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Notes and Documents



MASSON'S INAUGURAL LECTURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

David Masson (1822-1907) is well known to students of rhetoric and English literature for his landmark biography of Milton; for editions of works by Goldsmith, Milton, and De Quincey; and for his essays on Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats. More obscure, however, are the specific theories of rhetoric and literature Masson endorsed, used as underpinnings for his own critical writings, and taught during the period that he occupied the famous Chair of Rhetoric and English Literature in the University of Edinburgh (1865-1895).

Masson, appointed professor in Edinburgh after the death of Aytoun, was the first to occupy the Chair after the University Commissioners had changed its name from "Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres" to "Rhetoric and English Literature." His initial tasks in this new position were to establish the relationship of rhetoric, a traditional area of study in Scottish universities, with English literature, to define the perimeters and components of these studies as he perceived them, and to argue for the yields to be gained from studying such subjects. Masson's "Inaugural Lecture," discovered among manuscripts in the University of Edinburgh archives,¹ was the professor's response to the immediate demands of his position. Because the lecture affords scholars a useful summary of Masson's rhetorical and literary doctrines, illuminates the conjunctions of these studies

in nineteenth-century Scottish thought, and clarifies a major change in the nature and focus of the Edinburgh Chair, it is reprinted here in its original form.²

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Inaugural Lecture by
Prof. Masson, Tues., Nov. 14th. 1865.
from the "Daily Review."³

I. Whether we adhere to the older & stricter definition of Rhetoric, adopted by Aristotle & followed by his Greek & Roman successors, or take that wider view of the limits of Rhetoric to which there has been a tendency in later times; in either case the association of the word "rhetoric" with the general word "literature" in the designation of the chair enables me to say that the business of this class must include a course of Lectures on Rhetoric & the Principles of Literature.⁴ Literature! The word is grand but vague. In the act of pronouncing it what image is called up to the mind? The image of a huge aggregate of something transmitted to us from the past ages of the world, the quantity constantly increasing as we come nearer to our own times, & the entire accumulation at first sight, formless, heterogenous, imme[a]surable! The literature of any particular country is the past thought, or feeling, or experience of that country, of whatever kinds, so far as it has been preserved in written, or printed, or engraved characters, or in any verbal fashion whatsoever; &, similarly, literature in general, or the literature of the world, is the past thought, or feeling, or experience of all the nations of humanity hitherto, in so far as it has been so preserved, & is still decipherable & intelligible. All the manuscripts or scraps of writing, all the printed pages or fly-leaves or books, all the monumental records, all the inscriptions on tombstones, even, preserving thoughts, or statements, or feelings, or tissues of such, that have emanated from individual minds or from minds collectively, from the beginning of human society--all such things belong to the inventory of the world's literature, if it were to be itemed to its absolute totality.

But though it may be well to start from such a conception of what literature is & includes in its widest etymological sense, it is manifest that the conception must almost immediately be left behind as utterly immanageable. It is as if one were to

survey a Salisbury plain, or other tract of flat, overstrewn for miles with mounds & miscellanies of stony & slaty debris, mixed with white paper rubbish. Nothing can be made of it. Some vast reduction of our conception of literature must evidently be made ere we can profess to make literature a subject of study. Now, such a reduction has actually been made by the popular instinct. When we speak of literature generally, or the literature of the world, what we [generally (*deleted*)] usually have in view is not the total aggregate of decipherable remains of all sorts, but a select portion of them, this portion consisting of a collection of those more important & elaborated remains which are called books or compositions. This reduces [our (*deleted*)] the idea of literature somewhat, but for the purposes of anything that could be called a history, or science, of philosophy of literature, there must be yet another reduction of our conception of literature. How shall we make the farther requisite reduction? Perhaps one of the most luminous & suggestive observations on this subject was an observation of Wordsworth's, which DeQuinc[e]y has cited & developed at some length. Wordsworth drew a distinction & DeQuinc[e]y restated & applied it between books of Knowledge & books of Power.⁵ An overwhelming proportion of the extant books [of (*deleted*)] in all languages are books conveying information & nothing more--repositories of facts, or scientific knowledge, particulars & generals--dictionaries, grammars, almanacs, &c. Subduct all these books of knowledge from the total literature of a country & the library of that literature might be thinned down to a comparatively small residue. If the subduction were made to the right extent, & on Wordsworth's principle, the residue would consist of what Wordsworth called "books of power." There are books so written, whether in prose or verse, presenting such a peculiar combination of matter & form, that they stir & delight when they are read, take possession of one like a storm or a secret witchcraft, infuse one knows not what subtle elements of sweetness or beauty or strength, leave not one's being as they found it, but rouse it into enthusiasm & a state of spiritual joy,⁶ or tumult or half-melancholy throbbing. So I interpret Wordsworth's remark, & DeQuinc[e]y's extension of it. All of us, when we think of literature in a more special sense than as consisting of the total library of the world's books, do in fact think of it as consisting of a comparatively small number of these books, reputed the greatest & the choicest. We sweep out of our thoughts all the vast miscellany of books, the produce of mere industry, & we fasten our regards on those which we recollect as the classics or masterpieces of the different national literatures, ancient & modern. We think of the *Belles Lettres*--of literature as a fine art--the most versa-

tile & sublime of the fine arts.⁷ And it is only by this reduction of our conception of literature, [at all possible (*deleted*)] that we make criticism or a science & philosophy of literature, as distinct from mere bibliography (the knowledge of books from their outsides, title-pages & tables of contents) at all possible. If we make the selection strict enough, if we take account only of the real classics & masterpieces of the world's literature,—on the walls of one modest room we may have a representation & epitome for all higher purposes of the literature of human time. Standing in such a room & looking round, one may say at last, This is literature; these are the great ones, the artists & powers in speech; here is the flower in the thought of the world.

Having made this assemblage there strikes us immediately one important fact relating to them. They are not all of one kind; there are varieties of genius among them; they belong to different faculties, practise different arts, address different emotions & intellectual tastes & wants among their readers.⁸ There presses upon us at once, therefore, the necessity for some classification of authors, some distribution of literature into kinds. Writers may be best distributed into 4 great orders or classes. In the first place, there is a large class of books or writings the distinctive character of which is that they are descriptive or narrative—that their aim is to record or represent scenes, objects, physiognomies, persons, actions & events, or it may be, even feelings & states of mind, that have actually been or happened in the real world. All such books or writings may be said to be of the Historical order; & the department of literature which they conjointly constitute may be called Historical Lit. or the literature of Memory. High examples in this order of literature, in its supreme form are Herodotus, Thucydides, Livy, Tacitus, Clarendon, Gibbon & Macaulay. Obviously different from such literature, & including also a large proportion of books in every language is a second great order of lit. which may be called Didactic lit. or the Literature of Exposition; or, with reference to that faculty or mood of the mind which they primarily address, the Literature of the Reason. It comprehends all writings whose main purpose it is to explain or expound abstract doctrines, theorems, generalisations or systems of such—whether treatises in the various exact physical sciences, from mathematics up to biology; or those works of larger scope, involving mind, morals, & the ends & laws of human society; which are often at present referred to a separate group, under the name of works of speculation or philosophy. Names of celebrity in the highest division of this very composite order are Plato, Aristotle, Bacon, Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Adam Smith, Kant[,]

Hegel & Hamilton. When I mention after these such other names out of a great abundance, as Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Lucretius, Virgil, Horace, Dante, Tasso, Cervantes, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Bunyon, Pope, Richardson, Fielding, Burns, Wordsworth, Byron, Scott, Racine, Béranger, Goethe, Schiller, & Richter, you will be aware of the third order of literature.--This third great order of lit. is Poesy or the Lit. of the Imagination. But view collectively the writers of all the 3 classes yet named--historical writers, expository writers & imaginative writers--& you will feel that there is yet a residue in the crowd of the world's important literary names, not easily to be included in any of these three classes or in all of them together. They are writers in so far of mixed means & materials, that they draw upon history, upon science & philosophy, & upon the resources of imagination as it suits them; but what is special in them is that they seek invariably, through these means & materials, to reach the active motives & energies of our nature, & so to sway the will.⁹ They are the pleaders, the preachers, the moralists, the satirists, the declaimers, the advocates of causes, the political leaders & revolutionists, or, in extreme cases, the spiritual propagandists of their lands & generations. What they all aim at, on a greater or smaller scale, is to persuade to something or other, to move or stimulate actively in a prescribed direction. It belongs to the circumstances of this class of functionaries in society, though less necessarily in modern than in ancient times, that their function should be exercised primarily through the living voice, speaking to audiences of their fellowmen. But in all times specimens of such speeches have passed, in more or less perfect state into literature; & in modern times pamphlet literature & the newspaper press, with its leading articles are developments permitting a large exercise of all varieties of the function apart from speech & beyond the individual's presence. Examples sufficiently characteristic of this order & yet sufficiently diverse to suggest the varieties of the function, are Demosthenes, Cicero in parts, Wycliffe, Luther, Latimer, Knox, Bossuet, Chatham, Junius, Burke, Fox, Mirabeau, Whitefield, Grattan, Cobbett, Canning & Chalmers. Call this kind of Lit.--Oratory or Oratorical Lit. A precaution is here essential. Classifications are always made for the [mind (*deleted*)] convenience of the mind itself in its dealings with things; & there are few classifications that hold in nature as rigidly as in our paper versions and maps of nature. It is especially so with the present.

What, then, should a philosophy or science of literature include? It should include, in the first place, a theory of style, or of that art of expression in language which writers

and speakers of all the 4 kinds have alike to practise. Following after Grammar, or the science of what is merely correct in language according to the habitude & rules of times & countries, it is for Rhetoric to move on into such more subtle inquiries as these--What constitutes clearness or easy intelligibility in words & their combinations into sentences? What constitutes good taste or expression or the reverse? & wherein lie the secrets of those higher qualities of style which move us with the feeling of artistic beauty, or majesty, or richness?¹⁰ A science of lit. must, however, involve not merely a philosophy of style, but also a science of the principles of each of the leading kinds into which lit. may be divided. These principles may be collected in 2 ways--either by the study of actual examples of the highest excellence in each kind of lit.; or, by an analysis, having for its end, the discovery of the means whereby, according to the constitution of the human mind, this or that mental effect may be produced.¹¹

II. History of our own English Literature.

Let some vision of this Lit. pass swiftly before us. Far back in time, our British Islands, Albion & Ierne, are heard of as somewhere in the seas to the north, out of ken of the Mediterranean world of civilisation, & reported to exist only by navigators. They emerge from the mist; we can just discern their outline ringed by the white breakers; & for a long tract of time this is all. It is rather by inference backwards than by direct information that we know that they were then inhabited by tribes of the Celtic race in its two divisions. They had their literature of a sort, doubtless. The poorest negro tribe that now exists has its literature of song, proverb, apologue & legend; & what we are told of the Druids permits us to guess that the literature, the unwritten literature, of the aboriginal Britain was more considerable than this. Pity that of this Druidism, the peculiar mythological system of the Celtic race in Europe, so much less is known than of the Gothic mythology, or even the mythology of the Slavonians! For it begins now to be more than suspected that traditions from it, both of matter & form, have come down in the intellectual veins of the whole nation to this day & subsist still in undissipated pools & gatherings wherever there are extensive relics of the Celt. But we begin the reckoning of our literary history, for the most part, as we do the reckoning of our history in general, from the time when the Romans tramped upon our island, & made it an outskirt of their empire. Yes apt as we are to forget it Britain was once a portion of the Roman Empire, & Latin manuscripts were brought over here & read by Roman officials & colonists in their winter quarters, & wherever, as far north as

the Forth itself, we find the heaps of oystershells & the mosaics & baths & other remains that tell of the sites of Roman settlements. And the Latin tongue was learnt here by the British youth, as over the seas by the Gallic youth; &, though Britain was never so completely Latinised as Gaul, it is a fact that in the roll of Latin authors of the iron and leaden ages, there were actually 1 or 2 British natives. But the Romans go or are said in a vague way to have gone; & again the British islands are ringed round by the surges, to digest within themselves whatever elements of the Celtic, Latinised Celtic; pure Latin or Teutonic are assembled in them. On Teutonic I say, for here comes a new start. The phenomenon of the Anglo-Saxon colonisation of these islands has never yet been sufficiently investigated. The fine old myth of Hengist & Horsa¹² is but the crushing in upon 1 or 2 names, & upon a few years, of events which may reach back into what we think of as the purely Celtic times, & may have taken centuries for their transaction. Suffice it that, when we do begin to look with any clearness into Britain after the Roman occupation, the main portion of its area is seen possessed by Angles & Saxons of near kin to the Schleswig Holsteiners of the continent & the vernacular speech of that portion is Anglo Saxon in several dialects. We call it Anglo Saxon, but we might as well for some purposes, call it simply Old English. For 5 or 6 centuries the Anglo Saxon or Old English dominion lasts, during which period Britain, like other mediaeval countries of the West, has its literature of ecclesiastical Latin, & moreover, for vernacular literatures, a prevailing Anglo-Saxon, & obscurely in the west & north a Cymric & a Gaelic. The Anglo-Saxon literature consists of a considerable body of remains; both in prose & in verse. And what of its character? To tell the truth, with the exception of 1 powerful epic--an epic of true genius,--which does not belong to [important & e1 (*deleted*)] this island at all but was brought by the Saxons or Angles from their Danish whereabouts when they came hither--with the exception of that, & a scrap or 2 more, the A.S. Lit. is not of the kind that would thrill you into ecstasy. It is interesting philologically & historically; it [was the (*deleted*)] is the lit. of a grave, solid, sturdy people, strongly ethical in its cast of mind; but there is more of bone & muscle than of nerve in it. As you read, you have a sense of "beef-wittedness," of stuff in plenty, but in a low electric state. What is wanting is the undefined something which Wordsworth called power--the passion, the phantasy, the humorous lightness, seen where intellect is in ferment. How shall this come? By mere internal development, or thro' foreign disturbance & impulse? Partly, at least, in the latter way. The inrush of Scandinavian energy in the Danish invasions

may have contributed something; the Norman Conquest did the rest. See the Normans lithe, agile, well-knit, lightly-feeding, close-cropped, how they swarm & flash over the islands till the best of them is theirs! It would take long to tell all they did for the stimulation of these lands intellectually as well as politically. How they roused & elevated, by a splendid series of chroniclers & a sprinkling of rare scholastics, the ecclesiastical Latin lit., which had flagged before their arrival. But more than this! They brought their French tongue with them, & romances, & the passion for romances in that tongue; & we have actually a French lit. of metrical, the produce of these islands during the first Norman reigns. For a while, indeed, it might have seemed to a hasty observer that French had a chance of becoming the national tongue. But no! When at length the compound nation was adequately formed by the absorption of the Norman into the Saxon, already in union with the naturalized Scandinavian, & containing no one knows how much of the Celt submerged, in addition to the Celt still outstanding, then the old Anglic or Saxon reasserted itself, developed in its grammar & enriched in its vocabulary by all that had intervened. And then--the learned Latin lit. still kept up among us by scholars & monks--what efforts everywhere, south & north, from Kent & Gloucestershire as far as Aberdeenshire, to work for popular purposes in the slight-varied vernacular, so as to supple it & make it pliant! Efforts uncouth for the most part, but with strokes & bursts of power in them, & at length, out of a crowd so labouring, behold that figure emerging, with hands outstretched as if gently taking precedence & bidding the rest behind him! Who is it? It is a Londoner--a portly, courtly, well-educated man, perfectly self-possessed, with a countenance placid & wise, after the most genial English type, humorous & down-looking eyes, fair hair, & a beard of the colour of ripe wheat. It is Geoffrey Chaucer. Yes

Whanné that April with his showrés sote
 The drought of March hath piercéd to the rote
 And bathéd every vein in sweich licour
 Of wh. vertue engendered is the flouer
 And Zephyrus eke with his soté breath
 Inspired hath in every holt & heath
 The tender croppés & the yongé sun
 Hatte in the Ram his halfe course of run.

Then Eng. Lit. longeth to begin, & it finds its great beginner in Chaucer. If we count only the great ones, it is Chaucer that heads the procession. But what a procession he leads! For a time, indeed, England had no fit successor to show, & it

was perhaps in Scotland that Chaucer's Muse then took refuge. But, after an age of turmoil, England regained herself, while Scotland went into turmoil instead. Then there came forth Ideality personified in Spenser, & after him came the later Elizabethans, with Bacon the sumptuous, & Shakespeare the lightly-stepping & unparalleled, as the twin lords of the host. But why pursue the enumeration? Note them for yourselves as they pass, poets & prose-writers commingled, sometimes prose & sometimes verse in the ascendant, from where Milton the mag-nanimous walks among his coevals, but cannot see them, & cares not though he cannot, on to Scott & Wordsworth, & the contemporary chiefs of our own Victorians. All in all, what a procession! Between 30 & 40 thousand.

NOTES

¹ The MS was discovered folded and inserted in a volume of lecture notes taken by G. J. Lumsden from Masson's course, 1881-1882, MS Dk. 4.28, University of Edinburgh. Also loose in the same volume were several other sets of notes on verse.

² The MS is reprinted in its original form, with the following exceptions: (1) punctuation has been inserted in brackets for the purpose of clarity, and (2) explanations have been added through footnoting in order to clarify certain passages.

³ The delivery of this lecture was just one month after Masson's appointment and seven days after the official registration of his appointment to the professorship. It may be taken as Masson's first public statement after assuming the Chair--thus, the use of the term "inaugural" to identify this lecture and the printing of it in the "Daily Review." See MS Dk. 2.20/⁵, University of Edinburgh.

⁴ MS Dk. 2.20/⁵, the official document appointing Masson, notes the Chair's change in name which had been approved prior to Masson's appointment. W. E. Aytoun, Masson's predecessor, had included attention to rhetoric and oratory, and considerable attention to classical literature, with much less time devoted to British literature. See "Lectures delivered by W. E. Aytoun," MSS 4897-4912, National Library of Scotland. For representative class exercises used by Aytoun, see MSS 4913, 4914, National Library of Scotland. Though Masson does not specifically identify "English literature" as the major focus of his course, it does assume major importance. See, for example, "Lectures on rhetoric and English literature, 1868-69," MSS

1401-1403, University of Edinburgh, where the "History of English Literature" consumes more than half of the course and where "Rhetoric and English Literature" comprises the remainder.

⁵ Masson, ed., *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey*, vols. X, p. 47; XI, p. 54, p. 59n.

⁶ The author changed the MS from "into a state of enthusiasm or spiritual joy" to "into enthusiasm & a state of spiritual joy."

⁷ The use of the term "*belles lettres*" is particularly interesting. Not only had the Chair been identified as one of "Rhetoric and Belles Lettres," but the literature taught by Masson's predecessors had been the accepted and established literature of antiquity and the French and German Renaissance. Masson, no doubt, wanted to limit the perimeters of literature to the *belles lettres*, the finest literary works, and, in particular, to the *belles lettres* of British origin. It is ironic that, amid the Victorian urge to promote a national literature, the French term would still be found appropriate.

⁸ This introduction to the different forms of literature reveals the Scottish emphasis on faculty psychology and their conclusion that the function of discourse is to "address" the mind. The view enjoyed considerable popularity among Aberdeen theorists of the eighteenth century, including Alexander Gerard (*An Essay on Genius*, 1774), James Beattie (*Elements of Moral Science*, 1792-1793), John Ogilvie (*Philosophical and Critical Observations on the Nature, Characters, and Various Species of Composition*, 1774), and George Campbell (*Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 1776). Masson's education at Aberdeen University, where the psychological underpinnings of discourse remained a popular interest into the nineteenth century, likely is reflected in his treatment of the forms of discourse. His association with Alexander Bain, the Aberdeen professor, possibly contributed to Masson's theory as well.

⁹ Masson's assignment of History to the Memory, Didactic Literature to the Reason, Poesy to the Imagination, and Oratory to the Will is, of course, Baconian (*The Advancement of Learning*); but his treatment is in a fashion after that followed by the Aberdeen literary group. There is striking similarity between Masson's assumptions in 1865 and James Beattie's assumptions in the 1790s. Compare notes from Beattie's lectures, MS B 49a, University of Aberdeen and his *Elements of Moral Science*

with notes from Masson's lectures, "Notes of Lectures on Rhetoric and English Literature, taken by W. K. Dickson, 1880," MS. Dk. 1.3², University of Edinburgh.

¹⁰ In 1861, Masson defined rhetoric as "The Art & Science of all literary expression," MS 6652, National Library of Scotland, p. 3.

¹¹ Masson's identification of these two approaches to a "science of lit." reveal the assumption which had emerged during the previous century regarding "observation"--the "new method" for producing knowledge in moral philosophy. Masson implies an endorsement of this method and identifies the two ways it might be used: (1) an analysis of works which are recognized as great, or (2) an analysis of the mind and how it is influenced. This, like other parts of Masson's doctrine, reflects Aberdeen thought. Indeed, it may be concluded that the first part of Masson's inaugural lecture introduces the Edinburgh community of thought to the conclusions of Aberdeen intellectuals.

¹² Brothers, circa 400, who are reputed to have led the first Germanic invasion of England and to have founded the kingdom of Kent.

SOME ECHOES OF BURNS IN TENNYSON

As long ago as 1891, John Churton Collins in *Illustrations of Tennyson* (London, p. 69) noted the parallel between the lyric in Tennyson's *The Brook* and the twenty-fifth stanza of Burns's *Halloween*. But Collins merely cited the parallel, passing on without comment except to say that "Burns's lines are as charming as Tennyson's," and he was probably unaware of the full extent of Tennyson's indebtedness in this instance not only to *Halloween* but also, in a secondary way, to another poem by Burns, *Elegy on Captain Matthew Henderson*.

Tennyson's famous lyric is often anthologized under the title *Song of the Brook* and printed as though it were a continuous

self-contained poem. Actually, of course, the song is untitled and is interspersed in the blank verse narrative of *The Brook* as a kind of lyrical commentary on the action in four different places, each section comprising a group of three or four stanzas ending with the refrain "For men may come and men may go,/But I go on forever." In any case, Tennyson's conception was clearly to create a four-part lyric expressing the *feeling* of the brook in several different moods, and for this the germinal idea undoubtedly came from Burns's *Halloween*:

Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,
 As thro' the glen it wimpl't:
 Whyles round a rocky scar it strays;
 Whyles in a weil it dimpl't,
 Whyles glitter'd to the nightly rays,
 Wi' bickerin, dancin dazzle;
 Whyles cooket underneath the braes,
 Below the spreading hazle
 Unseen that night.

Here we have very much the same variety of moods, from gay to solemn, from violent to calm, that Tennyson elaborated in greater detail in *The Brook*; and we have the same kind of vivid water imagery.

Secondly, the rhythm of the two pieces is virtually identical. Burns here uses the ancient *Christis Kirk* stanza which he inherited from the Scots tradition and which goes back to fifteenth-century prototypes in *Christis Kirk on the Green* and *Peblis to the Play*. In its eighteenth-century form, the stanza consists of an octave of alternating iambic tetrameter and trimeter lines rimed ababcdcd, followed by a single dimeter tag-line always ending in "that day" or "that night." Burns used this form in five different poems, and in *Halloween*, as elsewhere, he frequently employed feminine rimes with an extra syllable in the trimeter lines as in the stanza cited above. Obviously, Tennyson found this variation very much to his purpose in *The Brook* and he adopted it, outright, simply splitting Burns's octave into separate four-line stanzas, but retaining precisely the same patterns of rhythm and of rime.

Finally, to make the relationship between Tennyson's song and stanza 25 of *Halloween* quite conclusive, there is Tennyson's echoing of Burns's verb to "bicker":

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
 I make a sudden sally,
 And sparkle out among the fern,
 To bicker down a valley.

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
 The brook shall babble down the plain,
 (lines 9-10)

.

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
 And flood the haunts of hern and crake.
 (lines 13-14)

In this passage, Tennyson combines brook imagery with the mention of heron and crake, two birds which occur in a similar context in Burns's elegy as cited above (ll. 43, 49).

Burns was immensely popular and influential in Tennyson's generation, and there can be no doubt that the Victorian poet read his work with care and enthusiasm. When he came to write his lyric in *The Brook*, Tennyson, remembering Burns perhaps subconsciously, fused in his imagination the essential idea and form from *Halloween* with several details from the *Elegy on Henderson* to create a new and beautiful synthesis. Obviously, his debt to the Scots poet in this instance was substantial.

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THE MAN OF FEELING'S BEST FRIEND

It is undoubtedly assured that the most interesting technical device of Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* is the arrangement of "chapters," "fragments," and the rest of the "wadding." Just as clear is the fact that Mackenzie gets a full-fledged novel out of this unpromising material, a novel whose theme signals a major idea of the late eighteenth century and prepares for the Romantic movement. Such thoughts about the novel are nearly commonplace. But there is something else about the novel that works toward integration, in spite of the blind of "missing" chapters and misarrangement. This is the animal imagery--not an insistent part of the book but surely a consistent part that argues well for the integrity of the novel as novel.

The opening words of "Introduction," ostensibly the first chapter, are "My dog..."¹ This presents the reader immediately with what will develop into the major pattern of imagery, that of dogs. Other animal imagery, though present, tends to be either cliché ("gentle as a lamb," p. 5) or local effect ("a single crow," p. 4) which neither patterns nor reveals any unstated meaning. But the imagery of dogs, on the other hand, frames the novel--as we shall see--and suggests no less a sentiment that "a man's best friend is his dog." In fact, so entire is this theme that one can determine the favorability of a character by his attitude towards dogs.

The narrator of the introduction establishes his good nature by his "feeling" toward his dog, Rover--by name the universal dog. In spite of the failure of the dog to "point" accurately, the narrator forgives him quickly:

It was a false point, and our labour was vain; yet, to do Rover justice, (for he's an excellent dog, though I have lost his pedigree) the fault was none of his, the birds were gone... (p. 3)

Here, at the very beginning of the novel, such an emphasis should alert the reader to a thematic implication; there is no other reason to make such an issue of dogs unless it be for such eminent purpose.

The next major emphasis is soon after the opening of the novel proper (chapter XI in the fiction, but actually chapter I in the fact of it). The narrator of the novel itself (not the hunter who discovered the manuscript) is introduced rather unhappily as a dog-tease:

The last time I was at Silton Hall, I saw his chair stand in its corner by the fireside; there was an additional cushion on it, and it was occupied by my young lady's favourite lap-dog. I drew near unperceived, and pinched its ear in the bitterness of my soul; the creature howled, and ran to its mistress. (p. 8)

That the dog raises such a spectre as "bitterness of my soul" again alerts the reader to the significance of the dog imagery. Just as important is the lady's (Miss Walton's) care for the animal, which again is overstressed. When the dog howls and leaps to her for comfort, this is her reaction:

She did not suspect the author of its misfortune, but she bewailed it in the most pathetic terms; and kissing its lips, laid it gently on her lap, and covered it with a cambric handkerchief. (p. 8)

One notes the hyperbole of her reaction, another clue to its significance in the fiction. Indeed, here the dog is nearly a substitute for a loved one, a child of her own perhaps. We know that after Harley's death she refused to marry. We also recall that the very dog figures in Harley's last glimpses of Miss Walton. This is the "frame" of the novel, which begins and ends not only with the lady but with her dog as well. As Harley seeks to meet Miss Walton, entering her garden, "The lady's lap-dog pricked up its ears, and barked: he stopped again" (p. 113). This dog, the same as at the introduction of Miss Walton, brings forth a remembrance of a line from *King Lear* (III, vi, 66): "The little dogs and all/Tray, Blanch, and Sweetheart, see they bark at me!" An editor of the novel, Brian Vickers, finds these words objectionable: "Perhaps the most objectionably sentimental of Mackenzie's quotations" (p. 137). But seen as a thematic image, the dogs of the lines from *King Lear* are a great deal less objectionable; in fact they are perfectly in place.

In addition to this "frame" to the novel proper, there are two major passages of interest for the animal imagery, one near the beginning and one near the end, a kind of second frame. Again, there would be little value in making such an issue unless for structural purposes. The first is the scene of the beggar and his dog (pp. 18-23). The dog, "a crook-legged dog" (p. 19), trots at the heels of the beggar, a man whom we immediately sympathize with *because* he has a dog. The dog too is a beggar and Harley finds it impossible to "resist" both. The beggar's tale is sentimental enough, but to some degree it is redeemed (in terms of its literary quality) by the dog's presence, its cleverness and its loyalty. When Harley drops a coin, it is the dog who picks it up:

It had no sooner reached the ground than the watchful cur (a trick he had been taught) snapped it up; and, contrary to the most approved method of stewardship, delivered it immediately into the hands of his master. (p. 23)

This ends the chapter. Even though it is called a "trick," the dog's action proves his loyalty, and we are encouraged (by the words "contrary to the most approved method of stewardship") to understand the master's loyalty too to the dog. Theirs is a symbiotic relationship.

The same is true, even more sentimentally, of old Edwards and his piteous story near the conclusion of the book. Again Harley encounters what appears to be a beggar; he soon finds that it is his old friend and listens with the necessary amount of tearful attention to his awful story. Not once but twice

does a dog highlight this tale:

You remember old Trusty, my shag house-dog; I shall never forget it while I live; the poor creature was blind with age, and could scarce crawl after us to the door; he went however as far as the gooseberry-bush; that you may remember stood on the left side of the yard; he was wont to bask in the sun there: when he had reached that spot, he stopped; we went on: I called to him; he wagged his tail, but did not stir: I called again; he lay down: I whistled, and cried "Trusty"; he gave a short howl, and died! I could have lain down and died too; but God gave me strength to live for my children. (pp. 88-89)

Once again the reader notes the hyperbole. A man who could lie down and die because of a dog's death is a very sentimental man indeed! For Mackenzie this scene creates the validity of old Edwards' character; he is a good man because he liked, nay loved, his dog. Can there be any further purpose in introducing this otherwise pointless incident?

But Edwards is a *very* good man, and so he tells of yet another dog, his son's. As he relates the impressment of his son (he will take his son's place, of course) he speaks of the cruelty and brashness of the men who, in effect, "shanghai" him; in addition, there is the cruel gamekeeper, introduced apparently for no other reason than to shoot a dog:

My son was a remarkable good shooter; he had always kept a pointer on our former farm, and thought no harm in doing so now; when one day, having sprung a covey on our own ground, the dog, of his own accord, followed them into the justice's. My son laid down his gun, and went after his dog to bring him back: the gamekeeper, who had marked the birds, came up, and seeing the pointer, shot him just as my son approached. The creature fell; my son ran up to him: he died with a complaining sort of cry at his master's feet. Jack could bear it no longer...

(pp. 89-90)

The reason for his son's imprisonment, as thus revealed, is a dog's death. In the imperative of the imagery, this makes the son a very positive character.

These are the two major scenes involving dogs and, along with Miss Walton's lap-dog, they frame the novel. It is possible that they serve yet a further function in the thought pattern of the novel. Early, Harley is called one of that group identified as "bashful animals" (p. 9); and very late in the

novel there is a reference to mankind as a "social animal" (p. 106). If this pre-Darwinian idea is functional in the novel, it is just possible that Mackenzie wants the reader to comprehend an identity of mankind with his fellow creatures. If so, then it is something on this order: man is a creature like other creatures on God's earth and should consequently show "humane kindness" toward all his fellows. The dog is the instance in *The Man of Feeling* by which one judges Miss Walton's kindness and the sentiments of beggars, Edwards and his son. Assuming all of this to be so, it is positively remarkable that Harley possesses no dog!

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NOTE

¹ Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling*, ed. Brian Vickers (London, 1967), p. 3. All quotations are from this edition and page numbers will henceforth follow quotations.

TWO NOTES ON BURNS

The Text of "Ah woe is me, my mother dear."

James Kinsley prints in the Clarendon Press edition (1968) a text of "Ah woe is me, my mother dear" taken from the Glenriddell MS and collated with the Adam MS.¹ Both Kinsley and Henley and Henderson note the existence of a MS of the poem copied by Burns on the flyleaf of an exemplar of Fergusson's *Poems of various subjects*, (1785) which also has the poet's signature on the title-page, and a further inscription by Mary Dalzel saying that the volume was presented by Burns to her mother 'some time about the year 1788.'² On the basis of the note by Hugh Blair preserved in the Esty copy of the 1786 *Poems*, advising Burns not to print in 1787 verses on Jeremiah, 15, and on the assumption that the stanzas referred to are the poem.

discussed here, it is reasonable for Kinsley to date the composition of the poem as the year 1786.³ It did not appear in print, however, until much later.

J. Egerer, in the preface to his *Bibliography of Robert Burns* (1964), states: "If there has been any special endeavour on my part it is to emphasise the first appearances in print of Burns's writings". He says that this poem was first printed in the Hogg/Motherwell edition of *The Works of Robert Burns*, (1834-36), adding that it is to be found in Volume 5. (Egerer 365) No one seems to have noted, however, that Hogg had printed the poem much earlier in his short-lived periodical *The Spy*, (No. 47, July 20, 1811.) As well as a number of substantive variants, the *Spy* text differs considerably in orthography, punctuation and capitalisation from the readings in the three relevant manuscripts. Two of the substantive variations require some comment. In line 5 of the *Spy* version, the word 'band,' a Scottish spelling of 'bond,' is replaced by 'land'. This makes admirable sense, but destroys the alliteration of 'on bill or band' and is not supported by any of the MSS. In line 8 the phrase 'There's ne'er a ane will trust me' replaces 'The de'il a ane would trust me:'. In view of the fact that the earlier numbers of *The Spy* had already been criticised for linguistic indecorum, it is reasonably certain that this much weaker reading is editorial and not authorial.⁴

It is probably useful to print the *Spy* text and the 1785 *Poems* text together in their entirety in order to make readily accessible both a text published two decades before the previously known first printing, and an additional holograph text which, despite minor variants, largely confirms the accepted readings of this particular poem.

The Spy, No. 47

VERSES BY BURNS
Never before printed.

Ah! woe is me my mother dear,
A man of strife you've born me;
For sair contention I maun bear,
They hate, revile, and scorn me.

I ne'er could lend on bill or land,
Per cent has never blest me;
And borrowing on the tother hand,--
There's ne'er a ane will trust me.

Yet though a coin denied wight,
 By fortune quite discarded;
 You see how I'm baith day and night,
 By lad and lass blackguarded!!!

Fergusson's *Poems* (1785)
 Jeremiah 15 Ch. 10 Verse

Ah woe is me, my Mother dear!
 A man of strife ye've born me;
 For sair contention I maun bear,
 They hate revile and scorn me.

I ne'er could lend on bill or band
 That five percent might blest me,
 And borrowing, on the tither hand,
 The de'il a ane would trust me:

Yet I, a coin-deneyed Wight,
 By Fortune quite discarded,
 Ye see how I am, day and night,
 By lad and lass blackguarded!

"Hunting Song" - an additional stanza

In the absence of MSS, Kinsley prints his text of "Hunting Song," better known as "The Bonie Moor-Hen," from Cromek's *Reliques*, (1808). He notes that Henley and Henderson record a MS which he has not been able to trace, and list minor variant readings in lines 2, 5, 6 and 16 from the missing MS. Kinsley does not reproduce in his text the row of asterisks after the fourth stanza by which Cromek indicated that his text was incomplete, but he annotates thus: "Cromek printed the song with asterisks after l. 20, indicating that either his copy was a fragment or that the rest was unprintable."⁵ Speculation that the missing part of the poem was sexually indelicate arose for a number of reasons. It had long been noted that the refrain: "I rede you beware at the hunting, young men" obviously echoes the bawdy song in *The Merry Muses* with the refrain "I rede you beware o' the ripples, young man". Kinsley lists the sexual song from *The Merry Muses* in his appendix (No. 562) as being one of those songs admitted at various times to the canon of Burns's work either wrongly or on the basis of inadequate evidence. The expectation that any missing stanza or stanzas would be indiscreet was enhanced by Clarinda's demand in her letter to Burns, 6 February, 1788, in which she says, "Do not publish the "Moor-hen": do not for your sake, and for mine."⁶

As Kinsley points out the sexual symbolism latent in the image of the hunter and the game bird is not uncommon in popular poetry, and one need look no further than the *Epistle to John Rankine* to see Burns writing in this tradition.⁷

I have not been able to trace the missing manuscript, but a fifth stanza, additional to the four printed by Kinsley, has been published twice in the twentieth century. It was printed first as entry no. 132 in the Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge Catalogue of the sale of the second and concluding portion of the library of the late P. M. Pittar, a sale which took place on Nov. 4-7, 1918. The additional stanza was reprinted in *Book Prices Current 1919* where the added information is given that the MS was purchased by Proctor for £65. The entry describes a manuscript, and a modern transcript, of a "Hunting Song" with an additional stanza which runs as follows:

But by Cam a Rectre, Ohon and alas!
A Slee cunning lown wi' a firelock o' brass
The brass did sae glitter, it dazzled her eyes,
And now in his Budget he boasts of the prize.

The additional stanza is hardly a distinguished piece of poetry, but there is no reason to suppose that Burns did not write it. It was probably censored because of the clear implication of sexual conquest in the imagery of the brass firelock and the *budget* (*i.e.* a leather bag for holding game), and it provides an interesting commentary on the Clarinda/Sylvander relationship. The word "Rectre" (rector [?]) is something of a puzzle. I do not know what it means. It may be a mis-rendering of the word "reester" *i.e.* a stubborn, difficult restive fellow. Burns uses the verbal form elsewhere in his poetry. But I suspect it is not.

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NOTES

¹ *The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, ed. J. Kinsley. (Oxford, 1968), I, 234-5; III, 1175.

² I am indebted to Mr. Minto of Edinburgh City Library for photostats of the fly-leaves.

³ J. de L. Ferguson, "Burns and Hugh Blair.", *MLN* 44, 441-3.

⁴ I would like to thank St. Andrews' University Library for the use of their copy of *The Spy*.

⁵ Kinsley, I, 377-8; III, 1256.

⁶ *The Works of Robert Burns*, ed. W. S. Douglas, V, 77.

⁷ Kinsley, I, 61-3; III, 1036-7.

RUSKIN'S HEROIC MERCHANT

In a famous passage at the beginning of "*Unto This Last*," John Ruskin sets forth his conception of the role and obligations of the merchant: to focus on providing for the nation rather than on amassing a profit, to be faithful to his engagements, to market a pure product, to be as a father to the young men he employs and to share his workers' suffering in any commercial distress, and finally--if need be--to sacrifice himself as, on occasion, a soldier, physician, lawyer, or pastor may be called upon to do. In short, the merchant's career offers opportunities for heroism, too (XVII, 40-42).¹ But elsewhere in his writings, Ruskin makes it clear that, except perhaps for the signal instance of his father, the merchants of his own time represent a falling-off from the ideal type. In Letter 15 of *Fors Clavigera* (March 1872), Ruskin asserts that "the morbid power of manufacture and commerce in our own age is an accidental condition of national decrepitude; the injustices connected with it are mainly those of the gambling-house, and quite unworthy of analytical inquiry" (XXVII, 260-261).

While students of Ruskin have assiduously traced the sources of his economic thought in various political economists,² to the best of my knowledge no one has suggested that still another source might lie in Sir Walter Scott, particularly Scott's *Rob Roy*, where Bailie Nicol Jarvie is presented as an exemplar of the mercantile ideal. Jarvie is kind and charitable in his personal relationships, and willing to undergo personal risks in helping Frank Osbaldistone restore his father's fortunes

north of the Border; indeed, for a few tense moments it looks as though he will lose his life in the process. In one conversation with Frank, Jarvie explains how commercial and political fortunes can become entangled: "...I hae read in 'Baker's Chronicle' that the merchants o' London could gar the Bank of Genoa break their promise to advance a mighty sum to the King of Spain, whereby the sailing of the Grand Spanish Armada was put aff for a hail year," and Frank agrees with Jarvie that in such an action the merchants "did their country golden service."³ In Letter 15 of *Fors Clavigera*, Ruskin seems to echo such a sentiment when he declares that

a soldier who fights only for his own hand, and a merchant who sells only for his hand, are of course, in reality, equally the slaves of the persons who employ them. Only those servants and merchants are truly free, who fight and sell as their country needs, and bids them.

(XXVII, 266-267n.)

Rob Roy appears on two lists in which Ruskin singled out those Waverley novels which he regarded as the best.⁴ And in Letter 2 of *Fors Clavigera* (February, 1871), in the context of a discussion of Mill's economic theory, he observed that "making cloth, if it be well-made, is a good industry; and if you had sense enough to read your Walter Scott thoroughly, I should invite you to join me in sincere hope that Glasgow might in that industry long flourish, and the chief hostelry at Aberdeen be at the sign of the 'Nicol Jarvie'." Ruskin also cited Scott's personal correspondence for support of his view that the merchant had clear obligations to his employees and was answerable for that species of commercial gambling which could result in the workingman's ruin. (*Fors Clavigera*, Letter 27, March 1873, XXVII, 500-501.)

The full measure of Ruskin's indebtedness to Scott remains relatively unexplored though oft-noted; his admiration of Scott's characterization and his awareness of the novelist's strengths and weaknesses are well-attested in the massive Cook-Wedderburn index. Such passages as we have noted here suggest strongly that Ruskin also had in mind the Tory whose economic paternalism, perhaps a trifle ironically, foreshadowed the intellectual origins of the Labour Party, which was to rank Ruskin among its numerous prophets. For both Scott and Ruskin, the merchant who places his shrewd foresight at the service of the state is a public servant with a broad and humane trust.

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NOTES

¹ All quotations from Ruskin, cited by volume and page number, are from *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London, 1903-12). For Ruskin's ideal of the merchant, see especially *Munera Pulveris* (XVII, 219-20); "The Guild of St. George: The Master's Report, 1879" (XXX, 16); and the chapter "Traffic" in *The Crown of Wild Olive* (XVIII, 449).

² Notably John Tyree Fain, *Ruskin and the Economists* (Nashville, 1956) and James Clark Sherburne, *John Ruskin or the Ambiguities of Abundance: A Study in Social and Economic Criticism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972).

³ *Rob Roy*, Ch. 26, in *The Waverley Novels*, ed. Andrew Lang (London, 1922). Scott may have had in mind a closely related scene in Lillo's *The London Merchant* (I, i) (*Plays of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century*, ed. Dougald MacMillan and Howard Mumford Jones [New York, 1931], p. 620.) The play may be a source shared by Scott and Ruskin.

⁴ *Fiction, Fair and Foul*, XXXIV, 292; *Arrows of the Chace*, XXXIV, 606-607.