhood. Describing *Two College Girls*, she writes, "The story's path is clear: two dissimilar young women are going to grow and change, learning from each other as well as from their surroundings. Nineteenth-century fiction is full of stories about girls who mature into gracious womanhood through the influence of another character with whom they were first in conflict" (15). This, Marchalonis observes, situates these works as an extension of the common Victorian girls' domestic novel, which emphasizes character development on the path to womanhood. The setting has shifted, but Marchalonis argues that the function of these books is to demonstrate the virtues of domesticity and the inevitable outcome of be(com)ing a woman. University study thus becomes a temporary way station to the inevitable journey's end for women in this time period. As such, these works reflect the forestallment of the inevitable, granting their female protagonists time away from the patriarchy while preparing them not only to succumb to its doctrine, but to become ardent supporters of it as well.[2]

This common notion, however, belies the economic function of higher education in training students for a profession. The earliest universities existed as a means of preparing their students for work—in the church, in law, in the educational system itself—and while there were always students who saw the intellectual and social benefits of university study, the very ethos of these educational institutions existed as a means of preparing students for professional life. The same held true for those

few women who matriculated and earned degrees prior to the nineteenth century,[3] when higher education for women gained traction and became part of a raging national debate about the education of women. As feminist critic and author Adrienne Rich observes, in the nineteenth century, "education for women was a revolutionary question" (127). Rich suggests that the "major educational question for the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries was whether the given educational structure and contents should be made available to women" (121). Educational opportunities abounded for young women in the latter part of the nineteenth century, though the type of education offered to women, even at women's colleges, sometimes differed from that provided to men. Often, as Barbara Welter has observed, women's education was still centered around the notion of the home: when women went on to institutions of higher learning, they tended to study subjects that still ensured the optimal operation of the home as envisioned by the prevalent nineteenth century cult of domesticity—that is, that a woman's societal function was located securely in the domestic realm, bearing children and running the household, while her husband's sphere was located in the virtual and literal "marketplace" where he would take economic and political control of the factors that would dominate a farm, a village, a city, or a country. Whenever the auspices of the home collided with the structures of the marketplace, the woman was expected to defer to her husband (Welter 152). Numerous women's colleges of the time supported those aims. The Mt. Holyoke Female Seminary, which later became Mt. Holyoke College, claimed that "God, Nature and the Bible 'enjoin these duties on the [female] sex, and she cannot violate them with impunity'" (qtd. in Welter 168). Peril also notes this domestic inevitability of women's education at the time: "Most nineteenth-century college graduates went back to their parents' home,

sometimes for an interval before marriage, or if no husband loomed on the horizon, for good" (322).

The books themselves, however, present a conflicting image of the function of women's education. In *Marjorie Dean, High School Freshman* (1917), Marjorie's principal, Miss Archer, suggests that women's education has economic intent: "So many girls leave school when their grammar school course is finished. I wish we could persuade these mothers and fathers to let their daughters have at least a year of high school. It would help them so much in whatever kind of work they elected to do later" (Lester 36). Miss Archer connects education directly to an economic narrative, one focusing on post-education employment and an expectation of work. When she notes that education "would help [female students] so much in whatever kind of work they elected to do later," she speaks with a certainty that these girls will, indeed, work, at least for a time. In his seminal essay *The Subjection of Women* (written 1861, published 1869), John Stuart Mill's first reference to educating women connects directly to this same economic narrative: "The claim of women to be educated as solidly, and in the same branches of knowledge, as men, is urged with growing intensity, and with a great prospect of success; while the demand for their admission into professions and occupations hitherto closed against them, becomes every year more urgent" (25). Feminist critics like Moira Gatens contend that Mill argued for women's emancipation as a means of outlining a method of societal benefit—including male societal benefit—and notes that the economic imperative behind Mill's perspective on women's education conveys a myopic mindset focused on the (particularly fiscal) betterment of society as a whole and not on the betterment of women (30). Yet Gatens ignores the direct correlation between education and economics that governs the social demand for educating the citizenry in the first place.

Indeed, the economic narrative is an integral part of the college-going experience even today, and more than ever students are directed to see a college education as a means to an economic end in the form of employment (and often no more).[4]

This same narrative of need echoes throughout Progressive Era college girl books. For example, in *Betty Wales, Senior* (1907), Betty's friend Rachel expresses delight that, "at this time next year I shall be earning my own living 'out in the wide, wide world'" (Warde 4). Certain students in these texts, like Rachel, have a need to use their degree because of their economic background, and always view their education as a form of financial betterment. For these characters, there is no question as to what life after being a "college girl" will include.

Other girls in these books, however, are not overly concerned with their economic welfare. As Peril notes, once college is done, they return home until they marry; economically, their futures are secure. In fact, some of these books tend to deflect any notion that graduates must "use" their degree in any economic capacity. At the end of *Betty Wales, Senior*, Betty frets when a peer tells her that "we all ought to test our education in some such way right off, so as to be sure it was really worth something." Betty worries because, like most of her friends, she is "just going home to be with my family." One of Betty's professors overhears this remark and replies, "Leave out the 'just'… So many of you seem to feel as if you ought to apologize for staying at home" (Warde 109). Here, even an official representative of the institution—a member of the faculty, a progenitor of the curriculum Betty has just completed—is not connecting Betty's education to an economic outcome.

Still, as Peril notes, "To many of these young women, the bosom of family felt smothering and restrictive after the intellectual stimulation of the

classroom and companionable pranks and spreads of the dormitory" (322). Plus, the question of what to do—and, perhaps even more importantly, what to *be*—after completing their degree haunts the girls who attend these fictional colleges. This narrative is still with us: the question "What do you want to be when you grow up?" is commonly asked of young children. Their answer implies both an educational *and* an economic imperative, an indication of not only their life's path but also its outcome. Embedded in both this question and its response, however, is a tacit freedom to choose; when young children are asked what they wish to be when they grow up, the implication is that there is a choice. As such, the question is not only forward-thinking, but also identity-shaping; in many ways, and often for the first time, children are asked who they wish to be/become.

The girls in college books face the same question (though decidedly much later, chronologically, in their lives) as they near the culmination of their college careers. Toward the end of *Two College Girls*, in perhaps the most meaningful scene in the book, a group of students sit together and discuss the future, a future that—as they are all seniors, and graduation is fast approaching—is hurtling toward them at breakneck speed. One of the students reads aloud while the rest practice their sewing, and what she reads causes quite a stir amongst the group: "Most women do with themselves nothing at all; they wait, in attitudes more or less gracefully passive, for a man to come that way and furnish them with a destiny" (Brown). Writing about this scene, Marchalonis observes that the girls "react with amused indignation to the idea that they will wait, 'gracefully passive,' until someone else established their fate, and the conversation turns to a discussion of their plans and hopes" (17). The talk thus turns to careers—several plan to teach, one is to become a chemist, another wants to found a school for training servants—while a few,

like Rosamond, intend further university study, though Rosamond is the only one planning to go to medical school. As college girls, the idea of going home to marry right away is anathema, and as for going home at all, the only girl who confesses to doing that does so remorsefully:

> "That is splendid," said Mary Pruden. "I wish I were going to do something. My mother is sick, and I am going home to keep house and take care of her."
>
> The girls looked softly at her, while Rosamond said, "Mary Pruden, we have our opinion of you," and tenderly picked up Mary's ball of darning-cotton. (Brown)

The notion that career and aspiration, not marriage and motherhood, has become the next logical step in the life course of these characters indicates their strangeness in not just how different they may be from other Victorian girls' book characters, but also how different they are from the actual girls reading these books. Quinn suggests that the dialectical tension inherent to becoming a woman or becoming a doctor is actually an obstacle that impacted most of the college girls in these books: as he writes, these books "often foreground the successful New Women who achieve intellectual freedom only to discover they are perceived as neither men nor women in the 'real world'—they are out of place, seeming oddballs in a society where marriageable women are generally seen as conformist and conservative" (83). Here, he suggests that it is education, not career, that acts as a signpost of differentiation; this new classification of woman is defined by the levels of her education, and that expectation is put on her not by society but by her own self.

Despite this differentiation, there is a strong distinction between those characters who choose more traditional careers like teaching and those who elect to go into the medical profession. This same distinction could be

made based upon the incidence of these characters appearing in these books at all. While late nineteenth-century college girl books *do* feature some girls going on to medical school,[5] in none of the later popular series like Betty Wales, Grace Harlowe, Molly Brown, or Marjorie Dean do such ambitious characters appear. This absence suggests that there is something truly distinctive about the college girl who wishes to become a doctor, something that goes beyond the level of her education.[6]

In *Sympathy and Science: Women Physicians in American Medicine*, Regina Markell Morantz-Sanchez notes that women in the medical profession were still rather uncommon in the late nineteenth century; in 1880, for example, the number of women physicians only totaled around two thousand (92). According to Morantz-Sanchez, part of the reason for this was access to training: "Until the end of the nineteenth century, orthodox medical schools remained frustratingly slow to admit women. By 1893 only 37 out of the 105 regular institutions accepted them" (65). Still, social pressures were perhaps far more daunting than lack of access to medical schools:

> [W]hen a woman decided to study medicine in the nineteenth century, she was well aware that in many ways she challenged conventional definitions of woman's role, even if she believed, as many did, that medicine was naturally suited to female talents and abilities. Conventional Victorian marriage neither promoted nor condoned a woman's freedom to pursue personal goals. Often feminists pictured marriage as a dangerous impediment to underdeveloped women who ought instead to seek to live and think independently. (Morantz-Sanchez 129)

The tension for women seeking to become doctors in college girl books reflects the tension intrinsic in being a woman and being a doctor in this time period. In an oft-

quoted article from an 1894 edition of the *Women's Medicine Journal*, Dr. Gertrude Baillie wrote, "no woman can serve two masters"—in other words, medicine and marriage (qtd. in Morantz-Sanchez 130). Though in her study Morantz-Sanchez found that, in 1900, 31.9% of female physicians (a number that included osteopaths) were married, in the fictional lives of college girls deciding on which path to choose in life, the question comes down to one or other, not both (137).

At one point in her study, Morantz-Sanchez repeats a story recounted by Dr. Mary Sherwood at the Norristown Hospital for the Insane: one day, doing rounds, Dr. Sherwood is confronted by a female patient who asks her, "Say are you a doctor or a lady?" The woman adds, "You look so young and pleasant…I thought you might be a lady" (143). Ultimately, this seems to be the choice that Rosamond must make: to be a doctor or a lady.

Metamorphic Gender in *Two College Girls*

In Brown's *Two College Girls*, the protagonist, Edna Howe, is initially attracted to college as an opportunity to follow intellectual pursuits that her small hometown cannot offer. Edna's counterpoint is Rosamond Mills, Edna's roommate, a wealthy young woman from Chicago. Rosamond views college as a social opportunity and preparation for married life, and thus often shirks her lessons. As she observes, referencing the economic principle of higher education, "I haven't ever got to teach or earn my living. What's the use of spoiling all my fun by studying?" (Brown). The two girls' clashing intellectual values results in immediate discord between the pair:

> Rosamond Mills is a lively, frivolous, lighthearted westerner from Chicago whose purpose in college is to enjoy herself. Edna is self-righteously disgusted at her roommate's silliness, and her first real—and painful—learning experience comes

> when she discovers that Rosamond is equally dismayed at her: "That she would lie so lightly in another person's mind shocked her—she who had always taken herself so seriously" (51-52). [Marchalonis 15]

It is not long before the pair find common ground, however, and eventually, Edna's familial and economic difficulties, brought on by the death of her father, bring the pair closer together, resulting in Rosamond arranging to secretly fund a scholarship that is awarded to Edna, allowing her to continue at college.

Edna's journey is the cynosure of the plot, but Rosamond's journey is the more interesting, characterized by multiple transformations. The first two occur nearly simultaneously, marked by an episode during a history recitation when Rosamond feels chastened by Professor Powers for being unprepared for class. Edna describes her roommate's reaction to his reproof thusly: "She lay on the sofa and cried" (Brown). Rosamond resolves to become a more studious pupil, a change that brings her more into alignment with her roommate. As such, their interpersonal relations begin a thaw that will eventually blossom into "best" friendship. Thus Rosamond's initial transformations, from underachieving to serious student and from mild antagonist to close friend, set the stage for further transformations as the novel progresses.

Rosamond's initial changes occur because of external factors—her shaming by a professor and her growing friendship with Edna—demonstrating the proximity principle inherent to these books; Deborah O'Keefe notes that being around like-minded girls "helped a girl change and improve herself. She learned to eliminate any sour notes in her personality that might threaten the harmony" of her environment (112-113). These types of transformations are typical in girls' series books, where homogeneity is valued as a mechanism of inclusion. Still,

Rosamond begins to chart her own path when she decides to pursue medicine. Marchalonis writes of this decision, "Rosamond, who came to college to have a good time and who at first barely scraped through her classes, finds herself fascinated by zoology, and when the death of a friend [Kitty Morris] forces her to serious self-examination, sees the lack of purpose in her life and decides to become a doctor" (16). Actually, Rosamond's journey here is still marked by external factors—not by self-examination, but by *other*-examination. It is a classmate who first suggests that Rosamond would make a good doctor:

> "Girls," said May Lovering, "I wish you could have heard Rosamond the other day. We were going to dissect an ox's heart, and Rosamond asked Professor Greene if we couldn't have forks to handle it with! I wish you could have seen Professor Greene's face."
>
> "Rosamond, you'd make a good doctor!" cried another voice. (Brown)

Later, when her friend becomes ill, Rosamond insists on staying by her side and tending to her:

> "The girls like to have me about when they have headaches." The doctor would have liked to laugh again. She knew Rosamond Mills by reputation. "You never would believe it, Dr. Amory, but they say I am quiet and soothing… Do let me stay with her a little, Dr. Amory."
>
> Dr. Amory looked into Rosamond's face. She was surprised that she had never before noticed the firmness of the girl's mouth and the steadiness of her eyes. The western sunlight streamed in at the window behind Rosamond, and lighted up her gold-brown hair into a shining crown. The doctor was conquered. (Brown)

Watching Rosamond tenderly care for Kitty, the doctor is persuaded: "'My dear,' said Dr. Amory, gravely, 'you belong to the profession'" (Brown). In her study of early women in the medical profession, Morantz-Sanchez observes, "Another especially feminine theme that recurs in the motivation of women towards medicine is a childhood or adolescent encounter with illness—either their own or that of a close friend or relative" (107). Rosamond's transformation is reflective not of self-examination but of self-sacrifice, especially in what she must seemingly give up to become a doctor.

What is perhaps most interesting about Rosamond's unexpected interest in becoming a doctor is not the direction of the change but its suddenness, both for Rosamond and others. The doctor's "surprise" in seeing Rosamond in a (literal) new light reflects the experience of Rosamond's peers and the reader, as Brown had proffered few clues regarding Rosamond's capacity for medical care prior to these scenes. There are indications of Rosamond's capacity to care—her arranging for Edna's scholarship out of her own funds, for example—but the professional and scholarly turn that Rosamond takes is without precedent in the book. This suggests that Rosamond's alteration might be viewed through the lens of metamorphosis which, as Catherine Malabou states, "is at once a change of route, a new direction, and a change of form" (48). Rosamond's unexpected academic shift in the text is, indeed, a sudden and significant "change of form."

By traditional definition, a metamorphosis is the alteration of the physical form of a being or substance, changing the originating material, object, or individual from one thing to another. Charles Segal writes that, "metamorphosis is both an aetiology for natural processes or events and itself a miraculous event that disturbs the natural order" (16). To extend Segal's observation using a common natural archetype, a caterpillar's ultimate

metamorphosis into a butterfly—the end of a three-stage transmutative process—results in the maturation of the creature into its ultimate form or, conversely, results in another creature emerging from the cocoon altogether. Either the caterpillar becomes what it was always intended to be, or the caterpillar ceases to exist as some other disruptive form emerges. Regardless, change is the essence of metamorphosis, and what is key to metamorphosis is both the emergent alteration and the fixed finality of the process. A caterpillar metamorphoses into a butterfly, but upon doing so, cannot return to its pre-metamorphic stages. As Malabou observes, "Changing therefore amounts to finding a mode of torsion, reversion, metamorphosis, or migration that matches the impossibility of fleeing and the injunction to look at what looks at us. It is a kind of flight in situ" (49). Once done, metamorphosis cannot be undone. When Rosamond decides to become a doctor, she begins a journey down a path from which, for her, there is no return.

In choosing to become a doctor, Rosamond also chooses to give up becoming a woman—at least a woman according to late nineteenth-century American values: she will not marry, she will never be a mother, she will be defined by her profession, and she will be called Dr. and not Mrs. In some ways, all the students in Rosamond's college come in as caterpillars, larval beings entering a pupal stage when they leave behind girlhood to become "college girls." There is still an emphasis here on the construct of "girl," both in terms of social hegemony (the authority they wield in the outside world) and in terms of gender (not quite fitting the era's definition of womanhood). The college girl, though, has a freedom her previous self never had; she has agency, the freedom to choose.

This sense of agency does not mean that Rosamond and the other characters in *Two College Girls* do not

understand their ultimate fates or how their choices will impact their future selves. In this phase of their existence, they have a broader understanding of their own power in determining how they arrive at this fate. Edna, who comes to college in pursuit of intellectual experiences and with the idea of teaching upon completing her degree, is by the end of the book the one destined to marry, as she betroths herself to Rosamond's brother, Jack. Significantly, Edna adds a proviso to the marriage proposal: "You know I must teach two years, perhaps three," she tells Jack (Brown). When Jack protests, Edna "soberly and clearly explained her moneyed obligation for her education and set forth her reasons for wishing to discharge it with her own earnings" (Brown). Jack argues that "isn't everything I possess yours?" indicating he will pay Edna's obligation, to which Edna "delightedly" replies, "No" (Brown). Her response demonstrates that Edna has the ability to craft the terms of her own eventual fate; demonstrating a form of agency, she can have both a career and a marriage, though not at the same time— moving from college girl to teacher does not preclude the later journey into matrimony. And Edna crafts this journey on her terms, rejecting those of both Jack and the patriarchy. Though the enactment of her entire will is beyond her (presuming she would wish to be both teacher *and* wife), she is able to at least demonstrate enough autonomy to metamorphose according to her own design.

In order to enact her sense of agency, Rosamond, unlike Edna, is not allowed to follow a meandering path, but must make a clear, if not stringent, choice: a doctor or a lady. Whereas Edna can identify a course that includes occupation *and then* marriage, Rosamond is only permitted one or the other. Her choice is simple, but costly; either path will force her to surrender the other. Despite the resoluteness of her desire to be a doctor, the novel makes it evident that career or marriage is a far more difficult choice for Rosamond than she initially reveals. In the same

scene in the book where the girls sit and discuss their futures, a classmate intimates that Rosamond will marry after all, instead of opting for medical school. Rosamond's reply is telling: "Did you ever hear such nonsense, girls? The very idea of my ever being willing to marry that—that—that little snip! Now, girls, I'm in earnest for once. Do you think I'd sacrifice my usefulness to any man?—the special kind of usefulness I've set my heart on?" (Brown). Later, though, Rosamond adds: "If I ever marry,—and I hope I shall—it may be a shameless confession, but I—hope—I—shall,—it will be the man of all the world that believes most in me; will help me best to be a useful woman; will put new heart and courage into everything I do" (Brown). When alone with Edna, Rosamond speaks even more on this subject:

> "I am just the kind of girl not to marry, after all."
>
> When Rosamond said this, she liked to be contradicted, but Edna…made no reply. (Brown)

Malabou speaks of metamorphosis as brimming with possibility: "Today, *new metamorphic occurrences* are appearing at the level of social and economic organization and at the level of 'gender' or individual sexual identity. From the start I have said that the privileged regime of change today is the continuous implosion of form, through which it recasts and reforms itself continually" (59, italics original). For Malabou, metamorphosis represents a discarding of older forms in favor of newer, progressed/ive forms; for her, a change in form pulses with future-potential. Indeed, it is through metamorphosis, through the shedding of limited forms, that Malabou suggests we will achieve our potential future. This process seems especially appropriate for Rosamond; she, too, must metamorphose, must change, in order to reach the potential she has seen for herself ("Do you think I'd sacrifice my usefulness?"). Segal views this as

emblematic of metamorphosis: “metamorphosis provides an aetiological myth to answer the question of origins: how did the first wolf, weasel, frog, or laurel tree come into being? On the other hand, it is often the external realization of a type of character” (14). Rosamond’s story is both an origin and the external realization of who she was always meant to be. In order to do so, though, she must leave behind who she was (a girl), who she is (a college girl), and who her entire society expects her to be (a married woman). Whereas Edna can navigate the realms of career and marriage, for Rosamond, gendered metamorphosis reflects a change into one of two fixed identities: into being a woman, wife, and mother; or into being a doctor. At no point in the text does Brown allow Rosamond to consider a path toward both. For Rosamond, her gender journey is a fixed path with a fork in the road: while it is her choice, her agency in deciding what to be, she can be only one thing: “a doctor or a lady,” as Mary Sherwood was once told—but not both.

Metamorphosis may thus brim with opportunity, as Malabou observes, but it is also full of deprivation. It reflects both gain and loss. In some ways, Rosamond’s divergent options—"a doctor or a lady”—recall Tassie Gwilliam’s observation that, “Metamorphosis occurs in the service and avoidance of desire; at times it represents the presence of desire, at times it results from transgressing boundaries set on the expression of sexuality” (104). Rosamond desires, very much, to be a doctor; it is the only thing in the entire text she expresses a sincere desire for. And while Gwilliam here speaks to the congruence of metamorphosis and sexuality, particularly in works like Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, the inverse is also applicable. Gwilliam writes of mythological figures like Daphne, who metamorphoses into a tree to avoid sexual pursuit, or Narcissus, whose deep longing for his own image eventually results in his metamorphosis into a flower. For

Gwilliam, desire produces metamorphosis; although that desire is borne of an external factor (for Daphne, Apollo's pursuit of her; for Narcissus, Ameinias's prayers to Nemesis), metamorphosis is a transmutative process that emerges from within, and whether it is a desire *for* or a desire *contrary* to the external stimulus is, in some ways, beside the point. Rosamond desires to be a doctor, inexplicably so; she is told by her peers and her college's physician that she is made for the profession (the external factor), and it becomes her sole ambition. Her desire nourishes both her dream and her decisions, but Rosamond soon realizes—like Daphne and Narcissus—that metamorphosis does not come without a cost. As Segal notes, "there is a correspondence between our physical and our emotional or spiritual life" (12). Correspondence does not always imply congruence; for Daphne, the physical is counter- indicative of the spiritual/emotional; and like Daphne, Rosamond must also surrender the physical for the emotional. In order to become a doctor, she must cease to entertain notions of marriage and motherhood.

Writing about *Two College Girls*, Marchalonis, noting the metamorphic power of college, concludes that, "By graduation both [Edna and Rosamond] are women, but they are also persons" (16). I am not sure Brown agrees. Edna, perhaps, is both, though not at the same time; college has taught her how to straddle both worlds, not how to belong to them. Yet Rosamond must make a choice. For her, choosing medicine means giving up womanhood—being a doctor, not a woman. In 1880, Mary Putnam Jacobi, the famed physician, medical researcher, and suffragist, provided a balanced assessment of the doctor/wife conundrum: "The question of marriage again," she told her students at the Women's Medical College of the New York Infirmary and Mount Sinai Hospital,

> which complicates everything else in the life of women, cannot fail to complicate their professional

> life. It does so, whether the marriage exists or does not exist, that is, as much for unmarried as for married women. . . . Many married women will lose all interest in medicine as soon as they have children, as many now fail to develop the full needed interest precisely because they have no other, and are dispirited by isolation from family ties. Many will interrupt their practice during the first few years after marriage to resume it later. Whatever is done, either with or without marriage, can evidently be well done only in proportion as more complete intellectual development and more perfect training enables the woman to cope with the peculiar difficulties in her destiny. (qtd. in Morantz-Sanchez 135)

Putnam Jacobi suggests that, with sacrifice, with dedication, and with ingenuity, a woman can be a doctor, and a doctor can be a woman. *Two College Girls* seems to disagree; a college girl can metamorphose into one or the other, but not both.

Notes

[1] It should be noted that both Grace Harlowe and Marjorie Dean started their series in secondary education before moving onto college and higher education. All these series also continued their stories after their protagonists completed their degrees.

[2] For more on this, see Cornelius, Michael G. "Homogeneity, Agency, and the Girls' College Series, 1905-1925." *Representing Agency in Popular Culture: Children and Youth on Page, Screen, and In-Between*. Edited by Ingrid E. Castro and Jessica Clark, Lexington Books, 2019, pp. 85-108.

[3] There is no single good source that examines the history of women and university education prior to 1800. Often these individuals are recorded because of their presence in institutions or professions that require some type of higher education—e.g., Bettisia Gozzadini, who earned a law degree from the University of Bologna in 1237 and started teaching law there in 1239. For more, please see Vanacker, Beatrjis and Lieke van Deinsen. *Portraits and Poses: Female Intellectual Authority, Agency, and Authorship in Early Modern Europe*. Leuven University Press, 2022; Simonton, Deborah. "Women and Education." *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850*. Edited by Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus, Routledge, 2004, chapter 2; and, Solomon, Barbara Miller. *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America*. Yale University Press, 1986.

[4] A Google search will generate hundreds of articles about the economic benefits of college education, such as "Is College Worth It?" by Marisol Cuellar Mejia, Cesar Alesi Perez, Vicki Hsieh, and Hans Johnson, from the April 2025 issue of *Explainer* from the Public Policy Institute of California. Even in works that purport to tout the non-economical benefits of college, such as "It's Not Just the Money: The Benefits of College Education to Individuals and Society" by Philip Trostel from the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center and School of Economics at the University of Maine, the vast majority of the benefits are either directly or indirectly economic in nature (Lumina Issue Papers, 2015, www.luminafoundation.org/resource/its-not-just-the-money).

[5] In what is widely regarded as the first college girl book, Olive San Louie Anderson's *An American Girl and Her Four Years in a Boys' College* (1878), the book's protagonist, Wilhelmine "Will" Elliott, also plans to attend medical school after completing her degree, though, by book's end, that plan is delayed as she works to procure the financial means to achieve her dream. Still, Will seems to

have an easier time pursuing her dream than Rosamond; for more, see Robey, Molly K. "Anrdogynes, Amazons, Agenes: Transgender Studies and the College Girl, 1878." *Legacy*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2019, pp. 65-86.

[6] In some of the major series noted in this article, the main characters do tend to work for a while after completing their degree. Most prominently, Betty Wales opens a tea shop and works for her college as secretary of the Students' Aid Committee. Marjorie Dean pens the autobiography of her college's founder and works on the construction of a new dormitory for the college. Grace Harlowe does not take on a profession *per se* but does volunteer to aid in the war efforts in the European corridor. In most cases, though, they do not seek out these opportunities but rather fall into them; and at each series' end, the main character is married or engaged.

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Goodbye to All That: Sir Walter Scott's Poetry and a Case for Post-Scottish-Enlightenment Literature

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Prologue: "By Yarrow's streams"

> By Yarrow's streams still let me stray,
> Though none should guide my feeble way;
> Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
> Although it chill my wither'd cheek;
> Still lay my head by Teviot Stone,
> Though there, forgotten and alone,
> The Bard may draw his parting groan.
> (VI.ii.14-20)
>
> —Sir Walter Scott, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805)

This study of nineteenth-century British poetics is informed throughout by farewells and partings: by journeys and adieus; by boundaries mapped and borders crossed; by convergences, divergences, and estuaries. In September 1831, William Wordsworth embarked on a "Tour in Scotland and on the English border," one that he would later commemorate throughout the collection "*Yarrow Revisited" and Other Poems* (1835). The occasion was a poignant one, as Wordsworth's guide, his friend of twenty-eight years Sir Walter Scott, was on the eve of his own departure for Naples, leaving, as Wordsworth would put it in the collection's title poem, his "Tweed and Teviot / For mild Sorento's breezy waves"

("Yarrow" lines 52-53). Suffering from a stroke incurred by the desperate work schedule of his late years, Scott by the fall of 1831 was ailing and infirm—he died almost exactly one year later, on 21 September 1832—and looking to the Mediterranean ("warm Vesuvio's vine-clad slopes" ["Yarrow" 51]) for comfort and therapy. In "Yarrow Revisited," Wordsworth wishes his friend and former rival, whom he poetically christens the "Great Minstrel of the Border," safe passage in the faint hope that, basking in Italy, Scott might yet live to see his "[h]ealth return to mellow Age" (8, 59).

In this poetic celebration of Scott's valedictory journey, Wordsworth takes the opportunity to extol the sovereign autonomy of the poetic imagination over mere "localized Romance" ("Yarrow" 89). In lines that have him seeing the famously home-bodied Scott off from the "native Fancy" of Scotland and the Border for the "classic Fancy" of Naples, Wordsworth champions an interiorized, private vision that is unbound by time and space: what, ultimately, is "the power of Yarrow" (68), or even "mighty Nature's self" (85), he asks, without "the poetic voice / That hourly speaks within us"? (87-88). When this elegiac work appeared in 1835, Wordsworth affixed an intriguing footnote: "Notwithstanding the romance that pervades [Scott's] works and attaches to many of his habits, there is too much *pressure of fact* for these verses to harmonize as much as I could wish" (qtd in *William Wordsworth: The Poems* 1035n, emphasis added).

This note, like much of the poem it accompanies, encapsulates a Wordsworth/Scott binary that would have been a commonplace to nineteenth-century readers. On the one hand, there is a Romantic poetry of free-floating lyrical effusion, a Wordsworthian harmonizing untroubled by the recalcitrant texture of the actual. It is a poetry, again, of the "poetic voice / That hourly speaks within us" and secure in the conviction that, as John L. Mahoney writes

of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), "truth … [is] not individual and local, but general and operative" (4), a poetry that takes as its "great argument" the workings of the creative mind. As Wordsworth would avow in the famous preface to *The Excursion* (1814), "How exquisitely the individual Mind … to the external world / Is fitted; and how exquisitely too … / The external world is fitted to the mind" (63-68). Nancy Moore Goslee has nicely defined this vision of "high" Romanticism as a "poetry that claims an autonomous, constitutive power for the imagination … [T]his poetry is characterized by religious, political, and aesthetic, insubordination; by Promethean rebellion; and, often, by a Promethean isolation" (2).

On the other hand, is a poetry of historical and temporal particularity, what Wordsworth in the footnote deems Scott's "habits." Jane Millgate has usefully synthesized the organizing tropes and underlying assumptions of Scott's poetry: "the importance of locality, the sense of regional identity and historical continuity, and the authenticating significance of historical and other 'framing' devices" (4). Thus, in a letter written to Bishop Thomas Percy, whose *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) made such an impression on Scott, Scott writes, "An early partiality to the tales of my country, and an intimate acquaintance with its wildest recesses, acquired partly in the course of country sports, and partly in pursuit of antiquarian knowledge, will, I hope, enable me at least to preserve some of the most valuable traditions of the south of Scotland, both historical and romantic" (qtd. in Millgate 5). This could be the Scott famously condemned by Thomas Carlyle for his most unheroic investment in the too sullied fact: the erstwhile antiquarian and curator of Scottish and Border poetry had "nothing spiritual in him; all is economical, material, of the earth, earthy" ("Sir Walter Scott" 116).

Scott and Wordsworth comprise two different poetics, as William Hazlitt took up in 1818, writing, "[Wordsworth is] the reverse of Walter Scott in his defects and excellences. He has nearly all that the other wants, and wants all that the other possesses. His poetry is not external, but internal; it does not depend upon tradition, or story, or old song; he furnishes it from his own mind, and is his own subject" (891). Nowadays, one might describe this as a case of dual or divergent *Romanticisms* or map the English Wordsworth and Scottish Scott onto the Anglo-Scottish boundary—a gesture appropriate for "Yarrow Revisited," with its invocations of national (and oceanic) borders. Thus, the editors of 2004's *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism* undertake a remapping of the British Romantic canon, as they question the designation of Romanticism solely as "the authentic utterance … of an ontological difference which escaped or resisted the collective presences of society and history" (5), ultimately finding in this definition a narrow privileging of *English* Romanticism. As Katie Trumpener notes in her *Bardic Nationalism*, where English poets such as Wordsworth "represen[t] poetry as a dislocated art," the work of an individual poetic bard "standing apart from and transcending its particular time and place," Scottish poets, she argues, often worked within a context where "[n]ationalist antiquaries read bardic poetry for its content and its historical information" (6).

The Wordsworth of "Yarrow Revisited," certainly, had long since renounced the localized topographical verse of his early years to make, as he claims in the so-called "Prospectus to *The Recluse*" (included in 1814's *The Excursion*, as part of its preface) "the mind of Man— / My haunt, and the main region of my song" (lines 40-41), and during this time, he was working on his autobiographical *The Prelude* (subtitled "Growth of a Poet's Mind"), a poem that recounts a flight from the pressure of fact and cultural

history, and the exchange of rural folk pastimes and revolutionary activism for the insight that the mind is its own place and can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven. By the time of "Yarrow Revisited," Scott had also of course long abandoned *his* regional poetry for the widely disseminated, internationally bestselling Waverley Novels, the inaugural, eponymous volume of which records, as Ian Duncan puts it, "the sentimental formation of the private individual" (15). Across its paradigmatic three volumes, *Waverley* (1814) recounts Edward Waverley's farewell and adieu to both Scotland (which he experiences as a sociologically and ethnographically dense milieu) and the Jacobite uprisings of 1745. He renounces both the specifics of place and the stage of history for marriage and retirement to a rarefied domestic realm back in England, with the Scottish Rose Bradwardine. Indicatively, however, the novel associates private life beyond history with specific ideas of reading and literature. Somewhat bitterly predicting Edward's destiny, dedicated Jacobite Flora MacIvor places him, rightly it turns out, "in the quiet circle of domestic happiness" at his ancestral Waverley-Honour but goes on to suggest how he "will refit the old library in the most exquisite Gothic taste, and garnish its shelves, with the rarest and most valuable volumes" (250). Once outside of history, a denizen of private life, Edward is free to enjoy and revere what Duncan calls "the individualist, class-specific act of reading" (58). Indicatively, *Waverley*'s conclusion echoes Wordsworth's very celebration from his preface to *The Excursion* – published the same year as Scott's first, successful foray into novel-writing: "the individual Mind that keeps his own / Inviolate retirement" (lines 19-20).

It was 1803 when Wordsworth and Scott's friendship started, a friendship bound to be dynamic, marked by convergences and divergences. Wordsworth might have spoken fondly of the year in which he "first

became acquainted with this great and amiable man" (qtd in Peacock Jr. 340), but he was also known to grumble privately to Henry Crabb Robinson of how "the secret of Scott's popularity is the vulgarity of his conceptions, which the million can at once comprehend" (qtd in Peacock, Jr. 340), or to pen, in a letter:

> What you say of W. Scott reminds me of an Epigram something like the following—
>
> Tom writes his Verses with huge speed,
> Faster than Printer's Boy can set 'en [*sic*],
> Faster far then we can read,
> And only not so fast as we forget 'en [*sic*].
> (qtd in Peacock Jr. 340)

As Stephen Gill recounts, Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802–03), with its deep "celebration of . . . local attachments," may at one point have given Wordsworth the sense that in Scott "he had met a kindred spirit," but "increasingly they both became aware how irreconcilable were their attitudes to their art" (217, 218). It was perhaps with no small tincture of envy that the austerely living Wordsworth derogated Scott's wildly popular *Lay of the Last Minstrel* or *Marmion* (1808)—and as Gill surmises, the Scott commemorated in "Yarrow Revisited" tirelessly writing his way out of debt may have finally come for Wordsworth "to seem a noble image of the writer broken in the service of his art" (218). The sense emerges that their fortunes are complexly, dialectically intertwined—when one is in ascendancy, the other is in decline. After all, Scott's once bestselling poetry was, for a long time, all but absent from the academic Romantic canon, a canon often epitomized by Wordsworth.

It is instructive to bring together these two titanic figures from opposite sides of the Tweed—indeed, an extended study tracing their friendship and fortunes would be a compelling monograph. In the process, one could suss out instances of homage, critique, and intertextual echo.

Such a project could map the changing boundaries of taste and the shifting terrain of the nineteenth-century canon—pointing, for instance, to where the novel comes to eclipse poetry or noting where the modern, even *Wordsworthian*, sense of Romanticism emerges as a term that, as Jon Klancher puts it, "has come to signify" the "metaphysical victory over social and historical conflict" (5).

More specifically, such a project could reveal much about changes in the construction and dissemination of print and knowledge within an increasingly urban and homogeneous Britain. To return for a moment to Yarrow, the liminal, borderland site of Wordsworth and Scott's literal (if not also figurative) separation of 1831: in 1833, an anonymous commentator in the *New Statistical Account* would write of Yarrow, "A solitary newspaper formerly made its passage up the water by slow stages and through many hands, contrasting forcibly with the regular and rapid circulation of periodicals at present. Withal, there has been a striking change in the habits of the peasantry. *Local attachments have given way to general knowledge*" (qtd in Bell 5, emphasis added). A major premise of this essay is that what undergirds Scott's renunciation of locally and regionally inflected poetry for the novel is the loss of local, eighteenth-century, chiefly Scottish modes of knowledge production across the long process of Anglo-Scottish assimilation. Ultimately, the insistently privatized, domestic material culture of reading celebrated and assumed in Scott's *Waverley* (1814) and its immediate successors, *Guy Mannering* (1815) and *The Antiquary* (1816), was the result of the loss of public, institutional sites that characterized what has been designated the Scottish Enlightenment.

For the purposes of this discussion, *Scottish Enlightenment* refers first, to a highly specific set of material practices and institutional contexts, and second, a predilection for historical and ethnographic investigations

of human society *within* grandly overarching narratives of universal progress—theses that were, themselves, the products of the Scottish Enlightenment's local particularity. The distinctiveness of eighteenth-century Scotland within Britain has invited commentary and study. Quoting Franco Venturi on the topic of the Edinburgh of the 1700s, John G. A. Pocock notes that in it one could readily find "all the essential elements of an Enlightenment," elements that simply "did not exist" in England at the same time (525). Pocock is arguing here, that, unlike the English Enlightenment, the Scottish Enlightenment was defined by and embodied in its various institutions: the universities, philosophical circles, debating clubs, and learned societies that so typified the Edinburgh metropole when it was known affectionately as the Athens of the North. The signature material arrangements and practices of the Scottish Enlightenment were, collectively, natural extensions of Scotland's culture and history, a point that was made eloquently by Franco Venturi:

> It is tempting to observe that the Enlightenment was born and organized in those places where the contact between a backward world and a modern one was chronologically more abrupt, and geographically closer. It was the difference between traditional Scotland and the Glasgow and Edinburgh of the eighteenth century *which created groups and societies similar to the patriotic ones of the continent*. (qtd in Pocock 525, emphasis added)

Over time, and in step with the course of British assimilation, both the material arrangements and the chief intellectual contributions of the Scottish Enlightenment declined in influence. Clifford Siskin writes, "During the eighteenth century in Britain, Scotland was the Enlightenment home of philosophical inquiry—so much so that [many] routinely followed the path north from

England to the universities of Scotland . . . But by the early nineteenth century the path no longer seemed so inviting" (80). Accordingly, Scott would be forced to adopt what I like to call a *post-Scottish-Enlightenment literature*, one that casts off quintessentially Scottish Enlightenment notions of historiography and reflects a new literary context of what Goslee calls "writing in private and publishing for unknown readers" (32)—all in response to the loss of eighteenth-century Scotland's local attachments, or what Klancher calls its culture of "face-to-face relations" (19). Indeed, elsewhere I have made a case for my coinage *post-Scottish-Enlightenment* and in a study of Wordsworth. In a reading of *An Evening Walk* (1793), I argue that as a natural-descriptive poem indebted to James Thomson's *The Seasons* (1726-30), *An Evening Walk* marks Wordsworth's anxious, belated attempt at a demonstrably Scottish undertaking, one, however, that registers Wordsworth's awareness of his cultural and temporal distance from Enlightenment-era Scotland.[1]

In the case of Scott, throughout his writing the image of the physical book—representing a mass-produced, modular commodity—stands in for an alternative to the institutional practices and material cultures of Enlightenment-era Scotland. Scott's countryman Carlyle would declare, "[A]ll is changed . . . by the introduction of books" (*Heroes* 258); more recently, the definitive four-volume *Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland* has emerged, informed by the explicit assumption that over the course of Scotland's history, "books no longer represented mere repositories of information but became, in a profound sense, the material manifestation of a new communication order" (Bell 6). *Waverley's* famous introductory chapter pays homage to the technology of the material book: "the *great book* of Nature," Scott writes, remains "the same through a thousand editions," transcending historical contexts both

ancient ("of black letter") or modern ("wire-wove and hot-pressed") (5, emphasis added). In elevating the physical codex above and beyond historical particularity, Scott in *Waverley* makes the material book (in the iconic three-volume format) stand in for the ideological creation of an individualized and cultural "private life beyond historical process" (Duncan 13).

The remainder of this discussion focuses on Scott's major poetry, reading the poems along with many of their various prefatory and paratextual materials to reveal, across them, the record of Scott's growing farewell to a locally and historically inflected poetics informed by Scottish Enlightenment ideas. As part of this gradual renunciation, Scott would reframe his use of a bard figure as poetic narrator while again deploying the image of the material book as the emblem of a more mobile and widespread post-Scottish-Enlightenment reading culture, what Ina Ferris calls a "less institutionally defined, more stratified and unpredictable readership" (23). Toward this end, the section that immediately follows will devote some attention to Scott's own personal farewell to the concepts and contexts of Enlightenment-era Edinburgh.

"Harp of the North, farewell!": Scott as Last Minstrel

Writing nostalgically in 1827, Scott would declare, "There were men of literature in Edinburgh before she was renowned for romances, reviews, and magazines" (qtd in Garside, "New Man of Sentiment" 77). He evokes here the eighteenth-century Scottish capital that was celebrated for its philosophical circles and learned coteries as the very model of an Enlightenment public sphere. At the same time, he implies that such a milieu would eventually give way, yielding ground to a new print culture of mass communication—best-selling romances, reviews, and magazines. This section considers Scott's poetry in the context of his own response to the loss of the traditional

sites and contexts that typified the densely institutionalized Scottish Enlightenment and its defining ideas: Scott's poems provide a record of a gradual renunciation of regional and rhetorical specificity and historical particularity. The discussion begins by establishing Scott's own belated, ambivalent relationship to Scotland's Enlightenment heyday.

Peter Garside has written that throughout Scott's "comments on the [Scottish] Enlightenment, one senses a feeling of distance" ("'Philosophical' Historians" 499). To be sure, as a student at Edinburgh University, he was well-situated to take in "enlightenment at its fount," as John Sutherland writes (41-42). In this setting, in most accounts, he developed crucial "presuppositions, a manner of thinking and a historical method" (Forbes 22). As a student of both Adam Ferguson and Dugald Stewart who enjoyed a "direct relationship with the *literati* of the Scottish Enlightenment," Scott, as Garside notes, was fairly "soaked with 'philosophical' [i.e., conjectural] history" ("'Philosophical' Historians" 487, 504). As with many eighteenth-century students at Edinburgh University, Scott's exposure to such ideas was heightened by his involvement with one of the university's learned societies, in his case the Speculative Society ("the leading student debating society"): since its founding in 1764, "a large proportion of the papers presented by members had been on 'philosophical' historical subjects" ("'Philosophical' Historians" 505). During these years, Scott "accepted the leading principle of conjectural history: the law of the necessary progress of society through successive stages" (Forbes 27). Such tenets accompanied a belief in the "essential uniformity" of this stage-by-stage progress (27). For the Speculative Society, he presented a paper arguing that feudalism "proceeds upon principles common to all nations when placed in a certain situation" (qtd in Forbes 26), and in an early published essay, he asserts that "the

same state of society and civilization produces similar manners, laws and customs" (Scott, "Culloden" 10). What should be kept in mind, however, was Scott's basic belatedness, the way his time at Edinburgh University came as the Scottish Enlightenment was starting to wane. As Sutherland writes, Scott "was inflicted with the infuriating sense of having missed history, of having arrived too late on the Scottish scene" (4)—perhaps with a sense of being a "last minstrel" of sorts. Over time, the Enlightenment leanings of his thought would decrease, as he came to believe that "laws become *less* uniform and systematic as society progresses" (Garside, "'Philosophical' Historians" 508).

To read Scott's poetry is to read a record of a developing, if at times regretful, departure from the Scottish Enlightenment's historical theories and local particularity, a renunciation culminating in his turn from poems to novels. Both Scott's poems and the prefatory or paratextual writings attached to them are informed by "epic primitivism," in which "popular poetry is the carrier or the embodiment of a *geist* at once historical and national" (Dentith 33). Thus, in his preface to *The Bridal of Triermain* (1813), Scott writes,

> To modern readers, the poems of Homer have many of the features of pure romance; but in the estimation of his contemporaries, they probably derived their chief value from their supposed historical authenticity. The same may be generally said of the poetry of all early ages . . . Poets, under various denominations of Bards, Scalds, Chroniclers, and so forth, are the first historians of all nations. (267)

Dentith has identified in Scott's poetry what he calls an "imaginary anthropology," in other words, an interest in cultural stages within a developmental narrative. In its preface, Scott defines the aim of *The Lay of the Last*

Minstrel, his first major poem, as "to illustrate the customs and manners which anciently prevailed on the Borders of England and Scotland" (2). He goes on to justify his aim and various stylistic decisions:

> The [Border] inhabitants living in a state partly pastoral and partly warlike, and combining habits of constant depredation with the influence of a rude spirit of chivalry, were often engaged in scenes highly susceptible of poetical ornament. As *the description of scenery and manners was more the object of the Author* than a combined and regular narrative, the plan of the Ancient Metrical Romance was adopted, which allows greater latitude, in this respect, than would be consistent with the dignity of a regular Poem. The same model offered other facilities, as it permits an occasional alteration of measure, which, in some degree, authorizes the change of rhythm in the text. The machinery, also, adopted from popular belief, would have seemed puerile in a Poem which did not partake of the rudeness of the old Ballad, or Metrical Romance. (2, emphasis added)

"Literary" considerations yield here to historical and sociological ones, testimony to how, "[f]or [Scott] ancient poetry and regional history were mutually illuminatory" (Millgate 8). Similarly, in the advertisement for his succeeding poem *Marmion*, a poem culminating in 1513's battle of Flodden Field, Scott declares, "The design of the Author was, if possible, to apprize his readers, at the outset, of the date of his Story, and to prepare them for *the manners of the Age in which it is laid*" (46, emphasis added). (The success of the *Lay* makes him confident that another "*attempt to paint the manners of the feudal times* .

. . will not be unacceptable to the Public" [46, emphasis added]). Leaving the Border region for the Highlands in the 1810 *The Lady of the Lake*, meanwhile, Scott finds "the society of the clans in the sixteenth century" to be "an evidently more propitious context for the claims made on behalf of the origins of popular poetry" he shared with "the philosophical historians" (Dentith 43). That poem has long been celebrated for what Dentith calls its investment in "a particular and ethnographically established history" (42), its poetic descriptions of clan organization, manners, and superstitions, all informed by an awareness of constant cultural change:

> Time rolls his secret course. The race of yore,
> Who danced our infancy upon their knee,
> And told our marveling boyhood legends store,
> Of their strange ventures happ'd by land or sea,
> How are they blotted from the things that be! (Scott, *Lady of the Lake*, III.i.1-5)

A significant part of Scott's epic primitivism in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* stems from his use of the titular minstrel as frame narrator. As he recounts in his preface, it was due to his interest in the "poetical ornament" and metrical forms developed during a "partly pastoral and partly warlike stage of society" that "the Poem was put into the mouth of an ancient Minstrel . . . who, as he is supposed to have survived the Revolution, might have caught somewhat of the refinement of modern poetry, without losing the simplicity of his original model" (2). For the Scott of the *Lay* in particular, the bard or minstrel figure is both emblem and repository of cultural and regional memory and specificity. Thus, the last minstrel charms his captivated listeners with accounts "Of manners, long since changed and gone" (IV.xxxv.25). In a beloved passage, he celebrates his (and his art's) deep, abiding connection to his native land:

> O Caledonia! stern and wild

Meet muse for a poetic child!
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires! what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band,
That knits me to thy rugged strand! (VII.ii.1-7)

In the sixth canto, Scott features a procession of minstrels at Branksome Hall, there to celebrate a relatively bloodless victory over the English and the happy end to a feud between two noble Scottish houses. Each minstrel is a representative of his respective region and bardic tradition, whether it is Albert Graeme, a Scottish Borderer "In lonely guise, as nature bade" (VI.x.12); one Fitzraver, an associate of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, whose "sonnet, rhyme, and roundelay, [was] / Renown'd in haughty [Henry VIII's] court" (VI.xiii.3–4); or Harold of the Orkney Islands, whose encounters with "Norsemen" taught him "many a Saga's rhyme uncouth" (VI.xxii.14). The survey is a poetic realization of Scott's conviction quoted above that "[p]oets, under various denominations of Bards, Scalds, Chroniclers . . . are the first historians of all nations."

In framing his first major poem as the performance of a minstrel for a specific audience, Scott displays what was described above as an epic primitivist attention to an originary "scene of recitation" (Dentith 9). Such rhetorical situatedness presumes a pre-Romantic understanding of poetry—or even of identity. As Goslee puts it, "[T]he minstrel performing in the communal, oral tradition is to the modern poet, writing in private and publishing for unknown readers, as the 'pre-individual' self of the medieval period . . . is to the apparently individual, creative self of the romantic era, the self claimed by its poets" (32). Indeed, the poem's oft-quoted lines, spoken impromptu by the minstrel, castigating "The wretch, concentred all in self" (for whom "no Minstrel raptures swell") could be an

indictment of the whole project of high or Wordsworthian Romanticism (*Lay*, VI.i.12, 8). The embeddedness of the minstrel's lay in Scott's poem recalls the public, communal contexts of the Scottish Enlightenment. Goslee writes of *The Lay*, "Minstrels who represent the oral tradition in its prime appear in canto 6, responding to their audiences with narratives" that while they "include some magic, yet are constrained in their values by the face-to-face encounters with their society" (21). In its situatedness, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* comes as a reminder of what Millgate calls the "uneasiness" Scott reveals in his early writings for "poetry in its naked condition—as an artifact detached from the world of rational discourse"; his use of a minstrel is of a piece with his efforts "to ground the world of his imagination in that of actual history and geography and so render it 'safe'" (18).

At the same time, however, the privileging of the bard figure has the potential to replace the "historicising impulse" with an emphasis on "original genius" (Dentith 10). In the case of Scott, as Dentith notes, he "combines" an epic-primitivist or conjectural-history "view with the potentially distinct idea of the powerful bard" (33). With this tension or "problem" of bardic poetry in mind, one can trace across Scott's major poems a progression toward a newly privatized poetics, a poetry of widely distributed print, of individual authors and distant, solitary readers; such writing is as free from local or rhetorical situatedness as it is from the dictates of history. This modern state of poetics is a state Scott's *Lay* seems to foretell and caution against. The minstrel's central narrative features a significant subplot involving the mysterious spell book of the dead wizard Michael Scott and the havoc wrought when it falls into the hands of the mischievous dwarf, Lord Cranstoun's Goblin Page. The bound volume is the source of a sinister magic that subverts the laws and limitations of time and space—i.e., when its original owner "in

Salmanca's cave, / . . . listed his magic wand to wave, / The bells would ring in Notre Dame!" (I.xiii.4–6)—and baffles collective standards of certainty:

> [The book] had much of glamour might,
> Could make a ladye seem a knight;
> The cobwebs on a dungeon wall
> Seem tapestry in lordly hall;
> A nut-shell seem a gilded barge,
> A sheeling [i.e., hut] seem a palace large,
> And youth seem age, and age seem youth—
> All was delusion, nought was truth. (III.ix.11-18)

Easily and maliciously stolen by a goblin, the book, as Goslee notes, "is almost demoniacally free of the social constraints imposed upon the minstrel who performs traditional songs in the midst of his own society" (20). The episode is Scott's cautionary, apprehensive account of "the shift from singer and listeners to writer and readers, from mutual social definition to some more private, more alienated relationship" (Goslee 20)—it is Scott's ominous prophecy of a post-Scottish-Enlightenment culture of knowledge production, one centered on the material book.

Even as early as the *Lay*, Scott was embarking on a necessary redefinition of the bard figure in his poetry. In the poem's introduction, he takes pains to establish his eponymous minstrel as a solitary figure, one at odds with his surroundings: "The last of all the Bards was he, / Who sung of Border chivalry; / For, welladay! their day was fled" (lines 7–9). Scott links the minstrel's status to key geopolitical changes within Britain: "Old times were changed, old manners gone; / A stranger filled the Stuarts' throne" (lines 19–20). The implication is that the minstrel must accordingly adapt his art for a changing audience. Much is made throughout of how the minstrel is now performing for a largely feminine audience, like the Duchess of Buccleuch and her ladies in waiting, rather than his bygone warlike auditors: abridging a martial

section of his lay, he announces, "[W]ere each dame a listening knight, / I well could tell how warriors fight" (V.xxi.7–8). The motif anticipates the Scott who will wholly adapt his art for the "feminized" culture of novel reading. The proudly Scottish minstrel rejects, toward the end of his lay, his listeners' suggestion that "the more generous Southern land / Would well requite his skilful hand" (V.xxx.31–2) but by the end of the poem, Scott has removed him (his harp now "Hush'd") from Scotland's "poor and thankless soil" (V.xxx.13, 29) to transplant him to domestic seclusion: "A simple hut; but there was seen / The little garden hedged with green, / The cheerful hearth, and lattice clean" (VI.xxxi.19–21). Here, Scott, like Wordsworth, is looking to a poetics of "Inviolate retirement"—the poetics of a domesticated bard—as the response to a British print culture increasingly dominated by "the more generous Southern Land."

In a late poem like *Rokeby* (1813), published the year before Scott's first novel, the minstrel figure becomes the emblem of a private life and private art that are downright threatening in their self-absorption: the bard figure Edmund (here, a character rather than a narrator) is, like the one mentioned earlier in the *Lay*, a "wretch, concentred all in self" in a poem filled with them: The central action hinges on the private schemes of Oswald Wycliffe, who cravenly abstains from the "public good" of the battle of Marston Moor but thinks nothing of hiring the self-serving mercenary Bertram Risingham to commit an act of traitorous murder on the battlefield (*Rokeby* I.xii.13). *Rokeby*'s Edmund uses his minstrelsy for private gain in the service of a band of thieves and outlaws united in selfish greed. Scott intimates that the minstrel's private selfishness is of a piece with his artistic credo: "the conscious pride of art / Had steel'd him in his treacherous part" (V.xxii.3–4).

After the *Lay*, Scott would abandon the minstrel/audience apparatus that framed his first major poem, part of his heightened movement toward a literature of private authorship and consumption. In *Marmion*, his first succeeding poem, the "frame" surrounding the poem's six cantos set in 1513 is a series of six highly meditative verse epistles addressed to close friends of Scott's from his then-home of Ashestiel, a device foregrounding a reading culture of solitary author and reader alike. (One of the addressees, George Ellis, the editor of *Specimens of Ancient English Romances* [1805], confessed that he in fact missed the *Lay*'s "most charming of minstrels" and doubted the loss was fully "compensated by the idea of an author shorn of his picturesque beard, deprived of his harp, and writing letters to his intimate friends" [qtd in Millgate 21]). Fittingly, one of Scott's epistles interrupts and silences a minstrel within the text, one in the act of singing "Of Scotland's ancient Court and King" (IV.xxxii.32). Moreover, he concludes the whole poem with an epilogue addressed "To the Reader" and those who are about "To *read the Minstrel's idle strain*" ("*L'Envoy*" line 6), suggesting the passing of an oral communal culture. Scott's framing epistles in *Marmion* are, as a whole, ruminative Wordsworthian musings on time, the surrounding scenery, and the proper nature and aims of poetry. Typically, these sections find Scott contemplating a bleak, wintry landscape, one barren of historical or social interest—as, for instance, when he mourns the loss of the days when

> oft, from Newark's riven tower,
> Sallied a Scottish monarch's power:
> A thousand vassals muster'd round,
> With horse, and hawk, and horn, and hound[.]
> ("Introduction to Canto Second" 58)

Here, with the erasure of the social and historical, the poem's speaker is in search of what the poet William

Carlos Williams might have called *what will suffice*, and his consolations throughout the epistles are internal ones: "Something, my friend, we yet may gain; / There is a pleasure in this pain" ("Introduction to Canto Second" 59). The epistle that opens *Marmion* finds Scott justifying his latest "Essay to break a feeble lance / In the fair fields of old romance" ("Introduction to Canto First" 50) by claiming descent from Edmund Spenser, Milton, and John Dryden, all "invoked as practitioners, or would-be practitioners, of romance" (Millgate 22). Freed from the bardic trappings of the *Lay*, Scott positions his poetry within a pan-British canon of authors whose work purports to transcend time and locality; as Millgate writes, "The legitimization of *Marmion* is thus literary rather than historical" (22).

Indeed, to follow Scott's poetry after the *Lay* is to see Scott increasingly distancing himself from the dictates of history. Millgate calls the verse-epistle framework of *Marmion* "a direction away from the historical fable and towards the contemporary world of the author and his friends" (21). Meanwhile, the various prefaces and advertisements of Scott's poems record this progression. The *Lay's* preface, as mentioned above, carefully locates its focus on "the customs and manners which anciently prevailed on the Borders of England and Scotland" (2). In *Marmion*, however, Scott moves toward a greater independence from history; his advertisement to the first edition of *Marmion* declares, "The present story turns upon the *private adventures of a fictitious character*," though it may be "called a Tale of Flodden Field" (46, emphasis added).

In the poem's fifth canto, meanwhile, as the narrative turns to the events of Flodden, Scott declares,

> Such acts to chronicles I yield;
> Go seek them there and see:
> *Mine is a tale of Flodden Field,*

> *And not a history*. (V.xxxiv.19–22, emphasis added)

Marmion itself, as Millgate notes, deploys "a pattern of ambiguous metaphors for fictions that claim to escape the judgements of history" (41). Many of these revolve around the dastardly anti-hero Marmion himself, whose crimes include forgery: "Marmion's forgery enacts Scott's own ambivalence toward the free inventions of his imagination in romantic narrative and toward their successful publication" (Millgate 43). The advertisement for 1813's *Rokeby*, meanwhile, announces poetic fiction's utter autonomy from historical record: focusing on fictional events "immediately subsequent to the great battle of Marston Moor, 3rd July, 1644," Scott declares, "This period of public confusion has been chosen, *without any purpose of combining the Fable with the Military or Political Events of the Civil War*, but only as affording a degree of probability to the Fictitious Narrative now presented to the Public" (206, emphasis added). As mentioned above, this poem's central characters either abstain entirely from the Civil War campaign of 1644 or use the battlefield for furtive acts of murder.

From this perspective, *The Lady of the Lake*'s recurring bittersweet refrain "Harp of the North, farewell!" (VI.xxix.38), for example, furnishes the motto for Scott's major poetry. It is, as discussed, a poetry forever bidding adieu, a reaction to an increasingly post-Scottish-Enlightenment landscape in Britain. In this context, Scott's turn to the novel emerges as a next, logical step, charting a heightened course away from the cultural influence of the Scottish Enlightenment. That journey, in turn, is the realization of *Lay of the Last Minstrel*'s dire prophecy: the triumph of the all-powerful material book.

Epilogue: "good night to Marmion"

> And think'st thou, SCOTT! by vain conceit perchance,
> On public taste to foist thy stale romance,
> Though MURRAY with his MILLER may combine
> To yield thy muse just half-a-crown per line?
> No! when the sons of song descend to trade,
> Their bays are sear, their former laurels fade.
> Let such forgo the poet's sacred name,
> Who rack their brains for lucre, not for fame:
> Still for stern Mammon may they toil in vain!
> And sadly gaze on Gold they cannot gain!
> Such be their meed, such still the just reward
> Of prostituted Muse, and hireling Bard!
> For this we spurn Apollo's vernal son,
> And bid a long, "good night to Marmion." (lines 111–24)
>
> —George Gordon, Lord Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (ca. 1807)

The poet who famously chides Scott in the above lines was also, by most accounts, in part responsible for his decision to "forgo the poet's sacred name." Millgate writes that, by the time he published his last major poem, *The Lord of the Isles* (1815), Scott had been "outstripped . . . by Byron," a fact he freely admitted: in a letter to James Ballantyne, Scott confesses, "Byron hits the mark where I don't even pretend to fledge my arrow" (3, 193n1). Elsewhere, Scott would attribute his renunciation of poetry for novels to a need to appeal to a wider and, indeed, *British* readership: "The curiosity of the English," he writes, self-deprecatingly, "was not much awakened by poems in the rude garb of antiquity, accompanied with notes referring to the obscure feuds of barbarous clans, of whose very name civilized history was ignorant" (qtd. in Crawford 120-121). Scott could be expressing the sentiment poetically in his *Marmion*, when the titular

knight, ironically dubbed the "flower of [the] English land" encounters a "Northern harper rude [who] / Chanted rhyme of deadly feud": "Scantly Lord Marmion's ear could brook / The harper's barbarous lay" (I.x.12, 9-10, 17–18).

Of course, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* should hardly be taken as a careful, impartial study of the early-nineteenth-century print marketplace, yet some of Byron's claims are worth considering, particularly his contention that material changes are at the root of a transformed literary culture: "No dearth of Bards can be complained of now / The loaded Press beneath her labour groans / And Printer's devils shake their weary bones" (lines 64-66). For Byron, a literary culture oversaturated by print is a world of "prostituted Muse" and "hireling Bard," and what historians Lucien Febvre and Henri Jean-Martin famously called the "Coming of the Book" is a cause for concern: "'Tis pleasant, sure, to see one's name in print; / A book's a Book, altho' there's nothing in't" (lines 31–32).

The rest, as they say, is history. With his "goodnight to Marmion," Scott would devote his energies to novels. His first three works of fiction—*Waverley, Guy Mannering*, and *The Antiquary*—he conceived of as a trilogy, declaring in the "Advertisement to *The Antiquary*," "*Waverley* embraced the age of our fathers, *Guy Mannering* that of our youth, and *The Antiquary* refers to the last ten years of the eighteenth century" (3). The scheme has puzzled subsequent critics, hard-pressed to trace the progression. Thus, Robert C. Gordon writes, "It would seem that the closer Scott came to his own age the more chaotic the world became for him" (42). In this manner, the sequencing alone of Scott's foray into novel-writing rejects the stadial, history-as-progress narratives that typified Scottish Enlightenment thought.

The concluding volume of the trilogy, 1816's *The Antiquary*, opens significantly with a journey outside and away from Edinburgh "on a fine summer's day" (13), thus tracing a departure from the erstwhile center of the Scottish Enlightenment. In one of the most celebrated passages, Lovel, the traveling protagonist spends the night in a reportedly haunted room. (The scene, as is often recounted, inspired Emily Brontë of *Wuthering Heights* [1847].) During a waking nightmare, he beholds an arras of a medieval hunting scene, only to watch as

> The tapestry waved wildly on the wall, till its dusky forms seemed to become animated. The hunters blew their horns—the stag seemed to fly, the boar to resist, and the hounds to assail the one and pursue the other; the cry of deer, mangled by throttling dogs—the shouts of men, and the clatter of horses' hoofs, seemed at once to surround [Lovel]— while every group pursued, with all the fury of the chase, the employment in which the artist had represented them as engaged. (100)

The novel presents here an organic social totality, pre-modern life as it might be posited in Enlightenment-era Edinburgh, itself a vision of communal sociability and "face-to-face relations." The scene Lovel beholds shifts, however, as "an individual figure among the tissued huntsmen . . . seemed to leave the arras and to approach the bed of the slumberer. As he drew near, his figure seemed to alter. His hunting horn became a brazen, clasped volume" (100). The vision is one where the Coming of the Book—the "brazen, clasped volume" in the hands of a solitary reader—overwrites and replaces a vision of community. For Scott's contemporaries, it retells the fate of the Scottish Enlightenment, where, as one cynic put it, "the vaunted Modern Athens is fast dwindling away into a mere spelling book and primer manufactory" (qtd. in Chittick 41). Fittingly, it occurs in the concluding volume

of a trilogy that Scott saw as ushering in the nineteenth century—the era of the modular commodity of the three-volume novel—by bidding farewell to the eighteenth century.

Note

[1]See my "The Informing Author: William Wordsworth's *An Evening Walk* (1793) and the Post-Scottish-Enlightenment Reception of James Thomson's *The Seasons* (1726-30)," forthcoming in *Romantic Textualities, Literature and Print Culture, 1780-1840*.

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No More Aspiration than the Brute in the Field: Protestant Home Missionaries Write an Exploitable Appalachia

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A Field of Briars

The period centering on 1890 marked a turning point in writing about the mountains of the southeastern United States and the people who lived there. Through their rhetoric, writers helped define the mountains as a homogeneous region, *Appalachia*, that had not changed for over one hundred years and that, even today, still exists for some as an irksome anachronism needing help to get on its feet. That "help" has often been benevolent, though sometimes bumbling, and perhaps as often malignant behind a mask of benevolence; hence, rapacious land policies appeared and still appear in the guise of "improvement." While the fiction of Local Colorists like John Fox, Jr., and the philanthropical polemics of William G. Frost, among others, offer familiar examples of nineteenth-century writing to justify or even invite the exploitation of the mountain South (Shapiro 3-31; 113-132), the rhetorical work of "home missionaries" has gone relatively unremarked. The missionaries' efforts, purportedly charitable, offered mainline churches a way to categorize Appalachia and its people as degenerate and thus in need of the salvific uplift normative religion and sometimes big capital could provide. Following the Civil War, "the churches did not sow their seed broadcast but sought out those fields which would bear the richest harvests of converts, and hence of influence" (Shapiro 39).

In Henry D. Shapiro's apparently straightforward statement of fact, *field* operates on three levels: as a place to be cultivated metaphorically, as a farmer cultivates a field literally; as a "missionary field"; and, most suggestively, in the sense of the late-nineteenth-century entrepreneur who called the mountains "a magnificent field for capitalists" (qtd. in Eller 53). Within twenty years, missionaries had identified the southern mountains as their target and northeastern industry as their partner: one of their goals was "the 'exploitation' (which this era used as a nonpejorative) or absorption of the natural wealth into the national economy" of the mountains (McCauley 395). A Christian Appalachia would be a colonized Appalachia.

A narrative of Appalachian backwardness emerging in the last decade of the nineteenth century helped open the field of Appalachia to intrusive modernization. That narrative builds on an idea of the 1890s—that "Appalachian America" was degenerate, a relic of the past—by developing the wilderness as a center of failed American myth. A romantic idealization of wilderness suggests the opposite of Appalachian degeneracy. Turning away from the capitalists of Concord, Henry David Thoreau "went to the woods because [he] wanted to live deliberately," an ethos chronically misunderstood as back-to-the-land sentimentality. But the missionaries' narrative of the late-nineteenth century had little to do with a nostalgic yearning for an American Eden and everything to do with the development of coalfields and timber-rich forests through work designed to lift the soul and enlarge the pocketbook.

As Richard Slotkin puts it, America's first colonists sought to "prove [that] they truly belonged to the place, that their bringing of Christian civilization to the wilderness represented the fulfillment of their own destiny as children of Jehovah . . . and of the land's destiny as the creation of God" (269). Inspired by the likes of John

Winthrop's "Model of Christian Charity" (1630) and John Cotton's "God's Promise to His Plantations" (1630), American pioneers in the colonial and later periods often felt duty bound to make something out of the nothing they perceived undeveloped nature to be. This duty was not simply land-use policy; it was God's will. Thus, the Euro-American colonization of the southern mountains had, in this view, been ordained: the violent displacement of Indigenous people and consequent occupation of the mountains by white settlers fulfilled God's wishes for His people. But, as the narrative of the 1890s argued, the mountains had not in fact been settled; from evidence obvious to any who dared go into the mountains (so the story went), the southern mountains had reverted to a primitive state where people behaved little better than animals, where the land itself had reverted to wildness, and about which situation, therefore, God must be displeased. The white people of the mountains had not settled the wilderness but had settled *into* the wilderness; they had *become* the wilderness.

The task of settling the mountains and their people remained an unfinished job that good people would need to take up once again. In a period of roughly a decade and a half, polemicists from northeastern charities like the American Missionary Association looked at the history of America's wilderness through the same lens as the historian Frederick Jackson Turner—that is, as a place to be tamed. Contrary to Turner's "Frontier Thesis" of 1893, however, these same polemicists did not perceive that the frontier had passed; to anyone with eyes to see, the American myth was obviously out of whack in Appalachia. An untamed wilderness still existed, and—worse—threatened to persist so long as good people failed to act. Thus, a hundred-plus years of American triumphalism had a hole at its center: the frontier was *supposed* to be settled by 1890—that is what God

demanded—but the southern mountains were, if anything, even worse than they had been before white settlers arrived.

In the 1880s and 1890s, Protestant home missionaries (distinguished from *foreign* missionaries) were foremost among the region's self-appointed rescuers (Shapiro 32-58). One organization was especially instrumental in writing this phase of Appalachian history: the American Missionary Association (AMA), which had since antebellum days focused its efforts on non-white Americans, now became determined to convert "mountain whites" after the Civil War. This effort was related to the simultaneously emerging celebration of "Mountain Unionists" (Shapiro 87-90), those ostensibly from the South who stuck with the Union during the war, thus earning the redemption Southern rebels had foresworn. A non-denominational group before the war, and Congregationalist after (McCauley 400), the organization had its origins in the anti-slavery movement of the early nineteenth century before coalescing as the American Missionary Association in 1846 (Beard 11-32). Because of its interdenominational membership, the AMA's theology was not entirely coherent or explicit. It was adversarial in nature, labelling mountain religion as incorrect without stating what constituted "correct" religion. It was also evangelical in the sense that its missionaries felt called to spread the good news about ending slavery. (One of its early successes, even before the association had its final name, was the defense of the *Amistad* captives.) The AMA insisted on a strict distinction of its "anti-slavery" ethos from that of Abolitionism, which "opposed . . . slavery . . . along with other political tenets" (Beard 17) and prosecuted their goals using the "vituperative methods of [William Lloyd] Garrison" (18). The AMA, writes its chief apologist Augustus Field Beard, would represent the methods of those who, "equally disinterested, equally

determined and earnest, were well balanced, broader and wiser" (18). Its members would rely on "the absolute necessity of patience in reforms . . . and the faith that can wait upon the developments of time" (17). Patience did not favor the AMA's efforts to change the theological landscape of the mountain South, however as the putative beneficiaries of the missionaries' labors did not instantly embrace these outsiders' insults to their character and beliefs. Despite the home missionaries' overzealous and often mendacious attempts to denigrate mountaineers, which were purportedly designed as pretexts for bringing "true Christianity" to benighted mountain whites, the region resisted Congregationalism. But the rhetoric they employed, which proposed that mountain people had backslid into atavism, or even that they had devolved into sub-human creatures, has proven remarkably successful.

A New World to Conquer, Deplorable Ignorance to Defeat

"The Home Department," writes the Association's biographer, Augustus Field Beard, "was conducted with a special view to the preaching of the Gospel 'free from all complicity with slavery or caste'" (32). The reference to caste was a rationale for the AMA to expand its missions: while earlier work had focused on the enslaved and formerly enslaved, adding caste allowed the Association to expand its mission following the Civil War as it sought to bring other populations into focus. In 1883, Beard recollects, "particular attention was called to the pitiable condition of much of the mountain country inhabited largely by people of European descent who in the movements of civilization had been passed by and whose intellectual, spiritual, and material poverty presented a strong appeal to Christian sympathy" (237-38). With this statement, written twenty-six years later, Beard effectively summarizes the arguments "the mountain country"

(*Appalachia* was not yet the term of art) had endured and would continue to endure.

Reports of these missionaries' efforts appear in the pages of the *American Missionary Association* magazine. The December 1883 issue contains a brief notice of recent accomplishments in "MOUNTAIN WHITE WORK" (359, all capitals in original) and notices of papers about mountain white work presented by both the Reverend A.A. Myers and Mrs. A.A. Myers at the Association's Annual Meeting in October (355-56). The highlight of that meeting, perhaps, was an address by Charles G. Fairchild, a professor at Berea College. To undergird the case for the AMA promoting Congregationalism among southern whites, Fairchild lays out a number of facts about the southern mountain region—its enormous size, the value and amount of its resources, the problems presented by an uneducated, unchurched population (392-94)—that appear in an enormous number of later appeals for philanthropical uplift, including most (in)famously "Our Contemporary Ancestors" by William G. Frost, President of Berea. (Frost even uses the striking adjectival phrase "their Rip Van Winkle sleep" [1] sixteen years after Fairchild spoke about "those Rip Van Winkle hollows" [393].) Fairchild scorns aspects of mountain life that, in other, more romantic hands, might turn into an entry in the *Foxfire* series: "A man . . . wore upon his back his carefully preserved wedding suit, the wool for which he himself had cut from the backs of his father's sheep, and which his mother, after spinning, and weaving, and dyeing with butternut bark, had cut and made for him. A little shovel plough, a hand-made hoe, and an unkempt mule with a straw collar make up the agricultural outfit" (393). Primitive preaching is reviled: "For religious services, dependence is placed upon the chance visits of an exhorter who sometimes cannot read . . . and is even proud of getting his inspiration at first hand. There is a section of Eastern Kentucky, 200 miles

one way by 100 the other, that has not a settled minister of any denomination" (393). He argues, "Surely if the Church at the North is sighing for new worlds to conquer, what more claim can there possibly be upon its attention and benevolence?" (393)—an argument laced with the rhetoric of colonialism.

A sign of how diversified the anti-slavery Association became after the Civil War is in the "Forty-Second Annual Report of the Executive Committee. For the Year Ending September 30, 1888." The missions listed therein include the association's historical work among African-Americans, as well as "The Indians" (311), "The Chinese" (312), and—a recent addition to its charges—mountain people (309). Post-war, the mountain South could be understood as innocent—the corrupt plantations owners who had caused the war, went the popular myth, lived in the Deep South, especially along the coasts and the Mississippi, were disproportionately Catholic, and were beyond saving—, so the mountain whites warranted the AMA's efforts to redeem them. In that same report, the anonymous writer issues a kind of mission statement: "The field of missions is the world which lieth in darkness. We have to do with that part of it for which we are doubly responsible. It is in darkness and it is our own" (303). The "part" for which the AMA is responsible is the United States, which includes benighted regions like Appalachia that are "dark," not yet opened to the light (of Christ, of progress, of civilization).

AMA mountain white work was not universally welcomed by those it purported to save since it often began from a position of negative criticism. In their rhetoric, the Association's missionaries are unable to disguise their condescension, even contempt, for their supposed beneficiaries. In an atmosphere where even good food—cornbread——"symbolized ignorance, disease, and poverty" (Engelhardt 52), missionaries had ample room to

condemn mountain religion for being, as it were, irreligious. Thus, Beard writes about the lack of an "edifice" for worship in Williamsburg, Kentucky, as a sign that the apparently unchurched town and surrounding area are in need of evangelism (and a church building). Similar rhetoric shows up in *American Missionary*. Religious historian Deborah Vansau McCauley focuses on one missionary, Ellen (Mrs. A.A.) Myers, whose "perception of church membership in the mountains ran totally contrary to mountain religion's grace-centered conversion tradition." The theology Myers professed focused on "a post-conversion model of . . . 'works righteousness' grounded in moral reform and social benevolence *activities*" (405, emphasis added).

Myers's bêtes noires, Old School Baptists, came to represent for her the perversion of Christianity in the mountains (407). Among their sins, "Primitive and Old Regular Baptists" (407) had traditions of "summer . . . as mountain religion's high days of the year" and "monthly services (i.e., service held once a month [instead of weekly])." Mountain services had a "casual environment," leading Myers to believe that churchgoing was a social rather than religious event. Like others from northern religious organizations, she grossly misunderstood how mountain preachers worked; apparently improvising their sermons, these uneducated clergy were, in fact, representing a worship tradition as established in their region as Congregationalism was in its own region (408). Despite such misunderstanding, the Congregationalists were successful in building "a tasteful church" and "academy building" in Williamsburg (Beard 239). The school, at first named Williamsburg Institute, expanded and became Highland College (Todd).

In this case, the Old Time preachers fought back against the proselytizing outsiders. McCauley writes, "mountain preachers . . . were exasperatingly stubborn and

pig-headed about clinging to their . . . religion." Myers complains that "They . . . prejudice the people against our work. . . . They call our religion railroad religion'" (qtd. in McCauley 307). McCauley concludes that by 1884 "the preachers and religious leaders representing traditions most characteristic of mountain religion were already highly resistant to outside incursions on their mountain religion and culture" (307). Thus, a passage in the *Williamsburg Institute Catalogue, 1892-1893* ripples with undercurrents of interdenominational hostility: "Greatness is never found among those who know everything. . . . No one can tell the proud and haughty much of anything" (24, qtd. in Taylor 1). Unschooled as they were, these clergy readily recognized the condescending and bigoted charity that was encapsulated in such statements as "the deplorable ignorance and the evils flowing . . . among the mountain people" (Beard 238). It is notable that, for all their hectoring, the home missionaries in Williamsburg failed to establish lasting physical monuments: in 1907, Williamsburg Institute, by then named Cumberland College, acquired three buildings from the defunct [Congregationalist] school" (Todd).

Still, as scholars like David Whisnant, Shapiro, and McCauley demonstrate, other monuments to the AMA do remain visible in the long-ranging repercussions of its mythmaking. As Whisnant puts it, "the social and cultural theories and values of the early [AMA] churches, settlement schools, and foundations . . . provided a liberal façade for private development" (xv). Shapiro adds that these missionaries were foremost in the early "institutionalization of Appalachian otherness" (42); in other words, Appalachians, despite living within national boundaries, did not entirely belong to America and thus were (and apparently remain) made-to-order for such colonialist interventions as religious conversion and, in the name of "modernization," the industrial exploitation of

bountiful natural resources. The way these missionaries wrote and spoke about the mountains appealed not only to their contemporary audience of financial and political supporters but also to a future audience who utilized a similar language of uplift to justify razing mountains and damming rivers.

Spiriti Loci

These missionary writers built on a literary foundation that was readily available at this time. In the 1870s and 1880s, "Local Color" writing had romanticized and denigrated its subjects in equal measure while entertaining privileged readers with a hunger for subaltern exotica and pop sociology. Such writing came at a cost: "At the heart of local-color writing is . . . a confrontation between the 'we' readers and the 'them' read about" (Shapiro 14). The result, as Shapiro says, is not just cultural ignorance, but a harmful polity born of that ignorance. Missionaries added victimology to Local Colorists' motifs: mountain people became benighted mountaineers who required outsiders to rescue them. They became pitiful Others whose isolation made them miss out on the benefits of modernity most white Americans enjoyed. Their presence in modern America necessitated the interventions of liberal agents—missionaries and their industrialist allies—who argued that they were ordained to bring the mountains under human control, which in this case was also *divine* control. Thus, while missionary writing, like that of the Local Colorists, focused on the strangeness of the mountains and the people who lived there, there was this difference: in their writing, Protestant home missionaries argued for the uplift of their human subjects, in both the spiritual and worldly realms. They believed God wanted them to complete the task he had given the region's first settlers. This time, the missionaries were dedicated to doing the job right and, fortunately, had

big-money industrialism on their side. This time, they would defeat the wilderness.

The American Missionary Association professed an ancestral history of taming the wilderness. In his treatise on the AMA, Augustus Field Beard wrote about the missionaries' tough ancestors' response to seventeenth-century frontier hardships: "A rugged climate and a not too friendly soil called the New England settlers to severe personal labor in their conquest of the wilderness" (3-4). With such beginnings in colonial America, the late-nineteenth-century AMA naturally took to a narrative of wilderness-taming.

In 1775, a young explorer had a memorable encounter with the animate wilderness. Felix Walker was a member of the party Daniel Boone assembled for the Louisa (later Transylvania) Company to "hack a trail out of the wilderness, through Cumberland Gap, into the promised land along the Kentucky River" (Morgan 157). Almost fifty years later, Walker vividly recalled "the pleasing and rapturous appearance of the plains of Kentucky. . . [:] A new sky and strange earth seemed to be presented to our view. So rich a soil we had never seen before; covered with clover in full bloom, the woods were abounding with wild game. . . . We felt ourselves . . . just arrived at . . . the garden where was no forbidden fruit" (163-64). Three paragraphs later, Walker focuses on familiar symbols of the wilderness, icons that, for today's readers, authenticate his wilderness experience: "A number of buffaloes, of all sizes, . . . between two and three hundred, made off . . . in every direction, some running, some walking, others loping slowly and carelessly, with young calves playing, skipping and bounding through the plain" (166). Here, for Walker and other white settlers, was a fecund Paradise, a ripe new world burgeoning in the trans-Allegheny wilds.

In the twenty-first century, we are more likely to read Felix Walker's memoir as reverie. We might even be tempted to perceive "new sky and strange earth" as paradise regained. But in doing so, we ignore the settled-versus-wild binary that has obtained throughout much of America's cultural history. We must look with the colonist's eyes to see the (large, hairy, bovine) devil in Walker's "garden." The young explorer's legendary precursor, Daniel Boone, first visited Kentucky in 1769, an expedition recounted in the partially fictitious "Adventures of Col. Daniel Boon," a foundational document of American mythopoesis (Filson 39-62). Like Felix Walker, Boone also recalled the multitudes of buffalo he saw there. Unlike Walker, however, Boone did not simply marvel at the creature's abundance. Instead, as he looked back from 1784—nearly a decade after settling Boonesborough—he incorporated his own sighting of the animate wilderness into a pragmatic consideration of how the beastly and the human contend for valuable real estate: "The buffaloes were more frequent than I have seen cattle in the settlements, browzing on the leaves of the cane, or croping the herbage on those extensive plains, fearless, because ignorant, of the violence of man" (40). Again, it may be difficult for twenty-first-century Americans to understand what Boone implies: all those buffalo, to us representing the premature ghosts of a lost wild America, would have seemed to early settlers of the wilderness defilers of crops, and hence, vermin. These buffalo were not just beasts; they were metonymy. They stood for the wilderness, and thus for what had to be defeated.

The buffalo were the spirit of the place, and as long as they were in evidence, the job of settling was not done. As Boone's recent biographer Robert Morgan writes, "In Boone's time it was understood to be a man's duty to clear land and open roads, to let the light of civilization and churches into the threatening wilderness" (158). For

settlers pushing into deepest America, the closing of the wilderness was key to a master narrative. "Settling" meant making something useful of the wilds. Today, writes Robert Morgan, we "tend to see trees as friends and forests as welcoming shade." But, he continues, "those on the frontier more often viewed trees as enemies and forests as a refuge for Indians, panthers, wolves. It was one's duty to fell the threatening trees and clear away the brush and let the sunlight of calm and reason into the swamps and hollows (176). Likewise, as rational citizens of the Enlightenment, colonists were bound to bring reason to dark places: "A settler went to war, not only with Indians and the British, but with briar and mighty oak tree" (176).

In 1784, dutiful Boone's earliest biographer—and mythologizer—John Filson opened his ghostwritten "memoir" of Boone with a description of how, "by the permission or disposal of Providence . . . the mysterious will of Heaven is unfolded" and "Kentucke, lately an howling wilderness" has "become a fruitful field" (39). Like Morgan, Filson casts the frontier drama as warfare: "Here, where the hand of violence shed the blood of the innocent; where the horrid yells of savages . . . sounded in our ears, we now hear the praises and adorations of our Creator; where wretched wigwams stood, . . . we behold the foundations of cities" (39-40). Thus, Filson frames the frontier myth with a simplistic but powerful set of binaries: *howling wilderness* / *fruitful field*; *horrid yells of savages* / *adorations of our Creator*; *wretched wigwams* / *foundations of cities* (39), and so on throughout the *Adventures of Col. Daniel Boon*. Understanding the immense power of these binaries, home missionaries had a tool for stigmatizing the "degenerate" southern mountains and making them exploitable, conquerable wilderness.

Instruments Ordained

Boone's memoir ends on a note of triumph, with the "howling wilderness" settled. Boone has suffered much to see ""Peace crown[ing] the sylvan shade" (61). It has been his duty to do so; he has been "an instrument ordained to settle the wilderness" (61), an agent of God's will. But, in the writings from the *American Missionary Association* magazine one hundred years later, the accomplishments of Boone and the other pioneers seem to have been temporary. Based on these writings, as well as that of the Local Colorists and philanthropical polemicists, the wilderness would appear to have re-established itself throughout their "field,"—in the mountains, in the people who lived in the mountains, and in the writing about the mountains. Thus, in the years when the AMA began paying special attention to the "the mountain country inhabited largely by people of European descent" (Field 238), its representatives looked repeatedly to the theme of wilderness bounty, but from a strikingly negative perspective. In the late nineteenth century, these missionaries' writing took on, at best, a tone of regret for leaving God's wilderness work undone. (At worst, the rhetoric is agonized.) Now no buffalo roamed the southern mountains (and few were to be found in the West), but other spirits of the wilderness had appeared and thus had to be domesticated or destroyed.

To the missionaries, the unsettled wilderness was *unsettling*. And thus, in their writing they habitually raise the myth of wilderness only to focus on why they must be prime actors in the frontier's tardy passing. To an extent, they could do much of their rhetorical work simply by telling audiences of bourgeois New Englanders—people from the same class and region as most of the missionaries—what the AMA was up against: how wild the wilderness really was, and what dangers and opportunities the "retarded frontier" offered (Vincent).

In January 1887, C.J. Ryder included this brief geography lesson in his "Notes in the Saddle" column for the *American Missionary*: "This region has only recently been opened to the outside world. Coal fields are abundant, and timber of the very best kinds still stands in vast forests on the hillsides and along the streams" (12). His report closely echoed what W.F. Day had written three months earlier: "A goodly land it seems to be, abounding with the choicest of pine and hard wood timber springing from a fertile soil, with innumerable and unfailing streams, with coal beds larger than those of Pennsylvania or Great Britain, with beds of iron ore to match, and large quantities of excellent marble close at hand" (282). Such details echo the descriptions of exploitable fecundity found in the reports of Felix Walker and Daniel Boone, as well as in the land speculation advertisements of John Filson. But they also represent a rebuke to Ryder's contemporary progressives: such plenty in a locale suggested work had been left undone and pious duties unmet.

As the AMA formulated its strategy for working in the southern mountains, no myth proved more useful than that civilization had passed by the mountains and left them essentially as wild as the early Trans-Allegheny explorers found them. In 1889, for example, B. Dodge allegorized mountain missionary work as the hard work of clearing land from a wasteland: "the axe is then laid at the very root of the tree of a squalid life of illiteracy, and a life of Christian culture and hope comes in its place" (53). Or, as "A Teacher" puts it in a "Hickory Creek," published in June 1891, "Perhaps my mission may be to show this field of briars to others" (227). In 1894 C.J. Ryder addressed the AMA: "Nine years ago I took my first journey through the mountains of the South as Field Superintendent of the Association. . . . [H]ere in these weird old mountains, among people who were simply and utterly unfamiliar with the progress of the nineteenth century, . . . this was

like a chapter from the 'Arabian Nights'" (130). In Ryder's adjective-heavy prose, the wilderness is described but not shown: *new*; *strange*; *weird*; *old*; *unfamiliar*; and, to confirm the absolute otherness of the southern mountains, he compares what he has seen not with a Local Colorist's story but with *The Arabian Nights*.

The wilderness remained, or had returned—but was there an animate spirit to replace the massacred buffalo? Although there were certainly animals in the woods and the mountains, it was the people who lived, nearly wild themselves, in this wilderness who came to represent its untamed character. "A Teacher," not only speaks about the backwardness of the mountains; they also follow earlier writers' examples of animating the wilderness in a parable of surprising power. What Ryder does with such modifiers as *weird* and *strange*, "A Teacher" does with a story that is itself disturbingly weird. At first, the description of "a walk from school" is picturesque: "Blue hills after hills rose up before and on every side, as I climbed through the narrow gorges. The birds sang their sweet calls to each other in a perfect flood of melody" (226). But this misleadingly Edenic wilderness reveals the human damage hiding in its hollows, the *spiritus loci* updated for the resurrected wilderness myth: "I saw a short distance before me, jumping from rock to rock across a stream, the wildest looking child I had yet seen on the mountains. She was about eleven years of age, not half clothed, with a shock of yellow, tangled hair. She looked like an evil sprite" (226). Even though taken aback, A Teacher is still able to pass moral judgment and call the girl's appearance "evil"—a hasty conclusion that also implies judgment about the child's character. Still, A Teacher reaches out—" I tried to converse with her, but could only draw from her the monosyllable, 'hugh'"—before returning to Othering the waif: "She seemed to me like an apparition from another and inferior world" (226).

Boone and Felix Walker had written about a wilderness "abounding with wild game" and worked to tame the wilderness. But now, just over a century after John Filson began the mythologizing Boone the wilderness-tamer, here is an epiphany—part *Nell* and part *Deliverance*—that replaces herds of buffalo with a babbling "evil sprite," the image of human devolution in that "field of briars," the wilderness reborn and bound up in human perversity.

Awaiting the Ax

The "evil sprite" epitomizes wilderness redux, an image of the undead "inferior world," a de-romanticized version of the mountain maidens John Fox, Jr. was offering in contemporaneous works like *A Mountain Europa* and *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine*. She is a striking specimen, but hardly unique in missionaries' depictions of the "retarded frontier" and its people. Ellen (Mrs. A.A.) Myers, one of the most important, sincere, and harmful of the mountain missionaries (McCauley 403-10), artlessly dehumanizes and stereotypes the people in her mission as "hundreds of thousands [with] no more aspiration than the brute in their field. . . . Give them tobacco, and whiskey, and pistols," she writes of these beasts, "a little meal and bacon and coffee, a crude bed and a roof, and that, to them, is living. Oh, those purposeless lives! They exist simply because they are in the world and cannot help it" (19). Compared with the clumsiness of Myers's rhetoric, the story of the sprite reveals just how much art went into crafting "A Teacher's" subtle parable of backsliding. But Myers's message to elite readers is the same: to see the degeneracy in their own backyard.

Those themes found even subtler forms in some of the realistic writing AMA missionaries published. In 1894, the Reverend J.W. Doane addressed the membership on the topic of "Mountain Work." He began, however, with a description of life long since passed not in the mountains

but miles away in the Kentucky Bluegrass, where his "grandfathers were among the earliest settlers, [arriving] when the forest was almost unmolested by the woodman's axe. . . . They . . . improved their farms by building cabins," writes Doane, "clearing the land and tending their small crops. My father learned at an early age to make war against the forest" (455). Doane turns from this bellicose rhetoric to cataloging deceptively nostalgic and bucolic images: "I have seen the log house where my father was born. I have seen the spinning-wheel that my grandmother used, while she seated my father in a horse collar to keep him quiet and out of mischief. I have seen the sheep-skin my grandfather used for a saddle" (455). This description is not what *is*, but rather what *was*: a primitive world happily discarded. Doane is not just aiming for a mood of nostalgia but of atavism. He is unsentimentally describing how civilized people "improve" nature: they create by building cabins and planting crops, and they destroy by "mak[ing] war against the forest" and by "molesting" the trees.

Doane goes on to observe that, while the Bluegrass region of Kentucky is part of the modern world in 1894, the AMA's missionary fields to the south and east remain mired in the past: "The mountain regions of Kentucky are a survival of the pioneer times," he writes. "They are in about the same condition the bluegrass regions were in the boyhood days of my grandfather" (455). "Spinning and weaving are still done by the housewife," he continues. "The spinning wheel and the loom, together with beds, a table, a few chairs of home make, and sometimes a stove, comprise the furniture of the log cabins in country districts" (455-56). Doane is echoing and amplifying what the Reverend C. W. Shelton had reported to his audience of New Englanders five years earlier in the August 1889 *American Missionary*: "As their fathers lived, so . . . have they. . . . The open fire-place, the spinning-wheel and the

home-spun jeans are familiar sights. Forgotten by the rest of the world, they, in turn, forget that beyond these mountain peaks . . . a nation has pressed forward" (213). He describes how a "home is begun" in these precincts, linking an "ignorant and poor" young couple in the present-day mountains with their ancestors from a century or more earlier: "[I]t may be they are legally married. A building-bee is announced, a little cabin erected, a few pigs bought or given, a few trees girdled, some corn planted,"—so far the story is pleasant enough, but its tone shifts to the contemptuous—"in so crude and shiftless a way that even an Indian, in his first attempts at farming, would be ashamed to own it" (214). For the missionaries, it is as if the mountain people are still living in the earliest days of white settlement, but they have lost the initiative and drive that the earlier frontier story mythologized. Their ancestors were industrious, but they are content being shiftless and ignorant, barely even white.

While repeatedly noting the abundance of natural resources available to mountain people, the AMA missionaries condemned mountaineers' stubborn refusal to use those resources. That is, left to their own devices, they rejected the myth of ownership Richard Slotkin describes, refusing to "prove . . . they truly belonged to the place, [to] bring . . . Christian civilization to the wilderness" and fulfill "their own destiny as children of Jehovah . . . and of the land's destiny as the creation of God" (269). Despite being given some of the very best land in the world, the unmotivated mountain people perversely resisted doing God's will. "My people are not a progressive people," wrote the Reverend W.G. Olinger, from eastern Tennessee, in 1894. They "are satisfied to live as their fathers and grandfathers lived in the same little old 'log cabin,' . . . cooking by the fire place, with 'hog and hominy,' and the veritable 'corn dodger' as staple articles of diet; fruit . . . is but little cultivated, they being

satisfied with that which grows wild" (462). Olinger's antipathy toward "being satisfied" with what nature itself provides, as well as with such old-fashioned food practices as cooking over a fire and serving cornmeal-based foods, seems out of touch with today's environmental ethos, but in his day, relying on "that which grows wild" signified all that was retrograde, all that was "not . . . progressive." It was this wild element in America that demanded cultivation according to the AMA and others like them.

Bridging Streams, Crossing Valleys, Piercing Mountains Through

For the missionaries, the once-more useful myth of the wilderness had special currency when it came to the mountain people they served. Progress in the form of Northeastern capitalism had discovered the mountains. Since the mountain people themselves had not accepted their destiny to settle the wilderness, outsiders like the missionaries and developers rationalized that they would modernize the mountains instead. Even better, if the mountain people were made ready for the advance of civilization into their retarded frontier, they too would profit. Of course, they would have to surrender their pride as well as their autonomy, and accept the help of others—the AMA, for example—to move into a better future that would inevitably arrive. To introduce this mythology into the discourse of their genteel northeastern supporters, the AMA framed the mountains in two ways: as a missionary field that had to be settled in accordance with God's will; and as a place where intrusive industry, with its modern(izing) ways, could help them succeed in that mission.

Thus, C.W. Shelton wrote that "the day of isolation for this people is rapidly passing away. Yankee inquisitiveness has discovered that these mountains are full of the best coal and iron—Northern capital has already

begun to strip them of their rich forests of black walnut, oak and pine" (216). Given the fact that industrialization has resulted in waves of environmental catastrophe (deforestation, strip mining, mountaintop removal), Shelton's celebration of outsider capital reads like dark comedy. The Anthropocene had truly come to Appalachia: "The rivers are carrying these logs by the thousands to the immense mills," he continues, "which in turn are making the large towns, toward which already the railroad is hastening. . . . Engineering skill is bridging streams, crossing valleys, climbing mountains or piercing them through" (216). Although many historians date the Great Acceleration (when technological advances seemingly tumbled over each other to create the modern world) to the mid-twentieth century, the rapid, cumulative acceleration of anthropogenic environmental change is already apparent and celebrated in Shelton's late nineteenth-century aspiration for regional progress: "From their long sleep of a century," he writes, "these valleys, these homes, this whole people are awakening. A new life is beginning, a new future, opening" (216).

Such sentiments merely suggested the danger mountain people faced if they continued sleeping through the wakeup call of modernity. But other AMA missionaries issued more obvious threats about the prospect: if the mountain people chose not to benefit from the exploitation of their region, outsiders would be only too happy to do so. A piece with the portentous title "What is Yet Undeveloped in the Mountain Region of the South" coldly suggests that, although "[i]n mining and manufacturing, the recent developments in the South are astonishing[,] there is more to come. Nature has not yielded up all her treasures, and skillful hands have not done all their work" (282). Those skillful hands would not necessarily belong to mountain people. In the Forty-Second Annual Report of the AMA, another

correspondent wrote, “Great forests of black walnut, poplar, and other valuable timber, are awaiting the woodman’s ax and the lumberman’s mill. Railroads are either built, building or planned for every part to carry away its wonderful natural resources.” The warning is made even more explicit: “The people are poor, but the land is rich, and a few years hence will see wealth in the place of poverty, in the hands of either the natives, or those who will have displaced them” (Forty-Second Annual Report 37).

Thus, the wilderness-clearing work for which God ordained Daniel Boone and the settlers who came after him still remained for the missionaries and their allies, the industrialists, to complete. In December 1889, the Reverend D.M. Fisk observed that “[i]n an age that has harnessed mechanism, beast, and steam to the plow, scythe, sickle and flail, these owners of mountains of iron and mines of power still indolently vex a grudging soil with tools of such barbaric simplicity that their intrusion is scarcely more than a provocation to weeds” (358-59). According to Fisk, it was high time that mountain people give up barbaric ways: in the age of machines, the wilderness must yield.

Harvest

The culmination of the wilderness motif—harvesting what they had planted in the land they had cleared—was on the home missionaries’ minds from the moment they began insisting that work remained to be done in the mountains. For instance, in October 1886, an anonymous correspondent wrote about “the ripeness of the field for the harvest which we are asked to reap” (“Our Mountain Work in Tennessee” 284). In 1889, Fisk wrote that “Wherever the ground has been broken by faithful men there is a crop to show as returns for invested toil” (359). And, in 1891, a correspondent quoted scripture both

to justify and to allegorize "mountain work": "Say not ye, there are yet four months and then cometh the harvest? Behold I say unto you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35; quoted in "A Teacher" 228).

In the hands of their industrialist allies, the missionaries' metaphorical use of the taming-the-wilderness myth through clearing, tilling, and harvesting the land now became literal. The missionaries were not simply aware of this development but welcomed the coming of industry as a marker of and means to civilization. They saw the intent of God in the modernizing of the mountains. "The future of this region," wrote Frank P. Woodbury in December 1890, is "fixed by the hand of Omnipotence" (382). God's plan centered on clearing the wilderness, but now the tools were no longer those of "barbaric simplicity" (Fisk 359). Instead, machines made clearing the wilderness brutally efficient. Thus, C.J. Ryder predicts how the "retarded frontier" will pass: "[A] vast army of men [is] crowding into this region to gather its wonderful wealth. . . . Within a few years, hundreds of coal mines will pour out their black streams along the railroads, many of which are as yet unbuilt. Furnace fires will light up the darkness of the night along the hillsides" ("Notes" 12). An unnamed correspondent echoed Ryder four years later in a passage that stunningly conflates industrial and agricultural imagery to confirm where the wilderness motif in missionary writing had been leading: "In mining and manufacturing, the recent developments in the South are astonishing. Yet there is more to come." Like other predictions of the Appalachian future, this correspondent hints at an apocalyptic future when all will be put a-right: "The culture of the school and church will smelt, mould and polish. . . . The bench, the bar, and the pulpit will be enriched, and a new and more effective life will be infused into the industries of farm, mine, factory and shop. No

richer harvest will come from any field of Christian labor" ("What Is Yet Undeveloped" 282-83).

The home missionaries' settlement narrative—which repeatedly stated that wildness, in both nature and human beings, must be subdued, whether by modern theology, modern education, modern capital, or modern technology—"cleared the field," as it were, for the uplifting of the southern mountains region, and then, through partnership with modern industry, for its exploitation. In AMA polemical writing, the fact that wilderness settlement had not taken hold in one of the places where the mythologizing about it started—that is in the southern mountains or present-day Appalachia—required that latter-day "settlers" like missionaries, entrepreneurs, and earlier, failed, settlers to get the job done. Thus, the wilderness myth was not simply reborn but rather re-birthed by parties who had excellent reasons to wish that rebirth.

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Temporal Architecture in "The Tell-Tale Heart": A Bergsonian Analysis of Reader Experience

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Introduction

"TRUE!—nervous—very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am" (Poe 555). From its opening line, Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Tell-Tale Heart" constructs a peculiar temporal architecture through its distinctive use of punctuation, repetition, and fragmentation. The dash that cleaves the opening declaration, the doubled "very," and the temporal shift from "had been" to "am" immediately establish a complex relationship with time that persists throughout the narrative. This manipulation of textual elements does more than merely decorate the prose—it fundamentally shapes the reader's temporal experience of the text. Henri Bergson's concept of *durée*, developed in his seminal nineteenth-century works, provides an illuminating framework for understanding Poe's narrative technique that generates a temporal experience. In *Time and Free Will* (1889), Bergson introduces *durée* as pure, lived time—a continuous multiplicity that exists in consciousness, distinct from the spatially conceived time of clocks and calendars (100). This conception of time as a qualitative experience rather than a quantitative measurement, offers crucial insights into how literary texts can create temporal effects that transcend their status as static, spatial arrangements of words on a page. The intersection of Poe's narrative technique with Bergson's

philosophical framework reveals a fascinating paradox at the heart of literary temporal experience: while the text exists as a collection of discrete elements—words, punctuation marks, spaces—these elements combine in the reader's consciousness to create a continuous, lived experience of time. This paper argues that Poe's manipulation of textual elements in “The Tell-Tale Heart” creates a structured temporal experience. This experience manifests as a continuous multiplicity in the reader's consciousness, thus demonstrating Poe’s construction of narrative time as providing the framework through which readers synthesize their own temporal experience of the text.

Specifically, the analysis will examine how Poe’s narrative techniques—including strategic use of dashes, repetition patterns, and syntactic fragmentation—function as temporal markers that guide the reader's experience. Firstly, we will establish a theoretical framework based on Bergson's nineteenth-century writings on time and consciousness; secondly, we will analyse specific textual elements: punctuation, fragmentation and repetition function, as temporal markers; thirdly, we will use this analysis to lead to a broader discussion of how these discrete elements combine in the reader's consciousness to create a continuous temporal experience; and finally, we will consider the implications of this analysis for understanding literary temporality and reader experience.

Theoretical Framework: Bergson's *Durée* in Literary Context

Henri Bergson's concept of *durée* provides a revolutionary framework for understanding temporal experience, especially when applied to literary analyses. At its core, *durée* represents pure, lived time: a continuous flow of experience that exists in consciousness, fundamentally distinct from the spatially conceived time

of clocks and calendars. This section establishes the theoretical groundwork for understanding Poe's narrative technique in “The Tell-Tale Heart” which creates a temporal experience that manifests as "continuous multiplicity" (Deleuze, *Bergsonism* 38).

Bergson argues that our fundamental misunderstanding of time stems from our tendency to treat it as a form of space, a “homogeneous medium,” where discrete moments align sequentially “to form a discrete multiplicity” (Bergson, *Time and Free Will* 90). This spatial conception of time, while useful for practical purposes, fails to capture the true nature of temporal experience. Instead, Bergson proposes *durée* as "the temporal experience of consciousness, which is continuous and irreversible, and involves the interpenetration of the past within the present, as well as the projection of the present towards the future" (Atkinson 18).

This understanding of time as *durée* is crucial for our analysis of literary temporality. In *durée*, the “past” is not something left behind but remains present in the “present,” influencing all our emotions, feelings, actions, and reactions. Our “Before” is part of our “Now.” Our consciousness cannot be laid out as discrete successions of events on a timeline, as past events form memories that actively shape our present perceptions and decisions.

Spatial Versus Temporal Understanding

The distinction between spatial and temporal understanding becomes particularly relevant when examining literary texts. Traditional analyses often segment or separate narrative elements into discrete units—words, sentences, paragraphs—treating each as equivalent in temporal value. However, as Bergson points out, this is an "illusory quantification of qualitative

psychological states that obscures the fundamental difference between space and time" (Bogue 13).

Consider the opening passage of “The Tell-Tale Heart:” "TRUE!—nervous—very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why *will* you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses—not destroyed—not dulled them" (Poe 555). A spatial analysis would segment this passage into its constituent elements: four dashes, an exclamation mark, a question mark, repetition of "very," and the temporal shift from "had been" to "am." Each element occupies its own space on the page, suggesting a static arrangement. Yet, in the reader’s consciousness, these elements combine to form a dynamic temporal experience. The initial exclamation "TRUE!" erupts as a sudden intensity, disrupted by dashes that fracture the syntax and mirror the narrator’s agitated state. These ruptures do not merely separate words but create temporal pauses that stretch the moment, allowing past ("had been") and present ("am") to interpenetrate, as Bergson describes in his concept of *durée* (*Time and Free Will* 100). The repetition of "very" accelerates this flow, building a qualitative tension that transcends the physical space it occupies. Rather than a series of isolated units, the passage unfolds as a "qualitative multiplicity," where each element informs and transforms the others, immersing the reader in the narrator’s psychological time.

This interplay between spatial form and temporal experience reaches a crescendo in the story’s climactic confession: "Villains!" I shrieked, "dissemble no more! I admit the deed!—tear up the planks!—here, here!—it is the beating of his hideous heart!" (Poe 559). On the page, the succession of exclamation marks and dashes appears as a fragmented layout, each mark a distinct spatial entity. However, in *durée*, these elements coalesce into a unified temporal surge. The exclamations propel the narrative forward with accelerating urgency, while the dashes

introduce pauses that paradoxically heighten the momentum, reflecting the narrator's unravelling psyche. Bergson's distinction between spatial "discrete multiplicity" and temporal "continuous multiplicity" (Deleuze, *Bergsonism* 37) is vividly realized here: the text's physical structure provides a scaffold, but its significance emerges as a fluid, irreversible flow in the reader's consciousness. The past act of murder, the present confession, and the imagined heartbeat collapse into a single experiential moment, embodying Bergson's assertion that "the temporal experience of consciousness... involves the interpenetration of the past within the present" (Atkinson 18).

In literature, this spatial-temporal tension operates as a composite, where, as Deleuze interprets Bergson, space introduces "homogeneous and discontinuous sections," while duration brings "internal succession that is both heterogeneous and continuous" (*Bergsonism* 37). Poe's text exists simultaneously as a spatial arrangement and a temporal experience, but its true power lies in how these discrete elements—punctuation, repetition, syntax—merge with the reader's consciousness to create *durée*. By orchestrating such effects, Poe transforms the static page into a living temporal architecture, demonstrating how literary texts can transcend their spatial constraints to evoke a continuous, qualitative experience of time.

Continuous Multiplicity in Literary Experience

The concept of continuous multiplicity helps us understand how literary texts generate temporal experiences. Unlike discrete multiplicities that can be counted and divided without changing their nature, continuous multiplicities change in kind with each division. This distinction helps explain how literary elements combine to create a qualitatively different experience in the reader's consciousness. In "The Tell-Tale

Heart," each word and punctuation mark contributes to a continuous flow of experience that cannot be reduced to its constituent parts. According to Bergson, these qualitative states constantly interpenetrate to create the whole, the *durée*, which encompasses the entirety of the reader's lived/temporal experience—the previous readings, personal experiences, and emotional states.

From Discrete Elements to Continuous Experience

Bergson's cone model of memory proves invaluable for understanding readers' engagement with literary texts. In *Matter and Memory*, he presents this model, where a cone (SAB) intersects with a plane (P), with the plane representing "the plane of my actual representation of the universe" and the cone embodying the totality of memory (152). Thus, transformation of discrete textual elements into continuous temporal experience occurs through the complex interaction between the reader's *durée* and the text.

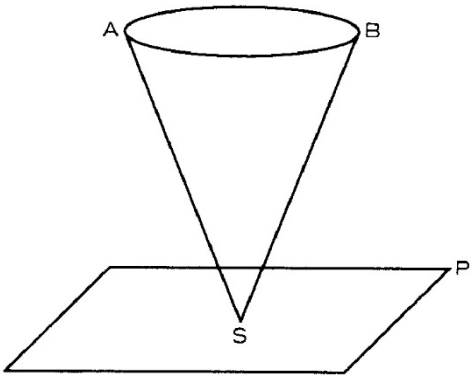

Fig. 1. *Bergson's Cone of Memory*

Applying this model to "The Tell-Tale Heart," the plane P represents the text itself; and the cone represents the reader's entire past, their accumulated memories, experiences, and psychological states. The apex S, where the cone intersects with the plane, represents the present moment of reading where memory meets current perception. This intersection is crucial for understanding how discrete textual elements transform into continuous experience. Bergson explains,

"My mental state, as it advances on the road of time, is continually swelling with the duration which it accumulates: it goes on increasing—rolling upon itself, as a snowball on the snow" (*Creative Evolution* 4). In reading, each textual element encounters not just the reader's immediate attention but their entire durational past.

When a reader encounters Poe's phrase from "The Tell-Tale Heart," "True!—nervous—very, very dreadfully nervous" (555), the experience isn't simply of discrete words and dashes, but a synthesis where these elements interact with the reader's accumulated past, including their understanding of anxiety, personal experiences of nervousness, and previous encounters with unreliable narrators. The continuous nature of this experience emerges from contracting memory, where the totality of one's past keeps accumulating each moment of the present to itself. The discrete elements of the text serve as "hyphen," or the bridge between external influence (the text) and personal action (the reader's response) [Bergson, *Matter and Memory* 151]. This connection explains why each reading of the text is a unique temporal experience. The plane of representation (the text) remains constant, but it intersects with each reader's unique durational whole, which is their personal cone of memory.

Thus, Poe's careful arrangement of textual elements creates a temporal architecture that intersects with and activates the reader's durational experience. The text's discrete elements—dashes, repetitions, and exclamations—serve as points of intersection with the reader's memory cone creating Bergson's "composite of space and duration" (Deleuze, *Bergsonism* 37). The spatial arrangement of the text provides the framework, but it is the intersection with the reader's *durée* that transforms these discrete elements into a continuous temporal experience. Thus, literary texts transform spatial

arrangements of words into "the temporal experience of consciousness, which is continuous and irreversible" (Atkinson 18). It reveals Poe's narrative technique in creating a temporal architecture to be experienced.

Textual Architecture in "The Tell-Tale Heart"

Punctuation as Temporal Markers

In “The Tell-Tale Heart,” the deployment of punctuation marks creates a complex temporal architecture that shapes the reader's durational experience. Each dash, ellipsis, and exclamation mark serves as a "temporal marker," a point where the text's spatial arrangement intersects with the reader's durational consciousness to create specific temporal effects.

The Dash as Temporal Rupture

In the story, the dash emerges as Poe’s primary instrument for temporal manipulation, creating "durational breaks" that disrupt the narrative flow and shape the reader’s experience of time. Far from mere grammatical pauses, these dashes function as "temporal markers," points where the text’s spatial arrangement intersects with the reader’s consciousness to evoke Bergson’s durée—a continuous, qualitative flow distinct from measurable, spatial time (Bergson, *Time and Free Will* 104). A striking instance occurs in the climactic heartbeat sequence: "It grew louder—louder—louder!" (Poe 559). Here, each dash punctuates the escalating auditory hallucination, fragmenting the sentence into discrete units on the page. Yet, in the reader’s temporal experience, these breaks do not isolate; they intensify. The dashes create moments of suspension that amplify the psychological tension, each pause a qualitative shift that builds toward an overwhelming crescendo, aligning with Bergson’s notion that duration "divides only by changing in kind" (Deleuze, *Bergsonism* 40).

This temporal rupture transcends spatial segmentation by mirroring the narrator's fractured psyche, drawing the reader into a "staccato *durée,*" a paradoxical blend of fragmentation and continuity. The first dash after "louder" suspends the initial sensation, allowing it to linger in consciousness; the second deepens this effect, interpenetrating the prior moment with heightened urgency; the third propels the sequence into a near-unbearable intensity. Unlike a clock's uniform ticks, this progression is not a "difference of degree" but a "difference in kind" (Deleuze, *Bergsonism* 13–35), as each interval transforms the reader's experience qualitatively rather than cumulatively. The dash, then, becomes a temporal fold where chronological progression momentarily folds back on itself immersing the reader in an extended present saturated with the narrator's paranoia. As E. Arthur Robinson notes, such "intervals of strained attention are prolonged until the effect resembles that of slow motion" (371), but this slowness paradoxically accelerates the psychological momentum, embodying Bergson's idea of duration as an irreversible, heterogeneous flow.

Poe's use of the dash thus encapsulates a complex durational architecture. Beyond pausing the narrative—as seen in moments of false confidence or meticulous action elsewhere—it actively constructs a temporal experience where fragmentation serves continuity. In this single sequence, the dashes transform the spatial layout into a dynamic interplay of suspension and surge, guiding the reader through a lived experience of time that transcends the text's static form. This technique exemplifies how Poe leverages punctuation to create a temporal rhythm that resonates with Bergson's philosophy, immersing the reader in the narrative's intricate psychological and temporal depth.

Exclamation Marks and Temporal Acceleration

The exclamation marks serve as potent "durational spikes," accelerating the temporal experience and immersing the reader in the narrator's psychological unravelling. These punctuation markers transcend their grammatical role, functioning as temporal accelerants that align with Bergson's *durée* (Bergson, *Time and Free Will* 100). This effect is most pronounced in the climactic moment of auditory hallucination: "Almighty God!—no, no! They heard!—they suspected!—they knew!—they were making a mockery of my horror![. . .] I felt that I must scream or die!—and now—again!—hark! louder! louder! louder! louder!" (Poe 559). Here, each exclamation mark punctuates a surge of emotional intensity, collapsing chronological time into a series of escalating peaks. The rapid succession—"heard!—suspected!—knew!"—propels the narrative forward, while the repetition of "louder!" intensifies this momentum, transforming the text into a "temporal vortex" that mirrors the narrator's spiralling panic. Far from mere emphasis, these exclamations create a qualitative progression in the reader's consciousness, as Bergson describes when past and present interpenetrate to form a continuous multiplicity (Deleuze, *Bergsonism* 37). The initial "Almighty God!" erupts as a cry of desperation, its force amplified by subsequent exclamations that layer suspicion and guilt atop one another. The dashes interspersed among them heighten this effect, pausing the flow only to intensify its resurgence, while "louder! louder! louder! louder!" collapses time into a singular, unbearable moment. This acceleration intersects the text's spatial plane with the reader's memory cone, generating a lived experience where each mark evokes prior tensions (anticipation, paranoia, confession) culminating in a crescendo that transcends linear progression. As Benjamin Franklin Fisher observes, "sound and sense meld here as

we more typically think of them melding in a poem" (87), suggesting that exclamation marks orchestrate a temporal rhythm that draws the reader into the narrator's breakdown. Poe leverages these markers to construct a dynamic *durée*, accelerating psychological time beyond the text's static form.

Sentence Length and Temporal Rhythm

The varying lengths in the sentences of the text serve as a sophisticated mechanism for temporal modulation, creating "durational waves" that shape the reader's experience of time. These shifts between terse, staccato sentences and longer, flowing ones construct a rhythmic structure that aligns with Bergson's *durée*—a qualitative flow where consciousness navigates varying tensions (Bergson, *Time and Free Will* 100). A striking example appears early: "Object there was none. Passion there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult" (Poe 555). This succession of short, declarative sentences compresses time into discrete bursts, each statement a standalone pulse. Yet, in the reader's consciousness, these units flow together, creating a "temporal compression" that conveys urgency and detachment. The brevity mirrors the narrator's attempt at rational control, but the rapid sequence evokes a qualitative tension, as Bergson suggests, where past affection and present intent interpenetrate subtly within a continuous present.

This rhythmic modulation deepens in moments of sensory intensity: "Presently I heard a slight groan, and I knew it was the groan of mortal terror. It was not a groan of pain or of grief—oh, no!—it was the low stifled sound that arises from the bottom of the soul when overcharged with awe" (Poe 556). Here, the progression from a medium length opening to a short negation and then an expansive description creates a "durational wave." The initial

sentence unfolds steadily, establishing anticipation: the abrupt "oh, no!" contracts time into a sharp peak of realization; the final clause stretches it again, immersing the reader in the narrator's layered perception. This shift requires the reader's consciousness to adjust dynamically, reflecting Bergson's idea of "different tensions" in psychological time (Bergson, *Matter and Memory* 207). The longer sentence doesn't merely extend duration quantitatively—it qualitatively deepens the experience, blending awe, memory, and terror into a heterogeneous flow.

Poe's alternation between compressed and expanded forms—evident elsewhere in stark assertions or detailed confessions—constructs a "durational score" that prevents the reader from settling into a single temporal mode. These variations mirror the narrator's oscillating psyche, from calculated restraint to obsessive unravelling, and align with Bergson's view that consciousness passes through shifting intensities. By modulating sentence length, Poe crafts a temporal rhythm that guides the reader through a continuous yet varied *durée*, transforming static text into a lived experience of time's qualitative multiplicity.

Composite Temporal Effects

Poe's complex temporal architecture uses punctuation to create a rhythmic layering of thought: "And now have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over-acuteness of the senses?—now, I say, there came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound, such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton" (Poe 557); the dash functions as a pivot point that shifts the narrative from internal assertion to sensory description. This interplay creates a "temporal counterpoint," where different types of punctuation establish varying durational effects that combine in the reader's consciousness. Again—"Ha!—

would a madman have been so wise as this? And then, when my head was well in the room, I undid the lantern cautiously—oh, so cautiously—cautiously (for the hinges creaked)—I undid it just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye" (Poe 555)—the intricate interplay of exclamation marks, dashes, and parentheses create a "continuous multiplicity," (Deleuze, *Bergsonism* 38) where each punctuation mark contributes to a complex temporal experience that transcends simple chronological progression.

The multi-layered use of punctuation aligns with Bergson's understanding of how discrete elements combine to create continuous experience through their interaction with memory. Each punctuation mark serves as a "hyphen" (Bergson, *Matter and Memory* 151) between the text and the reader's consciousness, creating intersection of the reader's durational whole with the narrative's temporal framework. The cumulative effect of Poe's punctuation creates a "temporal palimpsest," where each mark contributes to a layered durational experience that intensifies as the story progresses. This demonstrates how punctuation can function as instruments for temporal manipulation, creating points where the spatial arrangement of the text intersects with the reader's durational consciousness to generate complex temporal experiences that align with Bergson's conception of pure duration.

Fragmentation and Narrative Time

The use of "fragmented" narrative is a crucial mechanism for temporal manipulation, creating qualitative multiplicities in the reader's experience. Through fractured sentence structures, interrupted thoughts, and strategic paragraph breaks, Poe constructs a temporal architecture that mirrors both the narrator's psychological state and the story's thematic concerns with time and consciousness.

Sentence Structure Fragmentation

Poe's deliberate fracturing of conventional sentence structure in "The Tell-Tale Heart" generates a "micro-durational" experience that disrupts linear temporal expectations, aligning with Bergson's *durée*—a continuous flow where qualitative states interpenetrate (Bergson, *Time and Free Will* 104). A key instance occurs in the narrator's perception: "to feel—although he neither saw nor heard—to feel the presence of my head within the room" (Poe 557). The dashes fracture the syntax into disjointed segments, creating a temporal echo on the page. Yet, in the reader's consciousness, these breaks fuse into a continuous experience, synthesizing past sensation and present awareness. The repeated "to feel" frames the clause "although he neither saw nor heard," which interrupts with a negated sensory layer, amplifying the focus on intangible perception. This structure embodies Bergson's view of duration as "a succession of qualitative changes" that meld together (Bergson, *Time and Free Will* 104). The dashes stretch the moment, folding absence into presence, while the reader bridges the gaps, mirroring the narrator's hypersensitivity. Poe thus crafts a syntactic *durée* where fragmentation yields a heterogeneous now, immersing the reader in the narrative's psychological time.

Interrupted Thoughts and Temporal Effect

Poe's use of interrupted thoughts disrupts narrative continuity, generating "temporal whirlpools" that align with Bergson's *durée*. A pivotal example occurs at the climax: "I felt that I must scream or die!—and now—again!—hark! louder! louder! louder! louder!" (Poe 559). Here, dashes fracture the narrator's escalating panic, segmenting the sentence into bursts of intensity. The initial clause conveys desperation, halted by a dash that suspends time; "and now—again!" introduces a recursive loop,

folding the immediate past into the present; "hark!" jolts attention forward, while "louder!" repetitions spiral the auditory hallucination into a crescendo. In the reader's consciousness, these interruptions do not isolate—they coalesce into a continuous surge, a qualitative shift that defies linear progression.

Bergson describes duration as a "succession of qualitative changes" (Bergson, *Time and Free Will* 104) that meld together, and Poe's technique exemplifies this by creating a temporal rhythm where each break amplifies the prior moment. The dashes act as "durational hinges," pivoting between stasis and acceleration, immersing the reader in a heterogeneous "now" saturated with dread and memory. This mirrors the narrator's psychological collapse, where fragmented thoughts—elsewhere evident in cosmic claims or heartbeat fixations—form a unified *durée*. Poe thus transforms interruptions into a temporal effect that draws the reader into the narrative's chaotic flow, embodying Bergson's understanding of time as an indivisible, evolving whole.

Spatial and Temporal Interplay in Narrative Structure: The Page as Temporal Space

In "The Tell-Tale Heart," the physical arrangement of text on the page complements its temporal structure, creating a dynamic interplay between spatial form and narrative flow. The lengths of paragraphs and strategic placement of breaks serve as "temporal markers," guiding the reader through shifts in intensity and perspective. The progression of paragraphs reflects the narrator's psychological shifts, aligning with Bergson's concept that spatial and temporal dimensions intersect to form lived experience. In the climactic confession, the dense, uninterrupted paragraph reflects the narrator's frantic psychological collapse, creating a sense of temporal acceleration as his internal unraveling collapses

chronological progression into a single overwhelming moment: “I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder—louder—louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God!—no, no! They heard!—they suspected!—they knew!—they were making a mockery of my horror!” (Poe 559). In contrast, earlier paragraphs, describing his methodical preparations to kill the old man, are further measured, allowing the reader to linger in the narrator's calculated rationalizations.

Temporal Silences Through Omission

Poe masterfully employs strategic omissions, crafting "temporal silences" that invite the reader to actively participate in the narrative. These silences are not mere gaps, but potent intervals where the absence of explicit detail compels the reader to construct the missing moments, engaging their *durée* (imagination) to bridge the emotional and temporal chasm. Consider the pivotal transition from the narrator's meticulous, drawn-out nocturnal surveillance to the abrupt act of murder: "With a loud yell, I threw open the lantern and leaped into the room. He shrieked once—once only. In an instant I dragged him to the floor, and pulled the heavy bed over him" (Poe 558). This sequence, a staccato burst of verbs—“threw,” "leaped," "shrieked," "dragged," "pulled"—creates a rapid succession of actions that compresses time into a visceral instant. The absence of the murder itself, the "temporal silence," forces the reader to confront the horrifying act through their own imagination, intensifying the psychological tension and mirroring the narrator's obsessive, time-distorted perspective. This deliberate omission aligns with Bergson's concept of “mémoire-habitude” (Bergson, *Matter and Memory*), where the mind actively synthesizes fragmented elements into a cohesive,

albeit unsettling, flow. By withholding explicit details, Poe amplifies the psychological impact, compelling the reader to navigate the narrator's unstable reality and actively construct the missing narrative pieces.

Temporal Folding Through Repetition

Repetition in “The Tell-Tale Heart” serves as a mechanism for "temporal folding," collapsing past, present, and future into a single experiential plane, resonating with Bergson’s *durée* and Deleuze’s interpretation of repetition as differential (Bergson, *Time and Free Will* 100; Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* 76). While the "vulture eye" motif intensifies from initial dread to focused obsession across the narrative, the climactic confession crystallizes this effect: "tear up the planks!—here, here!—it is the beating of his hideous heart!" (Poe 559). This outburst repeats the heartbeat motif—echoed earlier in its growing intensity—but transforms it through context. The dashes and exclamations fracture the syntax, while "hideous heart" recalls prior auditory fixations, folding the murder’s past into the present revelation. In the reader’s consciousness, this repetition does not merely reiterate; it evolves, merging memory and immediacy into a qualitative whole. Bergson argues that *durée* integrates past states into the present as a "continuous multiplicity" (Bergson, *Time and Free Will* 104), and Deleuze extends this notion by contending that repetition produces difference (Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* 76). Here, the heartbeat’s recurrence is no static echo—it carries the weight of planning, execution, and guilt, each iteration a differential shift. The urgent "here, here!" amplifies this folding, tethering the imagined sound to the physical planks, while "hideous heart" fuses perception with confession, creating a temporal knot. This process collapses linear time—past dread, the act of murder, and present exposure

interpenetrate within a single durational moment. Poe's strategic repetition thus builds a narrative time that transcends sequence, immersing the reader in a dynamic *durée* where each echo amplifies the psychological and temporal depth, crafting an experience of continuity through difference.

Repetition as Temporal Modulation

Poe's strategic use of repetition in "The Tell-Tale Heart" serves as a sophisticated mechanism for modulating temporal experience, creating qualitative progressions in the reader's consciousness. Through carefully orchestrated patterns of word repetition, phrase recursion, and rhythmic structures, Poe constructs temporal experiences that transcend chronological progression.

Word Repetition Patterns

Poe's repetition of individual words transforms static text into a temporal pulse. A striking example occurs in the heartbeat's escalation: "louder—louder—louder!" (Poe 559). Each repetition amplifies the auditory hallucination, punctuated by dashes that fragment the sequence on the page. Yet, in the reader's consciousness, this triad unfolds as a "qualitative progression," not a mere additive count. The first "louder" evokes the initial perception, the second deepens it with memory of prior sounds, and the third surges into an unbearable peak, folding anticipation and dread into a continuous now. This mirrors Bergson's view that duration evolves through "successive moments" that penetrate one another (Bergson, *Time and Free Will* 109). Unlike spatial repetition, which stacks identical units, Poe's pattern creates "memory-echoes"—each "louder" resonates with the narrator's mounting paranoia, qualitatively distinct yet indivisible from the whole. This technique, seen elsewhere

in phrases like "very, very dreadfully nervous" or "slowly—very, very slowly"(Poe 555), builds a temporal texture that defies linear measure. Here, "louder—louder—louder!" accelerates psychological time, immersing the reader in a crescendo where past perception and present frenzy meld. Bergson's snowball metaphor applies: duration rolls upon itself "as a snowball on the snow," gathering intensity with each turn (Bergson, *Creative Evolution* 4). Poe leverages word repetition to craft a living *durée*, where each echo propels the narrative beyond its textual bounds into a dynamic, experiential flow.

Phrase Repetitions and Cumulative Effect

Poe's repetition of entire phrases in "The Tell-Tale Heart" generates a cumulative temporal effect. A central example is the narrator's insistent question: "How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily—how calmly I can tell you the whole story" (Poe 555), reiterated later with slight variations. Each recurrence—first as a defiant assertion, then as a strained plea—builds a psychological scaffold on the page. In the reader's consciousness, these repetitions do not stack mechanically; they evolve, layering initial confidence with growing desperation. The phrase becomes a "temporal anchor," its echoes resonating with prior iterations, folding the narrator's past rationality into present instability.

Bergson likens duration to a snowball, "rolling upon itself" to gather intensity (Bergson, *Creative Evolution* 4), and the aforementioned phrase's repetition embodies that process. The initial "how healthily—how calmly" asserts control, but as it recurs amidst mounting tension it accretes doubt and irony, qualitatively shifting with each return. This cumulative effect mirrors the narrator's unravelling, paralleling how repeated "eye" phrases—building from dread to obsession—amplify

fixation elsewhere. In *durée*, these iterations form a "continuous multiplicity" (Deleuze, *Bergsonism* 38) where each repetition interpenetrates the last, creating a snowballing momentum that defies linear time. Poe's phrase repetition thus constructs a temporal spiral, immersing the reader in a lived experience where accumulated echoes of sanity and madness coalesce into an indivisible, intensifying whole.

Rhythmic Patterns in the Text

The rhythmic patterns in the text create temporal architectures that structure the reader's durational experience through "different planes of consciousness," (Bergson, *Matter and Memory* 239) thereby modulating the pace and intensity of that experience. Robinson identifies this phenomenon as a "structural power" achieved through "reduplication," where recurring patterns create a "dominating impression" that gives the story its "architectural principle" (371). The rhythmic progression in the following passage creates temporal cadences, that modulate between methodical description and psychological revelation: "First of all I dismembered the corpse. I cut off the head and the arms and the legs. I then took up three planks from the flooring of the chamber, and deposited all between the scantlings. I then replaced the boards so cleverly, so cunningly, that no human eye—not even his—could have detected anything wrong" (Poe 558). The patterns are "two levels of chronological development which are at work simultaneously throughout the story" (Robinson 372), creating "different tensions" (Bergson, *Matter and Memory* 207) of duration in the reader's consciousness. This rhythmic modulation accelerates dramatically in the confession scene: "Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God!—no, no! They heard!—they suspected!—they knew!—they were making a mockery of my horror!" (Poe 559). Here, the spacing between

exclamations decreases while psychological intensity increases, creating qualitative changes to the reader's *durée*. The cumulative effect of word-level, phrasal, and rhythmic repetitions, create a "temporal fugue" to generate a complex durational experience in the reader's consciousness.

Reader Experience and Temporal Synthesis

From Discrete to Continuous

The transformation of Poe's discrete textual elements into continuous temporal experience represents a complex process that aligns precisely with Bergson's understanding of how consciousness synthesizes duration. Through the reader's engagement with "The Tell-Tale Heart," we observe how individual textual markers like punctuation, words, and phrases, combine in consciousness to create what Bergson terms a "qualitative multiplicity" that transcends simple sequential progression (*Time and Free Will* 105).

Synthesis in Reader Consciousness

Poe's stylistic choices in "The Tell-Tale Heart" compel the reader's consciousness to synthesize fragmented elements into a cohesive temporal experience. A vivid example occurs in the narrator's fixation on the old man's eye: "It was open—wide, wide open—and I grew furious as I gazed upon it. I saw it with perfect distinctness—all a dull blue, with a hideous veil over it that chilled the very marrow in my bones"(Poe 557). On the page, dashes and repetitions segment the description into discrete units: the eye's state, the narrator's reaction, the detailed perception. Yet, in the reader's mind, these fragments fuse into a "qualitative multiplicity" (Bergson, *Time and Free Will* 105). The initial "open—wide, wide open" stretches the moment, its repetition amplifying intensity; the dash pivots to "furious," blending

observation with emotion; and the final clause layers visual clarity with visceral chill, interweaving perception and memory of prior dread.

Bergson argues that consciousness integrates such elements not as a sum but as a continuous whole, where states “permeate one another" (*Time and Free Will* 110). Here, the reader synthesizes the eye’s widening, the narrator’s rage, and the chilling veil into a single durational surge, distinct from the text’s spatial breaks. This process—evident across Poe’s narrative, from nervous assertions to climactic outbursts—requires active participation, aligning with Bergson’s view of *durée* as a lived, evolving unity. The sentence’s structure mirrors the narrator’s obsessive focus, drawing the reader into a temporal flow where fragmented impressions cohere into an indivisible experience, transcending the static page.

Role of Lived Experience

Each textual element in “The Tell-Tale Heart” opens with a "virtual horizon" in the reader's consciousness, drawing upon their accumulated experiences to create meaning. Consider the word "midnight" in the passage: "And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his door" (Poe 555). For each reader, "midnight" evokes a unique constellation of associations: darkness, silence, fear, secrecy drawn from their personal *durée*. These associations help bridge the gaps between discrete textual elements, creating "virtual multiplicities" (Bergson, *Matter and Memory* 35–38), that contribute to the continuous flow of reading experience. The word "latch" similarly opens up a world of tactile and auditory associations—the feel of metal, the potential for sound, the careful manipulation required—that varies based on each reader's lived experience. When combined with "turned," these virtual associations create a unique temporal experience. This virtual dimension becomes

evident in passages of sensory description: "I moved it slowly—very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man's sleep. It took me an hour to place my whole head within the opening" (Poe 555). Each reader's understanding of "slowly" draws upon personal experiences of careful movement, creating unique temporal syntheses that bridge the gap between discrete textual elements.

Reading Pace Variations - Temporal Elongation and Compression

Poe's control of reading pace in "The Tell-Tale Heart" crafts a "temporal gestalt," modulating the reader's temporal experience to reflect the narrator's spiralling tension, resonating with Bergson's *durée*—a qualitative flow of shifting intensities (Bergson, *Matter and Memory* 67). A pivotal example occurs as the heartbeat intensifies: "It grew louder—louder—louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled" (Poe 559). This passage juxtaposes rapid acceleration with deceptive calm: the staccato "louder—louder—louder!" quickens the pace, each dash and repetition compressing time into urgent bursts that echo the narrator's auditory fixation; the subsequent clause slows abruptly, its measured rhythm—marked by "and still" and "and smiled"—stretching the moment with an eerie normalcy. This shift forces the reader to oscillate between haste and restraint, mirroring the narrator's concealed panic amid external obliviousness.

Bergson views consciousness as navigating "different tensions" within duration (Bergson, *Matter and Memory* 207), and this pacing embodies that dynamic. The accelerated "louder" sequence forms a qualitative surge, each iteration interpenetrating the last to amplify dread, while the slower follow-up unfolds a "durational wave," contrasting the internal chaos with external indifference.

This variation—echoed elsewhere in reflective lulls or sudden cries—immerses the reader in a heterogeneous flow, not a uniform beat. As Bergson suggests, duration evolves through intensities that roll upon themselves (*Creative Evolution* 4), and here the rapid escalation rolls into a deceptive pause, crafting a temporal whole that feels alive. Poe's pacing thus guides the reader through a rhythmic *durée*, where compression and expansion coalesce into a lived experience of the narrator's fracturing psyche.

Psychological Time vs. Narrative Time

The intersection between psychological time and narrative time in the text creates a "double movement" in the reader's consciousness, where the formal progression of narrative events interweaves with the reader's subjective experience of duration. This temporal architecture demonstrates Poe's narrative technique of "temporal resonance" between text and consciousness. This resonance consists of three temporal/durational parts, namely: construction, linearity and knowledge experiences.

The Construction of Durational Experience

The duration experienced while reading the story is a unique synthesis between the text's temporal architecture and the reader's personal *durée* that creates a "temporal dialogue," an intersection of multiple planes of consciousness. The reader's *durée* intersects with the narrative at various points—for example, the historical context of the "before," the immediate present of the narrator's confession, and the anticipated understanding of the murder's outcome: "You should have seen how wisely I proceeded—with what caution— with what foresight—with what dissimulation I went to work! I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed

him" (Poe 555). The "different planes of consciousness" interpenetrate, encompassing the reader's present moment and their “actual representation of the universe,” similar to how the “image of the body is concentrated” (Bergson, *Matter and Memory* 152). This representation consists of the reader's immediate composite experience, which includes the coexistence of past and present within their immediate experience (Deleuze, *Bergsonism* 22). This synthesis is even more poignant in these lines—"Never before that night, had I felt the extent of my own powers—of my sagacity. I could scarcely contain my feelings of triumph. To think that there I was, opening the door, little by little, and he not even to dream of my secret deeds or thoughts" (Poe 556)—where narrative time explicitly confronts psychological time. The reader's *durée* intersects with the narrative through "different planes of consciousness" (Bergson, *Matter and Memory* 239) which results in the reader's accumulated understanding of the story's outcome.

The Linearity of Present Experience

While the narrative appears to move non-linearly between past and present, the reader's experience maintains a "continuous present": "If still you think me mad, you will think so no longer when I describe the wise precautions I took for the concealment of the body. The night waned, and I worked hastily, but in silence"(Poe 558). Though this passage describes events chronologically in the "past" to the narrator's confession, for the reader it constitutes their immediate present experience. The preceding knowledge of the murder doesn't function as "future" information but as part of the accumulated present through which each new detail is understood. As philosopher Jean Hyppolite argues, this fusion of past and present is the very definition of duration: "This duration—which is pure succession, the extension of

the past into the present and therefore already memory" (Hyppolite). Hyppolite's concept clarifies that, for the reader, the narrative's past is not left behind but is actively present as memory, shaping their immediate experience. This continuous present becomes evident in passages that seem to shift between timeframes: "Yet, for some minutes longer I refrained and stood still. But the beating grew louder, louder! I thought the heart must burst. And now a new anxiety seized me—the sound would be heard by a neighbor!" (Poe 557–58). The progression from "refrained" (past) to "now" (present) demonstrates how each moment carries forward into the next in the reader's immediate experience. The temporal markers function as qualitative intensifiers of the reader's present experience.

Temporal Knowledge and Memory

The synthesis of memory and anticipation creates "temporal tension" that colours the reader's experience of seemingly "past" events: "Upon the eighth night I was more than usually cautious in opening the door. A watch's minute hand moves more quickly than did mine" (Poe 556). The reader's knowledge of the impending murder creates a "qualitative progress"; for example, the minute hand comparison gains tension from its place in the reader's accumulated present experience, where memory of previous passages combines with anticipation of known outcomes. This effect heightens with sensory focus and foreshadowing: “It was open—wide, wide open—and I grew furious as I gazed upon it. I saw it with perfect distinctness—all a dull blue, with a hideous veil over it that chilled the very marrow in my bones" (Poe 557). Here, the description of the "wide, wide open" eye creates a temporal layering, weaving the reader’s memory into growing anticipation of the violent climax. The phrase "I saw it with perfect distinctness" collapses temporal boundaries, as the reader’s awareness of the eventual

confession and murder amplifies the intensity of the description. The "dull blue" and "hideous veil" act as visual details and triggers for temporal synthesis, drawing past, present, and future into a singular experiential moment.

This synthesis of temporal elements—the constructed duration, the continuous present, and the interplay of memory and anticipation—culminates into a "temporal gestalt" where chronological distinctions dissolve into the reader's experience. This qualitative multiplicity aligns with Bergson's assertion that true duration is a flow of interpenetrating moments where meaning emerges from dynamic interaction in consciousness. Poe's manipulation of temporal knowledge allows the reader to experience the narrative as a lived, durational whole.

Theoretical Implications

The analysis of temporal experience in "The Tell-Tale Heart" through a Bergsonian lens yields significant theoretical implications that extend beyond this single text to illuminate broader questions of literary temporality, narrative theory, and reader experience. By demonstrating how discrete textual elements combine in reader consciousness to create continuous temporal experiences, this study advances our understanding of how literary texts operate as temporal artefacts and suggests new approaches to analysing narrative time.

Contribution to Understanding Literary Temporality

The application of Bergson's concept of *durée* to Poe's narrative techniques reveals how literary texts can create "structured temporal experiences "that transcend simple chronological progression. It also demonstrates how literary temporality operates simultaneously at multiple levels: chronological sequence of narrative events

and the qualitative experience of time in the reader's consciousness. This creates the "temporal architectures" that guide readers toward specific kinds of durational experiences while allowing for individual variation in synthesis. This understanding challenges the traditional approaches to literary temporality that focus primarily on chronological sequence or narrative order. Instead, it suggests that literary time emerges through the complex interaction between textual structure and reader consciousness.

The study also reveals how literary texts can create "different tensions of duration" within a single narrative. In Poe's story, passages of methodical description ("I moved it slowly—very, very slowly") exist alongside moments of psychological acceleration ("louder! louder! louder!"), creating temporal counterpoints that readers must synthesize into continuous experience, which suggests that literary texts can operate as sophisticated temporal instruments capable of modulating readers' experience of time through careful manipulation of textual elements.

Extensions of Bergsonian Theory to Narrative Analysis

While Bergson himself did not extensively apply his theories to literary analysis, this study demonstrates the fertile ground for extending his concepts into narrative theory. The notion of *durée* as a "continuous multiplicity" indicates how readers synthesize discrete textual elements into continuous temporal experiences, suggesting a new theoretical framework for analyzing narrative structure. The study also extends Bergson's concept of the "memory-cone" to explain readers' engagement with literary texts, suggesting each textual element intersects with both the reader's immediate attention and with their entire durational past. Thus, different readers experience the same text differently while still being guided toward

similar temporal experiences by the text's structure. The textual elements serve as Bergson's "points of intersection" where the plane of immediate representation (the text) meets the reader's accumulated past (their memory-cone).

Furthermore, this analysis suggests new ways of understanding Bergson's "different planes of consciousness" in a literary context. In "The Tell-Tale Heart," these planes manifest as different levels of temporal experience: the immediate progression of words and punctuation marks, the psychological time of the narrator, and the synthesized temporal experience of the reader. The interaction between these planes creates "temporal depth" in the literary experience.

Broader Implications for Reader-Response Theory

This study has significant implications for reader-response theory as it proposes that temporal experience forms a crucial but often overlooked dimension of reader engagement with texts. While reader-response theory has traditionally focused on how readers construct meaning, this analysis demonstrates that readers also construct temporal experience through their engagement with textual elements. This temporal construction operates alongside and intertwines with meaning-making processes, hinting that temporal experience and semantic understanding are inseparable aspects of literary engagement. Moreover, this study recommends reader-response theory might benefit from greater attention to what we call "temporal competence," or readers' ability to synthesize different kinds of temporal experiences from textual cues. Just as readers develop semantic and interpretive competencies, they may also develop sophisticated abilities to navigate and synthesize the temporal architectures of literary texts.

The analysis also indicates new ways of understanding "gaps" in literary texts, or points where readers must actively participate in creating meaning (see Iser 165–70). From a Bergsonian perspective, these gaps might be understood as temporal thresholds where readers' durational consciousness must bridge discontinuities in the text's spatial arrangement. This understanding adds a temporal dimension to Iser's concept of the "implied reader," suggesting that texts not only guide readers toward certain interpretations but toward specific temporal experiences. These theoretical implications offer new directions for literary analysis that consider texts as temporal artefacts that shape readers' experience of time. This understanding opens up new possibilities for analysis: how texts create temporal effects, how readers synthesize temporal experiences, and how literary time relates to other forms of temporal experience. Future research can explore these insights and apply them to different genres, historical periods, or cultural contexts, potentially revealing how literary temporality intersects with broader questions of human temporal experience and understanding.

Conclusion

Our analysis of “The Tell-Tale Heart” through Bergson's temporal framework reveals the extraordinary sophistication with which literary texts can orchestrate temporal experience. Moving beyond the theoretical implications explored in the previous section, we can appreciate Poe's masterful manipulation of textual elements like temporal score and temporal resonance. The former is a carefully constructed framework that guides readers through specific durational experiences while allowing for individual variation in synthesis, and the latter points to where the textual construction intersects with

reader consciousness to generate unique durational experiences.

Perhaps the most significant insight to emerge from this analysis is the understanding of literary creation and reception as a form of temporal choreography. Authors, through their manipulation of textual elements, create frameworks that guide readers toward temporal experiences without fully determining them. This relationship operates through structured indeterminacy, where texts provide specific temporal markers and architectures allowing individual readers to synthesize these elements into continuous experience.

Looking forward, this study suggests the value of examining the differences of authors across various periods and genres in creating distinct temporal architectures. How do modernist texts, for instance, create different temporal experiences than romantic or postmodern ones? How do different cultural traditions approach the creation of literary time? Moreover, as reading increasingly moves into digital environments, how might new technologies affect the temporal experience of texts? The interplay between traditional literary temporal markers and digital reading platforms presents intriguing possibilities for future investigation.

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A Review of Ann C. Colley's *Coleridge and the Geometric Idiom: Walking with Euclid*

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Coleridge and the Geometric Idiom: Walking with Euclid by Ann C. Colley is a book that takes an ambitious perspective toward Coleridgean studies. Coleridge's output of writing was voluminous, spanning a wide range of forms and topics from poetry to logic and philosophy, political essays, and religion; its breadth and depth present a considerable challenge to scholars. Coleridge's work was also, paradoxically, inherently fragmentary and at times even ephemeral. He was a writer famous for his talking but also for his inability to finish and/or publish his works. To make scholarship even more difficult, the published works were often repeatedly revised in his lifetime. The critic is presented, then, with the problem of dealing with Coleridge's writing as it morphs across time in his own re-visioning of his thoughts. As a result, the collective critical attention applied to Coleridge and all his writings has also been voluminous and frequently contradictory. Colley wrestles with this problem by grounding her study, especially of Coleridge's poetical works, in a heretofore little considered approach—that is, of the influence of his early education in Euclidean geometry. For Colley, the geometric grounding, coupled with Coleridge's much investigated love of walking and walking tours, creates an approach that allows her to grapple with Coleridge's vast output within a logical frame consistent with his production.

Colley begins chapter one by situating her investigation within the well-established literature on

Coleridge's walking habits. Her depth of research into the works of important scholars in the field, such as Morton Paley, is commendable. The chapter really shines, however, when Colley turns her eye on the notebooks: She does not merely depend on the published and carefully edited notebooks to elucidate how Coleridge rambled through the countryside sketching and describing the landscape in clear geometric forms, but turns her attention to the original handwritten notebooks to point out how the published versions sometimes erode or elide the drawings tossed in among the description. This extra attention to the production of Coleridge's complete descriptions brings clarity to scholars who have never had the opportunity to view the original notebooks. The added effort does much to enhance the argument she makes regarding Coleridge's geometric lens on the landscape. Emphasizing how Coleridge recorded his walks gives new emphasis not only to what Coleridge saw, but also the medium through which he viewed it. Along with the sights of the landscapes, Colley emphasizes the feel of Coleridge's feet as they cross and register the geometric forms of the land. This approach unveils Coleridge as surveyor, cartographer, and compiler of not only the form of the landscape but also its kinetic character. Colley asserts, "Coleridge's sensitivity to motion within a landscape is not just his oft appreciated consciousness of its activity, but . . . his sense that its movements travel beyond the line of sight or the edge of words" (36). This sense that Coleridge's writing is a kind of transmuted manifestation of his movement through the geometric forms of the landscape, is a tantalizing prospect.

Throughout chapters one, two, and three—in both text and extended footnotes—Colley effectively informs the reader of the importance of Euclidean geometry to the education system of England, noting that British education at every level, from Coleridge's time at Christ's Hospital to his sojourn at Newton's Cambridge, was steeped in

"Euclidean culture" (83). She stresses that Coleridge's genius at applying geometry as both a discipline and a medium through which he envisions and creates his art goes beyond the use of static Euclidean forms. She rightly connects this idea to a sense of movement through geometric forms in both space and time. Colley points out that this organic development of space and time manifests in elements of the landscape such as the movement of rivers and further asserts that Coleridge's traversing through said landscape creates a format which is not cartographic, fixed, or altogether "Euclidean." However, Colley misses a chance here to emphasize that Coleridge was not confined to the mere Euclidean in geometry. While England had great allegiance to the Euclidean, continental mathematics were shifting toward the mathematical forms of calculus championed by intellectuals like Carl Gauss, Gottfried Leibniz, and Isaac Newton. Leibniz expressed the ideas of motion using a notational form that abandoned Euclidean geometric descriptions. Newton developed the same calculus but expressed his developments in geometrical explanations. As a product of Newton's Cambridge, Coleridge studied the *Principia* and would have been aware of calculus derivatives (time varying rates of change). This additional assessment of what a geometric education entailed would not contradict Colley's conclusions but would rather reinforce them by giving a foundation for Coleridge's development of the sense of movement and time beyond the static and strictly Euclidean geometry.

This intersection of movement and form that Colley describes so well in Coleridge's thoughts as expressed in his notebooks and draft, eventually comes to fruition in his poems and prose writings. The application of this hypothesis to Coleridge's poetry and prose forms the topics for chapters four and five respectively. In chapter four Colley takes us into the "topography" of

several poems and examines the geometric forms of lines, circles, etc. to emphasize that the rhythms of his poems "take shape from the irregular tread of his rambling" (116). The cadence of Coleridge's walking tours, she argues, asserts itself in the sometimes fluid, sometimes stumbling, arrangement of lines on the page and eclectic use of strong punctuation like dashes and exclamation marks. Her remarks clarify how Coleridge's ramblings have manifested in the poems as "a phenomena that represents how one forms one's thoughts" (122) and bring home to the reader a sense that the poems can recreate the scene in a kinetic as well as visual manner. The movement through each scene is a kind of shadow, an evocation, of Coleridge's thought process. She asserts that the "recollected rhythm or imprint of his feet moving through a landscape . . . shaped the contours of his nature poems and bestowed on them . . . a consciousness of an evolving present" (116). These observations have the ring of truth, but the study would have been strengthened with some close attention to use of verb tense and the metrical analysis of lines. In general, though, the poetic analysis is excellent. It does seem strange that Colley neglects to turn her insight on "Kubla Khan." As one of Coleridge's most famous poems, it combines Euclidean geometric shapes with a fluid river so that these shapes give way to artistic production in the prophetic. Such an organization directly supports the movement through the geometry of the landscape of the poem.

In chapter five, Colley focuses on the mature Coleridge, who from his early forties had taken up a more sedentary, settled life with Dr. Gillman. Here, Colley examines the overall change of the Euclidean culture of England and the ways in which Coleridge was aware of and influenced by the shifting mathematical debates. The author emphasizes that geometry "helped construct a systematic thoroughfare along which Coleridge could

tread, time and time again the landscape of metaphysical thought" (152) even though he had long since ceased his ramblings across the landscape of the Lake District.

Overall, this book constitutes an important moment in Coleridgean studies and offers innovative insights into the use of fields of study besides the literary and the philosophical. Further investigation into these mathematical/scientific areas of interest of Coleridge are sure to be a rich starting point for other scholars. Coleridge may not have been an omni-competent multipotentiate, but he was a diverse thinker whose work conveyed great complexity. Colley's book is an important step in expanding current scholarship to explore the depth and breadth of this author's work.

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A Review of Helena Esser's *Ouida*

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Helena Esser's 2024 monograph *Ouida* is the third book to be published entirely about the author, following Natalie Schroeder and Shari Hodges Holt's 2008 *Ouida the Phenomenon* and the 2013 collection of essays *Ouida and Victorian Popular Culture* edited by Jane Jordan and Andrew King. In the introduction to the book, Esser describes her task in the following way: "My interest . . . lies in how Ouida treats gender binaries, femininity, (toxic) masculinity, consent, female agency, and commodity culture. I aim to make visible how Ouida so often challenges, transgresses, and subverts binary Victorian notions of gender without categorising character attributes as either 'masculine' or 'feminine,' that is, without re-inscribing that binary" (20). In the following four chapters, Esser discusses homosocial masculinity, women in masculine spaces, Ouida's Femme Galantes, marriage and sexuality, and Ouida's views on Italy among other issues.

One of the most salient questions that Esser asks about Ouida's writing is why Ouida's worth as a feminist has remained the criteria that most often determines her merit as a writer and object of study long past the feminist reclamation projects of "undiscovered" female writers begun in the 1970s and 80s. The earliest scholars examining Ouida, including Schroeder and Holt (along with others like Sally Mitchell), emphasized aspects of Ouida's novels deemed subversive and which supported frameworks of a long-neglected feminist body of work like those expressed in Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* while de-emphasizing ways in

which Ouida's writing does not substantiate a feminist reading of texts written by women in the nineteenth century and prior. While Esser argues against many of the interpretations of Ouida that limit her to a mere misogynist more interested in portraying the lives of men than women, readers come away from *Ouida* with the sense that Esser believes that Ouida is a worthy object of study despite not always fitting neatly into a feminist box.

Esser also spends some time in this monograph pushing back against Ouida's portrayal by her biographers: "The memory of Ouida has been shaped from the beginning by her author persona, but also by her biographies, which all reflect the dominant gender politics of their time and attempt to portray her patronisingly and unsympathetically in turns as a deluded eccentric or a tragically jilted, naïve woman" (12). Several of these biographies attempt to psychoanalyze Ouida—for example, suggesting that her male protagonists are poorly disguised attempts to deal with emotional issues that stemmed from being abandoned by her father—and Esser deservedly pushes back against those analyses of Ouida's writing.

Ouida explores avenues of the writer's work hitherto unexplored and adds to the scholarship in new and exciting ways. Esser provides readings of *Under Two Flags* that run counter to the traditionally accepted interpretations of this novel, she introduces the concept of asexuality to Ouida studies, and she extensively charts the novels and real-life figures who inspired Ouida's writing along with the authors who were, in turn, inspired by Ouida. The chapter on Italy that contains Esser's discussion of *Helianthus*—Ouida's final, unfinished novel that has escaped critical notice until this monograph—is particularly thought-provoking in its assertion that here Ouida presages the fascism that is to envelop Italy and predicts the course of the First World War.

Esser's *Ouida* is a must-read, not only for those scholars interested in Ouida, but for those interested in Victorian writers in general. Ouida's writing provides an excellent vehicle for understanding the politics and gender dynamics of the time as well as other issues like attitudes toward marriage, and Esser's monograph is a welcome addition to Ouida studies.

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A Review of Jeremy Parrott's *David Copperfield Unbound: A Genetic Study*

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David Copperfield Unbound will captivate scholars and lovers of Dickens's favorite novel. Jeremy Parrott's exploration of Dickens's creative processes—the "genesis" in the subtitle—fascinates with brilliantly researched analysis, even as it tantalizes through its intrinsically speculative nature.

Parrott examines the novel primarily through *onomastics*, the study of names through their origins and history. Parrott writes, the "conscientious [onomastic] critic must be guided by the plausible and the justifiable. We may not *know* what the author meant or intended, but we can bring to bear that which relevant circumstantial evidence suggests, implies, or invites us to understand" (278). An example of Parrott's method, broadly, is his curiosity about unexpected references to elephants in the novel (like Mr. Micawber's saying "elephants" when he means "elements"). This thread leads Parrott to Yarmouth Sands, home of the novel's Peggotty family, and retraces Dickens's 1849 excursion to climb the towering Britannia Monument honoring Admiral Horatio Nelson, celebrated hero of the Napoleonic Wars. Parrott reveals that the names of four ships Nelson commanded are engraved near the monument's pinnacle, one being Nelson's flagship in the 1801 Battle of Copenhagen: *The Elephant*. From the keeper of the monument, a man who sailed with the Admiral in his final voyage, Dickens learned of Nelson's 1800 visit to Yarmouth with Sir William and Lady Emma Hamilton.

Parrott goes on to relate that Lady Emma (née Amy Lyon) was an actress and mistress to several wealthy men in her early twenties. At twenty-six, she married sixty-year-old Hamilton in 1791. Sir William grew senile, and by the time of their arrival in Yarmouth Emma was pregnant by Admiral Nelson, giving birth to their daughter Horatia in 1801. Parrott considers this story of Nelson's "taking" of Hamilton's wife as the kernel of Steerforth's seduction in the novel of Little Em'ly (*Em*[ma] and *Ly*[on] separated by an apostrophe), where Steerforth "steals Em'ly" from *Ham*[ilton] Peggotty), to all their ruin.

Other bits gleaned from the 1849 Yarmouth visit include a "fingerpost" pointing to the village of Blundeston six miles from Yarmouth, and a Rookery Farm nearby: David's first home is Blunderstone Rookery. Parrott also notes that Wilkins Micawber bears the name of the Britannia Monument architect, William *Wilkins*.

Aware of Dickens's great care in naming characters, Parrott considers numerous onomastic possibilities for David Copperfield, multiplied by David's many nicknames: Trotwood, Brooks of Sheffield, Davy, Mas'r Davy, Daisy, Doady, and more. A brief example here involves early pioneer of electricity, Humphrey Davy, who in the 1820s recognized the facility of *copper* for conducting electric current in stable electric fields. Parrott also considers rich possibilities between the biblical David, slayer of Goliath and ancestor of Jesus, and between Uriah the Hittite and Uriah Heep: King David, enamored with Uriah's wife Bathsheba, sent Uriah to the front of a raging battle that ensured Uriah's death. David Copperfield effectively eliminates Uriah Heep, his rival for Agnes, by banishing him to Australia.

Other avenues of "genetic" exploration include Mr. Dick (Dickens was neighbors with one Samuel Dick, and his lawyer son, Charles Dick). Parrott makes a fascinating case for the severed head that impedes Mr. Dick's

"Memorial" belonging not to Charles I, but to England's Lord Chamberlain, who from the Restoration to the 1960s censored the London theaters.

The book approaches its climax through its exploration of Dickens's admiration for Samuel Pepys's famous diary from the 1660s. Pepys recorded sensitive political opinions in a shorthand code—as he did, too, when noting his extramarital activities, presumably so his wife might not read about them. Parrott suggests that in *Copperfield* Dickens similarly hid "his meaning behind symbols which would be opaque to the uninitiated . . . in a personal code known only to himself" (282), a code hidden in plain sight mainly through character names so that his wife would not grasp their true import. As an example, Parrott pursues Dickens's fascination with a painting by Swiss artist Angelika Kauffman, titled "The Three Graces," noting that her models were the three daughters of the British banker, Thomas Coutts. The daughter of one "Grace," Sophia Coutts, was Angela Burdett-Coutts, who at the age of twenty-three inherited a fortune equivalent to hundreds of millions today. More than 500 letters from Dickens to "My Dear Miss Coutts" detail their twenty-year partnership in philanthropic projects such as Urania Cottage, a sort of halfway house for recovering "fallen women."

According to Parrott, "The three Graces" echoed in *Copperfield* are Little Em'ly; Dora Spenlow, David's charming but vapid first wife; and Agnes Wickfield, who ultimately becomes David's ideal companion and partner. Agnes's continual "pointing upward to heaven" suggests the mythical muse Urania ("heavenly" in Greek), often depicted looking to the heavens and holding a globe aloft to which she points with a short staff. Parrott considers it "painfully obvious that the oft-repeated allusions by the narrator to Agnes as his 'good angel,' 12 in total, are barely coded references to the angelic Angela" (304). When

David says repeatedly that he associates Agnes with the angel he saw as a child in a stained-glass church window, Parrott argues that Angela had to recognize the allusion, as the newly built St. Stephen's Church she established in 1850 honored her, its founder and benefactor, with a carved figure of herself as an angel beneath a prominent stained-glass window, pointing upward to a scale model of St. Stephens.

Parrott sees much in Dickens's declaration in the 1850 *Copperfield* preface that he is torn "between pleasure and regret" at completing the book, but declines to elaborate by saying, "I am in danger of wearying the reader whom I love, with personal confidences, and private emotions." The author's decision to include no comma between "reader" and "whom" suggests to Parrott one *specific* reader, Angela Burdett-Coutts, not "the reader generally." Significantly, when Dickens and Catherine's marital difficulties became known in 1857, Angela publicly sided with Catherine and eventually ended her personal relationship with Dickens. As a result, Parrott notes that in the preface to the 1867 edition of *Copperfield*, Dickens made just one change, deleting "whom I love" and saying simply that he wished to avoid "wearying the reader with personal confidences and private emotions."

Parrott quotes Dickens writing to John Forster in 1855, "Why is it, that as with poor David, a sense always comes crushing in on me, when I fall into low spirits, as of one happiness I have missed in life, and one friend and companion I have never made" (318). Writing *Copperfield*, Dickens thought his wife, Catherine, would see Dora Spenlow as his "first love" (Maria Beadnell), and assume that *she*, Catherine, was the ideal companion Agnes represents. Above all, Parrott says, this is why Dickens "encoded" sensitive, private elements in his most highly autobiographical work. David finds that "one missed happiness" in Agnes Wickfield, but Parrott

suggests that Dickens was not so fortunate in his hopes with Angela Burdett-Coutts. (Cue Nelly Ternan. . .)

There is much more that will intrigue Dickensians in *David Copperfield Unbound*—perhaps most notably Parrott's tracing the influence of Byron, Keats, and Shelley on Dickens; Dickens's "proto-Modernist" influence on Samuel Beckett; and the consideration of *David Copperfield* as having more substantial impact on Freud's theory of the "Oedipal complex" than Sophocles' play. As noted above, Parrott's work is brilliant and speculative in examining Dickens's creative processes in the novel before it was completed and "bound." I believe *David Copperfield Unbound* will prove immensely useful and valuable to scholars and more casual lovers of Dickens's novel alike.

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