

**THE
CARLYLE SOCIETY
PAPERS – SESSION 2012–2013**



New Series No.25

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OCCASIONAL PAPERS 25



Edinburgh 2012

President's Letter

2012 has been a momentous year, the publication of volume 40 of the *Carlyle Letters* a milestone celebrated in July by an international gathering in George Square in Edinburgh, and an opportunity for the Society to participate in the form of a memorable Thomas Green lecture by Lowell Frye. The 50-odd people who took part in three days' discussions of both Carlyles ranged from many countries, and many of them were new names in Carlyle studies – a hopeful sign for the future.

At the same conference, another notable step gained: many new members for the Carlyle Society, several of them life members. And many members willing to join the digital age by having their publications sent by internet – a real saving in time and cost each summer as the papers are published, and the syllabus for the new session sent out worldwide. Further members willing to receive papers in this form are invited to write in to the address below. Obviously, we will continue to produce the papers in traditional form, and many libraries continue to value their annual appearance.

One further part of the celebrations of our 40th volume remains in the form of a public lecture on *Thomas Carlyle and the University of Edinburgh* in the David Hume Tower on 15 November 2012. By then the actual volume should be to hand from North Carolina, where Duke Press has pledged its continued support as the edition moves, hardly believably, to complete the letters that have survived between the Carlyles. 43 volumes should take us to the fateful moment of Jane's death, and a few months beyond.

We continue to enjoy the University's hospitality in our premises for the Edinburgh meetings, though during the coming year we may have to move to new premises in Paterson's Land in the Royal Mile. Here, too, the internet gives members who are regular attenders the opportunity to keep in touch with last-minute announcements. The Society remains grateful to the University, and to those members who help each year with the membership roll, with the finances, and with the continued health and modest expansion of our activities.

Ian Campbell
President

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One hundred and fifty Years on

Liz Sutherland

Liz Sutherland delighted the Carlyle Society at its Christmas meeting in 2011, and again the conference in July 2012 with an expanded version of these very new letters!

January 3 – JWC to Jean Aitken Monday

My dear Jane the best-laid plans &c – I intended to write to you immediately after receiving that wonderful box at Christmas but no doubt as Mr. C has already told you I have been suffering from the most terrible cold and have hardly left my room for the last fortnight. Mr. C was so excited at its arrival! I sometimes think that he is still a little boy! the socks which you had knitted with your own hands were tried on immediately and fitted perfectly. And my petticoat is so lovely and soft. Many thanks. But such delights and so clever of you to have everything vacuum-packed. The cheeses and the black-bun and shortbread were so welcome at New Year when several of our friends came to call. The McSween's haggis went straight into the freezer and will go with us on the 25th to the Grange where they say they will have a Burns Supper. There will be about 12 of us to dinner so they will get another one from Fortnum and Mason's. Mr. C is to do the Immortal Memory as he has "the right kind of voice"! That is, if we get there. There is so much snow even here and all that entails. The pavements are so very icy that it is not safe to walk out tho' Mr. C manages with the aid of a stick and special grippy things he straps to his shoes just like when they used to put special shoes on the horses away in the past. Did you read about the closures of the Channel tunnel because of the ice – A train got stuck in the tunnel – what a nightmare – one of our friends was to travel to visit friends in the south of France for the Christmas holiday and thankfully abandoned the idea before she even left Edinburgh!

But there goes the door-bell. Hopefully Mr C will answer it. Oh dear must close now – Miss Jewsbury has rushed in – she always rushes! clutching a letter – probably from our friend Mr. Mantell in New Zealand.

Kind regards to your husband and the rest and best wishes for the year ahead.
Yours affly, Jane W. Carlyle

Jan 5. 2011 – JWC to Lady Ashburton

Dear Lady

We are so much looking forward to coming out to the Grange, if we get there! At the moment I have my usual winter cold but surely it will have gone in a fortnight. I have been very careful – not going out and even gave up the gratification of going with Mr C to dine at Lady Sandwich's on New Year's day in case it made my cold worse and I would have to forego the pleasure of coming to you. Mr. C says that this freezing weather plays havoc with his work says even his mind seems to have frozen and coming out to the Grange is clearly something to resuscitate his very soul – and something you can be sure of -- *mine* as well! He will, of course, be bringing some work with him which is a balm to him and probably a relief to the company present! So pleased that we are to be a small party. I believe Mr Amis and Mr Bennett will be with us and that excellent American, Vidal. All being well, we shall come out on the afternoon of the 25th – Mr C has already prepared the Immortal Memory as requested.

What have you been reading? It is such wonderful weather for catching up. I have here Ms Mantell's *Wolf Hall*, which I am enjoying thoroughly; she is I believe a niece of Mr Mantel in new Zealand. And I've just finished Ms Atwood's *The Year of the Flood* which was hard work but once I've started something I don't like to abandon it.

Kind regards to you and Lord Ashburton and a big kiss for the dear little one.

PS Do you need me to collect anything here in town before we set off?

February – JWC to Mary Russell beginning of February

Now dearest Mary, I know that I said that one of my New Year resolutions was to learn how to send e-mails but it just isn't me. I don't even like speaking to people on the telephone, but I have to as Mr. C refuses to answer the thing. I have been so very upset of late. Do you have problems getting someone to come and help you at home to do any of the heavy work? tho' these days there isn't really much of that what with dishwashers, washing machines and hoovers. A huge problem here is the impossibility of getting English-speaking servants, they are like gold, don't like being called servants, and charge like demented bulls. Thank goodness for Delia Smith and her very practical cooking books! And thank God Mr. C still likes very simple meals! Though even some of the simple dishes seem to be beyond me. I weigh everything so carefully, sieve things when it says to do so but just when I think I have everything under control, I stop, refer to the book to check what next, only to discover that I have omitted an important ingredient. Even the simplest recipe seems to be beyond me and the finished article never looks like it does in the book. Everyone else manages so why not me?? By the time I am finished I am exhausted and thoroughly disheartened and descend into a slough of despond. Mr C just says that I must learn to concentrate. All very well for him to say so.

We are just back from four days at the Grange and even Lady Ashburton has the same problems. For dinner on two of the nights she had to have someone come especially to do the cooking. It was either that or a big trip to Waitrose. She is such an excellent hostess and would manage but her little girl has had tonsillitis and the nanny has gone off to Australia to visit cousins!! I'm sure she could have chosen a less inconvenient time to go but these days it's so difficult to get a reliable girl that they rule the roost, rather. We were quite a merry party. Mr. Bennett who is always fun, treated us to one of his monologues and Mr. C had some tremendously enjoyable "discussions" with Mr. Vidal from the States. They even managed to discuss the President without Mr C becoming over-excited!

There are so few opportunities these days for getting dressed up that I wore that lovely blue dress you encouraged me to buy when we went shopping in Dumfries last summer. As you may remember I thought it rather décolleté so I bought a little silk vest from Marks & Spencer to wear underneath it so that not so much of me was revealed – not that there is much of me to reveal in that department!

You will be glad to know that since being away my sleep has improved immensely. I hope that both you and the Doctor are both avoiding the colds which seem to be affecting so many of our friends. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Feb 28 – JWC to Lady Ashburton.

Dear Lady Ashburton you will be delighted to know that I have at last got a girl to come and help me. She is Zofia – Polish, of course but her English is not at all bad though sometimes I am sure she misunderstands me deliberately! I share her with Mrs. Gilchrist at number 6 – she comes to me on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays in the mornings and goes next door on Tuesdays and Thursdays all day. The Gilchrists also have an au-pair – another Australian girl, very interested in sport which is good for the children though rather exuberant and noisy for my tastes. How long she will stay is anyone's guess. Has yours come back yet? How is your precious little darling? Is she recovered? I do hope so. Mr Mantell you will be glad to know is quite safe. I received a letter yesterday. The effects of the Christchurch earthquake did not reach him in Wellington, thanks God. We were all so worried about him when we heard that so many had died. Just to be in the wrong place at the wrong time...

Will you be in town soon?

March 8 – JWC to Ann Gilchrist Tuesday 9.35 in the evening

My dear Mrs. Gilchrist Please may I borrow Zofia tomorrow instead of Friday? If she could come at 9 o'clock that would be very helpful. Perhaps she could help me to do some cooking as I forgot that Mr. C had invited Ms Mantel for lunch. Just send a note back with your au-pair – if she is at home and not out at one of her classes – or the pub! Such problems I have with cooking!

JWC to Margaret Oliphant

My dear When are you coming up to town? It is such an age since we met. I need a good Scottish person to talk to. Am surrounded here in Chelsea by such a number of busy young people, all looking alike with their long blonde hair, and their designer clothes and all dashing off to keep-fit. They swoop around taking their beautiful little children to school or nursery in their four-by-four cars, well-named “Chelsea tractors”! Mr. C, of course, hardly sees them as he takes his daily walk later in the evening when all is relatively quiet. If he does meet any of them they tend to avoid him. If only he would get a dog then he would not look so strange. Old men walking dogs are much more acceptable than those who have a *lurking* air about them. And he will wear that awful old coat and hat pulled down over his face.

I see that dear Anthony’s niece has just brought out another novel – I think they call them aga-sagas such a strange name). I heard her on the radio recently –sounds rather a pleasant woman, very pretty, too, I believe. If you do decide that you need to be up in town, do telephone me and I shall come and meet you. Our new number is 0207352 7087. We had to have it changed the reason why I shall explain to you when we meet.

April 28 – JWC to Lady Stanley

Thank you dear Lady for sending us the photographs of yourself and the “bright young things” at *the* Wedding; how very exciting it was for you all and such a crowd at the Palace afterwards. Miss Jewsbury wished me to go with her but being uncertain in large crowds of people, I declined but watched much of it on television. The clothes and hats of the guests were wonderful but what did you think of the Princess Eugenie hat?? Mr. C said it looked like a giant Pretzel that you can buy at the German baker’s in the King’s Road. The Middleton family all looked most respectable all things considered. She is, I believe, a very down-to-earth girl and is quite clever; I hope she is clever enough to deal with the “Family” better than poor Diana did. Her sister seems a very lively sort of young woman. I expect she will be looking for an aristocratic husband too. All the young men of our acquaintance were rather taken by her. Do your girls know

her? have they met her about town? The newspapers are rather interested in her so she will have to behave herself not like that wife of Prince Andrew who seems also to have blotted *his* copy-book lately.

We hope to see you before you go back to Alderley. In the mean time, kindest remembrance to the “Bright beings”.

May 1 – TC to JAC

My dear brother, Thank you for sending on Alec’s letter; it’s good to see that all the family are doing well in Canada. I see that Alec’s youngest is intending coming over to visit in Dumfriesshire, to look at the old places and to acquaint himself with his father’s old haunts. He is also hoping to work here. This could be a problem for him as work of any kind is very hard to find. No doubt he will find his way to Chelsea as well. At last I have got rid of the first set of proofs and can look to having a short holiday. The town is full of people who have come to look at the royal wedding and they will come out to Chelsea to call here. Jane watched it on television. Hopefully the introduction of new blood will add some intelligence to the royal gene pool. I tried in vain to avoid both the wedding and the visitors. I could not even claim not to be at home as everyone knows that I am struggling to finish my book. You would think that knowing that they would do the decent thing and leave me alone – but no. However we do not have so many friends left in this world so they must all be graciously received.

I’ve been invited to the Mansion House next week –Chancellor Osborne is to be speaking – should be interesting as I don’t think he knows anything about the economy but no doubt he will have had someone who does know something write his speech for him. The Mayor will bore us about his buses and his other plans to improve the transport in the city – bicycles for all is his plan – dangerous, I call it.

As you see I am enclosing Emerson’s letter, which you will probably find disappointing as he does not say much about the state of things in America. He is very keen that I go and visit him there in the “*fall*” but it will depend much on how my book is progressing. At the moment it is like trying to build bricks with straw. Eheu eheu!

May 12 – JWC to Jane Dods

Was it you, my dear nice woman, who sent me the copy of last week's *Haddingtonshire Courier*? Who are these people opening a restaurant in my old home? Are they from Haddington? Or are they new arrivals? It will be rather strange to go for dinner in the very rooms where my mother and I entertained visitors and studied my lessons for school.

But how are you? I was so upset to hear from my cousin of your accident in your car! I'm sure it could not have been your fault! To blame you for driving too slowly is nonsense. Tho' I suppose 20 miles an hour on the A1 is a little tardy! What does your husband say? Will you get another car? I'm certainly glad I never learnt. To attempt to drive here would be tempting fate and in London with all the congestion charges where would I park?

I may be coming to Scotland in August. Sir George Sinclair has invited Mr.C. to travel to Thurso where he will be allowed to work in peace. He finds the noise of planes overhead sometimes quite unbearable – his study is at the top of the house and on warm days the windows must be open, of course, and we seem to be on what they call the flight-path into the big new airport – I don't suppose he will go. If he does decide to go I don't want to stay here alone and Mrs. Russell at Thornhill has asked me to go to her and my aunts will be very upset if I don't spend time at Morningside. I have a wild longing to go to Dumfriesshire, London is so terribly hot and busy with foreigners in August and most friends have gone off to Italy or the south of France to their villas.

Two weeks ago Mr. C went to dinner at the Mansion House, had a "discussion" with Mr. Johnson about the traffic problems and this morning a bicycle was delivered to the house!! He is at this moment out pedalling round Chelsea and plans to go to Hyde Park tomorrow – if he's spared! He refuses to wear one of those helmet affairs, says his wide-awake is quite sufficient. I'm afraid my cycling days are well past. There are too many cars and trucks and I am sure I would fall off and be killed – or at the very least maimed. And who would care for Mr. C if that happened.

Is your dear husband still having to take those pills for his cholesterol?

Thankfully we are both well at the moment though Mr C does often suffer from indigestion probably not helped by my cooking! Best wishes to you both.

June 18 – JWC to Mary Russell

Oh young woman! There you go again! Such a long silence! Have you forgotten how to write? I do so look forward to your letters with all the news of the happenings around Thornhill. Did you read in the papers about that place in America where they are not going to teach children to do joined-up writing any more but will concentrate on their “key-board skills”!! Will they be able to sign their names? will they make an X instead? No-one now will write thank you letters or keep diaries! Geraldine is shocked – as I am – she’s always thrilled when she hears the letter-box in the morning and sees a hand-written letter lying on the mat that isn’t in a brown envelope with a window in the front advertising the fact that it is another bill. She doesn’t care what kind of pen is used –even a Bic will do – it is just so much more personal, an e-mail just does not compete. How can you put something called an e-card on the mantelpiece at Christmas?! But you need not worry on my part as I do not have any of these “*key-board skills*” and I’m afraid I am just too long-in-the-tooth to bother learning them. So please write to me soon so that I don’t begin to believe that you have forgotten how to put pen to paper!

July – JWC to Lady Stanley

Do you remember that I told you that Mr C is now the proud owner of a bicycle? Well the inevitable has happened! Mr C has fallen off his bicycle – was just missed by one of the “bright young things” collecting their children from school so only lots of cuts and bruises and very hurt pride! Perhaps he will take more care in future and dodge the traffic instead of expecting the cars to dodge him!! Our old cat, Tabitha, has very sadly died – just keeled over. She was almost 21 which would make her 150 years old in cat years! In her time she was such an excellent catcher of mice. And how I miss her now. All the local mice appear to have heard of her demise and have moved in here. It is all very well being told that we have to catch them humanely and then release them in the park but I’m sure mine are of

the “homing” variety –rather like homing pigeons – another kind of vermin in my opinion. Indeed from my window I can see 2 now enjoying the sunshine and the seeds I put out earlier for the birds! Yesterday night when as usual I couldn’t sleep and went down to make tea and when I switched on the light in the kitchen it was like Aintree with all the mice hopping about. So in vera Desperation I am getting in a man, or a woman, from the council.

One year to go to Olympics and my husband is complaining that the town will be full of visitors who will no doubt find their way to us in Chelsea and he will have to entertain them. He is already planning to go to Scotland next July so that he will be “not at home”! I wish to goodness he would finish that book of his and then we might, just might, be able to go off somewhere together. As you know, from my past experiences, it is so complicated to organise everything for him if I want to visit far from home.

Mr.C has just rushed in from the garden – his laptop needs charging and he forgot to save what he had been working on for the last 2 hours. He is not happy!!!

I’d better go and help pour oil on the troubled waters. Love to all the “bright young things”.

July and August – JWC to Jean Aitken

My dear Jane

I promised the Dr. that I would write to let you know that he is on his way to Dumfries. Hopefully this letter will arrive before he does but no doubt he will telephone you before he leaves Edinburgh. He is to be spending a few days there where he has some business to do for Mr C at the bank and hopes to stay on and visit some events in the Festival. He tells us that the town is just like London – full of foreigners, hardly an English, or indeed a Scottish voice to be heard. He had met Mr Erskine and his sisters in George Street. on their way to an afternoon concert – all looking remarkably well. Mr. Erskine’s by-pass seems to be working –“new lease of life” he says. Cafés and restaurants have all spilled out on to the pavements – for the convenience of smokers, I suppose – it’s all taken on the

appearance of being on the Continent. Apparently every hotel in the city is fully booked – just as well the Dr had arranged to stay with Mr Hunter out at Blackhall – so it doesn't look like the recession has hit Edinburgh. How it has changed. I am hoping against hope that I shall get to Scotland next year, God and Mr C's book willing! My aunts in Morningside aren't getting any younger and they would like me to visit them.

As you have no doubt seen on the television news, we have had rather a frightening time here. Thankfully the rioters have not reached Chelsea. However everyone is being very careful but it appears that it is the shops mostly which are being attacked and pillaged – but not bookshops which tells you something!. Mr C says that the surprising thing about it all is that it has taken so long to happen. Anarchy will always raise its ugly head when people become completely disenchanted with the government and any excuse will do to light the spark. Sadly it was a man being killed by the police that did it. And the Government don't seem to want to take responsibility for the lack of education, lack of work – indeed lack of hope. So of course when an opportunity presents itself, people will grab what they can and to hell with the consequences and consequences there will be!

We have just received a call from the BBC – they are sending someone to interview us here in Cheyne Row. It appears that our telephone has been hacked!! Remember when a few years ago my letters were got into by the security services? Well they are coming tomorrow and recording us for that programme at the weekend. Though what any hacker would find interesting in our lives would be interesting to know!

By the bye Mr C says to tell the Dr that his letter arrived yesterday along with the article clipped from the *Herald* “Historical authors’ blog aims to raise profile for the future”. But, he says, will readers actually buy the books? Will they just have them put on those *Kindle* things and where shall we poor authors be then? Is it only aimed at “historical fiction” or “faction” like Ms Mantels *Wolf Hall*? Perhaps the fact that she won the Booker prize will help”. She has become quite a favourite of Mr C's and is coming again for tea tomorrow.

What a long letter! But I must post this in the next few minutes if it is to reach you tomorrow. Love to all the family.

September 9 – JWC to Mary Austin

Dearest Mary it was so kind of you to give me advice on the keeping of hens! I have decided that they will be an asset to no. 5 Cheyne Row!! But do I really need a cockerel? You know how Mr. C is about noise. I know I have to protect the precious beings from foxes even here in London but can't I just have a very secure shed for them at night? When I told him his horrified reaction was "In the summer will they be scratching around my feet while I'm trying to work?" and "Think about rats!" But I am determined! I believe I can buy a little shed at Tesco's or order something called an "Egloo" which comes with hens included!! I read the other day that there are now half a million chicken-keepers in the Britain! After the cost of setting this up they may be the most expensive eggs ever bought – hope your brother appreciates it, hope that they actually lay some eggs! I have such plans – I dream of making meringues, fresh mayonnaise, Spanish omelettes – Delia will be very well used! Mr. C seems to know immediately if eggs have been bought from the supermarket! And always asks "how old is this egg? Is it really fresh?" They will be so fresh they will still be warm when he can collect them himself from the garden!! However, if you can still send us some of your wonderful cured bacon – it really is a superior article – better than anything I can get here – none of that frightful white stuff left in the pan – we, or rather, I shall be eternally grateful! His main complaint at the moment is new potatoes which, as you know, disagree with him terribly.

October

Dear Lady Ashburton. It was truly lovely to see you when you called last week and hasn't the dear little one grown. It is such a pity that she has to go off to school especially when you want to keep her close by you. But I suppose it is best that she settles somewhere sooner rather than later since you have to travel abroad so often with all your Charity work and Lord Ashburton so busy at the House. It is so important these days that girls have a proper education and she is such a clever girl.

Zofia has just told me that she is off back to Poland. Her boyfriend Szymon has made enough money building houses here to be able to marry her and build

a house of their own back home. Mrs. Gilchrist and I shall be sorry to see her go. Perhaps one of her friends will come in her stead. It is so hard to get someone both suitable and reliable.

Have you been watching *Downton Abbey*? What fun! All those servants! Mr C says he doesn't watch it but he seems to know a lot about what goes on; says they should all be sent packing particularly Mr Bates who looks like he will be hanged anyway. Roll on the next series.

Do you ever watch University Challenge on a Monday evening with that lovely Mr Paxman. Mr Ruskin telephoned to say that our "Man of Genius" was the answer to one of the questions last week! How famous he has become! We usually watch it but had been invited to Lady Sandwich for supper that evening.

I shall try for a glimpse of you before your next visit to South Africa.

PS I wonder what the Princess Royal has to say about the exploits of her daughter's rugby-playing husband when he was in New Zealand. Oh to be a fly on the wall!!

November – JWC to Mary Austin

Dearest Mary. The Hens have struck! Our butcher tells me he gets "organic" eggs – what the difference is I'm not sure but Mr C says he can tell!! So can you please employ the old method and send us some – that is if yours are still in the laying mood. We could get some from the Grange but they are so generous about sending us fresh cream and a weekly veg box that I don't like to ask. If you send them next day delivery – I know it's more expensive – I shall send a cheque off to you to cover your costs.

Your Mary Ann and Catherine came to tea last Sunday -- good to hear that they are doing so well in London. They say that Isabella is to travel to Asia and Australia before going to University – how exciting! Mr. Ruskin was here and has offered to take them round the Tate Modern and your brother gave them the

tickets left by Mr Macready for his new play opening next week. They are such lovely girls it is a pleasure to see them. I hope they will come often out to Chelsea – though I expect they will be more attracted by the clothes shops in the King’s Road and in Sloane Square!

Apologies for such a short letter –I promise a longer one later in the week.

Kind regards to James and the others still at the Gill.

December – JWC to Everyone

Dear Everyone. You would have been most puzzled to receive a letter in your Xmas card in an unfamiliar hand. The reason is this. I have broken my wrist – the right one – and cannot write to you all. My doctor’s daughter, who is home from University, has kindly offered to act as my amanuensis. She will then take the finished article to the shop in the King’s Road to be photocopied.

I have been so well lately that in spite of the cold I felt I needed to get out for a walk. Well I only got as far as the end of the street when I stepped on an invisible patch of ice and down I went like a ton of bricks. I was lifted to my feet by a very pleasant young man – he had lots of ear-rings and a tattoo – it just shows that you cannot judge people by their looks these days – who helped me home where Mr. C called for a taxi and off we went to the hospital. They kept me there overnight and fixed a metal contraption on my hand and wrist. But I cannot hold a pen and I *must* write to you all so hence my reliance on Miss Barnes.

Everyone has been so very kind – as I have had flowers from the Tennysons and the Forsters and from the Ashburtons, our house begins to take on the guise of a florist’s or as Mr C says –a funeral parlour. Mr. Neuberg and Mr. Froude arrived with boxes of chocolates – I shall be putting on so much weight. Mr. Dickens has sent me an advance copy of his new book “so that I don’t weary”. And so many visitors offering to help – either to do shopping or even to cook for us. Geraldine pops round every morning for her orders as she calls them. I’m so glad we are on good terms again as she is so very generous with her time.

You will be wondering if Mr C has recovered from his bicycle accident. Well the bicycle's front wheel will never go round again but I'm pleased to tell you that he recovered quickly physically but his pride has taken a little longer. Thankfully this truly terrible weather has curtailed any ideas of having the machine fixed so he walks everywhere just like he used to do. He has also been taking himself up to speak with the demonstrators outside St Paul's Cathedral and I feel that a strongly-worded letter will soon be winging its way to the Times. His sense of justice has never diminished which is not always the best thing for his blood pressure!

In the New Year we are again hoping to go out to the Grange – it is always so relaxing after the hustle and tumult of Christmas here in Chelsea and I am hoping that by summer we can both take a holiday – perhaps even together!

Although my letter-writing is much curtailed, I do so look forward to reading all your letters with all your news.

So it just remains for me to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a hale and hearty 2012!

Carlyle the Master Storyteller: telling stories and spinning yarns in *Frederick the Great*

Linda Stewart

I'd like to spend just a few minutes talking about how I became involved with Carlyle before I go on to discuss Carlyle's literary approach towards his last major work, *Frederick the Great*, which was published in six volumes between 1858 and 1865. My introduction to Thomas Carlyle was actually through reading Frederick. In early 2006, Aileen contacted me about the possibility of a Ph D studentship which was to focus on Carlyle and the making of *Frederick the Great* that was being included in the current application for funding for the *Collected Letters* project. In the hope that the funding application would be successful, and in preparation for a potential interview for the Ph D studentship, I started reading *Frederick* in the summer of 2006. One thing that struck me immediately from reading Frederick was Carlyle's sense of humour which pervades the text. Carlyle's humour is something that I'll come back to later.

It was in July 2006 that Aileen gave me the good news that the Collected Letters team had been successful in their funding application, and I was called in – along with other applicants – for an interview with Aileen, Ian and Jonathan. I remember it vividly. I remarked that, after reading four volumes of *Frederick*, it appeared to me that Carlyle's writing was very off the cuff, as it were. Ian soon showed me the error of my ways by informing me that Carlyle carried out extensive research before putting pen to paper, that he was obsessed with revising his material and that he repeatedly edited his work until he was fully satisfied. I was lucky enough to be offered the Ph D studentship and began researching *Frederick* in earnest. It's fortunate that, at this early stage of my research, I hadn't come across David DeLaura's remarks in his work, *Victorian Prose: A Guide to Research*. Describing the *Frederick* manuscript, DeLaura said, "*Frederick the Great* survives to a large extent but in such far-flung distribution it would require heroic efforts to use it for scholarly work" (36).

At that time – and probably still today, in comparison with many of you – I felt like a relative newcomer to Carlyle. When I first started researching Carlyle

I was struck by other people's attitudes towards him. Many people hadn't heard of him, of course, but those who had either loved or loathed him; there didn't appear to be a middle ground. For instance, I found a poem about Carlyle in an old Carlyle Society paper that was given by Carlisle Moore some time ago. The poem was written by an anonymous American and the date is unknown:

As I was laying on the green,
A small English book I seen;
Carlyle's Essay on Burns was the edition,
So I left it laying in the same position.

Despite the negative perceptions about Carlyle and his work, coupled with DeLaura's remarks about the difficulties that I might encounter during my research into *Frederick*, I ploughed on nonetheless.

Carlyle had good reasons for deciding to write about *Frederick the Great*, although he spent a considerable time dithering about whether or not he should proceed with the project. This was primarily due to Carlyle's concern about whether or not Frederick was a suitable subject for his history. Carlyle's vacillation had important repercussions as his history of Frederick progressed, so I'd like to take a little time to talk about this. Carlyle believed that a chain of unfortunate events in the early to mid nineteenth century - the failure of Chartism, the Hungry '40s in England, the Irish potato famine in 1845 and the Revolutions in Europe in 1848 - had left Europe in disarray, with Governments abandoning their traditional authoritarian roles and adopting a new policy of laissez-faire. Carlyle felt that the nation was becoming fragmented. In his view, the nation had to function as a family unit, with the older, more experienced members instructing and educating the young. Carlyle had already tried to address this problem with the publication of his Latter-Day Pamphlets in 1850, but his hectoring tone in these - in one section he advocated that "the few Wise will have ... to take command over the innumerable Foolish" - had caused offence and had antagonised many of his readers.

Carlyle, therefore, took an entirely different approach when he wrote *Frederick the Great*. My argument is that, although he named this work a *History of Friedrich II of Prussia*, Carlyle was acting not as a historian but as a teller of stories. He was cloaking his didacticism within an epic tale of one of the last great

kings of Europe. Furthermore, he was using the figure of Frederick to demonstrate his belief in the absolute necessity of the existence of a strong leader for people to follow. This was a revised, more acceptable spin on “the innumerable Foolish” being commanded by “the few Wise”. By taking on the role of a storyteller and by adopting techniques which are more often associated with oral performance than written work, Carlyle hoped to steadily but surely draw his readers into the action of his epic and increase their feelings of unity with each other through their empathy for Frederick and their involvement in his history.

Carlyle himself noted the role of the historian as a storyteller and teacher, when he wrote in his essay “On History” in 1830:

Whereas of old, the charm of History lay chiefly in gratifying our common appetite for the wonderful, for the unknown; and her office was but that as of a Minstrel and Storyteller, she has now further become a Schoolmistress ... all learners, all inquiring minds of every order, are gathered round her footstool, and reverently pondering her lessons, as the true basis of Wisdom. (Works 27: 84)

You’ll notice that even here Carlyle is alluding to an oral performance, with the audience “gathered round” the “footstool” of History.

It is interesting to investigate the reasons behind Carlyle’s choice of Frederick as his subject. As I’ve already mentioned, he debated long and hard over his choice. As his history progressed, Carlyle persisted in showing Frederick in a favourable light, despite increasing misgivings about Frederick’s character in the course of his research. For example, during his coverage of the Seven Years’ War, a conflict that lasted from 1756 until 1763, Carlyle describes the battle of Kolin which took place on June 18th 1757. This was Frederick’s first defeat in this lengthy war, and Carlyle unjustly blames this defeat on one of Frederick’s officers, contradicting the accounts of other commentators. He glosses over a serious tactical error made by Frederick describing him instead in glowing, god-like terms:

Friedrich ... dashed from his Hill-top in hot haste towards Prince Moritz, General of the centre, intending to direct him upon such short-cut; and hastily said, with Olympian brevity and fire, ‘Face to right *here!*’ With Jove-like brevity, and in such a blaze of Olympian fire as we may imagine”. (Works 17: 179)

Regardless of Carlyle's own personal reservations about the King of Prussia, in order for his history to succeed in encouraging his readers to follow Frederick's example, it was crucial that readers should view Frederick as a hero. As Carlyle progressed with his history this dichotomy became increasingly more problematic.

We can see Carlyle's vacillation over his choice of subject in a series of letters that he wrote in 1852. Writing on 1st March to Joseph Neuberg Carlyle states, "it remains quite unlikely that I shall ever write a word about Friedrich" and he reinforces this sentiment in a letter to his brother, John, on 13th March, "I am often tempted to renounce it all, some good day" (*Collected Letters* 27: 57, 70). Less than three months later, on 6th June, he tells Karl August Varnhagen Von Ense, "I decidedly grow in love for my Hero, as I go on" (27: 136). Yet in a letter to Ralph Waldo Emerson on 25th June, Carlyle maintains,

I am not writing on Frederic [sic] the Great; nor at all practically contemplating to do so I took to reading, near a year ago, about Frederick, as I had twice in my life done before; and have, in a loose way, tumbled up an immense quantity of shot rubbish on that field, and still continue. Not with much decisive approach to Frederick's *self*, I am still afraid! The man looks brilliant and noble to me; but how *love* him, or the sad wreck he lived and worked in?" (27: 153).

Compare this with a letter to Jane on 13th August where he declares "really at heart I do not much love him: yet perhaps I could write a goodish kind of Book upon him" (27: 225). These letters highlight Carlyle's inner struggle: not only does he vacillate between love and outright dislike for Frederick, but he is also torn between, on the one hand, his belief that a history of Frederick is possible and, on the other, his desire to "renounce it all".

Small wonder that in his 1885 *Autobiography*, Henry Taylor remarked of Carlyle that "his mind seems utterly incapable of coming to any conclusion about anything ... He can see nothing but the chaos of his own mind reflected in the universe" (1: 328). Taylor's remarks appear to be borne out in Carlyle's admission in a letter to Jane in August 1852 that "a kind of bayonet in the back is *pushing* me on" (*CL* 27: 231). This confession implies that Carlyle's decision to proceed with *Frederick* was tempered by a strong sense of being engaged in a divine mission. He was acutely aware of the fact that this might be his final opportunity to pass

on his teachings to his readers. In his 1854 journal he acknowledged his situation: “I am getting old, yet would grudge to depart without trying to tell more of my mind” (Froude, *Life* 2: 172).

Carlyle may also have felt driven to the task in response to Thomas Babington Macaulay’s 1842 review essay on Frederick. As Arthur and Vonna Adrian claim in their recent essay on *Frederick*, “Instead of a hero, Macaulay had delineated a malicious practical joker, a blasphemer, a tyrannical military and civic leader, a plunderer, a deceiver—in short, an utter scoundrel” (187). Carlyle’s ambivalence towards Frederick did not extend to viewing him in quite such derogatory terms. A headnote written by Carlyle that later appeared in Froude’s 1883 publication, *Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle* reveals why Carlyle eventually embarked on the project:

I felt uncertain, disinclined; and in the end engaged in it merely on the principle *Tantus labor non sit cassus* [let not such a great work be lost] ... My heart was not in it: other such shoreless and bottomless chaos, with traces of a hero imprisoned there, I never did behold, nor will another soon in this world. (*CL* 27: 389)

It appears that Carlyle felt driven to the task – the “bayonet in ... [his] back” was still “pushing ... [him] on”. In August 1852, Carlyle was debating over the merits and demerits of travelling to Germany to carry out research for Frederick. A letter to Von Ense in June 1852 gives an insight into Carlyle’s motives for the trip. He states:

To look with my eyes upon Potsdam, Ruppin, Rheinsberg, Küstrin, and the haunts of Frederick; to see the Riesengebirge country and the actual fields of Frederick’s 10 or 12 grand battles: this would be a real and great gain to me. (27: 139)

Seeing things with his own eyes was crucially important to Carlyle. He subsequently put these first-hand experiences to good use in his highly-detailed descriptions of Frederick’s military campaigns. An indication of Carlyle’s success in this endeavour was the unqualified praise that he received for his highly-detailed coverage of these battles and his perceived grasp of military tactics. As *The Athenaeum* of 3rd May 1862 remarked, “his style, when he follows the army, marches with it, echoes its guns, reflects its bayonet gleams, is in harmony with its wildest music” (“*History of Friedrich*” 585).

In addition, *Frederick* is peppered throughout with what Carlyle refers to as “Tourist Notes”, long, descriptive passages of a particular area of the country. For example, Carlyle describes the route that a tourist would take if travelling east from Weimar:

‘Tourists, from Weimar and the Thuringian Countries,’ says a Notebook, sometimes useful to us ... ‘have most likely omitted Rossbach in their screaming railway flight eastward; and done little in Leipzig, but endeavour to eat dinner, and, still more vainly, to snatch a little sleep in the inhuman dormitories of the Country’. (*Works* 18: 302)

Carlyle’s distaste for travel, his dislike of unfamiliar food and his inability to sleep in a strange bed pervades this extract. By means of these “Tourist Notes” Carlyle allows the reader to join him in a tour of the area that he is describing, where the reader is the tourist and Carlyle is his guide. Their journey together here can be read as a metaphor for the journey throughout the six volumes of *Frederick*. Without the first-hand knowledge gained from his trips, Carlyle could not have produced such an in-depth account – it lends credibility to the text and enriches and enlivens the narrative.

The inability to make up his mind did seem to be part of Carlyle’s character: he underwent a similar process when he was preparing to write *The letters and speeches of Oliver Cromwell*. An important factor in his decision to write about the King of Prussia was that *Frederick* had succeeded in establishing social order in what was widely seen as the “chaos of the eighteenth century”, an achievement that was much admired by Carlyle.¹ In addition, Frederick’s military acumen and the many battles in which he showed himself to be an astute military leader and tactician lent themselves well to Carlyle’s plans to portray him as a hero whom readers would admire.

One major difference between Oliver Cromwell and Frederick the Great was that the reading public that Carlyle was targeting already knew about, and had an interest in, the life of Cromwell. Frederick, on the other hand, was a foreign sovereign who may have held less interest for them. Carlyle, therefore, had to

¹ Within a few days of his becoming king, Frederick ordered the Public Granaries to be opened and the grain to be sold at a reasonable price to the poor. He also abolished the act of legal torture and advocated religious tolerance declaring, “in this Country every man must get to Heaven in his own way” (*Works* 14: 290).

spin his tale in such a way as to make Frederick and his exploits appealing to his readers. According to Joseph Neuberg, Carlyle was successful in this endeavour. As I'm sure most of you know, Neuberg carried out a great deal of research for *Frederick* and proofread much of Carlyle's early drafts. He maintained that the final two volumes of *Frederick* showed "once more (as to my knowledge, it has never been done in modern Ages) History as a Tale of wonder" (Ms. 553.278, National Library of Scotland). Even bearing in mind that Neuberg was one of Carlyle's admirers, this was praise indeed for Carlyle's efforts.

That said, certain sections of *Frederick* are not a "tale of Wonder" but are particularly long-winded and tedious, especially Carlyle's lengthy and detailed description of Frederick's ancestry. Writing in 1895, Frederic Harrison complained strongly about this aspect of Carlyle's history. Harrison declared that *Frederick* was not a book at all, but an encyclopædia of German biographies in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Who reads every word of these ten [sic] volumes? Who cares to know how big was the belly of some court chamberlain, or who were the lovers of some unendurable Frau? What a welter of dull garbage! In what dustheaps dost thou not smother us, Teufelsdröckh! Oh Thomas, Thomas, what Titania has bewitched thee with the head of Dryasdust on thy noble shoulders? (*Studies* 47)

However, I enjoyed reading *Frederick* for several reasons, one of the main ones being, as I mentioned at the start of this paper, that I was attracted by Carlyle's sense of humour. For example, in the first volume, Carlyle describes Frederick's father, Friedrich Wilhelm as "a rough unruly boy" who was "dangerous to trust among crockery", and he highlights one of Friedrich Wilhelm's childhood pranks:

At a very early stage, he, one morning while the nurses were dressing him, took to investigating one of his shoe-buckles; would, in spite of remonstrances, slobber it about in his mouth; and at length swallowed it down,—beyond mistake; and the whole world cannot get it up! (*Works* 12: 30-31)

Carlyle then notes that the offending shoe-buckle "turned out harmless, after all the screaming; and a few grains of rhubarb restored it safely to the light of day" (31).

Humorous anecdotes and turns of phrase pervade *Frederick*. When I subsequently read criticism of Carlyle which described him as a rather grim and dour character, I found it difficult to reconcile these with my impressions of him from reading *Frederick*. Others were more generous in their appraisal of Carlyle. Lady Eastlake wrote in her 1844 memoirs “He is a kind of Burns in appearance—the head of a thinker, the eye of a lover, and the mouth of a peasant”. In her 1856 publication *At Home and Abroad*, Margaret Ossoli described a personal encounter with Carlyle:

He does not converse,—only harangues ... Carlyle allows no one a chance, but bears down all opposition, not only by his wit and onset of words, resistless in their sharpness as so many bayonets, but by actual physical superiority, raising his voice and rushing on his opponent with a torrent of sound. (184)

Despite this apparent criticism of Carlyle, Ossoli goes on to claim that, “you like him heartily”. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, the editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*, said of Carlyle:

I remember his saying some rather stern things about Scotchmen. But that which saved these and all his sharpest words from being actually offensive was this, that, after the most vehement tirade, he would suddenly pause, throw his head back, and give as genuine and kindly a laugh as I ever heard from a human being. (5)

Wentworth continues: “the gift of humor underlay all else in him. All his critics, I now think, treat him a little too seriously. No matter what his labours or his purposes, the attitude of the humorist was always behind” (11). Wentworth’s remarks appear to justify my first impressions from reading *Frederick* of Carlyle as an author who allows humour to run throughout the text, an author who behaves, in the words of Ruth apRoberts, as a kind of “Shandean Humorist”.

Carlyle’s readers had only to glance at the chapter titles of Book one, volume one of *Frederick* to become aware of his intention of setting down Frederick’s history in the form of a story.² These chapters are primarily concerned with Frederick’s birth, his parents and grandparents. Frederick is described as, “A small

² Chapter I. Proem: Friedrich’s History from the Distance we are at; Chapter II. Friedrich’s Birth; Chapter III. Father and Mother: The Hanoverian Connexion; Chapter IV. Father’s Mother; Chapter V. King Friedrich I. (Works 12: v)

infant, but of great promise or possibility” (*Works* 12: 20). Carlyle juxtaposes this “great promise or possibility” with his description of Frederick as, not just an infant, but “A small infant”. The inference is, that despite his smallness, Frederick will go on to do great things.

Frederick is then referred to as a “little creature” and a “little Prince” (20, 21). In the space of one page, Carlyle also uses the terms “little Princekins”, “little Prince” and “baby Prince” to describe two siblings of Frederick’s who had died as infants (21). In his influential book, *Orality and Literacy*, Walter Ong describes this oral technique as “aggregative”:

This characteristic is closely tied to reliance on formulas to implement memory. The elements of orally based thought and expression tend to be not so much simple integers as clusters of integers, such as parallel terms or phrases or clauses, antithetical terms or phrases or clauses, epithets. Oral folk prefer, especially in formal discourse, not the soldier, but the brave soldier; not the princess, but the beautiful princess; not the oak, but the sturdy oak. (38)

By repeating or reworking the description “little Prince”, Carlyle is attaching this epithet to Frederick and implementing this connection in the minds of his readers. By associating this description with Frederick’s deceased siblings, when Carlyle eventually attaches it to Frederick, it gains additional emphasis. Carlyle demonstrates that he is well aware of the significance of this strategy when he informs the reader that “this little Prince [is] a third trump-card in the Hohenzollern game” (*Works* 12: 21).³

Unusually, volume one does not begin with Frederick’s arrival on the world’s stage, but with a portrait of him as an old man roughly eighty years prior to the time that Carlyle was writing, so in the late 1780s. Indeed, all of Chapter one is given over to a detailed description of Frederick in the last years of his life. Frederick’s birth is not dealt with until Chapter two. At this stage, the reader expects Carlyle to launch into an account of Frederick’s history. Carlyle, however, confounds expectations by going back to the year 928 and the life of Henry the Fowler, before spending the next two hundred and sixty pages—the bulk of volume one—outlining Frederick’s ancestry, before he finally revisits Frederick’s

³ The House of Hohenzollern into which Frederick was born was a royal dynasty of electors, kings and emperors in Prussia, Germany and Romania.

birth. Small wonder that Frederic Harrison complained that *Frederick* was “a welter of dull garbage” (Studies 47).

In these opening chapters, Carlyle is adopting a narrative structure which involves circularity and repetition, both of which are oral devices, to raise Frederick’s profile and stimulate his readers’ interest in him from the outset. By beginning the volume near the end of Frederick’s life, Carlyle closes the temporal distance between Frederick and his readers. He then offers a circular pattern which consists of the repetition of the sequence of birth, life history and death. In the first instance, this involves Frederick’s birth, followed by the life histories and deaths of his ancestors. The second occurrence again features Frederick’s birth, followed by his personal life history and death. Through the repetition of these sequences of birth, life and death, Carlyle is using oral techniques to let his readers know that he is telling a story, and the ‘double birth’ is an early indication of the importance that he plans to assign to Frederick. In its review of volume three of *Frederick* on May 3rd 1862, the Athenaeum, despite harbouring reservations about Carlyle’s methods, admitted that “the story, in the main, is superbly told” (585).

Carlyle confirms the oral nature of his history in the opening sentence of volume one by beginning this in classic storytelling mode:

About fourscore years ago, there used to be seen sauntering on the terraces of Sans Souci, for a short time in the afternoon, or you might have met him elsewhere at an earlier hour, riding or driving in a rapid business manner on the open roads or through the scraggy woods and avenues of that intricate amphibious Potsdam region, a highly interesting lean little old man, of alert though slightly stooping figure; whose name among strangers was King *Friedrich* the Second, or Frederick the Great of Prussia, and at home among the common people, who much loved and esteemed him, was *Vater Fritz*,—Father Fred—a name of familiarity which had not bred contempt in that instance. (*Works* 12: 1)

The tone throughout this excerpt is informal. Informality is a key element of oral performance, where the speaker is attempting to foster an air of camaraderie with his or her audience. In addition, the phrase “About fourscore years ago” is clearly a variation on the familiar words, “Once upon a time”, which are found at the start of most traditional stories. The sentence ends with a reference to another well-known saying, “Familiarity breeds contempt”, reworked here

to Frederick's advantage. Carlyle is implementing a known oral device here, allowing his refashioned proverb to act as a mnemonic aid for his readers. His success in this endeavour is indicated by an enthusiastic review of volumes one and two of *Frederick* in the December 1858 edition of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. The reviewer describes Carlyle's "representation of his hero" in this passage as "faithful as a photograph, and as finely executed as a portrait by Vandyke ... The finished picture, with the clear and strong expression which the author gives to it, fixes in the reader's mind a favourable impression of the great King" (571).

Later in the same paragraph, Carlyle mentions Frederick's boots "which may be brushed ... but are not permitted to be blackened or varnished; Day and Martin with their soot-pots forbidden to approach" (*Works* 12: 2). This reference to a well-known London blacking manufacturer is a signal to readers that Carlyle is familiar with and shares their day-to-day concerns: the omniscient narrator is also 'one of us'. As Walter Benjamin notes, "A man listening to a story is in the company of the storyteller, even a man listening to one shares this companionship" (99). Carlyle's light-hearted, casual tone is intended to endear him to his readers and encourage them to enjoy his company, to excise from their memories any notion of him as a distant, authoritarian sage.

Furthermore, in this opening sentence, Carlyle again shows his storytelling credentials by introducing another recognized oral technique. The technique to which I'm referring when Carlyle describes Frederick as "a highly interesting lean little old man" is, of course ... suspense. Readers must continue reading in order to find out what makes Frederick so interesting, and why, "among the common people", he was so "much loved and esteemed". This was surely an unexpected description of a king whom recent historians had branded "a tyrannical military and civic leader" (Adrian 187).

Frederick lived from 1712 until 1786, becoming King of Prussia in 1740 and remaining as monarch until his death. The Seven Years' War, as I've already mentioned, was a conflict that took place between 1756 and 1763. Carlyle had to familiarise himself with military tactics which was a new area for him, but one to which he applied himself enthusiastically. I would like to make the case that the reason that Carlyle took such care over researching and writing Frederick's military campaigns was because he was aware that the figure of a strong leader in

the midst of battle would convey a powerful image to his readers. He had only to look back to the Napoleonic Wars to find examples of the impact that these images could have on the reading public.

Simon Bainbridge in his extremely interesting work, *British Poetry and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Visions of Conflict*, has written extensively about the militarization of British society at this time and the rise in popularity of war poems and songs and their influence on society. Bainbridge refers to Walter Scott's long narrative poem, *The Lady of the Lake*, first published in 1810, arguing that this became the British army's "secret weapon" during the Peninsular War against Napoleon (1). Not only was this inspirational to the troops when it was read out to them en masse, but, Bainbridge claims, the act of reading the poem transformed "the reader into a warrior" and had the effect of "transporting the reader to the battlefield itself" (144, 17). Carlyle's desire was also to transport readers to the battlefield and in doing so unite them and create a reading 'audience'.

In order to attract and keep the attention of his readers, Carlyle created a highly-detailed, lively, quasi-first-hand account of the various battles in the Seven Years' War. In his coverage of the Battle of Lobositz, for example, a conflict that took place on October 1st 1756, information from Carlyle's trips to Germany is brought into play to enrich his narrative. As Frederick marches with his army toward Lobositz, Carlyle sets the scene for his readers:

The Country-roads where Friedrich's Army is on march, I should think are mostly on the mounting hand ... through various scrubby villages which are not nameworthy ... Crossing the shoulder of Kletschenberg (*Hill of this Kletschen*) ... yonder in bright sunshine is your beautiful expansive Basin of the Elbe, and the green Bohemian Plains, revealed for a moment. (*Works* 17: 64-65)

Throughout his description of this battle Carlyle cites a Major-General Henry Lloyd, who was a serving soldier at the time. However, Carlyle's portrayal of events differs significantly from the Major's, a difference which can be seen from the moment battle commences. Lloyd states, "The action begun, about seven in the morning, between the Prussian's left wing, and the troops which M. Brown had posted in the Loboschberg" (7). Carlyle, however, chooses to provide a more dramatic description:

Friday 1st October 1756, Day should have broken: but where is Day? At seven in the morning (and on till eleven), thick mist lay over the plain; thin fog to the very hilltops; so that you cannot see a hundred yards ahead. Lobositz is visible only as through a crape [sic]; farther on, nothing but gray [sic] sea; under which, what the Austrians are doing, or whether there are any Austrians, who can say? (*Works* 17: 67)

Carlyle is doing some very interesting things in this passage: he is more concerned with creating an atmosphere and generating a feeling of suspense than providing a detailed military account. He achieves this by a careful choice of language. The first thing to notice is that this is written mostly in the present tense. Carlyle frequently moves between tenses throughout Frederick. The effect of using the present tense to describe the action is one of transporting the reader to the scene of the action and creating a sense of immediacy.

The use of short, clipped phrases such as “thin fog to the very hilltops” and “nothing but gray sea” coupled with the phrase, “you cannot see a hundred yards ahead”, where the “you” directly involves the reader, mimics the action of a Prussian soldier looking around and checking out his surroundings. This creates a sense of urgency and mystery: we as readers don’t know what might jump out of the mist at us. Carlyle also poses rhetorical questions, “but where is Day?” and “what the Austrians are doing, or whether there are any Austrians, who can say?” which mimic the soldier’s thoughts as he surveys the scene. Crucially, the omniscient authorial voice is absent: the reader is left alone with the Prussian soldier scrutinizing the mist for signs of the enemy.

Lloyd’s account of the terrain describes “vineyards, which are separated by stone walls” (6). Carlyle takes this one step further, by referring to “Vineyards parted by low stone walls, say three of four feet high (parted by hurdles, or by tiny trenches in our day, and the stone walls mere stone facings) ...” (*Works* 17: 67). Carlyle’s own experience of the terrain allowed him to describe the condition of these walls at the time of writing – indicated by his use of the phrase “in our day” – and compare this with their state at the time of the battle in 1756.

Both Lloyd and Carlyle describe troop deployments. Again, there is a noticeable difference in style. Lloyd informs us that “Marshal Brown had posted some thousand Croats ... sustained by several battalions of Hungarian infantry”

in the vineyards at the side of the Loboschberg mountain (6). Compare this with Carlyle's description:

Leftward on the Lobosch-Hill side, as we reconnoitre, some Pandours are noticeable, nestled in the vineyards ... there are the Pandours crouched, and give fire in a kneeling posture when you approach. Lower down, near Lobositz itself, flickerings as of Horse squadrons, probably Hussar parties, twinkle dubiously in the wavering mist. (*Works* 17: 67)

As well as transporting the reader to the scene of the action, by writing in this manner Carlyle generates a feeling of suspense. Suspense, as I have already noted, is one of the key elements of oral performance. As E.M. Forster once pointed out, storytelling can be traced back "to neolithic times" where the audience was "only kept awake by suspense" (41-42). If this faltered or failed the speaker's audience "either fell asleep or killed him" (42). Carlyle, of course, is not concerned with whether or not his audience is going to kill him, well, perhaps he is in a figurative sense, but he is concerned with keeping their attention, with 'keeping them awake', as it were, and generation of suspense is a technique that Carlyle uses throughout *Frederick*.

As his history progresses, Carlyle also constantly addresses the reader. He issues invitations and even commands, involving the reader directly in the action, for example, "Let us precede him thither" (*Works* 18: 317), "Forward, then!" (301). As well as increasing his communication with his readers, Carlyle employs another oral technique, repetition, to draw them in further:

"He likewise promptly laid hold of the two Hills ... a fault in Browne to have neglected that night, for which he smarted on the morrow" (*Works* 17: 66)

"What would Browne now not give for the Lobosch Hill! Yesternight he might have had it gratis" (70)

"His right wing holds the Homolka Hill, - that too would now be valuable to Browne, and cannot be had gratis, as yesternight!" (70-71)

Carlyle not only repeats the sentiment but some of the words as well. All of these techniques are designed to draw in the individual reader and encourage a

sense of unity in Carlyle's readership. Another technique favoured by Carlyle is the tendency to give people, especially those in authority, rather silly names, for example, referring to Madame de Pompadour, "The thrice –famous Pompadour, who had been known to ... [Friedrich] in the Chrysalis state, did not forget him on becoming Head-Butterfly of the Universe" (*Works* 16: 208).⁴

In his book on orality, Walter Ong makes some interesting comments regarding the difficulties involved in creating and appealing imaginatively to an 'audience' of readers. Ong states:

the spoken word forms humans into close-knit groups. When a speaker is addressing an audience, the members of the audience normally become a unity, with themselves and with the speaker ... Writing and print isolate. There is no collective noun or concept for readers corresponding to 'audience' (73).

Carlyle is attempting to circumvent the isolation of the printed word by reaching out to and involving his 'audience'. The question is; why was the notion of unity so important to Carlyle? To answer that question we have to go back to Carlyle's desire for strong governance, for the wise leading "the innumerable Foolish". Carlyle is thinking on a national scale; he is 'preaching' to the nation en masse. Just as Scott's poem had enormous resonance for a society that had become militarized, Carlyle hoped that his history would have meaning and instruction for a society that had become fragmented and leaderless.

In his coverage of the Battle of Kunersdorf, a conflict that took place on August 12th 1759, and in which Frederick suffered a major defeat, Carlyle employs the same storytelling techniques with which he began *Frederick*. In the first paragraph he introduces an element of suspense when he writes, "Sunday July 29th, at Frankfurt-on-Oder divine worship was broken-in upon, and the poor City thrown into consternation, by actual advent, or as good as advent, of the Russians" (*Works* 18: 58-59). As he moves on to cover the battle itself, Carlyle allows the narrative to slip between tenses:

The Prussian army advanced, unwavering, all the faster—, speed one's only safety. They poured into the Russian gunners and musketry battalions one volley of choicest quality, which had a shaking effect; then, with level bayonets, plunge on the batteries: which are all empty before we can leap

⁴ Madame de Pompadour was the mistress of Louis XV from 1745 onwards.

into them; artillerymen, musketeer battalions, all on wing; general whirlpool spreading. And so, in ten minutes, the Mühlberg and its guns are ours. (74)

This movement from the past to the present tense for the action sequences affords Carlyle the opportunity to occupy two distinct roles. His position shifts from that of omniscient storyteller who is recounting past events for his readers to that of vicarious participant—with those readers—in the events that are being unfolded.

A more dramatic example of this participation can be found during his description of an earlier conflict, the Battle of Leuthen, which took place in December 1757. After describing Frederick's success in this battle, Carlyle highlights an encounter between the king and one of his landlords. Carlyle asks readers for their "consent" because, he tells them, the "Dialogue ... is dullish", before presenting them with a lengthy transcript of this conversation (*Works* 17: 324). This concludes with:

King. '... you are an honest man:—probably a Protestant?'

Landlord. 'Joa, joa, Ihr Majestät, I am of your Majesty's creed!'

Crack-crack! At this point the Dialogue is cut short by sudden musket-shots from the woody fields to right; crackle of about twelve shots in all; which hurt nothing but some horse's feet,—had been aimed at the light, and too low. (324)

The onomatopoeic "Crack-crack" of these "sudden musket-shots" interrupts the physical text at the same time as they "cut short" the conversation. The reader can see the dislocating effect of the shots on the page, as well as virtually hearing the sound of these shots as they are fired, a technique that is all the more effective because the reader has been lulled into a state of complacency by the previous "Dullish" dialogue.

Effectively conveying the sounds of warfare was a key part of Carlyle's oral strategy. He describes the reaction of Frederick's troops to the gunfire mentioned in the previous passage:

The Prussian Host at Saara, hearing these noises, took to its arms again; and marched after the King. Thick darkness; silence; tramp, tramp:—a Prussian grenadier broke-out, with solemn tenor voice again, into Church-Music;

a known Church-Hymn, of the homely *Te-Deum* kind; in which five-and-twenty thousand other voices, and all the regimental bands, soon join. (*Works* 17: 325)

Carlyle conveys the sound of the soldiers' feet breaking the silence as the troops march stoically after their king. Readers can imagine that they are marching along in unison. Walter Ong suggests that "sound incorporates. Whereas sight situates the observer outside what he views, at a distance, sound pours into the hearer A typical visual ideal is clarity and distinctness, a taking apart The auditory ideal, by contrast, is harmony, a putting together" (71). Carlyle hoped that, by exposing them to the sound of the "tramp, tramp" of the soldiers' marching and the melody of "a known Church-Hymn" readers would become increasingly imaginatively involved in his tale.

As I noted earlier, the figure of Frederick was a key component in Carlyle's oral strategy. If readers became disinterested in Frederick and his exploits they might simply stop reading Carlyle's history. However, Carlyle came under a great deal of criticism from contemporary reviewers for his persistent eulogizing of, not only Frederick, but Frederick's father, Friedrich Wilhelm. In a review of volumes I and II of *Frederick* in 1859, the *Eclectic Review* described Friedrich Wilhelm as

Ungainly in his person, harsh and startling in his speech ... rude to an incredible extent in his manners, vulgar and sensual in his habits, low in all his tastes, and half-brutish in some of them; there was nothing in his mental endowments, nothing in his official administration, nothing in his dealings with other Powers, sufficient to redeem him from indifference. ("Hero-Worship" 109-110)

Indeed, Thomas Babington Macaulay had recently depicted Friedrich Wilhelm as a monstrous individual in his 1842 review essay:

If he met a lady in the street, he gave her a kick, and told her to go home and mind her brats. If he saw a clergyman staring at the soldiers, he admonished the reverend gentleman to betake himself to study and prayer, and enforced this pious advice by a sound caning, administered on the spot. But it was in his own house that he was most unreasonable and ferocious His son Frederic and his daughter Wilhelmina, afterwards Margravine of Bareuth [sic], were in an especial manner objects of his aversion ... the Prince was kicked and cudgelled, and pulled by the hair. At dinner the plates were hurled at his head: sometimes he was restricted to bread and water: sometimes he

was forced to swallow food so nauseous that he could not keep it on his stomach. Once his father knocked him down, dragged him along the floor to a window, and was with difficulty prevented from strangling him with the cord of the curtain. (246-247)

A significant section of reviewers remained unconvinced of Friedrich Wilhelm's pacific qualities and this led them to begin to doubt Carlyle's portrayal of Frederick.

In order to overcome this perceived antipathy towards Frederick, Carlyle deliberately devotes a significant portion of the final volume—almost one fifth in total—to covering Frederick's final years. Carlyle does not allow his hero to die until two pages before the end of the volume. He then executes a master stroke with the addition of an appendix at the end of these volumes in 1868. This is entitled, "A Day with Friedrich", and consists mainly of twenty pages of dialogue between Frederick and one of his bailiffs in 1779. In earlier editions of *Frederick*, although the appendix is not included, Carlyle makes a point of referring to it. He is employing a degree of trickery here. At the same time that he insists that his account of the conversation makes for "rather heavy reading", Carlyle introduces the oral elements of suspense and intrigue by mentioning the fact that such a document exists in the first place (*Works* 19: 254-255).

The explanation for these tactics is Carlyle's determination not to let his history finish with Frederick's ill health and death. Instead of leaving readers with a negative image of Frederick as a sick and dying old man, Carlyle provides them with a positive and uplifting final portrait of him: "Friedrich is now 67 years old; has reigned 39 ... the 'Alte Fritz,' still brisk and wiry, has been, and is an unweariedly busy man" (305). As we saw earlier, Carlyle used a similar tactic at the start of volume one, where Frederick experienced a 'rebirth'. The oral devices of circularity and repetition that he employed in his opening chapters are repeated in this final volume. Once again, Carlyle's narrative involves the sequence of birth, life and death. However, in this final instance there is one significant difference: there is no death. The lasting image of Frederick at the end of these volumes is of a living, breathing, speaking monarch carrying out his duties, as always, to the best of his abilities.

There exists an urgency in Carlyle's use of orality in Frederick that does not

appear in his previous works. This urgency was fuelled by Carlyle's own concerns that this would be his final opportunity to address his readers. Earlier in his career, in works such as *The French Revolution*, Carlyle can be seen to be honing his literary skills, in particular his orality. By the time he comes to write *Frederick*, his oral techniques have become greatly refined. *The Eclectic Review* of October 1865 appeared to recognise this progression in Carlyle's work when it announced: "We put out of sight *The French Revolution* of our author, the most Homeric of all stories since the *Iliad*, but told rather as Daniel or Isaiah might tell the burdens and woes of ancient people, than as history usually tells her tale, precisely and clearly". It described *Frederick* as, "the second most splendid and magnificent history in our language", second only to Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* ("Mr. Carlyle's Last Chapter" 301, 300).

Towards the end of his coverage of the Seven Years' War, Carlyle himself hints at the success of his storytelling techniques:

We are henceforth, thank Heaven, permitted and even bound to be brief. Hardly above two Battles more from [Frederick] him, if even two:—and mostly the wearied Reader's imagination left to conceive for itself those intricate strategies, and endless manoeuvrings ... wherever they may be, with small help from a wearied Editor!— (*Works* 18: 330)

This passage suggests that Carlyle believed that, at this stage of his history, his oral strategy of encouraging his readers to become imaginatively involved in *Frederick's* history has been a success. This belief has given him the confidence to detach himself from his readers, allowing them to use their own imaginations to picture the "intricate strategies, and endless manoeuvrings" of the final two conflicts.

Throughout *Frederick*, readers are courted, cajoled, occasionally coerced and bullied by Carlyle. *The Eclectic Review* succinctly described Carlyle's methods: "he cuffs and thumps the reader about the head, with his usual magnificent tempest of words, till, in sheer dismay, one gives up fighting the matter out with him" ("Mr. Carlyle's Last Chapter" 309). The readers' perceived ability to now "respond ... vigorously" with minimal interference from "their Editor" appears to confirm Carlyle's success as a master storyteller. Yet the *Eclectic's review* contained a significant caveat. It declared that, despite Carlyle's "cuffs and thumps", the reader was left "holding one's own impression ... that

Frederick is not to be tried by any high and truly noble standard” (309). Carlyle’s persistent eulogizing of Frederick throughout his long history proved to be his downfall. Although there is no doubt that Carlyle was successful in capturing the imagination of his readers, in particular with his vivid descriptions of Frederick’s military campaigns, Carlyle failed in his attempt to make his readers fall in love with his hero. This profoundly influenced *Frederick the Great’s* place in posterity with the result that Carlyle’s lengthy and laboriously produced epic was only ever accorded a minor position within his literary canon.

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The Carlyles and Mesmerism

Malcolm Ingram

In Carlyle's *French Revolution* the opening chapters describe France before the revolution. Chapter 6, entitled 'Windbags,' begins by describing the aristocracy at the Longchamp races; continues with a literal windbag — the brothers Montgolfier launching their airship, then veers abruptly to this passage:

“Or observe Herr Doctor Mesmer, in his spacious Magnetic Halls. Long-stoled he walks; reverend, glancing upwards, as in rapt commerce; an Antique Egyptian Hierophant in this new age. Soft music flits; breaking fitfully the sacred stillness. Round their Magnetic Mystery, which to the eye is mere tubs with water, sit breathless, rod in hand, the circles of Beauty and Fashion, each circle a living circular Passion-Flower: expecting the magnetic afflatus, and new-manufactured Heaven-on-Earth. O women, O men, great is your infidelity! A Parliamentary Duport, a Bergasse, D'Espremeni we notice there; Chemist Berthollet too, on the part of Monseigneur de Chartres. Had not the Academy of Sciences, with its Baillys, Franklins, Lavoisiers, interfered! But it did interfere. Mesmer may pocket his hard money, and withdraw. Let him walk silent by the shore of the Bodensee, by the ancient town of Constance; meditating on much. For so, under the strangest new vesture, the old great truth (since no vesture can hide it) begins again to be revealed: That man is what we call a miraculous creature, with miraculous power over men; and, on the whole, with such a Life in him, and such a World round him, as victorious Analysis, with her Physiologies, Nervous-systems, Physic and Metaphysic, will never completely name, to say nothing of explaining. Wherein also the Quack shall, in all ages, come in for his share.”

(Carlyle, 1989. pp 53-54)

What Carlyle is describing, somewhat obscurely, is the success of Dr Mesmer in Paris, at its height in 1784, when his Animal Magnetism became the height of fashion among the aristocracy. Carlyle, writing half a century later, in 1835, describes him as charismatic, but a windbag and a quack, as did two committees of investigation set up by the French Academies of Science and Medicine. This paper traces the complicated connections that Thomas, Jane and Dr John Carlyle had with the subject over some thirty years, during which it became one of the greatest crazes of Victorian Britain.

Mesmer and Animal Magnetism

Franz Joseph Mesmer (1734-1815) was Austrian, born near Lake Constance, and studied and qualified in medicine in Vienna. He was friendly with the Mozart family, and in the opera *Così fan Tutte* is satirised in the maid Despina's comic impersonation of a magnetic doctor. Early in his career Mesmer became interested in magnetism and began applying magnets to his patients as a form of treatment. A Dr Hell, a Jesuit professor of astronomy, stole his idea, but Mesmer then invented the theory of Animal Magnetism. He believed that animal magnetism did not depend on the power of magnets, and attributed it to the ancient idea of a universal fluid – the magnets were merely conductors. He maintained that the 'magnetic matter was like the electric fluid.' Steel was not essential and he claimed that he could render magnetic 'paper, bread, wool, silk, leather, stones, glass, water, various metals, wood, men, dogs - in a word, everything I touched.' (Carlyle, J.A., 1829). By this he meant making 'passes' with the hands; stroking movements that did not need to touch the subject's body. Obviously a charismatic practitioner, his patients showed dramatic effects: they could be put to sleep, or into a dreamy state in which they would behave oddly. Their limbs could be put into strange postures which they retained without effort for long periods. They would respond to suggestions that they would not feel pain, and would show none when pins were stuck into them or when they were burned. Claims were made that they could be clairvoyant in these states. Many, mostly women, had fits, which were contagious – when one had a fit, others would follow within minutes.

Mesmer was condemned as a quack by the authorities in several European countries, but prospered among the wealthy aristocracy, and was an instant success in Paris, where he practised group treatment with the strange baths and iron rods and other props that Carlyle describes. After two distinguished French committees of scientists pronounced him a fraud, he retired quickly, a very rich man. There was little or no interest in Britain at this time, and revolution and war then reduced communications for many years afterwards.

Mesmerism and Animal Magnetism are the same thing, and the phenomena produced are identical to those seen in what we nowadays call hypnosis, after the term neurohypnosis, coined in the 1840s by James Braid – an Edinburgh graduate. Hypnosis is well recognised today, and has been much used and studied, but its causes and effects remain obscure, although in recent years brain scanning

techniques and cerebral blood flow studies have shown definite and unique changes in specific areas of the brain during hypnosis. (Crawford,1993; Nash, 2008)

Dr John Carlyle's Essays

Thomas Carlyle showed an early interest in magnetism, and published a long review of a German book on the magnetism of the earth, a reminder of his scientific and mathematical background (Carlyle, 1821). When he wrote Sartor he made use of the idea of the magnetic equator, the point between two poles of a magnet where there is neither attraction nor repulsion: his 'Centre of Indifference'. This background may have led him to take an interest in Mesmer's ideas. Some years later, in 1828, Carlyle's brother, Dr John, was in London, newly qualified and fresh from his post graduate studies in Munich and Vienna (Ingram, 2007). All his education had been financed by Thomas, and John was now irritating him by not seeking medical work vigorously, and by talking of becoming an author like his brother. Thomas suggested that he should write about medical topics, making use of his experiences in Europe:

“Suppose you try an Essay on Animal Magnetism....*Warum nicht?* It will do yourself a deal of good; and you can manage it. Only be sceptical, quite sceptical; tell in clear language what the Magnetisers say they can do; and then translate scores of remarkable cases &c and things that they have done..... Do my good Doctor try this! as for the editorial reception of it, I incline to suppose that Fraser could not well but accept it. A word to the wise!” (TC to JAC, 7 3 1828.)

This letter shows that both of them were familiar with the subject. John wrote two papers, which appeared within a few months of each other.

The first, the Foreign Review article (Carlyle J A, 1829), is a scholarly account, the lengthier of the two at 14,000 words, and ostensibly reviews three German and two French books, and issues of a French journal, L'Hermes, all published in the previous decade. He reviews the history of Animal Magnetism from its beginnings with Mesmer up to 1830. It is well researched and clearly written, a sound demolition of the magnetisers, allowing them to condemn themselves out of their own mouths by quoting the more absurd of their claims, just as Thomas had suggested. The second article (Carlyle J A ,1830), published in Fraser's Magazine, would have had a wider readership, but is less than half the

length of the earlier essay, and goes over much the same ground, while essaying a lighter, man-about-town style, and barely succeeding.

Both papers give a detailed account of Mesmer's years in Paris and of his methods, with extensive quotations from contemporary witnesses of Mesmer's Paris salon, obviously the source for his brother's account above, but more valuably an account of Mesmer's departure with a huge amount of money, and of the French Magnetists who after he left split into various factions. These French successors, mostly aristocrats, found that the effects they produced changed dramatically, and that instead of Mesmer's fits, sleep and somnambulism became the fashion, and later clairvoyance. This term was first applied to claims that mesmerised subjects could see and read when blindfolded. John Carlyle shows how all these dramatic states almost always occurred in women, and how both the fits and the somnambulism were infectious. He presents the excesses of Mesmer and his disciples in a deadpan fashion: the magnetised piano playing magnetised music in Mesmer's premises; the magnetising of trees by one of the wealthy landowners, round which his estate peasantry would gather, and link themselves together with ropes attached to the tree and to their thumbs. Best of all, he explains the fall and recovery of mesmerism and why it took over half a century to establish itself in Britain. A French official enquiry in Mesmer's time, whose members included such distinguished men as Benjamin Franklin, then ambassador to Paris, and the chemist Lavoisier, condemned him and his work out of hand.

Dr John begins the Fraser's article by proclaiming how impartial he is going to be, but immediately describes animal magnetism as emerging from the superstition and witchcraft of previous centuries. The rest of the article is mostly a series of anecdotes chosen to show animal magnetism in the worst possible light. He quotes, for example, a report of a magnetiser trying to outstare a giant toad, the toad later exploding, and claims made that toads were capable of magnetising humans. In the same dismissive style, he reports an important event which took place in Paris in 1829, the year in which he was writing. A major operation, a breast amputation for cancer was performed under animal magnetism, the patient experiencing no pain during the speedy ten minutes of surgery. This event was observed and reported in detail by a new committee of enquiry, whose members were impressed, but the report was published a year after Dr John's paper, in which he fails to grasp its importance, and presents it as another ludicrous story.

In writing these two papers Dr John followed his brother's advice closely, allowing his material to speak for itself. The first and longer article impresses, even today, as a thorough and objective review of the history of mesmerism, but the second, for Fraser's magazine, shows greater bias in both his selection and in style. He wrote to amuse his readers, and to make fun of the more preposterous claims of the magnetisers. He regarded them as quacks, as did his brother. John made one grave error, ending the Fraser article with: '...experience has shown that there is no market for magnetic ware in this country.... now it seems gone, never to return.' How wrong he was!

Magnetism comes to Britain

Animal Magnetism came late to Britain, more than fifty years after Mesmer's success in Paris. During these years very few people had been interested; Shelley was mesmerised while abroad, Coleridge took an interest, and the Carlyles knew about it, but few magnetisers came from France until 1837, when Baron J. E. Dupotet visited Britain, the very year in which *French Revolution* was published. He gave some demonstrations that were less than ideal as he spoke little or no English, but like most of these magnetisers he travelled with one or two assistants who he knew to be what we now call good hypnotic subjects. He impressed Dr John Elliotson, a very successful physician, and an Edinburgh graduate. He became a physician at St Thomas's Hospital aged only thirty-two, and soon moved to the newly opened University College Hospital. He was a lively lecturer, and keen on novelty and on research. He introduced the stethoscope to Britain, was the first to use iodine in goitre, and was the first physician to abandon the traditional knee breeches and wear trousers. He soon had the largest private practice in London, and carriages blocked his street during his consultation hours. Thackeray, a grateful patient, dedicated *Pendennis* to him (Ridgway, 1994).

This famous, influential and intelligent man began to experiment on his hospital patients with animal magnetism, with dramatic results, especially with two teenage sisters, the Okey sisters. They were epileptics, quiet and demure as a rule, but when magnetised they showed all the usual features of trance, and also became uninhibited in their language and behaviour, saying rude things to Elliotson and some of his distinguished visitors. He gave lengthy public demonstrations with them in the operating theatre of the hospital, before packed audiences, professional and lay, with many famous people attending: Dickens, the actor McCreadie, and even royalty.

Elliotson made larger and larger claims. He took the older of the twins on ward rounds, and the girl paused at various beds and predicted that the patient would die soon, and according to Elliotson correctly. He carried out various experiments with metals and other substances and claimed that the sisters reacted to those that he had magnetised. By this time some doctors were becoming suspicious, especially Dr Thomas Wakely, the editor of the new and radical *Lancet*, who allotted much space to exposing fraudulent doctors. Wakely interfered with some of these experiments behind Elliotson's back, and found that when he switched some of the specimens, the girls reacted to the unmagnetised specimens as though they were magnetised. By the end of 1838 Elliotson had been ordered not to use magnetism on his patients, and was forced to resign his hospital post. He continued his flourishing private practice, and used mesmerism for many years.

There are Carlyle connections here. Wakely wrote of the elder Okey sister: 'One of her performances, it is said, was assayed in the chapel of the mad and Rev. Edward Irving. Okey arose during the service, prophesied, and spoke the "unknown tongues", so clamorously that the deacons were induced to lead her out of the midst of the congregation.' (Melechi, 2009) This is just possible: the talking in tongues in Irving's London church was at its peak in 1832, when the Okey sister could not have been older than twelve, but is merely reported gossip. In the spring of 1839, only months after Elliotson's resignation, Carlyle attended a dinner given by the actor Macready. Elliotson was there, and Harriet Martineau, another major figure in the history of mesmerism in Britain.

All these events had huge publicity. Thomas Moore even wrote verses about them in 1838, beginning: It begins:

Though famed was Mesmer, in his day,
No less in ours, is Dupotet,
To say nothing of all the wonders done,
By that Wizard, Dr Elliotson.
When standing as if the Gods to invoke, he
Up waves his arm, and down drops Okey.'

The mesmerism craze swept the British Isles, and continued unabated throughout the 1840s. Lecturers by the dozen toured the country giving demonstrations to huge audiences from all social classes; some by serious doctors, others by mountebank showmen. Many books were published, and new journals

flourished. Many famous people were involved. Dickens, perhaps because of his love of acting, took up mesmerism with enthusiasm, and in 1844 ‘treated’ the wife of his friend De La Rue, when both families were in Genoa. He visited Madam De La Rue daily, at all hours, and even in her bedroom. There may have been an affair (Kaplan, 1974, 1975). In 1845 he wrote to John Foster: ‘What do you think to my setting up in the magnetic line with a large brass plate: “Terms, twenty-five guineas per nap.”’ In 1859 Dickens took the part of Mesmer in a play called *Animal Magnetism* (Winter, 1998). Harriet Martineau, a friend of the Carlyles, created a stir when she wrote about her cure by mesmerism (Martineau, 1845). In 1838 she had collapsed in Venice, with gynaecological problems. She settled in Tynemouth for five years, to be near her doctor brother-in-law, and was confined to her couch most of the time, but continued her writing and had many visitors including Carlyle himself (Ingram, 2009). She published *Life in the Sickroom* in 1844, which proved controversial, and followed it by describing her cure by mesmerism in six long letters to *The Athenaeum*— Jane called them her ‘effusions’. Martineau had been impressed by local lectures and demonstrations, and was treated and cured by several mesmerists, including her maid, Mrs Winyard, of whom Jane said that in earlier times she would have been burned as a witch.

Many other writers, including the Brownings, Charlotte Brontë, Wilkie Collins, George Eliot and Trollope, were influenced by the craze (Wynne et al, 2006), but this was a craze that reached all social classes. The public lectures reached a wide audience, and a host of amateurs of all classes experimented with mesmerism. It aroused much controversy: the press and the medical profession were mostly hostile, the latter regarding magnetisers as unqualified people stealing their patients. *The Lancet* called it: ‘one of the completest delusions that the human mind has ever entertained.’ These ideas about magnetism had an earlier parallel when Galvani explored electricity in the late eighteenth century in his experiments with frogs. He described the results as ‘animal electricity,’ and it was used enthusiastically as a treatment by both Benjamin Franklin, who employed an electric chair, and by the Methodist Charles Wesley, who electrified ‘troubled souls.’

The Carlyles’ Experiences

Jane’s first personal encounter with the phenomenon was in 1842, when her

friend Charles Buller offered to magnetise her. Charles Buller, who had been tutored by Carlyle as a young man, was now an MP and a writer, a well-liked and humorous individual. He undertook to magnetise Jane, provided she gave him an hour of her time, and promised not to laugh or make a noise (C.L. JWC to Jeannie Welsh, 11 September, 1842). She agreed, but he had no success, and she wrote afterwards: ‘Well, I have undergone the process of Animal Magnetism and with the impracticability of the Bass Rock – which proves merely , according to Charles, not that his animal magnetism is a piece of downright nonsense but that I have an ill-regulated mind’(C.L. JWC to Jeannie Welsh, 14 Sept 1842).

The Carlyles’ main experience of animal magnetism, took place late in 1844. and Jane described it in detail in a letter to her uncle:

‘I saw Miss Bolte magnetised one evening at Mrs Buller’s by a distinguished Magnetizer who could not sound his hs, and who maintained nevertheless that mesmerism “consisted in moral and intellectual superiority—” in a quarter of an hour by gazing with his dark animal-eyes into hers, and simply holding one of her hands, while his other rested on her head he had made her into the image of death—no marble was ever colder, paler, or more motionless, and her face had that peculiarly beautiful expression which Miss Martineau speaks of—never seen but in a dead face or a mesmerized one— Then he played cantrups [tricks] with her arm and leg and left them stretched out for an hour in an attitude which no awake person could have preserved for three minutes. I touched them and they felt horrid—stiff as iron—I could not bend them down with all my force—they pricked her hand with the point of a penknife she felt nothing—and now comes the strangest part of my story— The man who regards Carlyle and me as Philistines said, “now are you convinced?” “Yes,” said Carlyle, there is no possibility of doubting but that you have stiffened all poor little Miss Bölte there into something very awful”—“Yes said I pertly but then she wished to be magnetized what I doubt is whether anyone could be reduced to that state without the consent of their own volition I should like for instance to see anyone magnetize ME!” “You think I could not”? said the man with a look of ineffable disdain— Yes said I—I defy you”— “Will you give me your hand MISS”? “Oh by all means” and I gave him my hand with the most perfect confidence in my force of volition and a smile of contempt—he held it in one of his and with the other made what H Martineau calls some “passes” over it—as if he were darting something from his finger ends— I looked him defiantly in the face as much as to say, you must learn to sound your Hs Sir before you can produce any effect on a woman like me! and whilst this or some similar thought was passing thro’ my head—flash—there went over me from head

to foot something precisely like what I once experienced from taking hold of a galvanic ball—only not nearly so violent—I had presence of mind to keep looking him in the face as if I had felt nothing and presently he flung away my hand with a provoked look, saying “I believe you would be a very difficult subject, but nevertheless if I had time given me I am sure I could mesmerize you at least I never failed with any one yet.” Now if this destroyed for me my theory of the need of a consenting will—it as signally destroyed his of moral and intellectual superiority—for that man was superior to me in nothing but animal strength as I am a living woman! I could even hinder him from perceiving that he had mesmerized me by my moral and intellectual superiority! Of the clairvoyance I have witnessed nothing.....Of course a vast deal of what one hears is humbug—...’ (JWC to John Welsh, 13 December, 1844).

The most recent history of Mesmerism (Winter, 1998), prints this letter on the very first page, because Jane realised that the encounter between magnetised and magnetiser was a contest of wills -of domination and submission – and saw it as both a battle of the sexes and of social classes: she will never submit to a man, especially when he drops his h’s. She was right; magnetisers from Mesmer on were almost all male, and their subjects almost always women, and in France most of the first magnetisers were aristocrats who practised on their peasantry. In the same letter Jane concluded that the less one had to do with all this the better, and that it was on a par with the witchcraft and demoniacal possession of earlier times –‘the selfsame principle presenting itself under new scientific forms and under a polite name’. She also admits that ‘it is idle to pretend it does not produce the phenomena,’ as her husband agreed at the time.

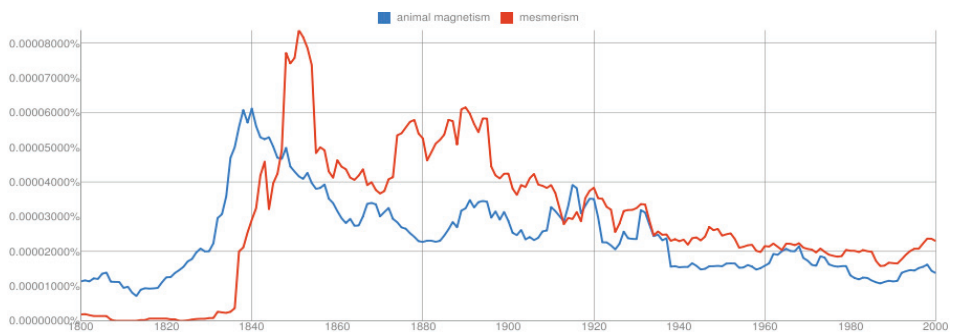
Amelie Boelte, the subject of these experiments, German, writer, novelist, feminist, radical, and a close friend of the Carlyles, was working at the time for the Bullers as a governess. A few months later she travelled to Nice with them and became mentally disturbed, perhaps in a fever. She was left alone in a hotel, and the Carlyles became concerned about her welfare. Lady Baring agreed to help, and Thomas wrote to thank her, speaking well of Boelte, but adding: ‘I have of late begun to apprehend there might be some hysterical flaw in her constitution; the Mesmeric phenomena first set me upon this.....This has often recurred to me since I saw that Mesmeric Operation.’(TC to Lady H Baring, 22 12 1844)

Statistics from the letters and texts

The rise and fall of animal magnetism can be traced statistically. A search of the

Collected Letters online, using ‘Animal Magnetism’, ‘magnetism’, and ‘magnet*’ (all words beginning with ‘magnet’) and of Carlyle’s major works, gives forty separate references from the letters but only ten from the collected works – most of them from *French Revolution*. The letter references fall into two distinct groups. The first cluster is in 1830, when John was writing and publishing his papers on the subject. Prior to the first mention of Animal Magnetism is in 1824, when Carlyle writes to his brother John saying that Coleridge is ‘full ... of Animal Magnetism.’ The second group accompanies the progress of the craze in Britain, beginning in 1837, reaching a peak in the 1840s, and declining in the 1850s and 1860’s. Thomas refers several times to ‘magnetic sleep,’ usually when he is complaining about fatigue, and Jane makes references to ‘spiritual magnetism’.

Google Labs have recently made it possible to search the 5.2 million books Google have digitalised and put online and display the results as an ‘Ngram.’ Searching books in British English for the terms ‘mesmerism’ and ‘animal magnetism’ measures all occurrences of these words in these texts between 1800 and 2000, and mirrors exactly the pattern in the Collected Letters. The graph for ‘mesmerism’ peaks several years later than that for ‘animal magnetism’, and at a higher level.



Aftermath

Mesmerism flourished throughout the 1840’s, then gradually declined. Unlike the hydropathy craze of the 1850s which was confined to the well-to-do (Ingram, 2008), magnetisers with little or no education or training appeared everywhere; lecture-demonstrators performed throughout the land and to all social classes, and, judging by the many titles published in these years, most of them wrote books. It

was found that major operations could be performed painlessly in the trance state induced by the magnetisers. An Indian Army doctor, James Esdaile, a Scot and another Edinburgh graduate, carried out many major operations, training Indian assistants to induce trance states, but the process was lengthy. A government committee investigated his work, and gave him a new hospital to pursue his research, but, as in Europe, further development was quickly halted in the 1850s by the emergence of anaesthesia using ether and chloroform.

Meantime James Braid had introduced the term neurohypnosis, later shortened to hypnosis, in the 1840s. He became interested in mesmerism and soon decided that the phenomena had no relation to animal magnetism, as he was able to produce all the features of it without the stroking movements that were in use. Instead he had subjects stare at an object, such as a watch, a procedure still common today. Although he faced much criticism at the time, he was instrumental in making hypnosis a less mysterious thing, and making it more acceptable to the medical profession. He also was the first to use the terms suggestion and suggestibility in relation to the process.

As mesmerism declined, it changed, and gave way to related crazes, including religious or spiritual magnetism. Many ministers were approached by their flocks about mesmerism, some became interested and experimented themselves, and a few became magnetic evangelicals, who believed that mesmeric phenomena were instruments of the divine will. In later years Jane became interested in ‘spiritual magnetism.’ In two letters of 1860 Jane comments on coincidences. She wrote of a letter that arrived in the post after they had been discussing the sender at breakfast: ‘Was that *chance*? Or *magnetism*? Or *what*?’ Of another similar coincidence she wrote: ‘I think there must have been spiritual magnetism at work.’ After meeting the American actress Charlotte Cushman in 1861, she wrote an effusive letter to her, having been asked if she believed in ‘spiritual magnetism.’

‘If I believe in one human will having power over another, even through some miles and other human beings?.....Most assuredly! I believe in it absolutely and entirely! It is the Great Central Fact of the Universe for me! The concentrated essence of Life! I wouldn’t say as much in “mixed company”; knaves and idiots have so taken the name of Magnetism in vain – so disgraced and desecrated it with their Clairvoyant Champaign Breakfasts – their after dinner table-turnings – all their brutal nonsenses, that to declare oneself a firm believer in Magnetism – *and in little else* – were to expose

oneself uselessly to the misconception of the greatest number.’ (JWC to Charlotte Cushman, 6 Sept 1861)

More mundane than spiritual magnetism was this craze for table turning. The ‘epidemic,’ as it was called at the time, began in Vienna in 1851 and spread quickly. A group of people held hands round a table and tried to turn it, and soon began to tap out messages in response to questions. This was the beginning of spiritualism. Although both Faraday and Braid devised experiments which showed that table turning was caused not by electricity but by human movements of suggestible people, the Society for Psychical Research flourished for the rest of the century.

Discussion and Conclusions

Thomas persuaded his brother to write about animal magnetism some ten years before the craze invaded Britain. It is difficult to explain its sudden and huge popularity, which began in 1838 and lasted more than twenty years. In the 1830s Thomas Arnold had claimed that he and his generation had experienced 300 years of change in the previous thirty years, and Britain continued to welcome change with the Victorian optimism that believed anything was possible. New ideas and inventions were embraced enthusiastically and it is unsurprising that some of them proved false. In the same period doubt and anxiety produced a need for natural explanations of the mysterious. The fashion for lectures and for self-improvement spread Mesmerism speedily around the country to reach all classes, whereas in France it had been one of the last fashions of the aristocracy before revolution. It cost little, and required no special training and no qualifications, at a time when there was no regulation of medical treatments or practitioners.

As for the Carlyles, their attitudes to mesmerism shed some light on their personalities. Thomas, with his scientific background, and John, medically trained, were firm unbelievers from the beginning, while Jane was more ambivalent, agreeing with them, but when talking to another woman, rather fearful of it, and later believing in spiritual magnetism. Compared with many of their contemporaries, especially literary friends, all three were much more sceptical about the subject. It is not surprising that brother John, with his continental experience, should have dismissed mesmerism long before it became popular in

Britain. Jane's first-hand encounter with a magnetiser left her bloody and not entirely unbowed. She was the first to stress the male/female differences between magnetisers and magnetised, and the importance of social class. A parallel among crazes today can be found in cosmetic surgery, a specialty in which 95% of the surgeons are male and over 90% of their clients female.

The final mention of mesmerism in the Carlyle letters comes in the 1860s. Mesmerism was going out of fashion, but when Jane was very ill for a year after her street accident in 1863, in desperate pain and profoundly depressed, and all conventional doctors and drugs had proved useless, she asked her husband to summon a magnetiser. Thomas agreed. Later he wrote in his *Reminiscences*:

'We had even... a trial of 'Animal Magnetism;' two magnetisers, first a man, then a quack woman (evidently a conscious *quack* I perceived her to be), - who at least did no ill, *except* entirely disappoint.'(Carlyle, 1997, p172).

It was a sad ending to their relationship with Mesmerism.

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The Carlyles and photography in the 1860s

Aileen Christianson

The purpose of this paper was to illustrate the extent to which both Carlyles took part in an enthusiastic exchange of photographs in the first half of the 1860s. There are seven Carlyle photograph albums in the Butler Library, Columbia University, New York. The National Portrait Gallery, London, holds many of the photographs that were taken of Thomas Carlyle in April 1865, as well as earlier and later ones. Concentrating on photographs of Thomas Carlyle and Jane Welsh Carlyle taken in 1862-65, and photographs of friends obtained in 1862-64 by Jane and Thomas, these are placed in the context of the Carlyles' letters. As we progress through 1865 with volume 41 of the *Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, more and more precise evidence as to why and when the Carlyles had photographs taken is emerging. The emphasis of the paper is more on the Carlyles' words and on the photographs themselves, than on any overall narrative about the development of photography. To give a chance to incorporate new information into the printed version of this paper, we are holding it over until the 2013 Carlyle Society Papers. The Carlyle House, Chelsea, has examples of photographs taken of Thomas Carlyle by William Jeffrey and of Jane Welsh Carlyle by Thomas Douglas, both taken in summer 1862, and we are placing them here as a taster for the other photographs that we will print in 2013.



Jane Welsh Carlyle, by Thomas Douglas, August 1862
Courtesy of The National Trust



Thomas Carlyle, by William Jeffrey, Sept. 1862
Courtesy of The National Trust

The Carlyle Conference

On 10-12 July 2012 the Carlyle Letters project held an international conference in George Square in Edinburgh to coincide with and celebrate the completion of volume 40 of the *Carlyle Letters*. It was an exceptionally relaxed and harmonious group of about 50 people, from New Zealand, Tanzania, Europe, North America – and the UK. Many faces familiar from years of work on both Carlyles, and many new faces, which was a particularly encouraging feature. There were two full days and one half day of papers, and rigorous timekeeping meant everyone was able to enjoy everyone else's paper – unlike many other conferences where you have to choose among “parallel” sessions. An excellent conference dinner was provided in Teviot House. And – particular thanks to the Carlyle Society – Lowell Frye, Elliott Professor of Rhetoric and Humanities at Hampden Sydney College in Virginia gave a Thomas Green lecture which our Edinburgh-based members were able to attend, and enjoy the reception after.

A good prospect is Professor Frye's willingness to let the Carlyle Society publish the Green lecture next year – and Aileen Christianson's willingness to let us publish the illustrated work she has been researching on images of both Carlyles. A sample precedes this letter!

The Conference gave many people a chance to catch up not only with their colleagues' and friends' news, but with what is happening and what is just beginning to happen in the study of both Carlyles. The organisation was shared between Aileen Christianson and myself, and many others helped. The British Academy supported the conference (as did a private donation), and we look back on it with unreserved pleasure.

Ian Campbell

SYLLABUS 2012-13



CARLYLE SOCIETY: PROGRAMME FOR 2012-13

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

2012

29 September	Will Christie	Carlyle, Jeffrey and <i>Sartor</i>
13 October	Malcolm Ingram	Carlyle and Carlylese
1 December	Sheila McIntosh	The Carlyles' London (and AGM/party)

2013

26 January	David Edward	Johnson, Boswell and the Patriarchal Society
9 February	Ian Campbell	David Masson and Carlyle
9 March	David Sorensen	Carlyle, Acton and the Ghost of Liberty

We expect to continue to hold these meetings in 11 Buccleuch Place: the entry will be from 13 Buccleuch Place, there will still be facilities for tea, etc., and this arrangement should hold until March.

Please note also the lecture which will be held in the David Hume Tower (ground floor) on Thursday 15 November, 2012, at 1715 when (with the Principal, Sir Tim O'Shea in the chair), I will be giving a talk on Carlyle and the University of Edinburgh to mark the actual physical arrival of volume 40 of the Carlyle Letters.

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