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President's Letter

This number of the Occasional Papers outshines its predecessors in terms of length – and is a testament to the width of interests the Society continues to sustain. It reflects, too, the generosity of the donation which made this extended publication possible. The syllabus for 2006-7, printed at the back, suggests not only the health of the society, but its steady move in the direction of new material, new interests. Visitors and new members are always welcome, and we are all warmly invited to the annual Scott lecture jointly sponsored by the English Literature department and the Faculty of Advocates in October.

A word of thanks for all the help the Society received – especially from its new co-Chair Aileen Christianson – during the President's enforced absence in Spring 2006. Thanks, too, to the University of Edinburgh for its continued generosity as our host for our meetings, and to the members who often anonymously ensure the Society's continued smooth running.

2006 saw the recognition of the Carlyle Letters' international importance in the award by the new Arts and Humanities Research Council of a very substantial grant – well over £600,000 – to ensure the editing and publication of the next three annual volumes. At a time when competition for grants has never been stronger, this is a very gratifying and encouraging outcome. In the USA, too, a very substantial grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities means that later this year the eCarlyle project should become “live” on the internet, and subscribers will be able to access all the volumes to date in this form. We live in interesting times.

Just as we go to press comes the first number of the reborn *Carlyle Studies Annual* from St Joseph's University in Philadelphia. Subscription details from me if you would like a copy.

An unusually full – and a fascinating – year lies ahead.

Ian Campbell
President

Living with Frederick, called the Great.

Sheila McIntosh

The History of Frederick the Great is probably the least read of TC's works and the least attractive to general readers. Two recent biographies of Frederick -- one by David Fraser and the second by Giles MacDonogh -- contain three short references to TC's history and imply that TC misrepresented Frederick by his selectivity in concentrating on and celebrating Frederick's militarism rather than his interests in philosophy, the arts and justice. TC, they imply, contributes to the myth of Frederick as tyrant when in fact he was a cultivated man of the Enlightenment. Whether or not contemporary criticism is justified the fact remains that *Frederick* is now largely unread. Also its apologists are, on the whole, devout Carlyleans rather than historians which is less true of either *The French Revolution* or *Oliver Cromwell*.

TC was reading about Frederick in 1819 with some admiration, reverently quoting the mundane words Frederick spoke after the battle of Prague, "another time, we will do better" as Frederick's motto (*Collected Letters [CL]* 5:254). In 1830, aged 35, TC suggested to George R. Gleig for his *Library of General Knowledge* a one volume biography of Frederick for £300 that would be ready within a year (*CL* 5:102). But he was 56 when he began serious research on Frederick, 63 when the first two volumes were published and 70 when the last volumes were ready for publication. The first edition was published in 6 volumes, (eight volumes of the centenary edition) the longest of TC's works.

After reading J. D. E. Preuss's biography of Frederick in 1845 he told JWC: "[I]f I had a turn for travelling I should hold it very interesting indeed to go to Berlin, and try to make more acquaintance with him and his people. They are both of them very strange" (*CL* 20:19). By 1850 TC is making notes and complaining of the scarcity of information on Frederick (*CL* 25: 306). In a note written after JWC's death TC laments that while travelling to Scotsbrig in 1851 the prospect of writing a biography of Frederick "lay crushing me with the continual question, Dare I try it, dare I not?" (*CL* 26:152). Throughout the early fifties he is uncertain, frequently contradicting himself about his feelings for Frederick; he is the "lean drill sergeant of the world . . . a really mediocre talent" (*CL* 27: 46) yet he continues asking Joseph Neuberg for help in his research (*CL* 27: 55-57) and tells Emerson that in spite of his dislike of the corruption and spiritual sterility of the eighteenth century, Frederick "looks brilliant and noble to me" (*CL* 27: 153). In August 1852 he writes that his first trip to Germany will be made out of "the desire not to be a poor coward" and that he expects only pain from the venture. Nevertheless he cannot be driven away from his subject by a few physical discomforts (*CL* 27:225) and so gradually he shoulders a burden that will be with him and JWC for 13 years.

Most of his letters of this period mention Frederick, his frustration, feelings of

hopelessness at ever being able to begin writing and once begun, his doubts about ever being able to finish it. He groans in his journal, Dec. 1852, that; “[T]he elements of our work lie scattered disorganised, as if in a thick viscous chaotic ocean . . . and we must swim and sprawl towards them; must snatch them, and victoriously piece them together as we can. . . ! Shall I try *Friedrich* or not try him?” (CL 27:364). No one is exempt from his complaints. In December he announces to Charles Redwood, the friend with whom he used to stay in Wales, that he is unable to begin writing on Frederick “so little lovely is the man to me” (CL 27:372). He tells his sister that the sight of present day Germany wearies him and has “hurt poor Fritz” (CL 27:373). TC knew the difficulties of writing on Frederick from the beginning and so his persistence is hard to understand. There were no financial pressures on him now and as this was to be his last major work why not choose a less problematic, more accessible subject? There were times when TC disliked Frederick as much as he disliked the eighteenth century. In 1857 JWC in a letter to her sister-in-law puts it very clearly “I wish to heaven this book were off his hands—in any way. He has never taken heartily to the subject—ought never to have tried to make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear—for it needs all possible love for the subject to carry him along thro such a severe labour as he puts into everything he writes” (MS: National Library of Scotland [NLS] 1763.278).

TC’s self-pity is alleviated somewhat by the gusto and the humour with which he enhances and augments the vocabulary of moaning and complaining. His work on Frederick is a “sea of dead dogs,” “whirling chaos,” “Prussian Marine Stores.” His marginalia in the Frederick books bequeathed to Harvard are revealing not only of TC’s work methods but also his low opinion of many of the tools he had to work with. “Extremely romantic; now given up as mythical,” “what stupidest son of Adam can have written this?—A dunghill,” “work unreadable, except on compulsion to the stupidest mortal,” occasionally the reluctant compliment “his poor books rotted now to inanity, have left a small seed-pearl or two to the earnest reader” (Lane 8-10).

TC found all writing difficult. After the publication of the first two volumes of *Frederick* he announces: “Nobody ought to write unless sheer fate force him to do it; -- and then he ought . . . to beg to be shot rather” (CL 33:232). Ruskin describing his own feelings about the drudgery of writing says that it never gave him “the kind of pain of which Carlyle so wildly complains.” For Ruskin TC’s agony is all the more surprising because he says “Friedrich, bears the outer aspect of richly enjoyed gossip” (*Praeterita* ([Orpington, 1887] 2:240).

Neither the French Revolution nor Cromwell took as long to write as *Frederick*. *The French Revolution* took just over 3 years but when it is finished he tells his sister that it was “the ugliest labour I ever went thro’ since I knew this world” (CL 9: 109-10) but he had had to rewrite the first volume, the draft of which had been destroyed while in John Stuart Mill’s keeping. There was certainly less agonising over the suitability of the French Revolution as a subject for a book and less complaining

about the availability of material. He began working on *Cromwell* in 1838 and the form it was to take was settled in 1843 when it became *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*. It was finished in 1845. This work had its own problems. He complains to his sister "I shall have an awful battle with this next book" (*CL* 17:143) and to Emerson that "I have come at last to the conclusion that I must write a book on Cromwell; that there is no rest for me till I do it" but at the same time "a book on Cromwell is impossible. . . . You would weep for me if you saw how between these two adamantine certainties, I am whirled and tumbled" (*CL*:17:164). But with *Cromwell* TC's admiration for his hero was unreserved and his main concern was that he should do Cromwell justice.

TC kept a journal of his second trip to Germany in 1858. It was full of his usual inimitable complaints. At Pardubitz his bed was too short and shorter than the mattress. His window; "looks down into the dim little street. . . . [O]pposite . . . is a house (probably of ill fame) where drunken Czechs and Czechesses raged and rioted, sang, fought, and argued with the Watchman all night long: 'Ihr Teufelskinder, geht heim' I shouted once or twice not expecting to be heard or obeyed." (Brooks 77). He writes to Julia Margaret Cameron, the photographer, December 1858 that he works in "a welter of chaotic litter . . . riding abroad a little in the dusk, like a distressed ghost" (*CL* 34: 259); to Gavan Duffy now living in Australia ; "I have been swimming in bottomless Abysses, whipt and whirled about as man never was, for long years past" (Duffy 202); to Charles Butler, who helped him with his American investments, that he is "more laden than you can conceive with that load of Prussian rubbish (which has many times seemed as if it would crush the life out of me before I could get done with it)" (MS Edinburgh University Library); to Emerson 9 April 1859 "I never in my life was so near choked; swimming in this mother of Dead Dogs" (Slater 526). Thackeray remained loyal, sending him gifts and amusing little pieces of doggerel in a vain attempt to cheer TC up; to him TC wrote 9 April 1859 "I often think this villainous bottomless confusion (worthless to gods and men) will kill me first" (MS: NLS 7197.68).

Henry Larkin and Joseph Neuberg, his willing but never formally acknowledged helpers, suffered too. On a rare occasion when Larkin gave TC a piece of his mind he told him that the work on maps for *Frederick* was "so utterly irksome and abhorrent to me . . . that nothing short of Dr. Francia's gallows could ever induce me to go through the like again" (Larkin, 80). Neuberg as well as helping with research was, during TC's second trip to Germany, "the mainspring of every enterprise" (*CL* 34: 185).

It is unsurprising that JWC preferred not to accompany him on either of his trips to Germany. However she still found herself caught up in his arrangements. On both occasions JWC had endless trouble because of his lost passports (*CL* 27:253 and *CL* 34:77, 84) After arriving in Scotland 29 August to stay with her cousin Janet Pringle, she writes him a cheerful letter describing her warm welcome. In a miserable reply TC tells her that while she was enjoying herself he was spending his

first day at sea when everyone was seasick and “all was tumbling about in our dirty machine.” He had missed two night sleep and had “arrived in Prague in the saddest plight” (CL 34:183).

JWC complained bitterly in letters to friends . In April 1855 she wrote to Kate Sterling that Frederick: “is become such a horrid bore to me that I *dream* about him in my bad nights!” (CL 29: 281). She announces to Mary Russell November 1857, anticipating the arrival of her two young cousins from Auchtertool, that making herself into a “human partition” between TC and “all the interruption and fuss that two young ladies who have no comprehension of, or sympathy with, hard work, and love of quiet, is more than I know how.” (CL 33:122). Her letters show a growing sense of isolation at TC’s lack of awareness of the strain *Frederick* is putting on her as well as him. Living with TC is like “living the life of a weathercock in a high wind, blowing from all points at once.” He involves her in his plans when her strength is “about equal to my canaries which every now and then drops off the perch on its back and has to be lifted up” (CL 33: 257-8).

JWC’s misery during the 13 years of *Frederick* was exacerbated by ill health and, for some years, her jealousy of the first Lady Ashburton. Larkin wrote in 1881 that it was around 1858 that he “gradually came alive to the intense dreariness of her . . . life. . . . [T]he misery was to be shut up alone with him [TC], when he himself was struggling under his burdens in utter wretchedness and gloominess of heart. . . . [H]e never saw the misery his own misery was inflicting on her” (Larkin 50-51).

Opinions differ on why TC devoted years of his life to *Frederick*. Ken Fielding believed that TC “found a strong appeal in Frederick’s character which he saw as in his own image” (CL 27:xiv). He argues that TC’s approach is retrospective that his researches are concerned with tracking authentic information and pictures of Frederick rather than the broad sweep of German History, implying that TC’s interest was in the man as a human being rather than the embodiment of a political theory or philosophical credo. Arthur and Vonna Hadrian argue that for his last book TC sought a subject to demonstrate his hero theory (Hadrian177). Simon Heffer calls the book “a pursuit of a hero” and “a celebration of Prussianism” (Heffer, 335). But TC’s interest in German culture was bound to arouse interest in Frederick himself. Frederick’s military successes made Prussia one of the most powerful European states of the 18th century and Frederick was central in the creation of the Europe of other Carlylean heroes, such as Richter, Schiller and Goethe, and of another of TC’s absorbing interests, the French Revolution.

The 1934 edition of the *Cambridge Modern History* praises both the French Revolution and Cromwell as superb prose epics but it says, TC was not a historian and “had no real conception of the continuity of Humanity” (12:838). But the whole purpose of TC’s lengthy genealogies is to set Frederick in a historical context and TC clearly saw Frederick’s creation of a strong Prussian state as a major determining force in the continuing history of Europe. David Lodge argues that although TC writes like a novelist because he uses novelistic techniques to create “emotive

power” he does not make things up; even when one might suspect him of having done so he frequently gives a source (Lodge, 203-5). Chris Vanden Bossche argues that TC is pre-eminently a historian because even though, like Gibbon and Hume, he considered history to be a branch of literature rather than an academic discipline (Vanden Bossche xix), he was influenced by new ideas in historiography and specialised methodologies for establishing historical evidence (xxii). For TC history was not morally neutral antiquarianism, but about philosophy and prophecy. Vanden Bossche explains: “Rather than take his readers to the past, he sought to make historical actors of the past live in the present as spectral apparitions carrying messages we fail to heed at our peril” (xxiii). There is an interesting hand written memoir of a visit to the Carlyles in 1859 written 1911 and pasted into the front of a first edition of *Frederick* in the Athenaeum Club’s library in Pall Mall . The author writes that JWC spoke of Carlyle’s view “that Friedrich was a hero, but further study led him to think that there were considerable cracks, if not breakages in the porcelain. The question arose if the historian should complete a work as one of literary art or should he put his ship about to meet the change of opinion.” This would certainly seem to indicate that TC was aware of the problems of his subject matter and his approach to it.

TC thought little of the first two volumes of *Frederick* (CL 33:207). Yet the first 2000 copies printed in September 1858 sold immediately as did the second 2000; a third imprint was ready by Christmas. Mazzini called it “unredeemably bad and immoral. It is Feudalism, worship of force, intellectual and brutal” (Mazzini 2:114). JWC told him after reading the proofs: “What a magnificent book this is going to be! The best of all your books”(CL 33: 47). There is a surprisingly warm anonymous review of the first two volumes,¹ in *The English Woman’s Journal*, a feminist magazine, 1 March 1859 in which the reviewer writes that the first two volumes of *Frederick* give an “extraordinarily vivid pictures of domestic life in a German court. . . . Never were the images of people who have been dead and buried for a hundred years been more thoroughly resuscitated by the mingled action of research and imagination.” The author concludes that *Frederick* would continue to be read “as one of the most graphic and fascinating works ever given to the world.” Sadly of course the prophecy proved to be untrue.

One of several problems for the reader is the genealogical detail, the difficulty of which TC acknowledges, offering timely reminders, pointing out people who are worth remembering because we will hear from them again and those we can forget because they will appear no more. Then there is the detailed military history, interesting only to the specialist. This contrasts with the absence of comment on Frederick’s other interests. There is no mention of the music in Frederick’s court or of Frederick’s interest in philosophy. TC says Frederick’s history during the years between 1746 and 1756, the “peace Period,” must be in compressed form because not only are the events of this period buried under rubbish in the “sad Prussian Repositories” but the events themselves lack importance (*Works* 26:195). Only

significant events such as battles can keep Dryasdust (TC's word for the desiccated, dull and boring antiquarians and historians) under control. Oddly and unexpectedly however he devotes much space to Frederick's relationship with Voltaire, to the extent that John Rosenberg saw TC's history in terms of three narratives: the first, the Oedipal conflict between Frederick and his father, the second echoing the first in the father-son relationship between Frederick and Voltaire and the third which overlaps the other two, centring on the solitary figure of Frederick at war (Rosenberg, 163-64).

The fact that *Frederick* is largely ignored today is understandable but regrettable. Ruth apRoberts points out the lightness of touch in TC's relationship with the reader that belies his grimness during the writing of *Frederick* (ApRoberts 15). She argues that his direct comments to the reader are reminiscent of *Tristram Shandy* and his habit of confessing to the reader when he has lost the source for particular piece of information (*Works* 14:219 and 17:339) gives the reader far more confidence in his honesty and integrity as a historian (17). Descriptions such as that of Friedrich Wilhelm's visit to the camp at Radewitz in 1730 (*Works* 13:247-59) are magnificent word pictures bringing the reader closer to the action by frequent use of the present tense, and numerous confidential asides. One hundred and sixty mealy bakers work and oxen are killed day and night for the profligate Polish King, Augustus II and his guests' amusement. Augustus, TC does not hesitate to tell us, sired 354 illegitimate offspring, some of them from his own daughters. Their quarters are "built of sublime silk tents, or solid well-painted carpentry, the general colour of which is bright green, with gilt knobs and gilt gratings all about." There were improvised flower gardens, a cake 30 ft. long and 15 ft wide. At the inspection of the troops we are told that Friedrich Wilhelm "drank a glass of wine to each party (steady your majesty!) who all responded by glasses of wine and threw the glasses aloft with shouts. Six pieces of artillery speaking the while and the bands of music breathing their sweetest; - till it was done, and his majesty still steady on his feet. He could stand a great deal of wine" (*Works* 13:258-59). The reader sees, hears and smells the fire at the newly built St. Peter's Church in Berlin; "[T]he Heavens were black as if you had hung them with a mort cloth: such roaring cataracts of flame . . . Hisss what hissing far aloft is that? That is the incomparable big bells melting. There they vanish, their fine tones never to be tried more, and ooze through the redhot ruin, Hush-sh-sht - the last sound heard from them. And the stem for holding the immense Crown royal, -- . . . weighing sixteen hundred weight; down it comes crashing through the belly of St. Peter's the fall of it like an earthquake all around" (*Works* 13:243-44).

The anecdotal quality of much of *Frederick* gives no sense of the burdensome nature of TC's task. We hear of Friedrich Wilhelm in Hanover where he was sent to "improve his breeding," giving his cousin, (the future George II of Great Britain) a bloody nose, swallowing his shoe buckle eventually restored to him by a few grains of rhubarb, and throwing himself out of a high window rather than obey his governess (*Works* 12:30-31). The relationship between Frederick and his father is

both horrifying and moving. They are tragic figures whose personal story is woven into the backcloth of political intrigue but it also stands separate from it. It is not merely a question of the two taking different positions in the politically complex and devious relationships between the various European States and alliances, it is also a portrait of a bizarre, dysfunctional relationship between father and son. Friedrich Wilhelm publicly humiliates Frederick and on discovering Frederick's plot to escape from him imprisons him, threatens him with death and makes him watch his best friend beheaded (*Works* 13:340) But there is also a sense of Friedrich Wilhelm's frustration; a sense of him being all at sea in the intrigue that surrounds him. His son is too smart and he has interests that Friedrich Wilhelm does not understand. TC gives us a surprisingly sympathetic picture of him. He shows an honest and devout man rescuing his country from extravagance and waste, treating the Salzburg Protestants with generosity and humanity (*Works* 14:33-50).

TC had many regrets about *Frederick* and saw it as a cause of much unhappiness but both Carlyles had periods of sociability and contentment during this time. There were long visits to family and friends in Scotland. Even JWC's journal of 1855/56, written during the period of her greatest unhappiness, is full of vitality. She has a busy social life with Ruskin, Tait, the actress Sarah Anderton, John Forster and others. During the late 1850s and early 1860s she made new friends including the American actress Charlotte Cushman and Walter Mantell the New Zealand activist for Maori rights. The side of TC which loved good company and which had warmth and affection for his family and friends never left him. He too made new friends such as Lewis Pelly and John Tyndall also became a close friend. Tyndall reports in April 1858 that he and TC were the "most joyful pair at the table" at a dinner party at Lord Ashburton's (*CL* 33: 207). And of course both Carlyles were eventually to become very close friends of Lady Louisa Ashburton. Years later TC describes his feelings after *Frederick* is finished "half killed, and utterly wearing out and sinking into stupefied collapse" (*Letters and Memorials* 3: 243). But Geraldine Jewsbury wrote to a friend: "Carlyle has finished Frederick! & his wife who ought to know declaring that he has been kicking up his heels in a wonderful way ever since" (MS: Mantell Papers. Alexander Turnbull Library).

1. This was given to me by David Sorensen.

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Jane Welsh Carlyle and her Gentleman Callers

Liz Sutherland

As an only child Jane Welsh Carlyle was used to being the centre of attention and even in school where she was often the only girl who shared many of the classes with the boys, she gathered about her her own little court. This she was to do throughout her life. She had a great capacity for friendship which she gave loyally and expected nothing less in return. She was clever, she was witty, and all men, young and old, like to be flattered and this she managed with great skill. As a young woman, therefore, she was never short of admirers though sometimes she could be accused of leading on certain young gallants who pursued her. In his *Reminiscences* TC told how “a relative of hers told me that every man who spoke to her for five minutes felt impelled to make her an offer of Marriage!...She seemed born ‘for the destruction of man-kind’”(45).

One of her first conquests was a Dougal Gilchrist whom she described to TC in August 1824 as having “fallen in love with [her] in good earnest” and on a visit to her home in Haddington, “came out with a matrimonial proposition in due form”, the refusal of which sent him into paroxysms of such weeping that he cried himself into a fever. Later in the letter she describes him as “a love-able creature ... now that his whim of marrying [her] is past – his affection ... is of no common sort; it is tender, devoted, hopeless” (CL 3:128-31).

Many years later after a visit to her friend Mary Russell of Thornhill in 1858, she wrote that she had sent a Robert McTurk her picture describing it as a “sort of *amende honorable* for having failed to give him myself ... when he had some right to expect it – long ago, when I was an extremely absurd little girl”. In 1821 Edward Irving had lost her to TC but continued to carry a torch for her, and was to visit them later in their home in Cheyne Row where he complimented her “You are like an Eve, and make a little Paradise wherever you are”. In 1842 artist Spiridione Gambardella would declare that “whenever [she] needed him he was ready to spill blood for [her], or go to the world’s end”. Jane had the ability to instil this kind of devotion throughout her life.

Her nurse Betty Braid had described her as “a fleein’, dancin’, lightheartit thing that naething would hae dauntit”, and according to TC in his *Reminiscences*, “she was always witty with a gift for narration – in a word she was fascinating and everybody fell in love with her”. As she grew from childhood into young womanhood, although no beauty she became increasingly attractive with her “very lovely but too *thoughtful* eyes”, those eyes which “lure[d] men to speech which her tongue made them regret”.

“As a listener she was miraculous, so that her big, black eyes seemed to be flashing with comprehension and sympathy, and men felt compelled to talk to her without reserve”. As she aged, she reckoned that she had more than gained in breadth of sympathy, general increase of poise and wit, which men admired in a friend and hostess. She was, according to Thackeray’s daughters Anny and Minny, “not familiar, but cordial, dignified and interested in everything as she sat installed in her corner of the sofa”. Froude, at his first meeting with her in 1849 recognised what many did not - that “her eyes [were] dark, soft, sad, with dangerous light in them”. After eighteen months in London Jane admitted to Eliza Stoddart in 1836 that

“with a good deal of effort I have got up a sentiment for several men and women, which has a good right to go by the name of friendship in these days. I have even executed two or three innocent flirtations with good effect, and on the whole live in great amity with my fellow creatures. They call me ‘sweet’ and ‘gentle’; and some of the men go the length of calling me ‘ENDEARING’ and I laugh in my sleeve, and think Oh Lord! if you but knew what a brimstone of a creature I am behind all this beautiful amiability!”

So it was when she moved to London with TC in 1834 that she really began to gather a select coterie about her. She had gained the reputation of being one of London’s female ‘town wits’, ladies whose fame was largely based on their clever and amusing repartee. Indeed, according to Thackeray, Jane belonged wholeheartedly to the great Victorian *bourgeoisie*. Jane confirmed this spirit in a remark about a party for Mrs Macready, which Thackeray also attended; “I question if there was as much witty speech uttered in all the aristocratic conventional drawing rooms thro’ London that night as among us little knot of blackguardist literary people, who felt ourselves above all rules and independent of the universe”(292).

TC was pleased and proud of her popularity – it meant that he could avoid many of the visitors and get on with his writing – though playing the hostess did not always give her the pleasure he supposed. She complained to Jeannie Welsh in the Spring of 1844 that “decidedly I begin to be weary of doing all the bores – while if ever perchance an exceptional human being drops in then he is carried off to smoke in the garden or talk tête-à-tête in the Library” and even when she felt unwell she still had “to do the amiable to company, and take all the principal bores off Carlyle”. Much later in early 1859 she complains to Mary Russell that “uninvited MEN [come] tumbling in to tea, and stealing away my evening”. However, perhaps the lady doth protest too much for she had written to TC who was visiting Wales in 1843 that “she had to deal with friends, exiles, disciples, waifs and strays, curiosities”, at the same time perform her earthquake – and “managed all triumphantly”.

Jane wanted the visitors to Cheyne Row to see her for herself and not only as an adjunct to her famous husband. For the most part, when TC was there she allowed

him to take the lead in conversation – she accepted her place – but when he was not, she could be her own person and control the gathering. She enjoyed the status that being TC's wife had brought *her*, recognising that the doors which were initially opened to him were opened also to her because of him. But even when he was known not to be at home – or even indeed in London – invitations still came for her and gentlemen still went out to Chelsea to visit her. She wrote to Lady Louisa Ashburton in 1863 that a Colonel Percy had begged Lady William Russell “to [be] introduce[d] to Mrs Carlyle – the wife of Mr Carlyle the *distinguished Philosopher* and herself a very distinguished woman”. However, not everyone saw her in this light. Charles Darwin told Elizabeth Wedgwood that “it is high treason, but I cannot think that Jennie is either quite natural or lady-like.”

Jane was always happiest in her own drawing-room where she was the centre of attention and could control proceedings. She would write that “Darwin and Mazzini met here the other day and the three of us sat with our feet on the fender ... and talked about ‘things in general’ forming the most confidential little fire-side party I have seen for a good while”. Reporting gaily to TC she wrote that she had had a “tea-shine” with her friends, Herzen, Saffi, Erasmus Darwin, Brookfield and Reichenbach. “There were six of us and we spoke 4 languages”.

She admits in an early letter of 1823 that TC's “little well-timed flatteries which roused her from inactivity...led her to believe that she was a genius of the first order”. She was, therefore, not prepared to be completely subsumed by TC and his popularity. One of her first courtiers, John Sterling, gave her the reassurance that she was a person in her own right. Soon after they met, he had written to TC but had enclosed a letter for Jane and she thanked him profusely for “sending her the little separate note ... ‘all to myself’ ... for in spite of the honestest efforts to annihilate my *I-ety*, or merge it in what the world doubtless considers my better half; I still find myself a self-subsisting, and alas! self-seeking me... Mr Sterling ‘I too am here’”. He had been one of the first to visit at No 5 Cheyne Row. Jane played chess with him and in a letter of October 1836, he told TC “Tell her she is ... sure of being constantly remembered; for I play backgammon with Charles Barton for want of any one to play chess with”. Later she told him that she had “always thought well of John Forster's judgement for, from the first he has displayed a most remarkable clear-sightedness, with respect to myself – thinking me little short of being as great a genius as my husband.” Even old Edward Sterling, the “Thunderer” of *The Times* had fallen victim to her charms and, after a short disagreement, had exhibited “A flash of indignation – then in a soft tone” had added, “do you know Mrs Carlyle you would be a vast deal more amiable, if you were not so *damnablely clever!*” Which pleased her immensely.

Young men appeared to hold a particular fascination for Jane – and Jane for them.

Were they the brothers that she had never had? Erasmus Darwin appeared to fit the bill as she wrote to Mary Scot in the Spring of 1841 “the likeliest thing to a brother I ever had in the world, not even excepting my brother-in-law”. Three years younger than Jane, he was to become one of her closest allies and friends. Always available for her, he would take her shopping or, if he found her depressed or suffering from one of her headaches, he would take her to Gunter’s for an ice and sit with her while she ate it, relating to her any scraps of news or gossip which might amuse her. This sibling feeling was extended to William Forster in 1847 when she wrote hoping that he would “decide for London; if it can be done without hurt to yourself, what a blessing you would be to *me!* Verily I feel quite *schwesterlich* towards you”.

It was probably this attitude to the young men which they found quite unthreatening. She was relaxed with them, could put them at their ease. Alfred Tennyson was a very shy man and, as she told her cousin Helen Welsh at the end of January 1845 “[t]he only chance of my getting any right good of him was to make him forget my womanness – so I did just as Carlyle would have done, had he been there: got out *pipes* and *tobacco* – and *brandy and water* – with a deluge of *tea* over and above”.

John Forster, known as “Fuz” joined the Cheyne Row circle in the winter of 1838. Although several years younger than Jane he became one of her most popular visitors. He was exuberant in his behaviour, and had a great burly laugh which compelled everyone to join in. With women he had a courtly, old-fashioned air of respect, he bowed deeply, raised his hat high and would hand them into a coach as if they were royalty. Later, she would tell him that he had “something *sunshiny* about [him], that cheers [her] gloom”. This gloom was often caused by her loneliness and melancholy, as TC left her much to her own devices while he wrote in his garret room at the top of the house. She and Forster shared an ironic sense of humour, both loved to gossip, to discuss books and the more prurient reports of murders and such-like found in the papers. He was a very kind man and always helped the lame ducks which life cast in his path. This last virtue endeared him to Jane as she seldom was without lame ducks of her own. Indeed TC in 1835 had suggested that she put an advertisement in their window “House of Refuge for stray cats and dogs” and he did not mean the four-legged ones.

These two-legged strays were usually exiles and foreigners, and a great many found their way to Chelsea over the years. They gave Jane much pleasure and were the source of many stories conveyed to her correspondents. But they were not always welcomed by *both* Carlyles. In a note to one of Jane’s letters to him in 1843, TC wrote that “the *Foreign-Exile* element was not the recommendable one here”. But for Jane, they were romantic; they were different. No.5 Cheyne Row was a bolt-hole for many foreign intellectuals who arrived in London – each introduced by another so that the word went round that they would have a welcome there. One of the first

“Sprinklings” as TC called them arrived in 1835. Joseph Garnier, a refugee from Germany, whom TC described as “[a] huge black man, with *schläger* cuts over his face ... fit for treasons stratagems and spoils”. Jane would write to TC in August 1843 “Poor Garnier walked in at five and staid till after nine – and if you had seen the difference in him at his entrance and his exit you would have said that I had worked a miracle! ... I gave him tea and took him a walk and lent him some music and soothed the troubled soul of him, and when he went away he said the only civil thing to me he ever said in life. ‘I am obliged to you, Mrs Carlyle – you have made me pass one evening pleasantly – and I came very miserable’”.

Jane wrote spell-bound to Susan Hunter in 1835 of another who appeared at Chelsea, one who “beats all the rest to sticks. A freed republican of the right thoro’- going sort ... who has had the glory of meriting to be imprisoned and nearly losing his head; a man with that sort of dark, half-savage beauty ... who fears neither Heaven nor Earth for aught one can see; who *fight*s and *writes* with the same passionate intrepidity; who is ready to dare or to suffer, to live or to die without disturbing himself much about the matter; who *defies* all men and *honours* all women – and whose name is Cavaignac!” The same age as Jane, Godefroy Cavaignac was for her the epitome of a romantic hero. He laughed long at her stories and thus became a particular favourite. He flattered her with “Vous n’êtes pas Ecossoise, Madame; désormais vous serez Française”. When he died in 1845, Jane was most distressed.

Jane attracted some of the neediest souls to their circle. Introduced by Cavaignac was one Richard Plattnauer, a German émigré, whose behaviour was erratic to say the least. He quickly became a regular Sunday morning visitor in the spring of 1843. During 1844 he began to behave more and more strangely. By August, TC was telling his brother, John, that “his wits had suddenly quitted him!” By the end of the month Jane was telling her cousin, Jeannie, he had been handed into her care by Sir Alexander Morison, a well-known doctor of mental diseases. When TC went to the Grange for a week, she tells her cousin that “everybody else is terrified for my being left alone in the house with him – But Carlyle has no idle apprehensions he paid me the compliment of supposing that I had presence of mind and cleverness enough without any protection”. It is hardly surprising that everyone was concerned for her safety. As a house-guest, he would suddenly leap to his feet, would rush out of rooms or into them, feeling the need to “seize a poker and dash” another visitor’s “brains out”.

But the foreigner to whom Jane became most attached was Giuseppe Mazzini. From the introduction of him into her life, Jane’s letters become full of Mazziniisms. There developed a close two-way friendship – both needed a confidant and a sympathiser. His enthusiasm for Jane was so great that he caused his parents in Italy concern which was only allayed by his letter to his father in which he assured him

that her feelings for him, were of “sisterly devotion... though perhaps tenderer and more demonstrative.” Again this *sisterly* affection.

He was certainly a most attractive man. Described by the German patriot and poet, Moritz Hartmann in Jessie White Mario’s *The Birth of Modern Italy*, “Mazzini was a man whom the hardest heart could not have repelled ... thin and pale, his complexion olive-tinted; of middle stature, well-knit ... and dressed with extreme simplicity; beautiful indeed was his majestic forehead ... but when you saw his eyes a sense of pleasure mixed with veneration possessed you; and when he spoke, the harmony of his voice conquered you” (220). The *Gazetta di Milano* wrote that they did not know whether to “admire most his lofty genius or [his] indomitable courage ... Every Italian feels himself exalted and ennobled by the fact that such a man is his countryman”. No wonder Jane adored him.

It was not only hospitality that Jane gave to Mazzini. She supported him in his fund-raising for his “organ-boys” and for his political party “Young Italy”. She persuaded John Forster to publish articles by him and introduced him to people who could help him. Indeed at one stage she was believed to be so involved that the gossips of London were having a field-day. In 1843, the Home Secretary, Sir James Graham was led to believe that Mazzini was plotting against Britain and ordered that his mail should be scrutinised. Jane was most indignant and more so when she found out that her own letters were being overhauled.

However, it was not only young men who came to pay homage. Jane knew instinctively how to flatter the older man. She treated *them* rather as father-figures. She would listen to them, laugh at their jokes and generally entertain them. Old Edward Sterling was particularly fond of her, making his carriage available to her, begging her to go on holiday with him, calling her his “Angel of Consolation and Mercy”. Towards the end of his life when Jane was away from home he called at Cheyne Row “in dreadful impatience” wanting to know when she would return and on visiting him he “held my hands and kissed then incessantly, and cried and laughed alternately – the laughing was the dreadfulest part of it – it was so insane”.

We tend always to think of the Victorians as being rather staid and undemonstrative but Jane always gave an exuberant welcome to those she loved, and it was reciprocated. She had written to John Sterling “one dare not fly into his [his brother, Anthony’s] arms as one does into yours”. On the reappearance of George Rennie after many years, she had sprung into his arms and had “kissed him a great many times.” When Leigh Hunt came to visit after a bout of flu in the 1840s during which she had not seen him, she leapt from her chair and kissed him, which flattered him so much that he went home and wrote the famous charming little poem for her

“Jenny kissed me when we met,

Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief, who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in;
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
Say that health and wealth have missed me
Say I'm growing old, but add,
Jenny kissed me."

Other gentlemen, too, could be enthusiastic, sometimes overly so. Lord Jeffrey, an old friend from their Edinburgh days arrived, kissed Jane many times "not on the brow or any of those delicate spots, but plump on my lips! Calling me 'my darling Jeannie' – my sweet child! My dear love!!! And then when we had got over the brunt of the business he ceased not a moment from kissing my hands, stroking my hair, patting my face – and saying the tenderest things in the tenderest tones!"

Elizabeth Pepoli had been heard to reassure Plattnauer that "'ALL MEN' were preposterously fond of Mrs Carlyle". Of course as this conversation was related by Jane to cousin Jeannie, it was probably embellished somewhat to her advantage.

Jane was always very jealous of her friendships. William Forster, who had bounded into the Carlyles' lives in Derbyshire in the summer of 1847, became quickly both an admirer of and admired by Jane. They had driven about, played chess and talked interminably. Jane had found him a most attractive young man. "I never enjoyed a visit so much before" she wrote "and so far as I can dive into the secret of my contentment, it lies in the fact of there being no *women* in the house, except servants! So that I have as fine a time of it as Beauty in the Castle of the beast!" He found Jane to be "one of those few women to whom a man could talk all day, or listen all day, with equal pleasure." However, during a visit two years later things were not so happy for Jane. Forster's adulation, she wrote peevishly to TC who was in Ireland, had shifted to a Mrs Paulet. "Contrary to all previous experience I am likely to be too 'well let alone' here. William Edward is no longer the devoted Squire of the Dames he was but the Squire of *one* Dame and that *one* is not *me!*... The gig cannot carry *three* – so I walk 'mostly by myself'".

John Forster blotted *his* copybook in 1858 by getting married. Jane felt his loss to her inner circle keenly. There would be no more "larks", no more jaunts; she could no longer rely on him as an escort to the theatre. However, instead of allowing a rift to develop, Jane was magnanimous and recovering from her initial jealousy, accepted Eliza as her friend but at the same time managed to let her know how well she knew her husband.

She was not so understanding when Mazzini became friendly with the Ashurst

family. Eliza Ashurst's name could not be mentioned in Jane's presence for she had committed the worst crime – had stolen Jane's most precious possession – the man himself. Jane wrote bitterly to her cousin Babbie Welsh that he “was not so solitary as he used to be – having got up to the ears in a good twadly family of the name of Ashurst – who have plenty of money – and help his ‘things’ and toady him till I think it has rather gone to his head. A Miss Eliza Ashurst – who does strange things – made his acquaintance first – by going to his house to drink tea with him all alone, &c &c. and when she had got him to her house she introduced him into innumerable houses of her kindred – and the women of them paint his picture – and send him flowers – and work for his bazaar – and make verses about him – and Heaven knows what all – while the men give capital towards his institutions and adopt ‘the new ideas’ at his bidding – Miss Ashurst would marry him out and out with all the joy in life – but that is not in Mazzini's way.” In 1861, however, Mazzini wrote to Emily Ashurst that he still “[felt] the same deep esteem and affection for Mrs Carlyle, and any little thing I might do for her would be a pleasure to me”.

She even complained to TC about Leigh Hunt's attentions to her friend Susan Hunter on a visit from Edinburgh: “who sang, talked like a pen-gun, ever to Susan, who drank it all in like nectar ...I was declared to be grown ‘*quite prim and elderly*’”. He kisses Susan Hunter. “Now just remember”, she complains to TC, “what sort of looking woman is Susan Hunter; and figure this transaction! If he had kissed me it would have been intelligible but Susan Hunter of all people!”

Jane's pleasure in life was drawn from excitement, the downside of which led always to depression and a sense of futility. Her moods, as we see from her letters, could swing from high spirits to depths of despair which in turn often brought on illness, illness from which she could make a remarkable recovery if some excitement or interesting visitor should show itself. She suffered less when she had company or something to look forward to and had no time to dwell on the past and past grievances. When she had time on her hands she became querulous and most dissatisfied with her life. She read, sewed and mended quite happily as long as she knew that someone would arrive to relieve the boredom. No.5 Cheyne Row was definitely a more cheerful place when Jane was occupied and playing the hostess to her callers. She had written to TC in 1836, “I had some private misgiving that your men would not mind me when you were not here ... but it is quite the reverse.” Twenty to thirty years later she would still be as popular as ever.

By the 1860s, however, she began increasingly to suffer ill-health; she also was becoming conscious of all the dead and otherwise dispersed friends and acquaintances and in consequence sought more and more to talk of home and of “dear old long ago”. She spent much time looking back to happier times and to writing to those who

had links with Haddington. She had written earlier to Jeannie Welsh, “the women to their shame like me best when I am well, and when there is chance of getting me to their stupid parties – But all my *men* vie with each other in delicate attentions to me when I am shut up – and I really have more society than than at other times; so that I can but keep out of my bedroom where it would be judged improper for an *Englishwoman* to receive.”

Friends who were left gathered round; they made frequent trips to Chelsea as if something precious was about to go out of their lives. After one of her many bouts of illness, she was greeted at Cheyne Row with “kisses of joy” from John Forster, Thomas Woolner “kissed me over and over... his face wet with tears” and went away with “a great sob”, sure that he would not see her again, and John George Cooke, on her return to Chelsea “took me in his arms... and burst into tears”.

There was, of course, a downside to Jane’s character which became more evident as she grew older and suffered increasing ill-health. According to Hanson’s *Necessary Evil*, “Jane was often hard and unfeeling, although her wit and charm glossed over these qualities.... She had little true benevolence ... she was capable of mockery and malice against the very people she had helped, as soon as their trouble had passed and her own impulse had exhausted itself”. She could be scathing, too. On a visit to John and his wife Phoebe in 1853, she wrote to TC – “She looks to me like a woman who has been all her life made the *first* person with those she lived beside and to feel herself in a *false position* when she doubts her *superiority* being recognised.” The words “pot”, “kettle” and “black” spring to mind.

So why was this woman who could display such contrasts in her personality, from joyful exuberance and sympathy to moodiness, bitterness, jealousy and on occasion downright unpleasantness remain so very popular?

TC would write in his *Reminiscences* after her death that “the waste wilderness of London was becoming a peopled garden to us, in some measure, especially to her, who had a frank welcome to every sort of worth and even kindly-singularity in her fellow creatures, such as I could at no time rival”(94). Washington Irving wrote in 1822 “There is an emanation from the heart in genuine hospitality, which cannot be described, but is immediately felt, and puts the stranger at once at his ease”. Jane Welsh Carlyle’s faults were greatly outweighed by her loyalty, her wit, her intelligence, and her desire to like and to be liked by her fellow-travellers.

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Dr John Aitken Carlyle: Travelling Physician

Malcolm Ingram

Introduction

Dr John Carlyle is a prominent figure in most volumes of the *Collected Letters*. Much of what we know about him comes from this source and is unflattering, for he often irritated Thomas and Jane: by doing well financially while not subscribing wholeheartedly to the Carlylean work ethic; by being dilatory, indecisive and mean; and even by having squeaky shoes. In her later years Jane called him ‘an insufferable bore,’ and Sterling once described him, to her delight, as ‘an accursed vegetable...not a man at all, but a Walking Cabbage.’ But Froude, who knew him well, thought that John would have been distinguished in his own right had he not been overshadowed by his brother; and in John’s entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography* Francis Espinasse described him as of ‘good, affectionate, manly character and fine talents.’ Although some of his letters are quoted in the *Collected Letters*, most, with his journal, lie unpublished in the National Library of Scotland (1). They furnish new information about him, especially about the decade he spent on the Continent, mostly in Italy. Perhaps we have been viewing Dr Carlyle through the eyes and pens of Thomas and Jane for too long. This long period yields a different view of him as man and doctor, and casts light on the role of the Travelling Physician, little documented, despite much historical research on the Grand Tour (Black, 1992, 2003).

Finding employment

His medical education was at Edinburgh, funded by Thomas. He then studied in Munich and Vienna for a year. By 1831, when he was thirty, he was well qualified, but lack of capital made it difficult for him to acquire a practice, and he had notions of becoming a writer, even of tackling a *History of Medicine*, much to the disgust of Thomas, struggling to make a living by his pen. John was in London, seriously short of money, and his brother had already spent some £240 on his education. He had few patients, mostly friends, but attended Hazlitt on his deathbed, and was commissioned by Jeffrey to help him out financially (JAC-TC, 14.3.31). He had no regular medical work, made little effort to find it, and told his brother that he had no desire to acquire a practice. He published a few medical articles in *Fraser’s Magazine* and the *Foreign Review*, and sent the modest fees to Thomas, only to quickly borrow them back. Thomas visited London in August. He reported on John to their brother Alex on the 18th: ‘His worst fault, indeed almost only one, is procrastination....he needs to be stirred up...as long as I am here he can look for little rest.’ (TC-AC, 18. 8. 31). Thomas lobbied his friends and contacts, and asked Lord Jeffrey to interview him and assist the process of stirring John up. Jeffrey obliged, then offered to help John in any way he could, even financially, and suggested that if he could no find work in

a practice he could perhaps become a travelling physician. Soon after he told John that the Countess of Clare, an Irish lady of 'rank and wealth,' was seeking one to accompany her to Italy for a year.

The Lady Clare Years

Lady Clare interviewed John twice. He had references from the charismatic preacher Irving, with whom he had been lodging, commending his 'religious character.' Another doctor was being considered, but Jack was appointed. He wrote to his father (JAC-JCSr.19.9.31), telling him that 'she seems a very straightforward, clever, informed lady.' She was religious, and he thought that she would treat him well and even kindly. 'We are to have two carriages with four, and one with two horses, and the whole party will consist of seven or eight persons in all....I am...to have the inside of the small carriage to myself while the Countess and another lady with her servants and couriers have the large one. We are to have breakfast and dinner together during the journey.' They would cross from Dover to Calais, spend three weeks in Paris, then travel to the south of France and on to Italy and Rome. 'It is likely that most of the time will be at my own disposition. I suppose my professional duty will be attended by little anxiety or labour.' His prediction proved correct and was the source of much discontent in the next seven years. His starting salary was £300 per annum, plus his keep and expenses. To the Carlyle family at that time this was wealth beyond any dreams of avarice. Thomas hoped that the contact with a lady of quality might help his brother to enter London medical circles in the future. John began to study Italian.

Thomas, wrote to his mother:

'... all give her a good character'...'The Countess is young (perhaps 33), courteous, and has behaved in this transaction with great liberality. Jack also is much more prudent and manly in his ways than he was; so that I think there is a fair prospect of his even doing the poor lady some good...'

'Something mysterious there is in the condition of this high personage, She was married some years ago and shortly after that event she parted from her husband (they say by her own determination), the nearest friends know not for what reason; and now she lives in a sort of widowhood (her husband is Governor of Bombay, and said to be a "very good sort of man"), so that being farther in ill-health she is probably unhappy enough, and has need of good counsel every way.'(TC- MC, 26.8.31)

Lady Clare (1793-1879) was Elizabeth Julia Georgiana, third daughter of Peter Burrell, first Baron Gwydir (2). Her husband, the second Earl (1792-1851), was John Fitzgibbon, Governor of Bombay from 1830 to 1834, and later a Privy Councillor and Lord Lieutenant of Limerick. They married in 1826 and separated three years later. The reasons were probably sexual, and can be surmised from recent Byron research. (3)

Although engaged for only one year initially, John spent over seven years with Lady Clare in Italy, and returned with the Duke of Buccleuch and his family for a further year. He had only two short summer breaks at home, escorting his employer back and forward to London on each of them.

The journal he kept for three months in Naples in the summer of 1832 combines a travel diary, describing his outings with the party to the conventional sights of Naples, with a commonplace book, long passages of religious and philosophical speculation (Campbell, 1977), and disappointingly little about his fellow travellers. John found the summer heat oppressive and suffered from frequent headaches. There are only two mentions of medical work: 'Have just left a consultation with Dr Roskilly and Prof Petroni about Mr Mill's servant. I differed from them both in thinking the disease cataract.' Three weeks later the Queen's Physician was consulted and agreed that cataract was the correct diagnosis.

On the fifth of August there was a violent eruption of Vesuvius, one of many in the eighteen-thirties (Palmieri, 1880). This did not stop the party from making their second excursion to the volcano: 'Lady Clare was carried all the way from Portici in a chair, Miss Morris on the trustiest of donkeys, Doria and I on good safe horses. Our equipage consisted in all of about 24 persons, ourselves not included.' They reached the summit, and all found it a memorable experience.

Despite the heat and the noise, John was impressed by Naples. He saw no indecency, –'no shocking degradation and misery and wickedness as in London.' He finished his diary in mid-August, as they prepared to return to Rome:

'I am the creature of habit to an extreme degree....I feel rather sorry and disheartened on looking over this part of my journal to find it so imperfect, so badly written, and it costs me some effort to keep from destroying it altogether. Yet it is not quite worthless and therefore it shall remain. I will even console myself with the hope of being able to do better in future. And now farewell to the record of three months past! Alas that they have not been spent more profitably.' He remained with Lady Clare for seven years in all, his salary steadily increasing. The party spent most of the year in Rome, sometimes moving for the summer months to Naples, or Roman suburbs. One summer they had an extensive tour in the south of France. In the later years Lady Clare had two young nieces for company and John grew friendly with one of them, a Miss Elliot, often horse-riding and walking with her in the moonlight.

He returned to Britain with Lady Clare in 1833, and had two month's leave. When they returned to Rome in the Autumn she rented a house, in which John had a suite of rooms with a separate entrance. The establishment was led by a Roman courier.

'The entourage consists of five English manservants, a chambermaid, two maids for Lady Clare and the other ladies, and a cook with two or three assistants. They almost kept me out of countenance for some time at first, but now I have got more accustomed to them and they annoy me

much less....I think it odd that anyone requires so many. I observe that my patient endures them as part of the state belonging to her rank, and as a thing she has been accustomed to all her life. She would think herself happier and better without them, as they can only at last minister to a transient and most unsatisfactory vanity, which does not naturally belong to her.' (JAC-MC, 17 11 33).

Despite this he could boast of her wealth: 'Lady Clare's carriage surpasses all others at Rome for its unpretending elegance and propriety. It reduces the Cardinals to despair.'

He described a typical day in 1833 (JAC-MC,17.11.33): 'We breakfast about eleven, a luncheon of bread, butter, meat and wine put on the table for those who choose to have it at three'. Dinner was at six-thirty, tea at nine. He rose at eight and worked until breakfast; walked in the afternoon, alone or with some of the party. He did not remain with the ladies at teatime. He often read to the Countess. As in the past he had little to do: '....my medical duties amount almost to nothing. My patient is as well as when she left Englandscarcely ever had to consult me.' He had attended one or two other people in Rome, but there were many resident English physicians, and there was little work for him.

In the summer of 1835 John was expected home for another leave. He and the Countess had reached Geneva, but she changed her mind, probably because Lord Clare had returned from Bombay to London. Instead she spent the winter in Munich, where John found hospital work to occupy him. The party came back to England for a holiday in 1836, and for good in 1838. In these last years John briefly severed his connection with Lady Clare. She allowed him to practise in Rome, and he set up his brass plate outside his lodgings in the Piazza di Spagna for the winter of 1836-37. He made over £60 in the first few months, but found he had few patients apart from those sent by friends, and returned to Lady Clare in May, 1837. A month later he met William Wordsworth and the journalist Crabbe Robinson, and showed them the antiquities of Tivoli.

Outbreaks of cholera in these last years reduced the number of visitors to Italy, and made his chances of building up a practice slim. During the epidemic in Rome John persuaded Lady Clare to remain when most visitors were fleeing the city. He gave his services gratis to the poor, and was horrified by the general panic and selfishness that prevailed. The presence of cholera was officially denied and the deaths blamed on 'poisoning.' In his letters he accused the Pope and his staff of exceptional cowardice, but praised the poor priests, the Jesuits, and the Capuchins. Many of the physicians 'behaved very ill.'

He and Lady Clare agreed to part when they reached London in September, 1838. Thomas was on holiday in Scotland, and it was Jane who welcomed John back to Cheyne Row. He went on to Scotland with a letter from Jane to Thomas:

'..I send you our Doctor very grey, very thin, but healthy, and locomotive

as ever. I wish I could send him with one certainty in his pocket, in which case he would be a help more meet for youRome may be the best place for him.....I should not like to have any hand in deciding him one way or the other – this only is clear to me; better to be a peripatetic Doctor than no doctor at all – and it is to be thoroughly doubted if he will ever screw himself up to practising his profession with the necessary energy and endurance in London.’(JWC-TC 9.38).

Within a month Lady Clare was missing him and sent for him. He was in Scotland and turned her down. The Countess summoned other doctors who diagnosed ‘Nervous Fever with Delirium.’ When John returned to London a fortnight later she refused to see him, but he discussed her case with the other doctors and feared for her sanity and recovery. But within a fortnight she had improved, met him, and they parted friends. It seems likely that her symptoms had been related to his departure and refusal to return.

By this time John had learned that the Duke of Buccleuch was in search of a physician. He went at once to Sir James Clark, the Queen’s physician, obtained a reference from him, took it to Dr Hume, the Duke of Wellington’s physician, and from him obtained a letter to Dr Arnott, a Dumfriesshire man, who had connections with Buccleuch, and had been Napoleon’s physician. John now had some useful contacts, thanks to his long service with the nobility, and knew how to use them. He obtained the post in the face of much competition. He was to be the family’s physician for their tour to Italy, principally to attend to the health of the children. The payment offered for the tour was £500, with all expenses paid.

The Buccleuch Grand Tour

Walter, the Fifth Duke of Buccleuch, was an even grander employer than the Countess of Clare. His palace was at Dalkeith, and he owned other large properties, including Drumlanrig Castle in Dumfriesshire, where his patronage might prove useful to the Carlyle family. He had held the title since he was thirteen, and when only sixteen entertained George IV for two weeks at Dalkeith. In 1838 he was thirty-two, married to the former Lady Charlotte Anne Thyme, and had four young children. The oldest son was William, Lord Dalkeith, aged seven; the others Henry, aged six, Walter, four, and a newborn fourth son, Charles. The children were said to be delicate but not ill.

John had dinner with the Buccleuch family in London, and on the 30th of November, 1838, joined them at Dover to proceed to Naples. The party was detained at Dover by bad weather, and he wrote to his sister Jean:

‘I have seen a good deal of the Duke and Duchess and think very highly of them. Their four little boys are the best-trained, and at the same time when let loose from constraint the rickettiest creatures, with the exception of your little Jamy, that I have seen. ...Neither the Duke or the Duchess have any

touch of the aristocratic haughtiness or stiffness of which one hears so much. They seem at home in their station, and bear themselves simply and naturally in it. I already get on with them as well as with Lady C after seven years intercourse.’(JAC-JCA, 30.11.38)

When he dined with them, he met the elderly Earl of Home, the uncle of the Duke and one of the party for the tour. John thought him ‘a good-natured specimen of Scotch nobility’ and ‘a very affable, agreeable old man.’ He had already consulted John about his indigestion. Both the Duchess and Lord Dalkeith, the future heir, were unwell, and John was glad to report that ‘in addition to my scribbling I have other work.’

Their departure must have been a brave sight. They travelled in five large carriages, each with four horses, with John in the children’s party, which occupied three of the carriages. The crossing to Calais was quick but unpleasant; most of the party were sick. John went ahead with the children to Boulogne, accompanied by the young tutor, and the governess. She was a middle-aged Swiss, and John was able to practise his French with her. The children were very biddable. Young Lord Dalkeith was fond of stories and John often took him on his knee to tell them while they travelled.

After seven years abroad John was a competent courier as well as an experienced physician. He guided the Buccleuchs around Paris, and interpreted for them there and in Italy and Austria. He was a shopping assistant to the Duke and Duchess in Naples, and his knowledge of Italian cities and tourist attractions must have been useful to them. The party made heavy demands on his medical services. His salary was generous, but now he had to earn it.

He wrote home more in this year, having more to tell the family, and because his and the Buccleuchs’ letters went in the ambassador’s bag wherever they went. John had decided that the Duke and Duchess were ‘both very different from Lady Clare, but I question whether my connection with them will ever be so intimate as it was with her’(JAC-TC,18.12.38). He had become friendly with Lord Home: ‘Lord Home amuses us all very much. He is an original of his kind – speaks in general broad Scotch, tells many stories of hunting and of warfare and often breaks through all etiquettes, tho’ thoroughly well bred.’ He saw much of the tutor, some 15 years his junior, but found him ‘commonplace and indolent.’ He had treated him for a very bad sore throat; and his patients also included Lord Home, whose indigestion continued to trouble him; the Duke and Duchess, both of whom had had colds; a nurse with pleurisy; and a nephew of the Duke’s.

The Duke engaged a vessel to take them from Marseilles to Naples, where they arrived in late December, 1838. John moved into private lodgings, five minutes’ walk from the house the Buccleuchs had taken. He thought other visitors to Naples not so ‘nice’ as formerly, and found life with his group very unlike the formality of Lady Clare’s. He went hare-hunting with them, and often dined alone with Lord

Home, when they enjoyed whisky, brandy punch and a cigar together.

A month later(JAC-TC, 21.2.39), the Duke's yacht, the Flower of Yarrow, arrived from home, and the Duke and Duchess planned an excursion to Malta or Sicily. The yacht brought many books, including a copy of *French Revolution*, which John re-read. He had been kept up for two nights with a patient when he wrote, but usually he rose at seven, breakfasted at eight, then read until ten or eleven, when he visited the Duke and Duchess. He dined at a trattoria, read again, walked, then 'closed himself in' for the night. On Sundays he dined with the Duke and Duchess, and after dinner the Duke read a sermon and prayers with all the household assembled. His main patients, the children, were giving him no trouble, but the Duke had sprained his great toe. John had been 'sitting in with three doctors, and making a little money' and so had no need to touch his annual salary. He met J S Mill, travelling with Harriet Taylor, and sailed with him to Sorrento, Amalfi and Paestum.

By March (JAC-TC, 20.3.39) John still had a busy family surgery. He was treating Lord Dalkeith for a cold and threatened croup. The Duke had 'violent bilious and gastric fever'; which had 'shaken and weakened him very much.' Another patient kept him up several nights, then died of fever. The Duke's nephew, treated successfully, sent John a cheque for £20, but the scrupulous John returned it, refusing to accept money for treating a relative of the Duke while in his pay. The Duke continued 'steady and faithful,' but the Duchess was 'a little changeable and more difficult to comprehend.'

May brought very bad news (JAC- MC, 18.5.39). The Duke's youngest child died of 'irregular measles' on the 7th, and his three brothers were in bed with the same disease, one of them dangerously ill. All the family were unwell except the Duke. 'My hands were full enough,' wrote John. After the death, 'the Duke and Duchess behaved like reasonable wise people in their severe affliction and testified their gratitude to me and to the other physicians in attendance at the time of their greatest trial in a way we cannot forget.'

The party had planned to move north to Florence by the end of the month and leave Italy at the end of June, but Henry was still desperately unwell. Staying in Naples was endangering his chances of recovery and he would be better moving north, but John feared that the sea voyage might kill him. But he advised it, and was justified and relieved when his young charge quickly improved.

All in better health, and glad to be 'out of the Roman heat and heading for the German mountains', they travelled by Trento, Innsbruck and Salzburg to the spa town of Ischl. They did not linger there, but cut short the tour, reaching London before the end of July. They had a 'prosperous journey from Ischl,' visiting Munich, Heidelberg and Bonn, and a favourable passage to London from Rotterdam. On arrival in the Thames 'the Duke's pleasure boat, all equipped, was waiting for his arrival', and they reached Montagu House within half an hour (JAC- MC, 27.7.39). Something was seriously amiss with one of the children, for the very next day a

consultation took place involving John and London's three 'first surgeons': Sir Benjamin Brodie, Lister and Stone. All agreed that John's treatment plan should be continued which, he proudly reported to the family, gave the Duke and Duchess 'a high idea of my skill.'

The doctor was pleased by this tour of duty. He had been much happier in Italy than in the past, but remained loyal to his first employer: 'I esteem Lady C much higher than either but my sphere with her was narrower and I had much too little work.' He thought of rejoining Lady Clare but decided against it, and in October a parting gift arrived at Chelsea from her, a portable writing desk of Russian leather. Within a short time he was off to Brighton with a new patient, William Coningham, describe by Thomas as 'a young, very tall, very lean, dyspeptical, gentlehearted, rich and melancholy man...at present in a pitiable state with his stomach disorders, and the dispiritment they may have brought on'. John's past experience with Thomas may have helped him here. The New Year brought a more tempting offer, and for the next two years John took charge of another psychiatric patient, a wealthy young Irishman, William Ogilby or Ogilvie, troubled by extreme shyness and anxiety. His family were threatening to have him declared unfit to manage his affairs, and had designs on his fortune. John prevented this, his treatment comprising companionship, extensive tours of Scotland and England with intervals in London, and keeping Ogilby's relatives at bay, which entailed much correspondence. He was paid £500 for the first year, and over £1000 annually for the second and third, again with all his expenses and accommodation. Psychotherapy has been called bought friendship, and if this is true John was now a travelling psychotherapist.

But from 1843, after a career lasting only some eleven years, he virtually abandoned medicine, turning down an offer to be physician to Lady Holland. He translated Dante's *Inferno*, and married a rich widow, who died in childbirth a year later, as did the child. He acted as ward to her children, helped his nephews and nieces, retired to Dumfries, edited a history of Scottish verse, endowed a scholarship at his old medical school, and shortly predeceased his brother. He and Thomas lie together in Ecclefechan churchyard.

Scholar and Doctor

Far from being indolent, Dr Carlyle was a perpetual student. His brother had noticed this earlier when John made demands to study further in Munich and then Vienna. Thomas, who financed these postgraduate studies, believed he would be better starting medical employment. After seven years of medical idleness with Lady Clare, John was harder worked by the sickly Buccleuch family, and made a telling slip of the pen when he wrote home complaining that he had been unable to get on with any work – by which he meant his studies.

He read daily and broadly in all these years: the three months of the journal alone show him reading in Latin, English, French, German and Italian, and transcribing many passages. In this short time he was reading *Pilgrim's Progress*, a life of Cicero,

Goethe's *Italian Journey*, a history of Naples, Rousseau's *Confessions*, Byron, the *Annals* of Tacitus, the New Testament in Greek and Italian, and had reached the book of Job in the Old Testament. He took Italian lessons during these years, and studied Dante with Roman scholars, which led to his translation of the *Inferno* years later. He corresponded with French and German friends, as well as with his family and friends like J S Mill at home. But he never resumed a journal, and wrote no more, except for his translation.

He was a competent and well-educated doctor. A lengthy case history (NLS acc.9086 Vol. 2,18.f.96) survives, vividly written, of a Russian boy of 14, suffering from severe and complex epileptic fits, treated by John in Rome in the spring of 1837. It reveals an acute observer, who can carry out an efficient clinical examination, but whose treatment is limited to calomel, castor oil and alarmingly heroic bleeding, all standard procedure for the time (Pfeiffer, 1985). He gives a long and detailed account of the unusual and complicated symptoms, mysterious to him, but describing what would become known a century later as temporal lobe epilepsy

Another medical thread runs through his life: an interest in psychiatry, from the experience of his mother's mental illness when he was fourteen (Ingram, 2004), to choosing mental illness as the subject of his university thesis, and even to his choice of patients later. In Rome in 1837 he was able to persuade a very deluded patient, armed with dagger and pistol and threatening to attack the clergy, to leave the city. His last two patients, with whom he spent over three years, had psychiatric conditions. John had no real vocation for medicine, as his brother discovered with the ministry, but he was a conscientious and patient physician and counsellor.

There is little information about travelling physicians in either this period or the 18th century. They were uncommon, as only the very rich aspired to them, and many British doctors had settled in Rome and Italy (Black, 2003). The salaries Dr Carlyle was paid in these years increased from £300 to over £1000 per annum. Compared with other doctors of the period (Loudon, 1986), these were generous, especially for a young and inexperienced man. At all levels of practice, fees were sharply higher for the aristocracy, and his were very high, when all travelling expenses and accommodation were added (Peterson, 1978). He saved virtually all his income and, over these twelve years, amassed what Froude called a 'modest competency'. Even more surprising, at a time when most doctors had a lowly position in society, is the status he had, regularly mixing and dining with his employers, and often with his own coach and separate, spacious accommodation.

The Man

He was indecisive, and knew it. He was a restless man, always dashing here and there when in London with the Carlyles, and an indefatigable traveller for the rest of his days, never purchasing a home of his own. His lack of vocation was encouraged by Jeffrey unwittingly providing him with a seven year sinecure. John was unable

to resist the lure of easy money. But it was always 1984 for John: Big Brother was always watching him. From school and university on, he was known as the brother of Thomas, and compared to him at every turn. It was a life-long burden which he bore with grace and without complaint. Jane, at her unkindest, said: ‘...*he eats the dinners which C declines* – for that seems to be the principle on which he is invited out – “since we cannot get Carlyle we may always have his *brother*.”’ (JWC Jeannie Welsh, 12.11.43)

Thomas and Jane were ambivalent about John; it was an odd triangular relationship. Both of them were very attached to him at various times. Thomas was always a loyal brother, although often irritated, and closer to John than to any other of his siblings. It is no accident that they lie together and share a tombstone in Ecclefechan churchyard. Jane was fond of him in the Craigenputtoc days, but grew steadily more exasperated by him over the years, and never forgave his robust attitude to her complaints, which he told her, more than once, could be remedied by work. His faults were many, but his virtues have been undervalued. He was cheerful, clubbable and sociable, qualities sadly missing at times in Cheyne Row, where they felt he ‘knew not the meaning of Silence.’ Thomas confided to his Journal in 1833: ‘He has a boundless affectionateness; this is his great quality. Manifesting itself too at times in strange ways, as in humorous frolicking (even with pigs and horses, if there is no other living thing to frolick with), ...and as a genuine inexhaustible fund of bonhomie.....How different from me; how much happier and better!’

He was a good doctor, valued by his patients and patrons, but his vocation was weak, and he yearned to be what he had little talent for: a writer like his brother. His prose translation of the *Inferno* was well regarded, and remained in print until the 1930s, but he failed to complete the rest of the *Divine Comedy*. He was not an original like Thomas, but he was a decent, conventional man, who, unlike his brother, retained the faith he had been raised in. All in all, he was much more than a Walking Cabbage. John consulted a phrenologist at the end of these years, and was told that he was capable of anything, but not capable of turning his ability to account. There was some truth in that, but, if the inevitable comparisons with his older brother are put aside, it was no mean achievement for an Ecclefechan farm boy to become the Duke of Buccleuch’s travelling physician

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NOTES

The Letters are contained in NLS Acc 9086 (NT Deposit). Volume 2 contains the letters of his years abroad, his medical notes of 1837(F96), and his Journal. The Journal covers a period from 20 May, 1832-15 August, 1832, and covers 61 pages, with pp 43-44 missing). Volume 3 has letters to and from JAC from 1822-1850; Vol.4 to 6 contain later letters than this period, except for Vol. 6 which contains letters from Lady Clare, 1838-9 and from European friends to JAC during the 1830s. Detailed contents of all of these are available on the NLS website: www.nls.uk. All dated letters from JAC in the text are from these manuscripts. All others are from the *Collected Letters* of Thomas and Jane.

2.

The pious Lady Clare was a Catholic - surprisingly, as her husband was not, and her father in law, the first Lord Clare, was Black Jack Fitzgibbon, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and a much-reviled opponent of Catholic emancipation. John and Thomas never mention her Catholicism. In later life she endowed a church in Ryde, where she died after retreating to a convent in her latter days (Kavanaugh).

3.

In Byron's first poems, published when he was nineteen, there is a long poem 'To the

Earl of Clare,' beginning:

Friend of my youth! when young we roved,
Like striplings mutually beloved,
With friendship's purest glow,
The bliss which wing'd those rosy hours
Was such as pleasure seldom showers
On mortals here below.....

Byron met Clare at Harrow when he was fifteen and the Earl eleven or twelve. The most recent Byron biography (MacCarthy, 2002) shows, using the Murray archive, that he was bisexual. His homosexual relationships, from Harrow on, have been concealed or minimised in the past. They corresponded, but Clare destroyed the letters. When Byron met Clare by chance 18 years later in Italy he shed tears, and he wrote to him during his last illness at Missolonghi in 1824.

In transcribing these early letters from the MSS, I have not corrected spelling or punctuation, as opposed to the practice in the Collected Letters. I believe this gives a better indication of the level of education of the correspondents at the time.

Thomas Green Lecture

“the fields ... are white already to harvest”:

Thomas Carlyle the Historian

Professor Paul E. Kerry

University of Cambridge and Brigham Young University

The work that launched Carlyle’s reputation as a new historian was *The French Revolution* (1837).¹ Often forgotten is the small but instructive subtitle, *A History*. He then went on to print a portion of his popular London lecture series, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1841), where the word History is included in the full title, a remarkable blend of social criticism and history that would be found once again in *Past and Present* (1843). *Oliver Cromwell’s Letters and Speeches. With Elucidations* (1845) presents the sources, the essential building blocks of the historian’s craft, Carlyle used to compose his portrait of Cromwell. And his final major work, *The History of Friedrich II of Prussia, called Frederick the Great* (1858-65), leads off with the word *History*. If the use and placement of the word *History* in Carlyle’s major oeuvre mean anything, it seems that Carlyle was in fact making it more prominent as his career progressed.

Yet in the twenty-first century Carlyle’s writing is struggling to find its place in the syllabus, and when he is taught then it is mainly by colleagues in the Faculty of English where his histories are not the centrepiece. This is not to say that he does not on occasion make an appearance in history syllabi. A colleague in the Faculty of History at the University of Cambridge, Pembroke College, Dr Jon Parry, informed me that he and Dr Boyd Hilton, Trinity College, do in fact teach a bit of Carlyle in their course on Victorian history, but here also not his actual histories, but rather his social criticism. At the University of Edinburgh, the historian Mr Owen Dudley Edwards continues to research and write on Carlyle and at University College London, Department of History, Professor Catherine Hall has engaged with some of Carlyle’s ideas in a recent book.² In 2004 I thought it would be an advantage to have a panel on Thomas Carlyle at the North American Conference on British Studies, an international conference of mostly historians who were to convene in Philadelphia. Thankfully, this idea appealed to Professor David Sorensen at St. Joseph’s University,

¹Cf. Martin Hewitt, “Thomas Carlyle”, in *Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writing*. Vol.I (London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1999), p. 179. Kenyon reminds us that Carlyle’s “books are still read, and he has commanded the respect of historians as diverse as James Anthony Froude, G. M. Trevelyan and Hugh Trevor-Roper” John Kenyon, *The History Men: the Historical Profession in England since the Renaissance* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983), p. 98.

²Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2002).

and he organised a strong panel. Owing to the luck of the draw, we were allocated the final session on the final day of the conference and the attendance was sparse.³

Nevertheless, the borrowed biblical phrase in my title is accurate; if there ever were a time to harvest the fields that come into view in Carlyle's histories, to rehabilitate his historical contribution, the time would be now.⁴ The current intellectual climate in the historical profession is conducive for a reassessment of Carlyle's historical writing. With the availability of new critical editions of several of Carlyle's major historical works—the essays, *Heroes, Past and Present*, and a forthcoming edition of *The French Revolution*—the way is being smoothed already. Allow me here to introduce a few interrelated approaches to Carlyle the historian and to touch on salient insights that others have made about this subject. Of course, this is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather I seek to establish that there are multiple, interconnected pathways to Carlyle the historian. In delivering the Thomas Green lecture on this subject, I am keenly aware of my predecessor, another historian, Dr William Ferguson who spoke on “Carlyle as Historian” in 1966 and I gladly recommend his lecture which after forty years remains as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar.⁵

Carlyle's historical writing can be evaluated by placing it in a historiographic context, which necessitates assessing both his philosophy of history and historical practice (including methodology). In posing this framework, I am to some degree following Philip Rosenberg who posited that the “modern historical sense” that was being developed during nineteenth century raised questions about the “nature of the historical enterprise—questions about historical methodology, the philosophy of history, and the nature of historical truth” and these were “the very questions with which Carlyle was puzzling himself in his early writings”⁶ and I would add that he revisited these in each of his histories.

Historiography refers to the history of historical writing and Carlyle's histories need to be so situated, for he produced his histories during a major transition in the discipline of history. Tremendous changes were afoot in Germany, which had made great strides towards the professionalisation of history. Until the late eighteenth century history was seen largely as an auxiliary discipline at the university; indeed, even Friedrich Schiller had to fight to carve a niche for history when he received an

³Dr Marylu Hill and I are organising a 2007 conference at Villanova University, Carlyle Resartus: Reappraising Carlyle with an eye to Carlyle the historian, as well as to address concerns raised by colleagues in the audience during a Carlyle panel at the 2006 International Nineteenth Century Studies conference at Rutgers University. It was noted that Carlyle needed to be remapped within Victorian studies and feature once again in the undergraduate curriculum.

⁴John 4:35. As for my own role as a fellow labourer, I am thinking seriously about organising a scholarly volume on Carlyle and History.

⁵William Ferguson, *Carlyle as Historian*, Occasional Papers of the Carlyle Society 2 (Edinburgh: The Carlyle Society, 1966), pp. 3-13.

⁶Philip Rosenberg, *The Seventh Hero. Thomas Carlyle and the Theory of Radical Activism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1974), p. 10.

invitation to take up a professorship at the University of Jena in 1789. The German Leopold von Ranke practised the idea of *Quellenforschung*, meaning an investigation of primary sources and influenced a generation of historians who would become known as the Prussian School. They in turn were sought out by students from as far away as North America, including John Lothrop Motley, George Bancroft, and Hebert Baxter Adams who would become leading historians in the United States. Indeed, Adams had taken his doctorate at Heidelberg University in 1874, was hired by The Johns Hopkins University—a university founded on the German model of scholarship—and then went on to train some of America’s leading historians such as Frederick Jackson Turner and Woodrow Wilson. In 1883 he helped to found the American Historical Association.⁷ German historical methods transformed the modern university and laid the foundation for professional history that was wissenschaftlich or “scientific”, which not only dispensed with dilettante histories, but also liberated history from philosophy led to the creation of an independent discipline. But there were other trends: Walter Scott was creating a new historical genre; Hegel’s Berlin lectures struck like lightning from a clear blue sky; Jules Michelet was taking French historiography in the direction of the new Romantic history, even as J. S. Mill tried to move in the opposite direction by attempting to uncover rationalist laws in history. Carlyle understood something of these new ideas, but he developed his own style and wrote about the philosophy of history, particularly in two rich essays, “On History” (1830) and “On History Again” (1833).

In 1973 the historian Hayden White published his groundbreaking *Metahistory*, which attempted to show how nineteenth-century histories were structured according to literary genres.⁹ And by the end of the decade, Lawrence Stone, in a famous article in the journal *Past and Present*, posited the return of narrative.¹⁰ In the German-speaking world, Leopold von Ranke, the father of modern history, was now seen to be on the same plane as Sir Walter Scott.¹¹ Out of these debates and the ensuing engagement with French and American literary theory known as the “linguistic

⁷Cf. James Stimpert, “Hopkins History: Pioneer of Graduate Seminars in U.S.,” *The Gazette Online. The Newspaper of The Johns Hopkins University* 30.8 (2000): October 23, 2000, <http://www.jhu.edu/~gazette/>

⁸Cf. Ann Rigney, *Imperfect Histories: The Elusive Past and the Legacy of Romantic Historicism* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2001).

⁹Hayden White, *Metahistory: the historical Imagination in nineteenth-century Europe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1973).

¹⁰Lawrence Stone, “The Revival of Narrative”, *Past and Present* 85 (1979): 3-24.

¹¹Irving Wohlfarth, “History, Literature and the Text: The Case of Walter Benjamin”, *Modern Language Notes*, 96.5 (1981): 1002-1014 (1007). Cf. Jörn Rüsen, “Rhetorik und Ästhetik der Geschichtsschreibung: Leopold von Ranke” in *Geschichte als Literatur. Formen und Grenzen der Repräsentation von Vergangenheit*, Ed. H. Eggert, U. Profitlich, K. R. Scherpe (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1990), pp. 1-11.

turn”,¹² the relationship between history and literature began to be explored again, often through the lens of narrativism, which has been defined as the theory “that fiction and history are both constructed from language and do not differ except in the truth-claim of the text.”¹³ Karin J. MacHardy calls the (re)convergence of history and literature “new textualism.”¹⁴ Radical postmodern formulations of these theoretical moves have been resisted by some historians, more so in Europe than in the United States.

“Perhaps the most difficult relationship the historian has with his literary bedfellow is the admission that written history is a form of literature. To even write about the problem creates an awareness of the need for literary skill and a fear of its absence” argues Cadenhead.¹⁵ This has been a typical way to address the relationship, the classical way, to see history as connected to rhetoric. But through the critiques of historians such as Peter Gay,¹⁶ style has turned into something far more than grammar and ornament. And it is precisely in the area of literary style and forms that White applies his significant critique: “Viewed simply as verbal artefacts histories and novels are indistinguishable from one another. We cannot easily distinguish between them on formal grounds unless we approach them with specific preconceptions about the kinds of truths that each is supposed to deal in. But the aim of a writer of a novel must be the same as that of a writer of a history. Both wish to provide a verbal image of ‘reality’.”¹⁷ University of Cambridge historian Herbert Butterfield had earlier drawn attention to Sir Walter Scott, writing in praise of the layers of authenticity presented in his historical novels.¹⁸ Leo Tolstoy (*War and Peace*) and George Eliot (*Middlemarch*) developed the historical novel into a genre that wise historians know to value.

Carlyle is sometimes criticized for getting into the heads of his historical actors — as if modern historians do not do the same with their position as an omniscient narrator.¹⁹ The esteemed historian, Dame Cicely Veronica Wedgwood, understood

¹²Richard Rorty, *Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophic Method* (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1967); Christina Lafont, *The Linguistic Turn in Hermeneutic Philosophy*, translated by José Medina (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999). Elizabeth Clark, *History, Theory, Text. Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard UP, 2004).

¹³Karen Hellekson, “Toward a Taxonomy of the Alternate History Genre”, *Extrapolation* 41.3 (2000): 248-56 (49).

¹⁴Karin J. MacHardy, *The Boundaries of History and Literature in Fact and Fiction. German History and Literature 1848-1924*, Ed. Gisela Brude-Firnau and Karin J. MacHardy, Edition Orpheus 2 (Tübingen: Francke, 1990), pp. 11-36 (p. 12).

¹⁵“History and Literature: Introduction” in *Literature and History*, Ed. I. E. Cadenhead, Jr. (Tulsa, OK: U of Tulsa P, 1970), pp. 1-8 (p. 3).

¹⁶Peter Gay, *Style in History* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1975).

¹⁷*Metahistory*, p. 122.

¹⁸Herbert Butterfield, *The Historical Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1924).

¹⁹Edmund Morris, *Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan* (New York: Random House, 1999). Morris here introduces a fictional character which serves to front the traditional, false omniscience of the authorial narrator.

that imagination must be an essential part of history, but found herself caught on the horns of a dilemma with Carlyle. She held that historians need to be sober, and yet was convinced that the compelling style in Carlyle's *Cromwell* was worthy of merit:

It cannot be denied that the literary historians are open to criticism for failures of perception and failures of scholarship which can at times be traced directly to their literary technique. Macaulay's denunciation of Strafford is noble in sound and volume, inspired by its range of images. But, by striking off a term so splendid as "the Satan of the Apostasy", Macaulay introduced a Miltonic grandeur into our vision of the man and the epoch, which makes it hard to bring the mind down again to the sober and pedestrian level on which along historical inquiry can be safely pursued, and just estimates made of persons and things.

I would not willingly forgo Macaulay's splendid phrase, but a great power over words and images can and does intoxicate, and the historian has chosen a branch of literature in which the utmost sobriety is usually advisable. It is not quite always advisable because there is the delicate and subtle problem of historic imagination: the power to move, or to give the impression of moving, from one epoch into another, the capacity to feel and think the thoughts of another time. This is a gift of literary imagination, and at its highest it sometimes resembles a state, if not of intoxication, then of possession. Thomas Carlyle is more frequently and more strenuously possessed by this kind of imagination than any other British historian. He ceases to be a recorder of the scene and becomes himself an actor, or more truly a disembodied spirit, restlessly moving from the mind of one character to another. He makes nothing of travelling two hundred years on the thunderclouds of his imagination to give a helping hand to Cromwell and his men at the Battle of Dunbar. [and here an extract from Carlyle's *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches follows*]

"The night is wild and wet ... the Harvest Moon wades deep among the clouds of sleet and hail. Whoever has a heart for prayer, let him pray now, for the wrestle of death is at hand. Pray, -- and withal keep his powder dry! And be ready for extremities, and quit himself like a man! ... the hoarse sea moans bodeful, swinging low and heavy against those whinstone bays; the sea and the tempests are abroad, all else asleep but we, -- and there is ONE that rides on the wings of the wind.

About four o'clock comes order to my pudding headed Yorkshire friend, that his regiment must mount and march straightway... Major Hodgson riding along heard, he says, 'a Cornet praying in the night'; a company of poor men, I think, making worship there, under the void of Heaven, before battle joined; Major Hodgson turned aside to listen for a minute and worship and pray along with them; haply his last prayer on Earth, as it might prove to be. But no ... the Heavens in their mercy I think have opened us a way of deliverance!

– The Moon gleams out, hard and blue, riding among hail clouds; and over St. Abb’s head, a streak of dawn is rising ... The Scots too ... are awake; thinking to surprise us; there is their trumpet sounding, we heard it once; and Lambert who was to lead at last! The trumpet peal, shattering with fierce clangour Night’s silence; the cannons awaken along all the line: ‘The Lord of Hosts! The Lord of Hosts!’ On, my brave ones, on!”

It is difficult to be sure whether the Lord General, who leads these praying troops to victory at the first streak of dawn after a stormy night, is in truth Oliver Cromwell, or a renegade Scot called Thomas Carlyle. The imaginative leap is complete. Carlyle has written himself and thought himself into the very heart of the scene. Without this extraordinary projection, English history as well as English literature would be the poorer for what is, by and large, a masterly interpretation of the Puritan mind in general and of Oliver Cromwell in particular.²⁰

Cromwell is not only about Carlyle’s imagination, it made a large swath of documents available and accessible. And by his very choice of topic and research, he put the study of Cromwell on a new footing. The Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, G. M. Trevelyan, gave Carlyle high praise in his Introduction to a selection of Carlyle’s work: “it was he who by means of an effort of painstaking scholarship, put the English on the track of finding out the truth about Cromwell.”²¹ In this important scholarly sense, too, Carlyle’s “passion for the concrete” was manifest.²²

It is productive to view Carlyle’s works with a literary lens, as Mark Cummings has done with *The French Revolution*²³ or Ruth apRoberts with *Frederick the Great*.²⁴ John D. Rosenberg, who has written the most recent major monograph devoted to Carlyle and history, asserts: “Carlyle conceived of his histories as modern prose epics — successors to the Bible, Homer, and Milton.”²⁵ This line of analysis certainly has its roots in *Frederick the Great*, as Rosenberg notes (who otherwise finds the history wanting except in one inestimable point which forms much of the basis of his central thesis): “In the ‘Proem’ Carlyle asserts that ‘History is an imprisoned Epic’ which ‘illuminate[s] the dark ways of God.’”²⁶ Chris R. Vanden Bossche, the editor of the critical edition of Carlyle’s historical essays, states: “Carlyle considered history

²⁰Cecily Veronica Wedgwood, *History and Hope: Essays on History and the English Civil War* (London: Collins, 1987), pp. 295-97.

²¹G. M. Trevelyan, *Carlyle. An Anthology* (London: Longmans, Green, 1953), p. 9.

²²John Nichol, *Thomas Carlyle* (London: Macmillan, 1909), p. 173.

²³Mark Cummings, *A Disimprisoned Epic: Form and Vision in Carlyle’s French Revolution* (Philadelphia: U Pennsylvania P, 1988).

²⁴Ruth apRoberts, “The Historian as Shandean Humorist: Carlyle and Frederick the Great”, *The Carlyles at Home and Abroad: Essays in Honour of Kenneth J. Fielding*, Ed. David R. Sorensen and Rodger L. Tarr (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 15-26.

²⁵John D. Rosenberg, *Carlyle and the Burden of History* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985), Preface.

²⁶*ibid.*, p. 161.

a branch of 'literature' rather than an academic discipline."²⁷ Treating Carlyle's history as works of literature can yield both historical and literary insights. Carlyle's contemporary, Thomas Babington Macaulay, who produced the *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842) and *The History of England* (1848-55; 1861), considered the "creative arts, but particularly literature ... as the true means by which human achievement in former ages expressed itself at its best, and in which could be studied some of the clearest clues to the nature [of the past]."²⁸ Historians such as Jenny Hale Pulsipher know that literature can yield certain kinds of corrective evidence as she detects an "Atlantic perspective" on particular cultural values by examining not only the historical records of Bacon's rebellion, but English drama of the same period.²⁹

There are a growing number of historians who are reappraising historical narrative and experimenting with new ways to write history.³⁰ The following description of Howard Fast's approach to history serves to illustrate its proximity to Carlyle's: "He did not approach the historical past the way it is taught in school: form a hypothesis, test it against the evidence, reshape it as required. The result of this approach, he feared, would be historical writing that satisfied the requirements of form without delivering on vital function. And what is function? To tell essential truths about the human condition... Sometimes he did research—and when he did, it could be thorough; other times he did almost none, if he felt that his instincts, aided by a little background reading, were enough. All their talk of sound methodology notwithstanding, he suspected that many academic historians worked the same way, whether they could admit it—to themselves as well as to others—or not. It is a feeling that gave him something in common with Howard Zinn and a handful of other academic historians accused of violating an unwritten code that calls for dispassionate detachment."³¹

Carlyle's philosophy of history presents a moving target—*The French Revolution, Heroes, Past and Present, Oliver Cromwell, Frederick the Great*—are very different to one another, but more than this, as David Sorensen warns, he "never conceived of a coherent, systematic or consistent theory of history. ... Carlyle's

²⁷"Introduction", in *Historical Essays*, Ed. Chris R. Vanden Bossche (Berkeley: U of California P), 2002, p. xix.

²⁸Owen Dudley Edwards, *Macaulay* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988), 89-90.

²⁹Jenny Hale Pulsipher, "The Widow Ranter and Royalist Culture in Colonial Virginia," *Early American Literature* 39 (2004): 41-66.

³⁰Some recent histories produced by professional historians are experimenting with form -- for example Jonathan Spence, *The Death of Woman Wang* (1978); Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (1980); Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (1983); Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard* (1990); Simon Schama, *Dead Certainties: Unwarranted Speculations* (1991); John Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from America* (1994); Craig Harline, *The Burdens of Sister Margaret* (1994); John Chasteen, *Heroes on Horseback: A Life and Times of the Last Gaucho Caudillos* (1995).

³¹Neil L. York, unpublished MS.

method of history was a spontaneous, intuitive, and slightly ramshackle arrangement designed to accommodate irresolvable contradictions in his 'theory' of the past."³² In *Heroes*, Carlyle emphasizes the Great Man as the motivating force of history: "For as I take it, Universal History, the history of what has been accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here. They were the leaders of men, these great ones; the modellers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or to attain; all things that we see standing accomplished in the world are properly the outer material result, the practical realisation and embodiment, of Thoughts that dwelt in the Great Men sent into the world: the soul of the whole world's history, it may justly be considered, were the history of these."³³ Certainly his biographies, *The Life of Schiller, comprehending an examination of his Works* (1825) and *The Life of John Sterling* (1851), the portraits in *Historical Sketches, written between 1842 and 1843* (1888), his eponymous histories, and devotion to Goethe can be seen to embody something of Carlyle's belief in individual lives ("History is the essence of innumerable Biographies"³⁴), perhaps even his need for father figures.³⁵ He hints at this, for the deeper purpose of history goes well beyond "Dryasdust" compilations or even compelling narratives, it is a pious struggle "to behold, if but in glimpses, the faces of our vanished Fathers."³⁶

"On History" and "On History Again" are profound and need to be explored more seriously by historians for their penetrating insights into the processes of history which come startlingly close to certain modern positions. For example, he addresses the dismal state of the historical record,³⁷ the one-dimensionality of narrative in both the recording of events as well as their retelling as history,³⁸ the

³²David Sorensen, *Carlyle's Method of History in "The French Revolution"*, Occasional Papers of the Carlyle Society 9 (Edinburgh: The Carlyle Society, 1982-1983), pp. 3-16.

³³Tomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, Ed. Michael K. Goldberg, Joel J. Brattin, Mark Engel (Berkeley: U of California P, 1993), p. 3.

³⁴"On History" in *Historical Essays*, p. 5

³⁵Cf. Chris R. Vanden Bossche, *Carlyle and the Search for Authority* (Columbus: Ohio State UP), ch. 6.

³⁶Thomas Carlyle, *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, Works. 30 Vols. Ed. H. D. Traill (London: Chapman and Hall, 1897), vol. 1, p. 3.

³⁷In "On History Again" Carlyle calls what remains for us from previous generations "our shred of a Letter": "Of the thing now gone silent, named Past, which was once Present, and loud enough, how much do we know? Our 'Letter of Instructions' comes to us in the saddest state; falsified, blotted out torn out, lost and but a shred of it in existence; this too so difficult to read or spell" *Historical Essays*, p. 16.

³⁸In "On History" Carlyle asserts that actual history is a "Chaos of Being", for one "can observe, still more can record, only the series of his own impressions: his observation, therefore, to say nothing of its other imperfections, must be successive, while the things done were often simultaneous; the things done were not a series, but a group. It is not in acted, as it is in written History: actual events are nowise so simply related to each other as parent and offspring are; every single event is the offspring not of one, but of all other events, prior or contemporaneous, and will in its turn combine with all others to give birth to new" *Historical Essays*, p. 7.

difficulty of locating causality,³⁹ the varieties of history,⁴⁰ and the concept Universal History.⁴¹ Ruth apRoberts, in one of the most original treatises on Carlyle's thought to date, dilates on this concept as she locates Carlyle within a German tradition of historiography through Lessing, Herder, Müller, Goethe, and Schiller. Sorensen puts forward the idea that Carlyle's was a "strategy of reconciliation between two versions of history—the Calvinist and the German Transcendentalist."⁴³ And John Morrow proffers Goethe's symbolic view of history as a key view that Carlyle inherited.⁴⁴ J. W. Burrow recognised in Carlyle "the blending of Old Testament sacred drama and German Idealist philosophy ... [that] provided the basis for his view of history. ... It was Carlyle's imaginative achievement, though not his uniquely—Marx's is the other name that comes to mind—to fuse this Hebraic-Christian pattern of idolatry and retribution with a version of the German philosophical accounts of the relations of spirit and matter, creative energy and determinate form. It is through this fusion that his view of culture and institutions, including religion, is relativised and made subtler than a mere iconoclasm, with a recognition of their necessity; they become impostures only in decay."⁴⁵ A. L. Le Quesne placed Carlyle in similar historiographical company: "In thus replacing a faith in the Bible with a faith in History, Carlyle had good nineteenth-century company—most notably Hegel and Marx ... The theme of progress does sometimes occur in Carlyle's writings (especially the earlier ones), but it is very muted and eventually disappears altogether. To Hegel partially and to Marx wholly, history was an autonomous and self-justifying process; to Carlyle it was something more like a theatre for the workings of providence which itself remains firmly outside history, and whose main concern is less to steer history as a whole to some satisfactory conclusion than to punish and counter the misdeeds and follies of human beings and human societies. Here too Carlyle is inconsistent, and fluctuates between a providential view of history and a more naturalistic one, gleaned from Goethe and the Saint-Simonians, according to which societies oscillate between ages of faith and ages of unbelief."⁴⁶

³⁹In "On History" Carlyle calls historians "Artisans" who "labour mechanically in a department, without eye for the Whole ... that class of cause-and-effect speculators" *Historical Essays*, p. 9.

⁴⁰In "On History" Carlyle distinguishes, for example, between political history, ecclesiastical, institutional, and cultural history, as well as the history of science. *Historical Essays*, pp. 10-12

⁴¹Cf. "On History Again", in *Historical Essays*, pp. 18-22.

⁴²Ruth apRoberts, *The Ancient Dialect: Thomas Carlyle and Comparative Religion* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988). Cf. Paul E. Kerry, "Thomas Carlyle and Friedrich Schiller as Historians: A Lacuna in Carlyle Studies", *Carlyle Studies Annual* 21 (2003-2004): 26-43.

⁴³*Carlyle's Method of History*, p. 3.

⁴⁴John Morrow, *Thomas Carlyle* (London: Hambledon, 2006), p. 162.

⁴⁵J. W. Burrow, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981), pp. 252-53.

⁴⁶A. L. Le Quesne, *Carlyle* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982), p. 33.

Carlyle's providential view of history is derived from his statements in "On History" such as "History is a real Prophetic Manuscript, and can be fully interpreted by no man"⁴⁷ or when in "On History Again" he calls "Prophecy" a "new form of History."⁴⁸ Marylu Hill describes the implications of this view: "History is for Carlyle a force, divine in nature, which actively shapes the future. What is radical here is that history moves from being *divinely controlled* to being something *divine in its own right*, as the embodiment of God."⁴⁹ Chris R. Vanden Bossche posits that prophetic history was a mutable concept for Carlyle, and could be also a poetic history inspired by Goethe and Schiller, as well as social criticism.⁵⁰ Thus, Carlyle's histories speak always to the present, whether to destroy past beliefs, "a process that created the conditions of the present" as in the French Revolution or to "prophecy the future", as with the Puritan revolution or to both reject certain outmoded values and cling to others in the manner of Prussia's Friedrich II.⁵¹

Furthermore, Vanden Bossche explains the relationship between Carlyle's philosophy of history and his historical craft: "What does this view of history as prophecy mean for Carlyle's practice as a historian? First and foremost, his blurring of past and present is a function of form, style, and narrative technique. He frequently uses the present tense to make the actions of the past appear to be taking place in the present. The prominence of Carlyle's own authorial persona, the narrating historian who brings the past into the present but also emphasizes the importance of the relationship between narrator and reader."⁵² A. L. Le Quesne also shows the relationship between Carlyle's philosophy of history and his historical practice in his "masterpiece", *The French Revolution*: "One of the most penetrating epigrams ever uttered about history is his 'Narrative is *linear*, Action is *solid*'" [in "On History"]; and his solution to this problem is to break up his account of the Revolution into a series of marvellously vivid scenes of present action separated by great gulfs of darkness, periods which he passes over rapidly with the merest summary of events. This effect of extreme discontinuity reflects his own conviction that large areas of history are best forgotten. This historian's job is to concentrate on those which can

⁴⁷*Historical Essays*, p.8.

⁴⁸*Historical Essays*, p. 18.

⁴⁹Marylu Hill, "'History is a Real Prophetic Manuscript': Reason and Revelation in Thomas Carlyle's Historical Essays", in *Carlyle and Religion: Literature and Belief* 25:1&2 (2005), Ed. Paul E. Kerry (at press). Cf. Marylu Hill, "The 'Magical Speculum': Vision and Truth in Carlyle's Early Histories", in *The Carlyles at Home and Abroad*, pp. 83-90.

⁵⁰Similarly his social criticism in *Heroes or Past and Present* drew effectively on history. Emery Neff suggests that *Past and Present* is written as an act of "social sympathy." *Carlyle* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1932), p. 199. Trevelyan later wrote that the historical part in *Past and Present* was proof of Carlyle's "sympathetic imagination." *Carlyle*, p. 8.

⁵¹"Introduction", in *Historical Essays*, pp. xxiv-xxv.

⁵²*ibid.*, p. xxvi.

still be brought alive for the present. The impression on the reader is one of violent chiaroscuro, ideally suited to reflect the lurid events of the Revolution ... Few history books, if any, have ever so perfectly matched style and subject, for Carlyle's style is itself a revolution, a deliberate wrenching break with the entire Augustan tradition of English prose writing, and its exaggerations, its grotesqueries and its violent discontinuities exactly mirror the events it describes." Le Quesne then cites an example to illustrate Carlyle's style:

One other officer is massacred; one other Invalide is hanged on the Lamp-iron; with difficulty, with generous perseverance, the Gardes Francaises will save the rest. Provost Fleselles, stricken long since with paleness of death, must descend from his seat, "to be judged at the Palais Royal": – alas, to be shot dead, by an unknown hand, at the turning of the first street!

O the evening sun of July, how, at this hour, thy beams fall slant on reapers amid peaceful woody fields; on old women spinning in cottages; on ships far out in the silent mains; on Balls of the Orangerie of Versailles, where high-rouged Dames of the Palace are even now dancing with double-jacketed Hussar-Officers ...

It is a cinematic effect; abruptly, the camera soars away into the blue, till all France is spread out below it, and the chaos around the Bastille is only one speck of violent action in a landscape deep in the peace of a summer evening."⁵³

Let me now call attention to the cautionary note sounded by William Ferguson when he referred to an article by Havda Ben-Israel in the *Historical Journal* (1959) on "Carlyle and the French Revolution." Ferguson admonished that Carlyle's historical contributions must not be advanced on the "wrong grounds" and he quotes Ben-Israel: "The faults which [Carlyle] knew that he had failed to overcome, they [Carlyle's defenders] glorify into achieved aims. The 'literary' aims which he indeed professed, he tried to achieve not at the expense of historical, accurate and factual truth, but emphatically through it."⁵⁴ Carlyle could surely empathise with Casaubon's feeling of inadequacy in Eliot's portrayal of his historical endeavours in *Middlemarch*, perhaps all the more so as unlike Casaubon Carlyle could read and work in German and therefore could be all the more apprised of developments in German scholarship which led Europe in the nineteenth century. In his Introduction to Cromwell, Carlyle complained bitterly about the "inaccessible" nature of the

⁵³Carlyle, pp. 38-9.

⁵⁴As quoted in *Carlyle as Historian*, p. 8. Cf. Havda Ben-Israel, *English Historians and the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1968).

historical record: “the documents and records of it, scattered waste as a shoreless chaos, not legible. They lie there, printed, written, to the extent of tons and square miles, as shot-rubbish; unedited, unsorted, not so much as indexed, full of every conceivable confusion.”⁵⁵ Yoon Sun Lee, in a reading of Carlyle’s historical essay, “The Diamond Necklace”, takes Carlyle at his word when he writes that he was strict with “documentary evidence” and concludes: “In his histories, Carlyle’s working methods do conform to the protocol of the ‘respectable’ historians that he disparages.”⁵⁶

In the most recent piece of scholarship on Carlyle’s historical writings, the aforementioned political philosopher, John Morrow, notes that Carlyle made a particular effort to obtain manuscript materials on eighteenth-century diplomatic affairs relating to *Frederick the Great*, although he placed little store by diplomatic history.⁵⁷ Morrow sees Carlyle’s approach to writing history as an arresting call to “a new style for historical research and writing that would rescue the past from either total neglect or, what was perhaps worse, the mind-numbing attention of the dryasdust school.”⁵⁸

Thus, the latest scholarly literature confirms a trend that has been taking place in recent analyses of Carlyle’s historical practice that is that they are imbued with a healthy dose of Prussian *Quellenforschung*. In other words, there is an increasing interest in studying the primary sources of Carlyle’s histories. The nature of historical evidence rests largely on the bedrock of primary sources and a rigorous investigation of Carlyle’s sources has been underway on several fronts,⁵⁹ including the Duke-Edinburgh Edition of *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle* and the University of California Press Norman and Charlotte Strouse Edition of the *Writings of Thomas Carlyle*. This return to the sources—*ad fontes*—may augur a

⁵⁵*Cromwell*, p. 2. Later he accuses earlier Dryasdust historians for not sorting through the “thirty thousand or fifty thousand old Newspapers and Pamphlets of the King’s Library”, p. 4. For Carlyle, “Memory and Oblivion” together allow for the possibility of history. It is therefore possible to have too much information as it is too have too little. “On History Again”, in *Historical Essays*, p. 20.

⁵⁶Yoon Sun Lee, *Nationalism and Irony: Burke, Scott, Carlyle* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004), p. 107.

⁵⁷*Thomas Carlyle*, p. 168. An important point because Carlyle’s efforts to research Frederick’s military campaigns are usually highlighted.

⁵⁸*ibid.*, p. 166. This new research style rested on two assumptions: “First, historians must ensure that their readers were really able to see the past, that is, to grasp the significance of historical events and actors in ways that conveyed vivid, instructive and inspirational images that helped them to come to terms with the particular manifestations of universal that confronted them. In addition, they must find a way of selecting from the virtually infinite number of past events those that were capable of having ‘meaning’ for their readers in this sense” p. 162.

⁵⁹Ben-Israel comments on Carlyle’s sources in *English Historians and the French Revolution* and D. J. Trela’s work on *Cromwell* continued in a similar vein. Cf. Trela’s *Cromwell in Context: The Conception, Writing, and Reception of Carlyle’s Second History* (Edinburgh: *The Carlyle Newsletter*, 1986) and see his *A History of Carlyle’s “Oliver Cromwell’s Letters and Speeches”* (New York: Mellen, 1992).

steady balancing of the scholarship from an emphasis on the literary style of Carlyle's histories and the perspective of his histories as literature, to evaluating Carlyle's historical works as histories, with a view to their philosophy of history and place in the history of historical writing. This shift is not merely one of nomenclature; rather, it accords with Carlyle's own view of the epistemological differences between history and literature.⁶⁰

At the beginning of this lecture, I mentioned that *The French Revolution* made Carlyle's reputation and that history may prove to galvanise interest once again in Carlyle the historian: "In *The French Revolution*, Carlyle's narrative power springs not simply from his skill as a word-painter, but also from his deep intellectual and emotional engagement with the form, content, and spirit of his sources", writes David Sorensen.⁶¹ This programmatic statement captures how and why an examination of the primary sources is invaluable: the complex web of associations attested to by these sources pervade all aspects of Carlyle's historical writing, not merely the subject matter, but the form also as Sorensen rightly observes. In addition, Carlyle's thinking can be illuminated by the kinds of interpretative decisions he made with those sources.

"Our clock strikes where there is a change from hour to hour" observes Carlyle and my hour and perhaps your patience has come to an end.⁶² Carlyle maintains that we must face "Contradictions in this strange dualistic Life of ours" and that history is "Accident correct[ing] Accident" in a "wondrous boundless jostle of things" and yet has "an aimful POWER presiding over it, say rather, dwelling *in* it."⁶³ This indwelling Power and the pious struggle to see the face of the Fathers if in "successive Revelations" only give rise to a "reverent humility" which Carlyle seems to have actually experienced, and that inspired him to continue to think and write about the past: "Let us search more and more into the Past; let all men explore it, as the true fountain of knowledge; by whose light alone, consciously or unconsciously employed, can the Present and the Future be interpreted or guessed at."⁶⁴

⁶⁰Lee describes the difference: "Ultimately, what distinguishes history of Carlyle is simply its claim to be read in a particular way: with absorption in the sense of recovering something real", *Nationalism and Irony*, p. 108.

⁶¹David Sorensen, Unpublished 100 pp. MS being considered as part of the Introduction to the Strouse Edition of *The French Revolution* to be published by the University of California Press.

⁶²"On History", in *Historical Essays*, p. 7.

⁶³"On History Again", in *Historical Essays*, p. 21.

⁶⁴"On History", in *Historical Essays*, pp. 8 and 12.

SYLLABUS 2006-7



CARLYLE SOCIETY: PROGRAMME FOR 2005-6

All meetings except 5 October in 11 Buccleuch Place, Centre for Lifelong Learning, starting at 1415. All welcome.

Oct 5 2006	Stephen Woolman	Scott and the Edinburgh Reviewers*
Oct 14	Jonathan Wild	The end of an Era
Oct 28	Aileen Christianson	Nigh on Forty Years Living with the Carlyles
November 18	David Hewitt	Novel-editing, letter-editing
Dec 9	Malcolm Ingram	The Carlyles and the Fraser CrimCon 1844: AGM Meeting
Jan 27 2007	Paul Scott	Thomas Green Lecture: Scotland after Waterloo
Feb 17	Maurice Milne	<i>Chartism's</i> reception: Carlyle's politics
10 March	David Sorensen	Carlyle and British Fascism Revisited

*English Literature/Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club joint lecture, 1715, Faculty of Advocates' Library

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