

**THE
CARLYLE SOCIETY**

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OCCASIONAL PAPERS 28



Edinburgh 2015

President's Letter

The Carlyle Society has settled into its new meeting room in the University Library and seen some growth in membership – both good news.

These Occasional Papers continue a great tradition of variety and originality. Many years ago the Carlyle Society was lucky enough to break new ground with a paper on Carlyle and the Japanese writer Inazō Nitobe: now Professor Wang Songling, from Ningbo, who has been with us for a year in the English department writing on Thomas Carlyle, provides a paper on Carlyle as a writer seen from the viewpoint of a Chinese reader. Bismarck, French writing, China – and Liz Sutherland's fascinating paper from last year's Christmas party which imagines what the kitchen table in Chelsea must have overheard over the years.

An increasing proportion of our publications now exist and are transmitted as pdf files, which has reduced postage costs and paperwork very substantially. Costs, however, continue to rise and this may be the last edition of Occasional Papers we can afford to produce in printed form; apart from a few paper copies for deposit in libraries (a legal requirement) all annual publications will come as computer files. As part of our modernisation I have undertaken to remove the Society from the list of charities since our affairs are no longer important enough to need tax protection in this way, nor to need the attentions of an auditor for our annual balance sheet.

The Carlyle Letters move steadily forward, volume 43 appearing about the same time as these papers. Future volumes are well advanced. And the Carlyle Letters Online means we are reaching a very wide international audience.

We are grateful to Edinburgh University for our meeting premises, and I would like to thank those members who continue to help in every way with all our activities.

Ian Campbell
August, 2015

Sharon Brown: Jane Welsh Carlyle and the French Question

Jane Welsh Carlyle knew French. She could read it, she could translate French literature into English, and she could speak French remarkably well. This was a discovery made in the course of examining a sampling of the work of 18th and 19th century Scottish writers, to learn what use they may have made of French resources in their own writings. Thomas Carlyle's *The French Revolution* was a natural choice for the 19th century, especially since Carlyle not only used French books and documents in his work, but also recorded and commented on many, if not most of these resources in his extensive correspondence.

Fortunately for anyone studying Carlyle, we have available to us both in print and online, *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, now totalling 42 volumes, with work on volume 43 well underway. Thanks to the very detailed online index, investigating Thomas Carlyle's use of French resources led inevitably to learning that Jane Welsh Carlyle knew French very well, apparently to a far more sophisticated degree than was usual even in her relatively privileged circumstances. This fact led in turn to wondering how Jane's unusual depth of knowledge came about, especially since she never visited France or any other French-speaking country, nor did she ever experience what we today call "French immersion", living amongst native French speakers and hearing and speaking only French for an extended period of time. This is of course a multi-faceted question, for aside from Jane Welsh Carlyle's educational background and what we will see of her particular interest in languages, the educational, social and cultural conditions of Scotland at the time also affect the answer.

Jane Welsh Carlyle's acquisition of the French language and knowledge of French literature did not, in the big picture, follow a straightforward educational path, although her early education began within the norm for Scottish children living in towns at that time. We will have a closer look at Jane's education in French, first by setting the general cultural and educational scene underlying the teaching of French in Scotland just before and during Jane's era, and then by looking at more specific aspects of her education before her marriage to Thomas

Carlyle in 1826, when she was 25 years old. Evidence of Jane's knowledge of French according to her own comments and those of others will complete our investigation.

Jane Baillie Welsh was born at a period when, by evidence found in such resources as the Scottish periodical press, sales and auction catalogues, account books, newspapers and libraries, there was a very significant interest in French books amongst the Scottish reading public, and thus, at least an equal interest in this market on the part of the Scottish book trade. It was not at all uncommon for Scottish booksellers to go to the trouble and expense of travelling to the continent to make deals with their French, Dutch, Belgian and Swiss counterparts. Some canny continental European printers and book dealers (often one and the same), thought it worth the risk of ignoring copyright laws by interleaving unbound pirated French works amongst the pages of legitimate imported books, in the hope that customs officials at the Port of Leith, where almost all books from the continent entered Scotland, would not inspect the barrels too closely.

Why this interest in the French language and in literature written in that language? Scotland's past history was partly responsible: the centuries-old link between Scotland and France, known as the 'Auld Alliance', certainly contributed to the relative prevalence of French in the Scottish school system. The greatest thrust to interest in things French before and into the beginning of the period we are looking at, however, was undoubtedly the Enlightenment, and in particular, what came to be known as the Scottish Enlightenment. One result of the intellectual riches the Enlightenment engendered was an unprecedented desire on the part of educated Scots to acquire from European literati and men of science any and all types and genres of literature, from the philosophical to the scientific, from poetry to prose and everything in between. Books in French were even being published in Scotland, especially books for use in schools such as grammars, readers and dictionaries. The so-called "old" *Statistical Accounts* (OSA) of Scotland, which cover 1791-1799, the latter date being just two years before Jane Baillie Welsh was born, name 49 parishes where French was taught. By the time Jane had started to attend the grammar school in Haddington, listed in the OSA as one of the parishes that taught French, the number of parish schools teaching French was steadily increasing: the *New Statistical Accounts* of 1834-1845 name 186 parishes where French was a part of the curriculum.

Jane's being taught to read and perhaps write French in the grammar school she attended reflected the school programme that had been in place in Scottish towns for some time. As Alexander Law notes in his book, *Education in Edinburgh in the Eighteenth Century*, by the second half of the eighteenth century, it was common practice in both the private and public schools of Edinburgh to teach French to boys and girls, and French was a fashionable subject in all girls' boarding schools from 1750, with the exception of cooking schools. This practice went beyond Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen: Lindy Moore's article on "Education and Learning" describes among others, the instance of George Chapman, a renowned Dumfries schoolmaster from 1747-1801, who taught "a number of young ladies English grammar, geography, French, and the principles of natural philosophy". By 1800, these subjects, along with writing, spelling and arithmetic, composed a fairly standard curriculum for Scottish middle class girls. As for those young men fortunate enough to attend university, they could expect that at least basic French instruction would be available, preparation for the 'grand European tour' often the impetus to learn French rather better at this juncture. T.C. Carr's article on "Early Teachers of French" at St. Andrews University, records three teachers of French paid by the University for the years 1755, 1781 – 1782, and 1794-1800, although the usual practice was for French teachers to rent rooms from the university and attract students by word of mouth or advertising. (Women, we note, were not accepted at university until nearly a century after that.) Advertisements for private teaching of French began to increase in the newspapers of Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow from 1750, with an upsurge after 1790 as French émigrés arrived in Scotland. This, then, briefly and very generally, was the place of French in the educational systems and social milieu of Scotland when Jane Baillie Welsh began her formal education.

By the early 19th century, the education of a promising child often started early: it is believed that Jane began to attend the Haddington grammar school before the age of five. She would undoubtedly have heard the boys at school reciting their Latin lessons aloud, which would account for the fact that she was able, when she hid one day under the table at which her parents were seated having tea, to call out suddenly, "Penna, penna!"; followed in plain English by, "I want to learn Latin. Please let me be a boy!" This event, recorded in John Collis's biography of the Carlyles, prompted Jane's father to agree to her learning Latin, even though her mother was very much against it, fearing such learning would make her unmarriageable. While Jane's father did prevail since Jane was

reading Virgil in the original by the age of nine, there is no specific mention of her learning French at this time; but as Haddington grammar school was, as we know, one of the parishes where French was taught, she undoubtedly would have had a good introduction to the language during her grammar school days.

Jane's father was a powerful influence in her life, and as education was very important to him, it became so for her. Indeed, her father went so far as to engage Edward Irving, who taught at the Haddington school from 1810-1812, as a tutor for Jane during those years. Evidence that Dr. Welsh passed his attitude towards learning on to Jane is found in a letter from Jane to her good friend and cousin, Eliza Stodart, in early 1820, a few months after her father's death. Jane wrote: "He used always to tell me that in giving me a good education, he was leaving me the greatest good – of this I have found the truth."

There is very specific mention of Jane's learning French in Kenneth Fielding and David Sorenson's *Jane Carlyle: Newly Selected Letters*, where they note that after Jane's father died of typhus in September 1819, the 18-year old Jane continued to follow her father's advice, studying French, German and Italian. In the afore-mentioned letter to Eliza Stodart, Jane expresses her beliefs eloquently:

The habits of study in which I have been brought up have done much to support me—I never allow myself to be one moment unoccupied—I read the books he wished me to understand—I have engaged in the plan of study he wished me to pursue—and to the last moment of my life it shall be my endeavour to act in all things exactly as he would have desired—when I am giving his sister and Christina their lessons I seem to be filling his place—and the recollection of his anxiety and kindness and unwearied exertions for my improvement & for the improvement of those who have so soon forgot him, is sometimes like to break my heart--...

Jane's knowledge of French between this period and her marriage to Thomas Carlyle in 1825 is often demonstrated in her correspondence, with Thomas of course, but also with her intimate friends and relatives. She was already familiar with the work of Rousseau by the time she met Thomas in 1821, and was strongly influenced by Rousseau's *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse* (1761), which celebrated the classical republican virtues admired by her father. Writing from Haddington on 15 January 1822, again to Eliza Stodart, Jane says:

...I return the two first volumes of Julia with many thanks—It seems to me, that the most proper way of testifying my gratitude to the amiable Jean-Jacques for the pleasure he had afforded me, is to do what in me lies to extend the circle of his admirers - I shall begin with you - Do read this book—you will find it tedious of its details, and in some of its scenes culpably indelicate; but for splendor of eloquence, refinement of sensibility; and ardour of passion, it has no match in the French language. Fear not that by reading Heloise you will be ruined—or undone—or whatever adjective best suits that fallen state into which young women and angels will stumble at a time - I promise you that you will rise from Heloise with a deeper impression of whatever is most beautiful and most exalted in virtue than is left upon your mind by ‘Blairs sermons’ ‘Pailey’s Theology’ or the voluminous ‘Jeremy Taylor’ himself—I never felt my mind more prepared to brave temptation of every sort than when I closed the second volume of this strange book—I believe that if the Devil himself had waited upon me in the shape of Lord Byron I would have desired Betty to show him out (sic)—...One serious bad consequence will result to you from reading Heloise—at least if your soul-strings are screwed up to the same key as mine—You will never marry! Alas! I told you that I should die a virgin if I reached twenty in vain—Even so will it prove—This Book this fatal Book has given me an idea of a love so pure (Yes you may laugh! But I repeat it) so pure, so constant, so disinterested, so exalted—that no love the men of this world can offer me will ever fill up the picture my imagination has drawn with the help of Rousseau—No lover will Jane Welsh ever find like St. Preux—no Husband like Wolmar (I don’t mean to insinuate that I should like both--) and to no man will she ever give her heart and pretty hand who bears to these no resemblance.....—where is the St Preux? Where is the Wolmar?—Bess I am in earnest—I shall never marry--...

While we may recognize here the fervour and passionate conviction of youth, we see also a remarkable confidence in assessing Rousseau’s work against that of other French writers. “...for splendor of eloquence, refinement of sensibility; and ardour of passion, it has no match in the French language”, Jane writes. Her statement implies a considerable knowledge of French language and literature before Thomas began sending her books in French. It is most likely that this would have been acquired by formal schooling, such as that she would have received at Miss Hall’s school in Leith Walk, Edinburgh, which the *Carlyle Encyclopedia* tells us Jane attended for some time in 1817 and 1818.

Thomas, as Jane's self-styled "reading tutor" from 1821, when Edward Irving introduced Thomas and Jane, sent his future wife many books he thought she ought to read, and advised her to read many others; but it is the books he sent her in French that are of particular interest here. Volumes of works by authors such as Chateaubriand, Marmontel, Molière, Rollin, Sismondi, Madame de Staël and Vertot arrived frequently at Jane's home in Haddington. As a result of some of the books he sent her, Thomas, at times and surely unwittingly, opened himself to Jane's teasing. It is highly unlikely that he expected the reaction noted below after sending her Madame de Staël's *Corinne, or Italy* (1807), which apparently strengthened Jane's preference for friendship over love and marriage. In mid-June 1822, Jane wrote to Thomas:

.....I think I heard you say you did not think very highly of Corinne—You must read it again—nobody with a heart and soul can fail to admire it—I never read a book, in my life, that made such an impression on me. I cried two whole hours at the conclusion, and in all likelihood I might have been crying to this minute, but for an engagement to a party in the evening, where prudential considerations require my eyes should be visible...

Quite a number of the books Thomas sent to Jane were meant to serve primarily as translation exercises. Thomas at times felt it necessary to urge Jane to finish a translation when she seemed to him to be procrastinating. In May 1822, he wrote to Jane, asking, albeit not about French translation:

Have you entirely abandoned the idea of translating Don Karlos? That were a fair enterprize (sic), and one in which success would be a noble thing. Coleridge is not more celebrated for any thing (sic) he has done than for his version of Wallenstein.

On the other hand, when she translated a 13th century poem, "A sirvente", by Pierre Cardenal that Sismondi included in his *Littérature du midi*, Carlyle complimented Miss Welsh on her translation of this work that he called a favourite of his. Jane, however, replied in June 1822, saying:

I beg of you, don't (sic) laugh much at my translations, or any of the silly things I send you—and do not think that it is vanity that tempts me to submit them to your inspection. Nobody can hold the trash I write, in deeper

contempt than I do myself—indeed I often think I might write better if I had more conceit.

Jane's concern about her writing ability – and her desire for fame - was a topic that was discussed not infrequently by tutor and pupil. Two examples, both from letters written by Thomas in the first part of 1823, are given here, chosen in part because of the references to Rousseau, whose work Carlyle knew Jane admired. In January 1823, he shows both sensitivity in assuring her he would never laugh at anything that causes her pain, and an understanding of the distraction a “love of fame” can bring about. Note that the teacher of French is also quite present:

My dear Friend,

I hope to get Vertot for you this afternoon, and I will not let slip the opportunity of scribbling a few lines along with it. You are very much mistaken in supposing that I can “laugh” at any thing which so evidently makes you unhappy as the present subject of your anxiety.

When I was of your age, I had not half the skill. And what haste is there? Rousseau was above thirty, before he suspected himself to be any thing but a thievish apprentice, and a vagabond littleworth: Cowper became a poet at fifty, and found he was still in time enough. Will you also let me say that I continue to lament this inordinate love of Fame which agitates you so; and which as I believe lies at the root of all this mischief.

In April of that year, Thomas again encourages Jane:

As to your literary hopes, entertain them confidently! There is to me no better symptom of what is in you than your despair of getting it expressed. Cannot write! My dear Pupil, you have no idea of what a task it is to every one, when it is taken up in that solemn way. Did you never hear of Rousseau lying in his bed and painfully wrenching every syllable of his Nouvelle Heloise from the obscure complexities of his imagination. He composed every sentence of it, on an average, five times over; and often when he took up the pen, the whole concern was vanished quite away! I could frequently swear that I am the greatest dunce in creation: the cooking of a paragraph is little better than the labour of the Goldmaker; I sweat and toil and keep tedious vigil, and at last there runs out from the tortured melting-pot an ingot—of solid pewter.

One of Jane's habits, which provides further evidence of her facility with French even when she did not trouble to be accurate, was her practice of sprinkling her letters with French words and phrases, as in a letter to Carlyle written in 1837:

“When you consider that this is Thackeray’s coup d’essai, in his new part of political renegade... [and a few sentences later] Cavaignac, contrary to your prediction, has written you an immense [?] long letter which he sent you a week ago by Madame ma mere, that so it might couter you rien (sic)...

There are other examples, however, where Jane's French is shown to be not only good, but exceptionally idiomatic and well-spoken for someone who, as we noted earlier, was not tutored individually in French as a child as she was in German by Edward Irving, and who had never been to the continent or otherwise lived in a French-speaking milieu. Townsend Scudder's biography, *Jane Welsh Carlyle*, is a good source of anecdotes that illustrate Jane Carlyle's ability to speak French. One story concerns the Frenchman Godefroi Cavaignac, who had been active in the movement which produced the French Revolution of 1830, and who was banished to England because of his opposition to Louis Philippe. By 1835 Cavaignac, for whom both Carlyles had a great regard, was a choice member of their inner group. Scudder reports:

On New Year's day, Godefroi Cavaignac always gave Jane some little present to honour the season. At her impetuous thanks, spoken in his own language, his stern face would relax into a smile; into a burst of mantling joyous humour. “You are no Scotswoman,” he would say. “Soon you will be a woman of France!”

Elsewhere, Jane was described as an “inexplicably French Scotswoman”; and Leigh Hunt reported to his wide circle that Mrs. Carlyle was an eloquent woman, in fact, a woman of genius. Hunt's disciples were quick to pass along the word, praising her deft art as raconteur and starting to refer to her as a British Madame de Staël.

The strangest story about Jane Welsh Carlyle and her approximation to *une Française* is also found in Townsend Scudder's biography. As Scudder tells it, David Masson, a fellow Scot who edited an Aberdeen newspaper, was in London,

where he met an older Mrs. Carlyle for the first time. Masson noted particularly that Mrs. Carlyle's eyes, soft and lustrous, were of a haunting gypsy darkness. Her face reminded him strangely of something he had recently seen. Then "it flashed upon him – Voltaire! A distinct likeness to the portraits of the young Voltaire! And the brilliance of her style intensified the illusion". Whether Mrs. Carlyle was ever made aware of this particular assessment we do not know; but her opinion would certainly have been worth hearing. It is doubtful that even being told one had "brilliance of style" would be enough to offset being thought one resembled Voltaire.

It is thanks to Dr. Aileen Christianson that another resource, invaluable in the search for French materials Carlyle used in his writing, came to my attention. Hill Shine's 1953 PhD thesis for the University of Kentucky, entitled *Carlyle's Early Reading, to 1834, with an Introductory Essay on His Intellectual Development*, includes an annotated list of 3400 items. This seemed a likely resource for discovering whether there was any co-relation between French works Carlyle mentions in his letters (apart from those sent to Jane when she was his pupil) and the French books that we know Jane Welsh Carlyle read after her marriage. As it happens, there appears to be very little: Carlyle worked on his writing alone without help from his intelligent, capable, well-read wife. The evidence is instead, that as a married couple, they maintained quite separate reading tastes. Jane's letter to her cousin Eliza Stodart in November 1833 when the Carlyles were living at Craigenputtock, appears to confirm this. It is a delightful letter, and worth including a section preceding Jane's mention of access to an important library and the books she chose from it. (To clarify two references in the letter: Barjarg was a country house and estate ten miles from Craigenputtock, and John Hunter the uncle of the then owner of the estate. He was also second charge minister of the Tron Church in Edinburgh. His father had bought the estate and formed the library the Carlyles so admired and appreciated).

But as I am all too rapidly approaching the end of my paper...[I must] tell you seriously what I am about, not doubting but both your Uncle and yourself, so long and intimately acquainted with my many amiable qualities, are dying with curiosity on this head at all seasons of the year. Know then (to give the Devil his due) (meaning by the Devil not you but myself) that I have really been a tolerably good child for some weeks back, My time (of

which valuable commodity the people here have perhaps more at their own disposal than any other individuals on the habitable globe) has been spent more satisfactorily and profitably than usual. A great God-send has befallen my Husband this Autumn; in which, as in all his other God-sends and Devil-sends I heartily participate. John Hunter (who never saw him)—has been induced to confide to him the keys of the Barjarg Library (an extensive and valuable collection) with leave to borrow therefrom at discretion. You cannot figure what an inestimable benefit it is, in our situation nearly impracticable on this side: or what exhalations of gratitude rise from my Husbands soul towards the Minister of the Trone [sic]. I verily believe if he were in Edinr, he would even go and hear him preach, to show his sense of the kindness. Two gig-boxfulls (sic) of excellent books have already been brought over and consumed by one party like reek—while I have selected therefrom—“Memoires of Marie Antoinette” (by M[m]e Campan) “Œuvres de M[me] Roland” (the very best woman I ever scraped acquaintance with—) “Memoires de M[m]e de Staal”—a clever spirited little creature quite superior to the sentimental de Stael-Holstein, that I used to make such work about in my “wee existence.” And finally a Life of Cook[e] the Actor—as a warning against drunkenness[.]

We note that only one of the books Jane chose was not in French.

In conclusion, we can assert that Jane Welsh Carlyle’s having been taught French as a child and young woman was not unusual, given the time period and her social background. It was certainly less usual that she acquired a tutor in the person of Thomas Carlyle, who sent her books in French, and set her to translating some challenging material. While this undoubtedly fostered her ease with the French language and her knowledge of French literature, it could only have been an extraordinary ability with languages, an excellent ear for pronunciation, and a great deal of genuine personal interest in reading and using French that resulted in her apparently impressive facility with the French language. There are many signs of this: sprinkling her letters with French words and phrases, and choosing to read French books at a point when she was free to read anything she wished, are examples. Perhaps most telling of all, however, is the evident pleasure she derived from discussing the French works she read with those, such as Thomas and her cousin Eliza, who she knew would understand, and - for the most part in any case - share her interest and her delight.

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Kitchen Letters

Liz Sutherland, Carlyle Society talk, 6.12.14

The Carlyles moved lock, stock and barrel from Craigenputtoch to Cheyne Row in June 1834. I have here excerpts from a few of the letters written by the kitchen table to the range which had to stay behind in the kitchen back in Scotland in which she tells of life below stairs in Cheyne Row.

June 1834

Just a short note, my dear, to say that here I am at last, after a nerve-wracking journey from home at Craigenputtoch. How long I am to be here I am unsure of at the moment but as there is no other furniture it looks like I'll be here for some time. As I said the journey was most uncomfortable, but I got off better than the dining-room table which arrived rather bumped and bruised and, to make matters worse she had damaged one of her legs in the process. But I heard the master say that he would mend it very soon with some glue. Thanks God they were very careful when they packed us up – it could have been a lot worse since the sailors tossed us about a bit. However once we got past Liverpool the Pickfords men were much better. More later when I have got settled.

July 1834

Well, my dear, as I promised I will tell you about my new home. There are 2 kitchens here – a front one and a back one. I am in the front one with the range, not as friendly as you, but no doubt we shall rub along and get to know each other better in time. As far as I can gather there is an open fire through the back and a big copper for washing the clothes. The larder is through there too and the coal cellar but I'm not sure how they will get the coal to it as all the houses in the street are joined together. I suppose they will have to bring it through the house! The master has already got a tin bath through there where he can have a proper wash every week or so. I heard him planning a sort of pulley attached to the ceiling and buckets so that he can make some kind of shower. It's very cold in there, I've heard them say, so the larder is there too. As I said I'm in the front which is not

nearly so dark and gloomy even though we are below ground as there are 2 windows and when the sun shines – which is not very often as we are near the river and there is often a thick mist drifting up our street, it can be quite bright. I can see that it's going to be awful hard to keep this place clean as you can hardly see half the time and candles are that expensive. And oh the smells! Your farmyard smells are a perfume compared with what we sometimes have! And how I miss the quiet of Craigenputtoch. It is so very noisy. Beginning in the very early morning, there are carts rolling over the cobbles in the street and men shouting. But thankfully it is as quiet as the grave at night. But to move on. The master and mistress seem very happy muddling along with a wee maid called Bessie that they brought with them. They have been out and about buying kettles and pans. He's even bought some gardening tools and says he will try to put the wee back garden to rights. They are both well pleased with Bessie but I have a feeling she won't stay long. But in the meantime all is well.

September 1834

I don't think I mentioned in my last letter a family called Hunt that the mistress is despairing of. Well their servant-lassie has just been round here again, this time to borrow spoons and sugar and tea as they have visitors and her mistress finds herself without. Last week it was tumblers and yesterday she was even round to "borrow" a cupful of porridge. They have no shame. Their maid even has the nerve to say that her "missus" is the most wretched of managers and often hasn't so much as a penny in her purse! The mistress is shocked at how much waste there is here. I heard her say last week that folk here throw out enough to keep a family for a week. Yesterday the mistress was to be entertaining people for tea and it was almost impossible to get her cups and saucers back and even her teaspoons. And when she did manage, half of them were missing. She really must stop being so generous or we shall soon have nothing left.

January 1835.

Well I was right. Bessie has gone and we have a lassie from up north who is useless. Instead of doing any work in the house she has been caught more than once with her nose in a book! They are both so impressed that she is reading one of the master's books! I don't think the mistress would really mind except she is down here herself all the time doing the cooking and having to see that the lassie actually does some of the work she is paid to do. At the moment the mistress

would be better off saving the pay and doing the work of the house herself! The lassie will be getting her marching orders before long believe you me. Trouble is she 's a nice enough lass and the mistress likes her but liking her doesn't light fires or put food on the table.

October 1835

The master has arrived back from Scotland with a lassie from Annandale that he describes as a walking misfortune – a lassie of tarnished virtue who has left the product of this tarnished virtue at home with her mother in Annandale. I think I'm the only one around here who can understand her as she speaks with a right broad accent. They seem to like her though she is another useless one. Her name is, would you believe it, Anne COOK which is really unfortunate as she can hardly turn her hand to anything fit for the table. I don't know what she does all day for the mistress seems to spend more time here in the kitchen making or supervising the cooking. The mistress was showing her how to make a decent loaf of bread, she stood there nodding but the first time she made one herself it was a complete disaster, and they had to send her off out to the baker. And I could hear down here what the master thought of the dinner she sent up yesterday so unless she improves she will be sent back to Scotland.

June 1837

Well eighteen months have passed and they have at last realised that Annandale Anne is not the reliable servant they thought. She has been caught pilfering and cheating the local shop-keepers so she is being packed off back to Scotland before she can do more damage. It was a miracle she lasted as long as she did.

December 1837

We have a new servant. A Helen Mitchell from Kirkcaldy. I can hardly understand a word she says but she seems very willing. However, she doesn't wash! How the mistress can put up with her is anyone's guess –and she drinks on the sly -- keeps a bottle or two of gin hidden at the back of the press. One of these days she will go too far. Every time the master and mistress are away she has wild drinking parties. It is a miracle that the house has not been burnt down – such carelessness. If only I could speak to warn them they are being taken for fools. But the mistress seems to have really taken to her so time will tell.

September 1840

Oh dear, oh dear. The mistress is so upset. I had heard the bell ringing and ringing and the mistress had to come down to see if all was well. And everything certainly was not well! Helen was lying on the floor amidst broken plates and spilt food with milk dripping off me. The mistress was white with fright. I'm sure she thought that Helen was dead but no --just dead drunk -- and it was only 10 in the morning! She locked her in thinking she would sober up later but had failed to notice the bottle of whisky hidden under me. The only one unconcerned amidst all this drama was the cat who thought all her dreams had come true as she lapped up the milk and broken eggs without being shouted at. Surely she will be sent packing this time.

February 1843

Well three years later and Helen is still with us. She really has made herself indispensable. So much so that she actually asks for something specific to eat. Yesterday she had begged a red herring for her dinner which of course the mistress said yes as it was such a simple request. However all was not well as, foolish woman, she had left it on a plate on the dresser. In comes the cat, nose up sniffing the air. With one bound it is on to the dresser and the red herring is disappearing down its throat just as Helen comes into the kitchen. Such a rage, such a fury against the poor defenceless beast just doing what nature intended! Helen grabs the broom and begins to chase it round me. The poor mite cowered under me then saw that the door was left open and shot like a bolt of lightning out and it has not been seen since. Probably too terrified to come back in. She had been such a favourite with Helen until then. That cat will need all its nine lives from now on. Oh and I almost forgot to tell you about Helen and the bugs. It's not only Helen that can appear like a woman possessed. The mistress came downstairs and discovered that Helen's bed was alive!! Not really surprising since Helen is such an unwashed creature. The mistress started pulling the bed to bits, all the time shouting at Helen who just stood there looking stupid. Honestly for the safety of the mistress's state of mind Helen will have to go.

We move forward several years in which there were several incumbents in the kitchen, some of whom did what they were employed to do and others who were more bother than they were worth, one or two just downright dishonest so we move swiftly on to --

February 1849.

I just have to write and tell you. You won't believe it!! Such excitement! Did I tell you that Helen is back? I heard her tell the mistress that she had fallen out with her brother in Ireland so she went back home to Kirkcaldy and opened a wee shop but what she really wanted to do was to come back here since she missed the mistress so much. Being soft-hearted – soft in the head more like – the mistress took her back. Well the master and mistress were hardly out of the house when the woman went into the cellar and came out with not one but several of the master's bottles of wine that he gets sent down specially from Edinburgh. That woman certainly has a problem with the drink. After downing the best part of the first bottle, she started falling about all over the place and eventually fell, hit her head off one of my corners and sank to the floor, blood everywhere The master and the mistress had just got back from visiting. They pulled and pulled the bell which rang and rang until I heard her say “oh God, they're back” and eventually she managed to stagger upstairs to open the door. She could hardly stand! The master then dragged her back downstairs and left her to sleep it off on the cold floor. Mrs White, a local wife, who sometimes helps out, came in, stepped over her and got on with making the dinner, all the while Helen was screeching at her for daring to “do her work”! How this will all end is anyone's guess.

March 1849

Well she's gone – this time hopefully for good! Mistress has been down here for days now cleaning the cupboards. When were they last cleaned? I hear her ask herself. I wish I could tell her – Never! So no wonder there are mouse droppings everywhere and huge black beetles. Poor trusting mistress! You know the other day I saw Helen take a drowned mouse out of the milk jug and she sometimes had to smooth off the top of the butter so that the master didn't see tiny footprints in it! They need an army of cats to keep the mice out of here.

January 1851

So sorry that I have not written for so long but we have been muddling along here with it seems a different servant every couple of weeks. What with ones who roast birds without cleaning them out first, others having to go to hospital, and one so deaf she could not answer the bells, life has been too full of upheavals. The master has taken to coming down in the evening to smoke a pipe in front of the range. I suppose the fire has been allowed to go out upstairs. He will sit there for what

seems hours gazing into the dying embers of the fire in the range and as the poor servant lassie sleeps in a bed in the corner, she cannot get to her bed till he knocks out his pipe and heads up the stairs. Then she has to be up by six to get that fire relit in time to make the breakfast. At least as soon as I've been wiped down, I can doze off. No wonder they can't concentrate on their work, they are just so tired.

March 1852

The master and mistress have decided that after all these years that they are going to stay here and have big plans for renovations. The kitchen is in a complete state of chaos and Fanny, the Irish girl, who was here a couple of years ago has come back in the middle of this chaos. – She's having to sleep in the back kitchen, she has no proper bed and has to cook over an open fire but just shrugs and claims she's just pleased to be back. Then the mistress discovered that the bed she was to sleep in was infested with bugs so it was taken to bits and dragged into the garden. The mistress rushing about like one possessed, ranting and raging. How she hates even the thought of bugs!

July 1852

Alas my good friend the range has been dispensed with and we have a very handsome new incumbent all the way from Edinburgh. I have not really got to know her well yet but she really thinks she's quite superior to the rest of us. Apparently she has a big boiler behind her in which she can heat two gallons of water and she has a tap which can be turned and out comes piping hot water! So goodbye to all the kettles and pots of water needing to be heated for washing. They've put a tank in a cupboard which is kept filled with water and a pipe carries the water to the boiler. We have water piped into the house from outside so I hope the water always gets there because if not the boiled could become very overheated and a catastrophe could occur! But will the renovations ever end? We have workmen who seem have just about taken up residence down here. Today they were boiling lead and splashing it around and worse – just missing me. Thanks God someone, in their wisdom, took the precaution of moving me a bit out of the way. They are so careless and make such a mess. Apparently there is scaffolding up the back of the house and they are doing something to the roof. However the Irish workers are certainly popular with Fanny, particularly one called Michael, and there is a lot of flirting and messing about when the mistress is out or has visitors and is unlikely to come down to the kitchen. No wonder we are

often mysteriously short of tea and bread when it's going down the throats of the Fanny's new friends.

October 1852

We've had burglars!! Now the police – four useless looking individuals – are here. They, the burglars, had come in through the pantry window. What with all these renovations the builders had left ladders and all sorts lying about and had left the pantry window without even a frame! It was just an invitation to “come in and help yourselves”! I had heard noises coming from the back kitchen but of course could not set up any kind of alarm. Some noise must have disturbed Fanny as she turned over in her sleep and knocked the candlestick off the shelf beside her bed which fell to the floor creating a devil of a racket. Suddenly there was silence, followed by a scurrying of feet and then silence again. It was only later when Fanny got up and went to the back kitchen where she keeps her clothes that she discovered the mess. They had tipped out her trunk to steal her clothes but had not noticed her little purse where she kept her pay. But they had helped themselves to some silver which was there to be cleaned, had drunk the mistress's breakfast milk and had even eaten a little cake which had been made by the postie's wife that she was saving for her tea. They had even lit a candle so they could see what they were doing. If the back kitchen door had not been locked on the outside, half the contents of the house could have gone. Poor Fanny she's in shock. Keeps saying “could have been murdered in my bed!” The mistress now has two guns!! Heaven help us!

December 1853

Well the builders are still here. Will they ever finish and go? They seem to make more work the longer they stay here. The only person here who seems to enjoy them is Fanny who appears to have set her cap at one of them and it won't surprise me if one day soon she asks for a character and disappears with the one who fell through the ceiling and having the luck of the Irish was stopped from falling all the way through by his arms catching hold of the beams on the way past. They appeared to be mightily fond of each other so no doubt we'll never hear from her again. Again a gap of a couple of years when life went on without an excess of drama...

November 1856

Just a note to tell you about our latest drama. Suddenly the servant, another one called Anne, who has been here for longer than most of the others, started rushing around, shaking and screaming her head off. She raced off up the stairs and I found out later that a beetle had somehow got into her ear!! And she believed that it was getting into her brain. She was muttering under her breath that she had had enough and was going to give the mistress notice so no doubt we shall have another servant. The good thing about it is that the mistress comes down and spends time with me while she teaches yet another girl how to make the soups and stews that the master likes.

June 1858.

Well a lovely wee lassie called Charlotte from the next street has come. The mistress is really taken with her calls her “a jewel of a creature” so I hope she is here to stay. But then the mistress always likes the young ones – she really does want to mother them to begin with until she realises how useless they are. Oh if only she had bairns of her own! But it’s a lonely life for a young lassie so no doubt she will be off sometime soon. It’s no wonder that as soon as the master and mistress are out visiting and sometimes even when they have visitors themselves that there is a tap, tap, tap on the window and a pair of feet scuttle upstairs, and with a lot of shushing, friends and sometimes followers come creeping down here. They always seem to know when a basket of food is delivered and make free with the butter and cheese. Does the mistress know? or does she just turn a blind eye?

Again servants of various sizes and ages have arrived, stayed a short time and then gone.

November 1860

We are now a regular establishment of two servants! The mistress has let Charlotte come back! She is supposed to be in charge of a Sarah who is much tidier than Charlotte and the two of them pass their days chattering and laughing which is so good to hear. Happy days! They share the bed in the corner but both are awful bad at getting up which is not good for the humour of either the master or the mistress so they have arranged to be woken each morning by a tap on the window as an old neighbour goes by to work. Sadly this will not last. Question is who will be the first to go?

November 1862

Just a note to let you know I'm still here. The mistress has just engaged another wee lassie to help with the housework. When will the mistress realise that the young ones are useless. I'm thinking that other mistresses give them a good character just to get rid of them. So we now have Florence who will be known as Flo. According to the mistress she is "extremely intelligent, active and willing" but she seems a bit sneaky to me. She is to help Mary who is to be the cook. But oh dear they don't get along very happily. I heard the mistress say that it was like keeping lodgers in the kitchen who squabble like starlings.

January 1863

Well it's as I thought. Flo was just a wee besom and a poisonous trouble-maker to boot. A really nasty piece of work, she made Mary's life a misery, always complaining about her to the mistress and what was a thousand times worse telling Mary every time she came downstairs that the mistress had described Mary as a "stupid, dirty maid-of-all-Work", only really fit to work in a rough tradesman's house and all sorts of other lies. She also made up all sorts of stories about the mistress's sanity or lack of it. The kitchen door was open and I could hear all that was said. I haven't ever heard the mistress so upset. Then Flo set to weeping and wailing, saying she was sorry and all that. But, thanks God, in this instance the Mistress hardened her heart and she was out of the house smartish, only to arrive back with her mother in tow, demanding to know why her precious daughter had been dismissed. Then the next day she came to ask for a character. The cheek of it!

November 1863.

At last they have found out! Mary and Helen have both been dismissed. The mistress is in shock. I've been bothered for a while now. As I am in the middle of the kitchen I can see all the goings-on. And such goings-on! – Honestly things I see and hear in this kitchen would make your hair curl if you had any. Mary has parties in here every time the master and mistress are away from home, inviting friends and followers and having a high old time and even when the mistress has taken a sick turn and has to keep to her bed. Such wickedness! It only came to light apparently when Mrs Southam, lovely wee Charlotte's aunt, told the mistress that she was dismissing the wrong servant Helen as it was Mary who was the bad lot. I'd heard Mary threaten to take knife to Helen if she told the mistress what

was going on. Indeed she had forced her on pain of poisoning to help her get the bairn she had produced in July out of the house. The mistress also discovered where all her linen had gone and why the household accounts were so high. All that butter – pounds of it – and all that tea. And all the breakages caused by the drinking and stumbling about. Poor soft-hearted mistress. How can she ever trust anyone again? She was so fond of her too – all that joyfulness when she came back from Scotland. Was all that pretend? We definitely need a much older woman here – a widow maybe. Someone who knows her work.

July 1865

Do you remember Meg Hiddlestone? She was servant to old Mrs Welsh at Templand and I think she came over to Craigenputtoch to help the mistress make curtains or some such thirty-odd years ago. Well. One of her daughters – the youngest I think -- called Jessie has come to help Mrs Warren who is getting on a bit but is such a good cook that the mistress thinks she needs extra help. She's quite young and pretty and I heard her tell Mrs Warren that she is to marry a fellow in Edinburgh so how long she will stay has yet to be seen. But oh it's so good to hear a good Dumfries voice again!

April 1866

Oh dear, oh dear. Just a very short note. Such terrible news. There has been much weeping down here in the kitchen. Jessie has gone off round to the master's friends to tell them that the mistress is dead! She was just down here this morning talking to Mrs Warren and making arrangements for a tea-party later tonight. She was so full of the joys too, telling Mrs Warren and Jessie how the master's visit to Edinburgh had been such a success. What will happen now? Will the master stay here? Who knows...?

**“A Living Statue”:
Carlyle, Frederick the Great,
and the Creation of the Bismarck Myth**

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Carlyle Society, 14 March 2015

Two recent landmark studies of Bismarck—Robert Gerwarth’s *The Bismarck Myth* (2005) and Jonathan Steinberg’s *Bismarck: A Life* (2011)—suggest the deep impact that Carlyle’s *History of Frederick the Great* (1858–65) exerted on the life and the legend of the “Iron Chancellor.” The enigmatic personalities of both men make this impact difficult to gauge: Bismarck’s career was marked by subterfuge and deception, and Carlyle’s by paradox and confusion. Yet in fundamental ways, Carlyle was a crucial contributor to the creation of what Gerwarth has called “the Bismarck myth” during the latter’s own lifetime. His epic biography of Frederick the Great offered the Prussian statesman a powerful and enduring self-image of Teutonic fortitude, strength, tenacity, and “genius.” Steinberg does not refer to Carlyle in his biography, but he does follow Gerwarth in linking Bismarck’s absolutism to the enlightened despotism of the King of Prussia. In his view Bismarck’s most notable “success, if that is the word” (144), was to preserve and to expand Frederick’s military state in the transformed conditions of an advanced industrial society. Germany paid a high price for this achievement. Summarizing Bismarck’s legacy, Steinberg quotes Max Weber’s withering denunciation of him in a 1918 lecture: “He left a nation totally without political education . . . totally bereft of political will accustomed to expect that the great man at the top would provide their politics for them” (479). But Bismarck would not have objected to this verdict, since it was equally applicable to the life of Carlyle’s Frederick the Great, after whom he modelled himself.

The scattered evidence in Bismarck’s letters, writings, and reported conversations testify to the fact that Carlyle was indispensable to the Chancellor’s political self-image. Bismarck felt that Carlyle had given the Prussian people

a definitive account of their greatest king, one that flattered Bismarck by its veneration of the qualities that were enshrined in his own “Iron Chancellor icon.” He liked to think of himself as a “hero” in the mold of Carlyle’s Frederick, who in the words of a popular magazine in 1867 “combines the energy of the soldier with the elasticity and flexibility of the statesman” (Steinberg 264). The last volume of Carlyle’s biography was published in 1865, shortly before Bismarck was transformed in German popular opinion from being a cranky reactionary to a symbol of national unity. The publication of the monumental *Frederick the Great* helped to accelerate this process by implicitly identifying Bismarck as the political successor to Frederick the Great. Prone to distrust and to despise historians, Bismarck was uncharacteristically generous in his appraisal of Carlyle. “Historians always see through their own spectacles,” he complained; “Why I prize Carlyle so highly is that he understands how to get inside another’s soul” (Ludwig 481). Bismarck flattered himself that in *Frederick the Great*, Carlyle had penetrated *his* “soul.” As Emil Ludwig noted of the Chancellor, “He knew his own powers. In his copies of Carlyle’s writings he had underlined doubly and trebly all the passages in which this author speaks of political genius” (472).

Judged in the light of Bismarck’s own political preoccupations, his awarding of the Prussian Order of Merit to Carlyle in December 1875 appeared to be an astute and characteristically calculated gesture. Carlyle had contributed vitally to the Bismarck legend, and the Chancellor reciprocated by offering him a distinction that had first been instituted by “Fritz.” In his letter of congratulation, Bismarck praised Carlyle for having “placed before the Germans our great Prussian king in his full figure, like a living statue” (Wilson 374). Carlyle’s response was equally warm and effusive. He was particularly moved by the Chancellor’s metaphor and repeated it to Lecky several months later, insisting that “There was nothing to make Bismarck write such a letter but his own free will; not a word of humbug in it that one could see” (375). Yet there was considerable dissimulation on both sides: Bismarck treated the biography as a flattering likeness, while Carlyle welcomed praise that appeased his own nagging doubts about Frederick’s lack of integrity and morality. As a historian, he was always alert to the interweaving of myth and reality in the reconstruction of the past. This alertness was frequently in conflict with his penchant for hero-worship, which necessarily thrived in circumstances in which the “facts” were colored by a desire for greatness. At no point in his career was this tension more acute than in the period in which he wrote his life of Frederick. His Prussian odyssey amounted to a prolonged and

furious attempt to bend his prophetic reading of European history to conform with modern events. It was an endeavor that Bismarck particularly valued, since Carlyle had indirectly invested the Chancellor's diplomatic and domestic policies with an aura of Frederickian righteousness.

Ironically, Carlyle and Bismarck needed one another to reinforce their mutual illusions about the future direction of history because both were plagued by doubt and uncertainty. John Tyndall observed Carlyle's discomfort in the 1860s when the subject of Frederick the Great was raised: "The facts of history were as sacred in his eyes as the 'constants' of gravitation in the eyes of Newton; hence the severity of his work. The 'Life of Frederick,' moreover, worried him; it was not a labour into which he could throw his whole soul. He was continually pulled up by sayings and doings on the part of his hero which took all enthusiasm out of him. 'Frederick was the greatest administrator this world has seen, but I could never really love the man'" ("Recollections" 357). This tension was evident throughout the biography, in which Carlyle anguished about his "questionable hero; with much in him which one could have wished not there, and much wanting which one could have wished" (*Frederick, Works* 12:14).

Bismarck's misgivings were less about Frederick than about his own qualifications as a disciple of Frederick. Carlyle helped to bolster his authority by repudiating the widely held assumption that the King of Prussia was a Machiavellian schemer and an amoral ruler, accusations that were also frequently directed against Bismarck by his opponents. In the lead up to the war with Austria in 1866, the Chancellor was beset by fears that his enemies at court, especially the liberal-leaning Queen and the Crown Prince, would weaken his hold on Frederick Wilhelm. In the opening "Proem" to *Frederick the Great*, Carlyle urged readers to take note of "this man the 'Creator of the Prussian Monarchy'; which has grown so troublesome to the Editorial Mind in this and other countries." Leaving a scenario open for Bismarck that the latter would soon be eager to write, Carlyle proclaimed that Frederick was the "first, who, in a highly public manner . . . announced to all men that [the Prussian monarchy] was, in very deed, created . . . and would go a great way, on the impulse it had got from him and others. As it has accordingly done; and may still keep doing to lengths little dreamt of by the British Editor in our time" (*Frederick, Works* 12:3-4). The space here for self-projection was considerable, and in reading Carlyle's biography, Bismarck spotted the rich opportunities that lay open to him to develop Frederick's original "impulse," namely the unification of Germany under Prussian domination.

Carlyle's conception of the King defending this vision against the combined duplicity of France, Austria, Russia, and England resonated with a politician who required a mythical veneer to conceal his ruthless and single-minded devotion to "*Realpolitik*."

Bismarck's indebtedness to Carlyle is visible in his *Reflections and Reminiscences* (1898), which he began writing in late 1890. Gerwarth has accurately described the book as "a self-glorifying portrait of a politician who had managed to unify the nation in the face of enormous obstacles. Yet this statesman had been ungraciously dismissed without explanation, being the victim of conspiracies by men who were not competent enough to lead the Reich in a time of national peril" (17). It was also a work in which Bismarck aligned himself with the character of Carlyle's Frederick, whose "veracity" was his defining virtue. Throughout the book, the Chancellor earnestly strove to emulate Prussia's greatest ruler, who in Carlyle's estimate "always means what he speaks; grounds his actions, too, on what he recognises for the truth; and, in short, has nothing whatever of the Hypocrite or Phantasm" (*Frederick, Works* 12:14). Bismarck too insisted that he belonged to a "Century . . . opulent in accumulated falsities," which he resisted with tenacity and determination. Recalling Prussia on the eve of 1848, he claimed that the "fundamental error of the Prussian policy of those days was that people fancied they could attain through publicist, parliamentary, or diplomatic hypocrisies results which could be had only by war or readiness for it, by fighting or by readiness to fight; in such shape that they seemed forced upon our virtuous moderation as a reward for the oratorical demonstration of our 'German sentiment.' At a later day these were known as 'moral conquests'; it was the hope that others would do for us what we dared not do for ourselves" (*Reflections* 66).

Carlyle's Frederick dabbled with similar "sentiment" in the early French phase of his career, but with Silesia in 1740, he experienced a Pauline moment of revelation and enlightenment. Until this moment, he had been guided by the same "publicist, parliamentary, or diplomatic hypocrisies" that Bismarck had condemned. The death of the Austrian Kaiser VI in October 1740 had convinced him that "the old political system had expired [with him]." The possibility that Europe "might blaze into general War" indicated to him that "he who has 100,000 good soldiers, and can handle them, may be an important figure in urging claims, and keeping what he has got hold of!" (*Frederick, Works* 14:397). Against this indomitable "Fact," the "Peaceable magnanimities . . . Those 'golden or soft

radiances,' admirable to Voltaire . . . and to an esurient philanthropic world" (14:395) melted into insignificance. Frederick invaded Silesia because he knew that he could get away with it. Carlyle furiously denied that it was hypocritical on the King's part to conceal his intentions: "'Never was such dissimulation!' exclaims the Diplomatic world everywhere, being angered at it, as if it were a vice on the part of the King to invade Silesia. Dissimulation, if that mean mendacity, is not the name of the thing; it is the art of wearing a polite cloak of darkness, and the King is little disturbed what name they call it." (14:408).

For both Carlyle and Bismarck, the invasion of Silesia by Frederick proved to be an awkward matter to interpret. For Carlyle it was a necessary aberration that propelled the King towards his stated goal of fame and recognition; in the later volumes, Frederick eschews such risks and concentrates instead on defending and strengthening Prussia. The shift suggests that Carlyle was never quite at ease in defending Frederick's aggressions in the Silesian affair. He preferred the idea of Frederick as an embattled leader, "busied about his dangers from Austrian encroachments, from Russian-Turk wars, Bavarian successions, and other troubles and anarchies close by" (*Frederick, Works* 19:3). The major powers of Europe were intent on dismantling Prussia because of its moral uniqueness, not because of its territorial aggressiveness. This was a leitmotif that Bismarck adopted to counter the allegation that he was a militarist who deviously endorsed the doctrine of might equals right. In an interview in 1867, he vigorously denied that Germany had any plans to launch a war with France: "The attack must come from her; we shall never begin a war, if war there ever be, for we have nothing to gain. . . . what are we to do with our victory? We could not even decently take Alsace, for the Alsatians are become Frenchmen, and wish to remain so" (*Conversations* 94). Notwithstanding the subsequent history of Alsace-Lorraine, Bismarck's words highlight the psychological attraction to him of Carlyle's Frederick, who was under siege from hostile neighbors.

In *Reflections and Reminiscences*, Bismarck acknowledged the younger Frederick's "longing for fame" but insisted that "this love of approbation, is in a sovereign a powerful and sometimes profitable motive; when it is lacking, the monarch is given more than usually prone to lapse into epicurean activity" (252). Bismarck emulated Carlyle in excusing Frederick's personal lapses by stressing the grandeur of his character: "In the case of Frederick the Great genius and spirit were so lofty that they could not be depreciated by any excess of self-esteem, and his extravagant confidence, as in the case of Colin and Kunersdorf, the violence

used towards the supreme court of the judicature in the Arnold trial, and the ill use of Trenck, may all be swallowed without prejudicing the general opinion of this monarch” (252–53). But if heroes could not be measured by conventional standards of morality, they could be judged in terms of their relationship with their followers. For Bismarck, the chief merit of Carlyle’s biography of Frederick was its populist dimension, which countered the impression that the King frequently governed by sleight-of-hand trickery and duplicity.

The source of Frederick’s appeal was his paternalistic style of rulership. Carlyle began his biography by introducing an endearingly pastoral 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 an esteemed him, was *Vater Fritz*,—Father Fred,—a name of familiarity which had not bred contempt in that instance.” He is a man of austere appearance and modest habits, but he “is a King every inch of him, though without the trappings of a King. Presents himself in a Spartan simplicity of vesture: no crown, but an old military cocked-hat, . . . no sceptre but one like Agamemnon’s, a walking stick cut from the woods, which serves also as a riding-stick.” This version of Frederick as a kind of Junker squire was politically convenient to Bismarck, enabling him to situate himself as a mediator between Prussian modernists and traditionalists. In *Reflections and Reminiscences*, he commented that “Frederick the Great did not propagate his race; but his position in our early history must have worked upon each of his successors as a challenge to resemble him. He had two peculiar gifts, each of which enhanced the other: he had the qualifications of a commander in chief and a homely bourgeois understanding of the interests of his subjects. Without the first he could not have been in a position to make lasting use of the second, and without the second his military success would not have won him the recognition of posterity in such a degree as has been the case” (251).

Carlyle’s “pastoral” Frederick was necessary to Bismarck because he stood as a bulwark against the liberal modernizers in Prussia who were seeking to undermine the social and economic power structure of the state. Carlyle’s King was the champion of ordinary people such as Miller Arnold, whom he defended in spite of the Berlin legal establishment’s opposition to his involvement in the case. Frederick had maintained his right to act for the good of all citizens, not merely those cognizant with the “Law Pleadings” of the “Attorney Species.” Bismarck savored Carlyle’s handling of the episode, rightly seeing it as a confirmation of Frederick’s sympathy for Junker culture. In an interview in 1890, Bismarck

delivered a lengthy paean to the nobility of the Prussian peasantry, and to their pivotal place in the country's conservative psyche. "If we do not support our agriculture," he argued, "our powers of resistance will be ruined in the same measure as are our powers of supply. The peasant is the backbone of our army; able to weather hard times, he is bound up with the country. . . . Town-dwellers and factory hands do not possess this feeling and quality, for one cannot be bound up with plaster and bricks, which are not organic substances. . . . The peasant is the rock on which the phantom ship of social democracy will be wrecked" (*Conversations* 136).

This rural idyll could be invoked by Bismarck to disqualify the views of those cosmopolitan liberals, social democrats, and socialists who regarded society as an arena of competing self-interests that either had to be democratized or collectivized. Bismarck opposed both these solutions. Nationalists could not be trusted either, since they "aimed at a united realm and one empire, while they really wished to sweep away all thrones and dynasties." Bismarck's strategy was to unite Germany around the Frederickian model of leadership, "adhering to the historical development of the last ten centuries, instead of by a revolutionary and total change" (*Conversations* 142). Carlyle had distilled the essence of this "development" in the first volume of his history, and showed how Frederick's Prussia had evolved from the spirit and the achievements of his Hohenzollern predecessors. The argument for a Prussian Germany was implicit in the triumph of the Frederickian state. As Carlyle declared, "Without these Hohenzollerns, Prussia had been, what we long ago saw it, the unluckiest of German Provinces; and could never have had the pretension to exist as a Nation at all" (*Frederick, Works* 19:8). And it was to Frederick to whom the Prussians owed their survival: "Without this particular Hohenzollern, it had been trampled out again, after apparently succeeding." Bismarck liked to believe that he was carrying on the mission that that the Hohenzollerns had initiated, and that Frederick had advanced.

Though he devoted relatively little space in the biography to Frederick as a peacetime administrator, Carlyle did highlight his general approach in matters of politics, economics, and government. From these sections, Bismarck derived a clear sense of how effectively Frederick played the part of "*Vater Fritz*" to his people. Here too Bismarck found considerable fodder for the propagation of his own myth. In the aftermath of the Seven Year's War, Frederick's Prussia was devastated. Contrary to the tenets of the Manchester School, the King chose not to leave the situation "to Nature," but instead he launched a campaign of vigorous

public spending. Carlyle stressed that in his role as a governor of a war-ravaged nation, Frederick demonstrated the same bold originality and courage that he had evinced on the battlefield. Resisting the fashionable nostrums of “laissez-faire,” the King implemented protectionist tariffs together with vigorous public spending. Carlyle taunted the advocates of the “dismal science,” particularly Mirabeau in his *Monarchie Prussienne* for either ignoring or underestimating the success of these measures: “M. le Comte, would there have been in Prussia . . . any Trade at all, any Nation at all, had it always been left ‘Free’” (*Frederick, Works* 19:10).

There was nothing abstract about Frederick’s disdain for Mirabeau’s “*Leave-Alone*” economic theories. It sprang from his deep conviction that it was the duty of the Prussian monarchy to protect the poor, using the power of the state to free them from penury and hardship. Carlyle cited passages from the King’s essay *Des Finances*, written in 1763 at the conclusion of the Seven Year’s War, that demonstrated his commitment to his subjects. Frederick recognized “that to repair the Public Calamities, assistance must be prompt and effective. Repeated gifts (*largesses*) restored courage to the poor Husbandmen, who began to despair of their lot; by the helps given, hope in all classes sprang up anew: encouragement of labour produced activity; love of Country rose again with a real life.” This renewed prosperity brought in its wake a moral revival: “[T]he fields were cultivated again, manufacturers had resumed their work; and the Police, once more in vigour, corrected by degrees the vices that had taken root during the time of anarchy” (19:22).

The final volume of *Frederick the Great* provided Bismarck with a blueprint for the ambitious program of social and economic reform that he tried to implement in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian war. His own contempt for “laissez-faire” was rooted in the same Prussian traditions that had informed Frederick’s actions. He was convinced that the economic stress in the country was attributable to the free flow of capital, and his protectionist measures and his plan for a national pension were designed to protect the working classes and the peasantry from the periodic upheavals of free trade. His condemnation of “Political Economy” in the 1890 interview revealed his deep affinities with the outlook of Carlyle’s Frederick. The professors of the Manchester school “consider adherence to theoretical axioms to be political consistency. This stupidity goes so far that they overlook the actual circumstances and urgent points.” He noted that “[o]ur whole political economy of the class-room and the press is a political economy of trade, and not of agriculture as well.” If this unbalanced state of

affairs persisted between capital and labor, the welfare of Prussia would be sacrificed to the private interests of capitalists: “Now that the oppressed German peasantry wakes and calls for liberation from its unjust oppression, official political economy denies its right, and talks only of one-sided private interests, when the first place general interests are at stake” (*Conversations* 135–36). For Bismarck, as for Carlyle, such “freedom” was a threat not only to the laboring classes, but to the existence of Prussia itself.

The influence of Carlyle’s Frederick on Bismarck extended to his personality as well as to his political and economic nostrums, again contributing to the mythology of his “iron” persona. Carlyle detected at an early stage in Frederick’s upbringing a character trait that would benefit him both as a soldier and a king, namely “the art of wearing among his fellow-creatures a polite cloak of darkness.” He “becomes master of [this art] as few are: a man politely impregnable to the intrusion of human curiosity; able to look cheerily into the very eyes, and talk in a social way face to face, and yet continue intrinsically invisible to them” (*Frederick, Works* 13:374). This steely composure was not a quality that Bismarck absorbed without considerable inner anguish. Steinberg’s summary of him as “the hysterical hypochondriac” posing as “the symbol of iron consistency” (478) aptly indicates the intensity of his struggle to restrain what the first English ambassador to the Germany called “his demonic self.”

It was possibly through Russell, the son of the Carlyle’s close friend Lady William Russell, that rumors of Bismarck’s gluttony and drunkenness reached Carlyle in 1878. The anecdote was reported by William Allingham in his diary. In an exchange between Carlyle and Paul Friedmann, a German visitor to London, the subject of Bismarck and Prussia was raised: “Talk on Prussian affairs, and especially Bismarck, whom F. thinks a despot. I was surprised at C.’s not coming forward to defend the Chancellor, but he seems to have got fresh lights on B.’s character lately. He remarked, ‘I hear he is a terrible fellow at eating and drinking.’ F. confirmed this, adding ‘he says himself he never gets drunk, but his friends do not say so.’” The conversation then turned to the recent publication of private conversations between Bismarck and his private secretary, Moritz Busch, entitled *Bismarck und seine Leute*. Allingham asked Friedmann whether the book “was authentic,” to which the latter replied, “Oh yes, it could not have been published without B.’s full consent. His object is to keep himself before the public” (Allingham 270–71). Friedmann’s remarks may have reinforced Carlyle’s doubts about the authenticity of this leader whose heroic credentials he had

burnished for over twenty-five years.

Had Carlyle read Busch's memoirs, he would have noticed an allusion to him that highlighted his great usefulness to Bismarck, both politically and mythically. Referring to Carlyle's letters to the *Times* in 1871, in which he contrasted "noble, patient, deep, pious and solid Germany" with "vaporising, vainglorious, gesticulating, quarrelsome, restless and oversensitive France," Busch informed Bismarck on 12 December, 1870, "The *Times* contains the following communication, which it would be impossible for us to improve upon" (1:283). The comment suggests the reciprocity of the relationship between Carlyle and Bismarck. If Carlyle helped to create the myth of the "Iron Chancellor," Bismarck's own behavior consolidated Carlyle's standing as an inspired historian-prophet. For Carlyle, the Franco-Prussian war constituted the final chapter of *Frederick the Great*, proving beyond doubt that his conception of "the Bible of History" that he had articulated in the "Proem" to Frederick the Great was now being realized. Echoing a verse from Thessalonians, he spoke of Bismarck's triumph as "an exhibition of Divine judgment . . . in an hour when no man looked for it" (Froude 2:399). For Carlyle personally, the German victory had vindicated his Sisyphean labors in writing Frederick. W. H. Lecky reported his ecstatic response in 1866 to the news of this "Success of Prussia—nothing has pleased me so well for forty years. I knew it must be so. Bismarck a hero—his disregard of the babble of people and newspapers, and of his own parliament" (Wilson 93).

If Carlyle had reservations about the Bismarck myth in 1878, they could not have been strong enough to tarnish "the living statue" that he rendered of Frederick the Great, and by implication, of Bismarck. Neither the rhetorical power nor the "demonic" force of *Frederick the Great* can be underestimated. Gerwarth has persuasively shown how "the Bismarck myth contributed significantly to the rise of Hitler by popularizing and promoting two central elements of right-wing agitation against the Republic of Weimar: anti-parliamentarianism and the belief that only a strong charismatic leader could solve the country's most pressing problems efficiently" (4). But in fairness to Carlyle, the Nazi appropriation of *Frederick the Great* needs to be juxtaposed with the reminder that Stauffenberg, Goerdeler, and other members of the conservative Resistance were inspired by Carlyle's "Fritz" in their effort to rid Germany of the Nazi scourge and to restore the values of decency, honesty, and Prussian "veracity" that he embodied. Steinberg too draws parallels between the Bismarck myth and Hitler's ascent to power. He reminds us of the essential void that lies at the core of the Bismarck

myth, which is its absence of “the redeeming human virtues: kindness, generosity, compassion, humility, abstinence, patience, liberality, and tolerance” (478). For readers of Carlyle—the writer who played such a signal role in fostering and perpetuating this myth—these words need to be remembered in any judgment of the “living statue” of Frederick that he has left to posterity.

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Thomas Carlyle and “Chinese Matters”

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Abstract: This paper discusses Carlyle’s knowledge of Chinese literature and culture and its influence upon his view of heroes and of hero-worship. Carlyle’s writings show a familiarity with Chinese politics, history, literature and culture, which are well exemplified by his understanding of Confucianism, his enthusiasm for *Schi-King* and Chinese romantic novels and his approving comments on the Chinese Imperial Civil Examination System. Above all it is shown by his great sympathy with the religious dimension of the Chinese *worship* of their Dead Fathers and their worship of labour. By citing Chinese political, historical and cultural matters, Carlyle intends to confirm the significance and importance of genuine sincerity and true faith in the formation of great characters in any way heroic. The paper concludes by suggesting that Carlyle recognizes a religiosity in Chinese literature and philosophy, which is in conformity his view of heroes and of hero-worship. Therefore, “Chinese matters” highlight his romantic critique of Jesuitism and Benthamism in the Victorian Age.

Key words: Thomas Carlyle; Chinese Matters; hero-worship; religiosity; influence

Introduction

In 1856, Thomas Taylor Meadows (1819–1869), a friend of Thomas Carlyle as well as an interpreter to the British Consulate at Canton, China, visited Carlyle and left him his newly published book *The Chinese and Their Rebellions: Viewed in Connection with Their National Philosophy, Ethics, Legislation, and Administration*. After the visit Meadows wrote a letter to Carlyle who wrote on the back of the letter “Meadows’s Letter/ (abt/ Chinese matters)”.¹ What, then,

¹ See the compiler’s note to Carlyle’s letter to Lady Ashburton (3 April, 1856): Note 8. “The Carlyle letters On Line” (Duke-Edinburgh edition of The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle).

were some of the “Chinese matters” that would draw attentions of Carlyle in his writing? And were his ideas somewhat influenced by “Chinese matters” or what did he find in “Chinese matters” that would be identical with his view of heroes and of hero-worship?

Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) was an extremely long-lived Victorian author. He was also highly controversial, variously and at different times in his long career regarded as a moral leader, a radical, a conservative and even a reactionary against democracy. Above all he was the “Sage of Chelsea” during the Victorian age. In the circle of Carlyle studies, it has been widely accepted that Carlyle’s philosophy comes from two major sources: the strict Calvinist education he received from his parents in his childhood and the influence of German idealism, in particular the work of Johann Gottlieb Fichte and other writers of German literature, particularly in Schiller and Goethe, where he discovered “a new Heaven and a new Earth” as Teufelsdröckh admits in *Sartor Resartus* (SR142). What I am going to show is that Carlyle’s philosophy as well as his cultural criticism might have to some extent stemmed from another source, that is, his knowledge of Chinese literatures and philosophy, which are neither related to the Calvinism that remained a potent influence throughout his life; nor are they linked with the German idealist ideas that were essentially romantic and skeptical.

I will focus on Carlyle’s knowledge of Chinese literature and culture and its influence upon his view of heroes and hero-worship. Carlyle’s writings, his correspondence in particular, show an astonishing familiarity with Chinese politics, history, literature and culture, well exemplified by his knowledge of Confucianism, his enthusiasm for *Schi-King or The Classic of Poetry* as well as his enthusiasm for Chinese romantic novels (in Chinese pingying: “cai zi jia ren xiao shuo”, his approving comments on the Chinese Imperial Civil Examination System (in Chinese pingying “ke ju kao shi”), and above all his great sympathy with the religious dimension of the Chinese *worship* of their Dead Fathers and their worship of labour and divine law. By citing Chinese political, historical and cultural matters, Carlyle intends to confirm the significance and importance of genuine sincerity and true faith in the formation of great characters in any way heroic, while highlighting his political view that man of intellect and moral power should be placed at the head of good government.

Part I

Carlyle's correspondence exhibits his familiarity with *Schi-King* or *The Classic of Poetry* known as *The Book of Songs* (*also Book of Odes*),² the oldest existing collection of Chinese poetry, comprising 305 works dating from the 11th to 7th centuries BC. In his letter to John Sterling dated 25th December, 1837, Carlyle expressed his deep enthusiasm for *Schi-King*, hailing it as a melodious masterpiece of beauty, sincerity and divinity:

I read the Rückert Translations³ from the Chinese last week: they are very interesting, very beautiful: harvest-songs, drinking-songs, songs of household calamity and felicity; an authentic melodious human voice from the distance of the Yellow Sea, from the time of Quang-fu-tchee⁴ and the Prophet Ezekiel! Authentic sincere: there is almost no other merit for me in written things. The sacred Scripture itself is sacred and divine because it is more sincere than any other Book. This Rückert shall abide with me in love, for its own sake and yours.
(CARLYLE LETTERS, Vol 9: 377-382.)

It deserves notice here that Carlyle rightly and sharply pinpointed two key terms of Chinese culture: “the Yellow Sea “and “Quang-fu-tchee”, the former coloured by the sand and silt from the Yellow River geopolitically symbolizing the origin of

² *The Book of Songs* is the earliest anthology of Chinese poetry, and the thematic and formal source of the Chinese poetic tradition. The Chinese name for *The Book of Songs* is the *Shi Jing*, and the term *shi* (the general term for poetry, like the Japanese term *waka*) derives from its name. Legend has it that its three hundred and five poems were compiled by Confucius (552-479 B.C.) from an earlier manuscript of around three thousand songs. The assertion that Confucius was the compiler is questionable, but certainly the anthology was extant in Confucius' time, and it seems likely that the anthology was collected between 1100 and 600 B.C. Confucius refers to the Book of Songs in the *Analects* and it was part of the curriculum of his disciples; it is counted among the Confucian Classics which form the basis of Confucian education. The collection was banned in the third century B.C., along with the other Confucian Classics, but was reconstructed during the Han dynasty, and the rescension [sic] (recension) which is most complete derives from this time. The Book of Songs contains three basic categories of song: folksongs and ballads, court songs and sacrificial songs. Like the Sanskrit Vedas of India, these songs provide us with a window onto the simple and beautiful life of an ancient time. Heroes and ancestors are praised, love is made, war is waged, farmers sing to their crops, people complain about their taxes, and moral categories are set forth in stark and powerful form. Though these are songs, the music has been lost, and some of them have been revised from folksong roots by court musicians, rhymed and arranged into stanzas. Others were aristocratic songs, songs to be sung to accompany ritual dancing, or to accompany the rites of ancestor worship.
(<http://web.whittier.edu/academic/english/chinese/Bookofsongs.htm>)

³ Friedrich Rückert, *Schi-King: Chinesisches Liederbuch gesammelt von Confucius* (Altona, 1833).

⁴ Confucius, Latinized form of K'ung Fu-tze: philosopher K'ung.

ancient Chinese civilization and the latter religiously and morally symbolizing the source of Chinese culture. Obviously Carlyle understood *Schi-King* quite well and specifically found himself identifying with the sincerity of the “melodious human voice”, which he regarded as the sacredness of literature. In *Past and Present* (1843), Carlyle employed similar words as he used to praise *Schi-king* to define great literature as possessing “a religion new and yet the oldest” and “melodious Voices from the eternal Heart of Nature”:

Nay in our poor distracted Europe itself, in these newest times, have there not religious voices risen,—with a religion new and yet the oldest; entirely indisputable to all hearts of men? Some I do know, who did not call or think themselves ‘Prophets,’ far enough from that; but who were, in very truth, melodious Voices from the eternal Heart of Nature once again; souls forever venerable to all that have a soul. A French Revolution is one phenomenon; as complement and spiritual exponent thereof, a Poet Goethe and German Literature is to me another. (*Past and Present /The Modern Worker*, p.234)

Sincerity, one of the key principles of Confucianism⁵, is also the very trait that Carlyle would apply to evaluate a true hero. Carlyle’s preoccupation with the sincerity of a man and his familiarity with Confucianism could be found in Emerson’s record of his conversation with Carlyle during their travel from London to Salisbury and Amesbury in July, 1848:

‘Yes, Kunst (art) is a great delusion, and Goethe and Schiller wasted a great deal of good time on it’: and he [Carlyle] thinks old Goethe found this out, and, in his later writings, changed his tune. As soon as men begin to talk of art, architecture and antiquities, nothing good comes of it. He wishes to go through the British Museum in silence, and thinks a sincere man will see something and say nothing...For the science he had even less tolerance, and compared the savants of Somerset House to the boy who asked Confucius “how many stars in the sky?” Confucius replied: he minded things near him” ; then said the boy, “how many hairs are there in your eyebrows?” Confucius said “he didn’t know and don’t care.” (*Emerson’s works*, IV, “English Traits,” Ch.XVI. “Tone” corrected

⁵ Zi Zhang asked Confucius about perfect virtue. Confucius said, “To be able to practise five things everywhere under heaven constitutes perfect virtue.” He begged to ask what they were, and was told, “Gravity, generosity of soul, sincerity, earnestness, and kindness. If you are grave, you will not be treated with disrespect. If you are generous, you will win all. If you are sincere, people will repose trust in you. If you are earnest, you will accomplish much. If you are kind, this will enable you to employ the services of others.” (*Analects* 17.6)

to “tune”. qtd. David Alec Wilson: *Carlyle at his Zenith*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co Ltd, 1927.p.46)

Emerson’s recollection shows that Carlyle’s knowledge of Confucianism was far above average, as he could freely and frequently borrow the Confucian aphorisms to illustrate his ideas, although we have no strong evidence to show Carlyle had first-hand knowledge to *Analects*. The Scottish writer David Alec Wilson (1864-1933), who had served as a British officer in Burma and was interested in Oriental culture, Confucianism in particular, compared Carlyle to “the European Confucius” in his biography of Thomas Carlyle (*Carlyle till Marriage*, Preface: vi). By placing Carlyle and Confucius in different cultural contexts but with similar moral concerns Wilson cited Goethe’s conversations with Eckermann to define Carlyle as a man possessing moral force: “It is admirable in Carlyle that, in his judgment of chosen German authors, has especially in view the mental and moral core as that which is really influential. Carlyle is a moral force of great importance.” (*Eckermann* 276-7. qtd. Wilson: *Carlyle till Marriage* .316), and to the Confucian sincerity Wilson compared Carlyle’s moral merit: “...his grip upon right principles and his earnestness, seeking always sincerity. He meant the same thing as Confucius and was equally genuine” (Wilson: *Carlyle till Marriage*, 316).

That Carlyle was a voracious reader is in some way represented in his semi-autobiographical figure Professor Teufelsdröckh, who claims that he might acquire “all knowable things” and might “have read in most Public Libraries.... Including those of Constantinople and Samarcand: in most Colleges, except the Chinese Mandarin ones, I have studied, or seen that there was no studying” (SR 135).

Although Professor Teufelsdröckh modestly admits his failure to penetrate “the Chinese Mandarin” libraries, Carlyle did dip into some ancient Chinese literatures in English version and might have benefited abundantly from the ethical values of *Schi-King* and *Analects*, both formative to his philosophy of heroes and hero-worship. As noted above, although Confucius’ identity as the first compiler of the first anthology of Chinese poetry remains questionable, his comments on *Schi-King* are scattered in *Analects*.⁶ In Chapter 2 of *Analects*, *Schi-King* is ethically summarized as “having no depraved thoughts” (*Analects* 2.2). In

⁶ See the compiler’s note to Carlyle’s letter to Lady Ashburton (3 April, 1856): Note 8. “The Carlyle letters On Line” (Duke-Edinburgh edition of *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*).

Chapter 17, Confucius urges his disciples to study *Schi-King* as a textbook and then he explicitly elucidates the moral and social functions of *Schi-King* (*The Book of Odes*):

My children, why do you not study the Book of Poetry? The Odes serve to stimulate the mind. They may be used for purposes of self-contemplation. They teach the art of sociability. They show how to regulate feelings of resentment. From them you learn the more immediate duty of serving one's father, and the remoter one of serving one's prince. From them we become largely acquainted with the names of birds, beasts, and plants. (*Analects* 17.9)

Carlyle has always been portrayed as a man who emphasizes the importance of silence, and in *Heroes and Hero-Worship* (1840) he himself pays tribute to Dante whose silence "is more eloquent than words" (125). In *Sartor Resartus* (1833–1834) Professor Teufelsdröckh is inspired by the Swiss Inscription "*Sprechen ist silbern, Schweigen ist golden* (Speech is silver, Silence is golden.)" (SR 165) and the Professor modifies it to "Speech is of Time, Silence is of Eternity" (SR 166), which is later echoed and elaborated in Carlyle's essay "Memoirs of the Life of Scott" (1838): "Under all speech that is good for anything there lies a silence that is better. Silence is deep as Eternity; speech is shallow as Time" ("Memoirs of the Life of Scott", *London and Westminster Review* 28, 2 (January, 1838), 293-345). Quite appropriately, Wilson associates Carlyle's Confucian individuality with his "practising aright the gospel of silence" (*Carlyle at his Zenith* 226), about which Carlyle noted in his journal, "Speech is human, silence is divine, yet also brutish and dead: therefore we must learn both arts" (qtd. Wilson: *Carlyle at his Zenith* 226). Carlyle's gospel of silence is "too true to be a new discovery" (227), as Wilson pointed out, since it had been taught two thousand years ago by Chinese sages like Lao Tzu and Confucius.⁷

Although not a specialist in Sinology, which was a rising science in the 18th and 19th century Europe, Carlyle in his knowledge of Confucianism proved exceptional and his vision of Chinese literature was not narrowly restricted to the

⁷ "He who knows does not speak; he who speaks does not know." is a paradoxical saying in Chapter 56 of *Tao Te Jing* (Chinese Pingyin: *Dao De Jing*) by the ancient Chinese philosopher Laozi (Lao Tzu, Lao Tse, or Lao Tze, c. 6th-5th century BCE), the master of Taoism .Confucius, a contemporary of Laozi, approves in an indirect way Laozi's paradoxical philosophy in *Analects*: The Master [Confucius] said:" I would prefer not speaking." Tsze-kung said, "If you, Master, do not speak, what we, your disciples, shall have to record?" The Master said, "Does Heaven speak? The four seasons pursue their courses, and all things are continually being produced, but does Heaven say anything?" (*Analect* 17.19).

ancient Chinese classics like *Schi-King* and *Analects*. According to Ku Hweng-Ming (1857-1928, also known as Kaw Hong Beng, Amoy Ku, or Tomson), who claimed himself a student of Carlyle at the University of Edinburgh,⁸ Carlyle also showed special interests in *The Two Fair Cousins*, a Chinese romantic novel about talented scholars and beautiful ladies written in about the mid-17th century. He had read Rémusat's translation of *The Two Fair Cousins* from the Chinese. Jean Pierre Abel Rémusat (1788—1832) was one of the first European sinologists to put the Chinese novel originally entitled (玉娇梨) (Iu-Kiao-Li) into French.⁹ Rémusat's *The Two Fair Cousins* was read by Goethe, Hegel, Stendhal, Ralph Waldo Emerson, as well as Thomas Carlyle. After Leigh Hunt read the novel, he introduced it to Carlyle, who found it so attractive that he recommended it to John Sterling. Carlyle's correspondence shows strong evidences of his liking for this Chinese romantic novel as well. In his letter to John Sterling dated 11th September, 1836, Carlyle took the novel as “worth reading”:

My dear Sterling,

One Book let me recommend to you as very well worth reading: Rémusats Translation of “The Two Fair Cousins” from the Chinese. Would you like to see a man of real genius struggling to express himself, and actually becoming discernible, under the figure of ‘dragon-letter verses,’ Chinese formalities and formulas, buy this Book.¹⁰ A man who really sees into objects; and under his silk gown and mandarin ways, has a certain impetuosity in him.

(<http://carlyleletters.dukejournals.org/cgi/content/full/30/1/ed-30-jane-welsh-carlyle-journal>)

⁸ Ku Hweng-Ming 's self-alleged identity as a student of Carlyle is questionable. See Qiao Xiufeng: “Questioning the Story of Ku Hweng-Ming 's Identity as a Student of Carlyle”, *Chinese Reader's Weekly*, June 5, 2014.

⁹ According to *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction*(1925) by Lu Xun, a great modern Chinese social critic and novelist (1881-1934), (玉娇梨) (*Iu-Kiao-Li*) might have been published by the end of Ming Dynasty (i.e. about mid-17th century, author unknown) and it was one of the first of ‘caizi jiaren’ novels, “already having French version and therefore making it particularly well-known in foreign countries, even more famous than in China *” (120).

¹⁰ Note by compiler of the Carlyle letters: Jean Pierre Abel Rémusat (1788–1832), Chinese scholar. Iu-kiao-li: or, the Two Fair Cousins, 2 vols. (London, 1827), translated from Rémusat's French version (Paris, 1826) of a Chinese work by Yu Chiao Li. In his letter of 26 Oct. Sterling replied, “I sent for the Chinese Cousins as soon as I received your letter but the answer was that the book is out of print.” He later noted, “Iu-Kiao-Li, ou les Deux Cousines; translated by Remusat;—well translated into English also, from his version; and one of the notablest Chinese books. A book in fact by a Chinese man of genius; most strangely but recognisably such,—man of genius made on the notablest Chinese books. A book in fact by a Chinese man of genius; most strangely but recognisably such,—man of genius made on the dragon pattern! Recommended to me by Carlyle; to him by Leigh Hunt” (Carlyle's Works, XI, 139).

The correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and his wife Jane Welsh Carlyle reveals they were so fond of the prophetic faculty of Schu-ping-sing, the heroine of the novel, that the term “Schu-ping-sing faculty” almost became in their private conversations as an idiom for talent and intelligence. For instance, in JWC’s letter to Jeannie Welsh dated 2 February, 1843, Jane mentioned Carlyle’s comment on her possession of the spirit of prophecy¹¹ and intelligence of the Chinese young Lady Schu-ping-sing in the novel *The Two Fair Cousins*:

Darling

Even Carlyle tells me sometimes that I have “the intelligence of Schuping sing” (you remember that Chinese young Lady?)—“who resembled a disembodied spirit” in the accuracy of her insight; being able to tell always what her enemies were plotting on the other side of stone walls— The occasion on which my spirit of prophecy—or Shuping-sing-intelligence—call it what you like—has just evinced itself, relates to you and your dose of physic—both Tuesday and Wednesday when I returned disappointed from the letter box I said to myself—there is something strange in this—if it be not that she has worn herself out in Manchester, and has had to take physic since her return!— When today I came to the physic in your letter I felt a sort of fear—of myself— really shuddered at the

¹¹ As early as in August 1831 Carlyle expressed his admiration for JWC’s ‘prophetic faculty’:
Dearest and Wife, I have got a frank for you, and will write from the heart whatever is in the heart. A blessing it was that you made me give such a promise; for I feel that an hour spent in speaking with my own will do me infinite good. It is very sweet in the midst of this soul-confusing phantasmagoria to know that I have a fixed possession elsewhere; that my own Jeannie is thinking of me, loving me, that her heart is no dream like all the rest of it. O love me, my Dearest, always love me! I am richer with thee than the whole world could make me otherwise....

Alas dearest the hour is come, and I finish while but beginning O write, write. I feel great want of your ‘prophetic faculty’; how safe I should feel in your bosom, safe, safe, and at home. However, I will do what I can to get soon back, and with an olive leaf—

I am forever / Your Husband /

T. Carlyle

(TC TO JANE WELSH CARLYLE (11 August 1831; DOI: 10.1215/lt-18310811-TC-JWC-01; CL 5:316-320.)

Compiler’s note on ‘prophetic faculty’: Possibly what Carlyle calls her “Shuping Sing” faculty, named after a Chinese character in a novel who could see “almost through millstones.” Or the whole joke about a “prophetic faculty” may also have been meant to be on Irving and his belief in “prophecy.”

My note: According to TC’s 1836 letter to John Sterling, it seems that TC would not have read Rémusat’s *The Two Fair Cousins* in the year 1831, although the English version adapted on Rémusat was published in 1827.

superhuman in me! (CL 16: 41-45)

In 1 July 1844 JWC wrote to Thomas Carlyle, for a second time referring herself as possessing “Schupingsing quality”:

Dearest—I was in considerable perplexity how I should manage on Sunday—
For you cannot displease my uncle more than by declining to go to church—as
early as Saturday morning he was questioning me as to which church I meant to
go to—

— As for Babbie she is sunk into the merest young Lady of them all!—her
Indolence is absolutely transcendental! and I cannot flatter myself that it is the
reaction of any secret grief—the only confession which with all my Schupingsing
quality I have been able to draw from her is that “one ought really to have A
LITTLE EXCITEMENT in one’s life and there is none to be got here”!— How
grateful I ought to be to you Dear for having rescued ME out of the young-Lady-
sphere! It is a thing that I cannot contemplate with the proper toleration— (DOI:
10.1215/It-18440701-JWC-TC-01; CL 18: 96-97)

Twelve years later in JWC’S Journal dated 29 October, 1855, she once more
recalled Carlyle’s associating her intelligence to “Schu-ping-sing faculty”:

But neither Lord Palmerstons hundred pounds, nor Miss Coutts twenty pounds,
nor the Bishop of Oxfords annual ten pounds nor any addition Mr C has procured
to their income putting an end to the goddaughters written applications to him; he
wished me to ascertain the real State of their affairs and “at all rates relieve him
of the correspondence.” So I travelled by steam-boat and Railway to New Cross,
taking Mrs George along with me, and brought my “Schu-ping-sing faculty”¹² (as
Mr C used to call it, when there was no Lady A to take the shine out of me, in his
eyes) to bear on the Low-concern, and it was as plain as a pikestaff to me that the
two old creatures had no management, and no independence or they might keep
themselves decently on what they already had without “asking for more,” and
that ‘the god daughter’ for the rest, was a greedy conceited fantastic little Body—
whom in describing as “highly interesting” Mr C has shown, how far “respect for
Johnson” could carry him!

¹² Note by TC: “Chinese personage, in the Two Fair Cousins, who could almost see into millstones”
(TC’s note in LM 1:286; cf. JWC to TC, 1 July 1844). (See: 10.1215/ed-30-jane-welsh-carlyle-
journal; CL 30: firstpage-30-195-lastpage-30-262)

My note: But the name Schu-ping-sing is neither traceable in Rémusat’s French version of *The Two Fair Cousins* (1826) nor in the English version (1827) based on Rémusat’s translation, nor in the original version of the Chinese novel (玉娇梨) (*Ju-Kiao-Li*) I. The love story happens among three major characters (according to the spellings of the names in the English version): the 20-year-old young talent Sse Youupe (苏友白), and the two graceful, beautiful and intelligent cousins, Miss Pe

Carlyle's letter to John Sterling reveals that his first reading of *The Two Fair Cousins* was probably in September, 1836 (Rémusat's French version was published in 1826, the English version was published by Hunt and Clarke of York Street, London in 1827) and that it was the intelligence, the accuracy of insight, the spirit of prophecy and the superhuman faculty of the intellectual personage in the novel that captivated Carlyle, who would later define such attributes in his view of hero-worship in *Hero and Hero-Worship* (1841), particularly in his fifth lecture on the Hero as Man of Letters, in which Goethe is "declared as a man of prophet in an profoundly unprophetic age" (T.J.Reed in D.R. Sorensen & Brent E. Kinser, eds. 227)¹³ and in which Carlyle highly approves the Chinese way of choosing governors by placing "the man of intellect at the top of affairs" (*Hero and Hero-Worship*143).

Carlyle's interest in Chinese romance was presumably not merely out of a curiosity for love stories of Oriental colours. As a historian, he would have been concerned much more with the manners of life and the spirits of the common people in the romance, which history books, travel wittings and missionary reports might fail to record. Rémusat's preface to the translation of *The Two Fair Cousins* may shed light on the latent reason why Carlyle regarded the Chinese romance as "worth reading":

If there be any narration who merit attention from those who are anxious to become fully acquainted with the spirit and genius of a people, they are such as have been just described; and in this point of view, the most approved Chinese romances may fill up an important void. They are, at the same time, more accurate and diverting than the relations of travelers; or who can paint a people so well as themselves? What travel, under such circumstance can vie with the novelist? The missionaries have enjoyed frequent opportunities of observing the Chinese people in political and public life, but they have very rarely gained admittance into the bosom of families. One half of the society, too, and by no means that portion of it which is most easy to understand, they have scarcely been able to see at all. Little can be known about the manners and the way of

Houngiu (白红玉) and Miss Lo Mengli (卢梦梨), the latter disguising herself as a young man and having the faculty of what Carlyle would call "seeing into millstones". The story ends happily, through smart management of Miss Lo, with Sse's simultaneous marriage with both Miss Pe and Miss Lo, which was legal and not rare at that time. Were Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle wrong in their memory or might Schu-ping-sing be a woman character from other Chinese romance?

¹³ Terence James Reed: "The first of the Moderns": Carlyle's Goethe and the Consequences", in Thomas Carlyle: *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*, Eds. D.R. Sorensen & Brent E. Kinser, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013. p.227

thinking of nation, without some acquaintance with its women. (Rémusat,
Preface to translation, London: Hunt and Clark, printed by London: W. Clowes,
1827. p. XI)

We may catch a glimpse of Carlyle's familiarity with the manner of everyday life of common Chinese citizens, which he might have acquired from reading Chinese romance describing the Chinese shopkeepers advertising their honesty in business transaction. In *Sartor Resartus*, the narrator, while complaining that he is "at an epoch when puffery and quackery have reached a height unexampled in the annals of mankind", suggests that "even English Editors, like Chinese Shopkeepers, must write on their door-lintels *No cheating here*,— we thought it good to premise" (S R 11). Quite similarly and interestingly, Carlyle's *French Revolution* (1837), although a book of history that finally established his reputation, is stylistically unusual an account of "manner and spirit of the common people" instead of an orthodox record of historical facts of Gibbon tradition. In his historical writing Carlyle dramatizes history and involves the reader by an enthusiastically personified way of storytelling combined with meticulous attention to historical facts, bringing history back to life as if "he were a witness-survivor of the Apocalypse." (John D. Rosenberg, ed. Thomas Carlyle (2002). *The French Revolution: A History*. New York: The Modern Library, p. xviii.) It seems not coincidental that both stylistically and thematically we see in *The French Revolution* a touch of romance writing which is distinguished by its stress on intellectual supremacy, spiritual motivations, moral force and dramatic effects, although we have no evidence to confirm the style of the book was in any way influenced by Carlyle's reading of *The Two Fair Cousins* in 1836, the same year he was (re)writing *The French Revolution*.¹⁴

Besides, Carlyle's interest in Chinese literature could be presumably traced in part to his extensive reading and translation of Goethe, who had deeply immersed himself in Chinese literature and philosophy ever since 1830. From French and English versions Goethe read many Chinese works (including *The Two Fair Cousins* and other 17th and 18th century Chinese romance as well as Chinese poetry and travel writings).¹⁵ Goethe even composed 14 cycle poems entitled *Chinesische-Deutsche Jahres- und Tageszeiten*, expressing his understanding of the universe and life as embodied in the changes of seasons in the garden by

¹⁴ TC's letter to Sterling in 1836 indicates he was half way through the third part of the "unfortunate book".

imitating the sentiments of Mandarin officials in the remote China. From Chinese literature, Goethe seemed to have discovered something in common for humanity. In one of his dinner interviews with J.P. Eckermann (1792-1854) in 1827 Goethe told Eckermann that he was occupied with reading a Chinese novel¹⁶ and his commentary on the Chinese characters sounded ideally affirmative:

[The] Chinamen think, act, and feel almost exactly like us ; and we soon find that we are perfectly like them, excepting that all they do is more clear, more pure, and decorous, than with us.... With them all is orderly, citizen-like, without great passion or poetic flight; and there is a strong resemblance to my ‘ Hermann and Dorothea,’ as well as to the English novels of Richardson. (Eckermann 348-349)

In the same interview, Goethe criticized the “pedantic conceit” of the German readers and articulated his open-minded attitudes to foreign literature:

But, really, we Germans are very likely to fall too easily into this pedantic conceit, when we do not look beyond the narrow circle which surrounds us. I therefore like to look about me in foreign nations, and advise everyone to do the same. National literature is now rather an unmeaning term; the epoch of World literature is at hand, and every one must strive to hasten its approach. (350)

¹⁵ Goethe’s conversation with Eckermann shows his extensive reading of Chinese literature, both classical poetry and romance. See Johann Peter Eckermann: *Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann and Soret*, Volume. I. Translated by John Oxenford, Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pp348-350.

¹⁶ The novel being read by Goethe is not traceable, but *The Two Fair Cousins* was translated into German in 1821. The popularity of *The Two Fair Cousins* in Germany can be found in G.W.F. Hegel’s *The Philosophy of History* (1837), in which Section I of Part I (The Oriental World) begins with Hegel’s introduction of ancient Chinese history and philosophy. In order to show the significance of self-cultivation, moral integrity and intellectual wisdom in the administration of the Chinese Empire, Hegel cites *The Two Fair Cousins* as an example: “The sciences, an acquaintance with which is especially required, are the History of the Empire, Jurisprudence, and the science of customs and usages, and of the organization and administration of government. Beside this, the Mandarins are said to have a talent for poetry and talented order. We have the means to judge this, particularly from the Romance, Ju-Kiao-li, or “The Two Cousins”, translated by Abel Remusat: in this a youth is introduced who having finished his studies, is endeavoring to attain high dignities. The officers in the army, also, must have mental requirements; they too are examined; but civil functionaries enjoy, at stated level, far greater respect.” (Hegel: *Philosophy of History*. Kitchener (Ontario): Batoche Books, 2001, P.142) There are two references to Hegel in Sartor Resartus, but there is no evidence to suggest that Carlyle had read Hegel. Teufelsdröckh dismisses Hegel as a “Logic chopper” and a “professed Enemy to Wonder”, which is, according to Jerry A. Dibble, a popular misconception about Hegel. (Jerry A. Dibble. *The Pythia’s Drunken Song, : Thomas Carlyle’s Sartor Resartus and the Style Problem of in German Idealist Philosophy*. Hague: Martinus Hijhoff, 1978.p.57)

Then he moved from Chinese literature and French literature and developed the then brand new idea of “World Literature”. Carlyle was as much receptive to foreign literatures as Goethe. In *Sartor Resartus*, Carlyle (in the disguise of the editor), when suggested by a Holfrath Heuschrecke to undertake the translation of the Deutsch work of Professor Teufelsdröckh’s *Philosophy of Clothes*, for the benefit of English-speaking peoples, stresses the significance of foreign thought to a country: “And what work nobler than transplanting foreign thought into the barren domestic soil: except, indeed, planting thought of your own, which the fewest are privileged to?”(SR 62) As a very early translator of Goethe’s work into English, Carlyle showed consistent worship for Goethe, regarding him as “the only living model of a great writer” and “one of my finest day-dreams to see him ere I die” in his letter to Miss Welsh on 6 April, 1823. Later in 1840, Carlyle described Goethe as “an ancient Hero, in the guise of a most modern, high-bred, high-cultivated Man of Letters” (*Heroes and Hero-Worship* 134). Carlyle and Goethe never met each other, but they kept in touch by correspondence. Goethe’s complimentary estimate of Carlyle is documented in his conversations with Johann Peter Eckermann on 11 October 1828, where he acknowledged Carlyle’s earnestness and profundity in the service of German literature: “What an earnest man he is! and how he has studied us Germans! He is almost more at home in our literature than ourselves. At any rate, we cannot vie with him in our researches in English literature”(Eckermann 86). There is no doubt that Carlyle was profusely enriched by German thought and literature, but simultaneously he turned his eyes to Chinese literature and philosophy for reference as his spiritual idol Goethe did. Goethe’s open attitudes to foreign literature (especially to Chinese literature)and particularly his admiration for the morality, purity, decorousness and orderliness of the Chinese people could be an inspiration for Carlyle to turn to China for a corrective solution of the drawbacks resulted from western industrialization.

Part II

In his *History of Philosophy*¹⁷, Hegel compares the traditional law and constitution of China with the European and concludes that “we can only do so in respect of what is formal, for the content is very different” (Hegel 120). He then points out that Confucius’ teaching, which is the base of the law and constitution in the history of China, is in essence “a moral philosophy” (120). As mentioned before, Carlyle’s enthusiasm for Chinese literature and his acquaintance with Confucianism were above the average level of his contemporaries. Confucianism regards *Rén* (仁)¹⁸ as the foremost virtue of an individual, which encompasses humaneness, benevolence and love. *Rén* was thus taken by Confucianism as the primary prerequisite for political leadership, and this was merged into the tradition of the Chinese Imperial Civil Examination System, where men of virtue and intelligence were chosen for government administration. In *Heroes and Hero Worship*, while discussing “the supreme importance of the Man of Letters in modern society” (140), Carlyle speaks highly of this Chinese civil service system, taking it as full of “scientific curiosity” (143):

By far the most interesting fact I hear about the Chinese is one on which we cannot arrive at clearness, but which excites endless curiosity even in the dim state: this namely, that they do attempt to make their Men of Letters their Governors! It would be rash to say, one understood how this was done, or with what degree of success it was done. All such things must be very unsuccessful; yet a small degree of success is precious; the very attempt how precious! There does seem to be, all over China, a more or less active search everywhere to discover the men of talent that grow up in the young generation. (142)

In his scrutiny of Chinese way of choosing literary governors, Carlyle points out that there is no doubt that the intellectuals “*have some Understanding*”

¹⁷ *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, also translated as *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, is a major work by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, originally given as lectures at the University of Berlin in 1822, 1828, and 1830. Published posthumously in 1837.

¹⁸ Yan Yuan asked about perfect virtue. The Master said, “To subdue one’s self and return to propriety, is perfect virtue. If a man can for one day subdue himself and return to propriety, all under heaven will ascribe perfect virtue to him. Is the practice of perfect virtue from a man himself, or is it from others?” Yan Yuan said, “I beg to ask the steps of that process.” The Master replied, “Look not at what is contrary to propriety; listen not to what is contrary to propriety; speak not what is contrary to propriety; make no movement which is contrary to propriety.” (Analects 12.1) Another meaning of *Rén* is “Don’t do unto others what you don’t want others do unto you.” (Analects 12:2).

(143), which he regards neither as a tool nor as “a hand which can handle any tool”, as most people “are too apt to figure” (143). Here by “Understanding” Carlyle underlines the sincerity, moral conscience and determined beliefs of men of letters internalized in heroes like Johnson, Shakespeare, Milton, Rousseau and Burns, in contrast to the scepticism and Benthamism that overemphasized instrumental rationalism in the Victorian age.¹⁹ To Carlyle, man of true intellect and sincerity shall be placed “at the top of affairs”, just like governors selected by the Chinese Imperial Civil Examination System:

This is the aim of all constitutions and revolutions, if they have any aim. For the man of true intellect, as I assert and believe always, is the noble-hearted man withal, the true, just, humane and valiant man. Get him for governor, all is got; fail to get him, though you had Constitutions plentiful as blackberries, and a Parliament in every village, there is nothing yet got!—” (143)

The above statement obviously shows Carlyle’s deep-rooted doubts about the effectiveness of the alleged well-founded western democratic constitution and parliament system, which he thought would be out of order as well without strong-willed governors of sincerity and morality. Similar suspicions of the mechanism of the so-called democratic constitution were also found in a book by Carlyle’s friend Thomas Taylor Meadows (1819–69), interpreter to the British Consulate at Canton and a utilitarian liberal. In his book entitled *The Chinese and Their Rebellions* (1856),²⁰ Meadows predicted that England’s colonial power would decline and blamed it on the “over-estimation and over-boasting of which we have lately had a great deal” (608). He wrote, “Men, as individuals, are so relative in all things that neither absolute autocracy nor absolute democracy seems likely to prove most effective for their good government” (637)²¹. Meadows, impressed with Carlyle’s approving reference of the hiring practice of the Chinese civil service in *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, left Carlyle this newly published book before he wrote Carlyle a letter on 4 April, 1856, hoping Carlyle would give some attention to his plan for the “Union of the British Empire ... *the ONLY means*

¹⁹ In *On Heroes and Hero-Worship*, Carlyle severely attacks scepticism and Benthamism that had began to spread over England since the end of the 18th century. See Thomas Carlyle: *On Heroes and Hero-Worship*, D.R. Sorensen and B.E. Kinser eds. pp.144-45.

²⁰ Thomas Taylor Meadows. *The Chinese and Their Rebellions: Viewed in Connection with Their National Philosophy, Ethics, Legislation, and Administration. To which is Added, an Essay on Civilization and Its Present State in the East and West*. London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1856

²¹ See the compiler’s note to Carlyle’s letter to Lady Ashburton (3 April, 1856) : Note 8.

of preserving the power of the English people in the face of the steadily growing power of the United States and Russia.”²² Meadows hoped for legislation on his plan and said that he had written at length because Carlyle had “the power of giving such legislation an immense impetus.” On the back of the letter Carlyle wrote “Meadows’s Letter/ (abt/ **Chinese** matters).”²³ The correspondence between Carlyle and Meadows as well as Meadows’ opinion on “autocracy” or “absolute democracy” reveals their inclination to legitimate the effectiveness of “good government” more than the external forms of political system. In other words, Carlyle believes that the democratic political and legal system might not be as important as we imagine, what is important is “good government” administered by ethically good governors. Such ideas of government administration are manifestly (and not coincidentally) identical with the Confucian political philosophy. Carlyle later developed this idea in *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, arguing that a “perfect government” should depend on what he calls as “the hero as King” or “Konning, which means *Can-ing*, Able-man” and “the truest-hearted, justest, the Noblest Man” (162). He went further to assert that in the noblest King resides “a divine virtue” so that he becomes “a kind of god” with a “Divine Right” (164) and that the right of a king to govern us is either a “divine right or else a diabolic wrong”:

There is a God in this world; and a God’s-sanction, or else the violation of such, does look out from all ruling and obedience, from all moral acts of men. There is no act more moral between men than that of rule and obedience. Woe to him that claims obedience when it is not due; woe to him that refuses it when it is! God’s law is in that, I say, however the Parchment-laws may run: there is a Divine Right or else a Diabolic Wrong at the heart of every claim that one man makes upon another. (*Heroes and Hero-Worship* 164)

In his *Papers from a Viceroy’s Yamen: A Chinese Plea for the Cause of Good Government and True Civilization* (1901), Ku Hweng-Ming appropriately associated Carlyle’s appeal for the “divine right” with his attack on Jesuitism, which, according to Carlyle, had led to “the widespread suffering, mutiny, delirium, the hot rag of sansculottic insurrections, the cold rage of resuscitated tyrannies, brutal degradation of the millions, the pampered frivolity of the units” (*Latter-day Pamphlets* 578-9). Ku Hweng-Ming also condemned what Carlyle called Jesuitism which Gu thought was not only widespread in the Victorian age

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid

but also became even more rampant in modern European society:

I have in these notes gone fully into this subject of Jesuitism because it is not the French nation alone whose soul is being eaten out, but all nations of the world to-day are being ruined by the deadening leprous influence of Jesuitism. The false Imperialism of Great Britain and the man eating Kolonial Politik of Germany are but the bastard offsprings of Jesuitism and false democracy. I have called the Kolonial Politik of Germany a “deinotherion,” a terrible beast. Now, this Jesuitism of the French nation is a vile, slimy, leprous, poisonous, bloodsucking snake or reptile. (142)

Ku Hweng-Ming’s abhorrence of Jesuitism, I believe, was strongly influenced by the Confucian political philosophy of “zhengming” (literally meaning “rectification of names or terminologies”, *Analects* 13.3), the top priority that Confucius would do in government administration.²⁴ Quite similar to Carlyle’s attack on Jesuitism, Confucius’s “zhengming” intends, both politically and ethically, to rectify the insincere behaviour of people and the social reality so that “they correspond to the language with which people identify themselves and describe their roles in society”.²⁵ Confucius believed that this sort of rectification must begin with the top rulers of the government, whom were the source of the discrepancy between names and actualities. In a conversation with a usurper, Confucius advised: “If your desire is for good, the people will be good. The moral character of the ruler is the wind; the moral character of those beneath him is the grass. When the wind blows, the grass bends” (*Analects* 12.19). Elsewhere

²⁴ Zi Lu said, “The ruler of Wei has been waiting for you, in order with you to administer the government. What will you consider the first thing to be done?” The Master replied, “What is necessary is to rectify names.” “So! indeed!” said Zi Lu. “You are wide of the mark! Why must there be such rectification?” The Master said, “How uncultivated you are, You! A superior man, in regard to what he does not know, shows a cautious reserve. If names be not correct, language is not in accordance with the truth of things. If language be not in accordance with the truth of things, affairs cannot be carried on to success. When affairs cannot be carried on to success, proprieties and music will not flourish. When proprieties and music do not flourish, punishments will not be properly awarded. When punishments are not properly awarded, the people do not know how to move hand or foot. Therefore a superior man considers it necessary that the names he uses may be spoken appropriately, and also that what he speaks may be carried out appropriately. What the superior man requires is just that in his words there may be nothing incorrect.” (*Analects* 13.3)

²⁵ See Jeffrey Riegel : Confucian Philosophy of Politics, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/confucius/#ConPol> Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy ,substantive revision Sat Mar 23, 2013 . When asked by a ruler of the large state of Qi, Lu’s neighbour on the Shandong peninsula, about the principles of good government, Confucius is reported to have replied: “The duke Jing, of Qi, asked Confucius about government. Confucius replied, “There is government, when the prince is prince, and the minister is minister; when the father is father, and the son is son.”(*Analects* 12.11).

in *Analects* Confucius employed another analogy to show the moral power of a ruler: “He who exercises government by means of his virtue may be compared to the north polar star, which keeps its place and all the stars turn towards it”(*Analects* 2.1). Jeffrey Riegel correctly summaries Confucius’ political ideas: “For Confucius, what characterized superior rulership was the possession of *de* or ‘virtue.’ Conceived of as a kind of moral power that allows one to win a following without recourse to physical force, such ‘virtue’ also enabled the ruler to maintain good order in his state without troubling himself and by relying on loyal and effective deputies.”²⁶ Essentially, Confucius’s political proposal of “zhengming” exhibited his deep anxiety over the loss of virtue and sincerity of the rulers of his times, analogically a similar situation but of another social context which Carlyle would witness and which he would define as full of Jesuitism.

Taking Jesuitism as the source of anarchism, Ku Hweng-Ming highly valued Carlyle’s idea of “good government” and attributed Carlyle’s ideas to his understanding of Confucian philosophy. In a conversation with his student who was later a teacher of Peking University, Ku recalled his experience of reading Goethe’s *Faustus*, Shakespeare’s plays and Carlyle’s *French Revolution* before he was sent to the University of Edinburgh by his godfather Mr. Forbes Scott Brown, a Scottish plantation owner in Malaysia, whose father was, according to Ku, “an old friend of Carlyle” as well as “a relative of Sir Walter Scott”,²⁷ and then Ku recounted Carlyle’s conversation with Mr. Forbes Scott Brown:

The world has headed on towards a wrong path. The way of human being, the social organizations—constitutions and cultures—are all fundamentally wrong.... the only gleam of light of hope lies in Chinese democratic thought. But what a pity! According to my knowledge, democratic thought in China has never been realized, and when it was spread to Europe and sparked the fire of the French Revolution, it died out all too soon, just like a lighted match blown out by a gust of wind. This is due to a democratic system without democratic spirit.... Socialism and communism will be one day realized by revolution, but the problem is: once there appears a ruler rejecting democratic thought in a socialist and communist country, there would be more difficult to have another revolution! (Zhao Wenjun, 177)

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Zhao Wenjun, “In memoir of Several Past Events of Mr. Gu Hongming”, *Selection of Historical Accounts*, No.8, Vol. 108, Beijing: China Historical Accounts Press, 1986. PP. 176-178. (兆文钧: “辜鸿铭先生对我讲述的往事”, (文史资料选辑) 第八辑, 总一〇八辑北京: 中国文史出版社, 1986年. 第176-178页) .

Evidently, in this reported discourse Carlyle articulated his anxiety over the future of the world and as he believed the Western world had stepped on a way of wrong political direction, he turned to China for “democratic thought”. Although Ku’s account of his acquaintance with Carlyle as well as the seemingly Carlylean counsel to Mr. Brown remains dubious, this passage reveals at least what Ku understood in Carlyle’s mind as the pattern of “Chinese democratic thought”, which had been in existence for long in the traditional Chinese elite political system. Indeed, Carlyle would view western democracy (American in particular) as “a product of an undereducated and vulgar populace “(John Lamb 120). In *Chartism* he even went so far as to align European democracy with *laissez-faire* economics and utilitarianism: “Democracy, take it where you will in our Europe, is found but as a regulated method of rebellion and abrogation; it abrogates the old arrangement of things; and leaves, as we say, zero and vacuity for the institution of a new arrangement. It is the consummation of No-government and Laissez-faire” (*Chartism* 43). In 1847, Carlyle had planned a book in six parts to be titled *Democracy*, which was to address the reason why democracy, despite of its popularity, was not a solution to contemporary political solution (Froude, Vol.I:366).²⁸ Hence, it would be understandable if Carlyle were anticipating an ideal political mode from China whose government system was basically virtue-oriented. As Ku alleged, it had been strongly believed in China that “a society without the sense of honour in men, and without morality in its politics, cannot... be held together, or at any rate, cannot last” (*The Spirit of the Chinese People*, 12).

It is usually agreed that social harmony and order are the envision of all governments as well as the concerns of intellectuals with strong sense of social obligation and moral conscience, and this was particularly true of Carlyle, especially when he entered old age. In *Chartism* (1840) Carlyle defined social and moral disorder as “insane by the nature of it” and “is the hatefulest of things to man” (*Chartism* 30. Professor Ian Campbell points out that order is a central theme in Carlyle’s writings and he traces this concern to Carlyle’s growing up in a home “dominated by a system which stressed order and submission.”(Campbell, <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/thomas-carlyle> I simply can’t find it: sorry. Just leave the internet citation in I suggest). Ian Campbell further explains Carlyle’s longing for a “forcible guidance” of chaotic Victorian society:

²⁸ See John Lamb, “Democracy” in Mark Cumming, Ed. *The Carlyle Encyclopedia*. Cranbury: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2004. P.120

He [Carlyle] survived adolescent identity crisis by imposing order on his own life, and he went on to produce a critique of his times based on an awareness that disorder was threatening to overtake and destroy the advances of the Victorian age and the industrial successes it had achieved. So, in *The French Revolution*, Carlyle clearly articulates his basic political principles: “the king must rule, and the nobles effectively manage their estates; failing this, these orders of society must be put down....In private and in public, Carlyle remained deeply skeptical of his age’s achieving such a structure as he longed for, which does much to explain his growing preoccupation with forcible guidance of an apparently wayward society.

(Ian Campbell, <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/thomas-carlyle> see above

As noted above, Carlyle’s political view, especially his view of “good government” and “divine right” is quite identical with the Confucian philosophy of government, if not under direct influence of Confucianism. In an insightful article entitled “Carlyle and China”(1947), Mei Guangdi (1890-1945), one of the famous Chinese cultural conservative critics with Harvard PhD background, made a comparative study of Carlyle and Confucianism ,appropriately observing that “Carlyle, although not an expert in Chinese studies as he did not write any explicit and systematic article on Chinese matters, had a view of life that was largely identical with the worldview of the Chinese sages. Hence, Carlyle’s comments on China were always to the point” (Mei Guangdi:” Carlyle and China” in *Thoughts and Times Monthly* (1947) p.46) In his *The Origins of Political Order: From Pre-human Times to the French Revolution* (2011), the Japanese-American scholar Francis Fukuyama treats the traditional Chinese political system characterized by meritocracy as a pre-mature paradigm of state-building and attributes what he calls the “high-quality authoritarian government” (instead of an absolute totalitarian government) of ancient China to its “political accountability” resulted from Confucian humanism. Meanwhile, Fukuyama holds completely negative view towards the traditional Chinese government’s lack of “rule of law”, which he thinks might lead to tremendous disasters once governed by a “bad ruler”.²⁹ Arguably Fukuyama’s analysis of the ancient Chinese politics echoes Carlyle’s view of “good government” as well as Carlyle’s comments on the ancient Chinese “literary governors.”

²⁹ See Wu Guo, “Fucuyama’s Observations on Chinese Political History”, BookReview, 12 (2011) (伍国: ” 福山对中国政治史的思考”, (读书), 2011年第12期) 2012-01-08<http://www.dajianet.com/news/2012/0118/179688.shtml>. See also Francis Fucuyama:” There is no universally correct political system”, Global Times, 23 April, 2015. (福山: 没有放之世界皆正确的政治制度) http://opinion.huanqiu.com/opinion_world/2015-04/6261718.html

Part III

Closely correlated with Carlyle's concern for social order and harmony is his sympathetic understanding of the religious dimension of the **Chinese** worship of their Dead Fathers as well as their worship of labour and laws of Heaven. As we know, there have been controversies as to whether there *is* a Chinese religion in the strict sense of the western term of "religion", since the terminologies used in Chinese and Western languages about "religion" may cause semantic and cultural discrepancies and misunderstandings thereof. Some scholars prefer not to use the term "religion" in reference to belief systems in China and suggest "cultural practices", "thought systems" or "philosophies" as more appropriate terms.³⁰ Nevertheless, in the philosophical frameworks that shape Chinese culture there is an internalized logic of religiosity, specifically found in the Confucian worship of ancestors, labours and laws of Heaven.

Carlyle highly approved the Chinese worship of their fathers and in several places of his writing he employed the expression of "go to the grave of their fathers, like Chinese" as if it were an idiom, which is actually a semi-religious practice and ritual of the Chinese to show their worship and memory of their ancestors, mainly on some festival occasions. In his letter to John Sterling dated 3 January, 1842, Carlyle wrote:

My dear Sterling,

A happy new-year to you also;—and thanks withal for your many kindnesses to me! I am not worthy of you; yet I have you. Let us be thankful, let us be hopeful, and stand tightly to our work. Ay de mi, I wonder how people can ring bells at this season: I could rather chaunt Litanies; or go, like the Chinese, to "the grave of my Fathers," and sit silent there. God is great, and man is little and mean, and a fool! Coeur-de-lion shall be deposited duly where you have bidden. Cardalion,—O tempora, O mores, —is a hero of Shakespeare's Parson Hughes!

Carlyle's "sympathy with the Chinese religion" was more evident in his letter to G. E. Jewsbury dated 21 October, 1840, in which he seemed to have realized a divinity of "the meanest life" from the Chinese worship of their dead fathers:

On the whole, I find I have great sympathy with the Chinese religion too; that

³⁰ Rodney L. Taylor. *Proposition and Praxis: The Dilemma of Neo-Confucian Syncretism. Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 32, No. 2, April 1982. p. 187. See also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_China

worship of their Dead Fathers practiced there. This so far as one can see is probably the chief worship they have. God, they say, is “that blue sky,” is “that Immensity all round there”; about Him we know little: but our Loved Ones that lie buried, are not they as Gods to us,—deified; do not our hearts overflow in sacred pity, in solemn reverence for them! We offer these oblations at their tomb;—our mute voice towards them, expressive of what no words will speak! —Alas, what a wretched thing were Life, if there were no Death in it. I fancy the foolishlest man would grow desperate of his existence and its paltrinesses, if that celestial temple, fearful and wonderful to the foolishlest, stood not always in the background. Standing there, it makes the meanest life divine. Dying we do become a kind of Gods. I will speak no more of all this at present. (CL12 : 295-298 TC to Geraldine E. Jewsbury, 21 October 1840 ;DOI ; 10.1215/It-18401021-TC-GEJ-01; CL 12:295-298)

<http://carlyleletters.dukejournals.org/cgi/content/full/30/1/ed-30-jane-welsh-carlyle-journal>

The fact that Carlyle showed very high respect for the memory of his father in whom he took as a “sacred pride” (Reminiscences VOL.I:9) and used a spiritual example all his life may well explain his sympathetic understanding of the Chinese worship of their Dead Fathers. In Reminiscences (1881) Carlyle recalls with grief those venerable clergy of the old days who have left “ineffaceable” impression on him and he laments the loss of the sincerity and the virtues of simplicity of his father’s generation , while criticizing his own generation’s “rushing off into self-consciousness, arrogancy, insincerity, jangle, and vulgarity”(Reminiscences VOL.I: 83 – are you not using another edition of the Reminiscences further down?). What Carlyle might have found in the Chinese ancestor-worship was a sense of spiritual or religious sacredness that was deeply rooted in the ancient Chinese people and overlapped his concept of hero-worship. Carlyle’s concept of heroism, as we know, stresses the hero’s spiritual dimension. In his lecture on Mahomet, Carlyle feels distressed about the decline of “religiosity” in “an Age of Scepticism” permeated with “the saddest spiritual paralysis” (Heroes and Hero-worship ,52) and he sharply points out that “the God’s world” and “the infinite celestial Soul of Man” were reduced to “a dead brute Steam-engine” and “a kind of Hay-balance for weighting hay and thistles on, pleasures and pains on” (Heroes and Hero-worship,75). In his article “In Defense of ‘Religiosity’ ”, David Sorensen argues that Carlyle’s essay on Mahomet “permanently reshaped Victorian attitudes to the Prophet” (Sorensen 211) and that “it was Carlyle’s energetic ‘religiosity’ that enabled him to re-create

the circumstances of Mahomet's conversation with open-eyed verisimilitude" (Sorensen 212). Sorensen also appropriately concludes that Carlyle found a "Divine reality" in Mahomet by "imaginatively intersecting with the Prophet's spiritual awakening" (Sorensen 220). Such a "Divine reality" was, in fact, not only found in Carlyle's imaginative intersection with Mahomet but also in his sympathetic understanding of the Chinese ancestor-worship. In *Past and Present* (1843), Carlyle pinpoints the divine significance of the Chinese yearly visits to the tombs of their ancestors:

—He [The Emperor] and his three hundred millions, it is their chief 'punctuality,' visit yearly the Tombs of their Fathers; each man the Tomb of his Father and his Mother: alone there in silence, with what of 'worship' or other thought there may be, pauses solemnly each man; the divine skies all silent over him; the divine Graves, and this divinest Grave, all silent under him,—the pulsings of his own soul, if he have any soul, alone audible. Truly it may be a kind of worship! Truly, if a man cannot get some glimpse into the Eternities, looking through *this* portal,—through what other need he try it? (Thomas Carlyle: *Past and Present*, London: Chapman and Hall, 1843. P.202)

Carlyle's "religiosity" was not narrowly restricted to Christianity—he possessed a more permissive and broad-minded view of religion than most of his contemporary audience, who were mostly offended by his lecture on Mahomet and were ignorant of the religious dimension of Confucianism. In this sense, Carlyle was a forerunner of cross-cultural communication, particularly in interpreting the Oriental religion. The religiosity or spiritual divinity that Carlyle attempted to refashion for his time by advocating hero-worship also finds expression in his eulogizing the "Gospel of work". An important reason that Carlyle took his father as a noble inspiring idol was he learned from his father "a great maximum of philosophy... that man was created to work" (*Reminiscences* 10). Campbell precisely suggests that Carlyle recognized that behind his father's motivation for work was "his acceptance of a world-order in which the Gospel of Work played a prominent part" (Campbell 1993:179). In addition, Carlyle might have recognized more about the religiosity of the "Gospel of work", since he thought it was only in one's work that one might experience the divine feeling of piety, loyalty and sincerity that is essential to all religions. In Sartor Resartus, "The Everlasting Yea" chapter ends with very biblical languages passionately calling for work:

I too could now say to myself: Be no longer a Chaos, but a World, or even Worldkin. Produce! Produce! Were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of

a Product, produce it, in God's name!' Tis the utmost thou hast in thee: out with it, then. Up, up! Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy whole might. Work while it is called Today; for the Night cometh, wherein no man can work.
(149)

Undoubtedly, between the lines of biblical language, we find a strong Christian commitment to the Gospel of Work. Carlyle's idealization of the religiosity of work is further developed and elucidated in *Past and Present* where he claims he finds "a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness, in Work" and that one's real desire to get work done "will itself lead one more and more to truth, to Nature's appointments and regulations, which are truth"(168). Again in *Past and Present*, Carlyle eulogies in a long passage the Chinese Emperor's "Act of Worship of Labour" by solemnly drawing "a distinct red Furrow with the Plough" on the "Mother Earth", an act symbolizing a kind of religious divinity "in sight of the Seen and Unseen Powers":

Or let us give a glance at China. Our new friend, the Emperor there, is Pontiff of three hundred million men; who do all live and work, these many centuries now, authentically patronized by Heaven so far; and therefore must have some 'religion' of a kind. This Emperor-Pontiff has, in fact, a religious belief of certain Laws, Laws of Heaven; observes with a religious rigour his 'three thousand punctualities,'—given out by men of insight, some sixty generations since, as a legible transcript of the same, —the Heavens do seem to say, not totally an incorrect one. He has not much of a ritual, this Pontiff-Emperor; believes, it is like, with the old Monks, that 'Labour is Worship.' His most public Act of Worship, it appears, is the drawing solemnly at a certain day, on the green bosom of our Mother Earth, when the Heavens, after dead black winter, have again with their vernal radiances awakened her, a distinct red Furrow with the Plough,—signal that all the Ploughs of China are to begin ploughing and worshipping! It is notable enough. He, in sight of the Seen and Unseen Powers, draws his distinct red Furrow there,—saying, and praying, in mute symbolism, so many most eloquent things! (201-202)

Here by borrowing the example of Chinese Emperor's initiating the ploughing at the coming of spring, a grand ceremony of showing worship of the Mother-Earth and the Laws of Heaven, Carlyle once more underlined the "religious vigour" of the Chinese Worship of Labour.

Conclusion

In his writings Carlyle might have presented an idealized vision of ancient China where people were supposed to be ruled by literary governors of moral integrity and enjoyed a “democracy” of “good government”. Without doubt, Carlyle’s understanding of the Chinese politics and philosophy was not entirely accurate. Nevertheless, his romantic vision of Chinese culture and philosophy helps explain his ideas of heroes and hero-worship. More significantly, in so doing Carlyle attempted to shape ancient Chinese culture and philosophy as a corrective to modern Western development. Carlyle’s writings reflect a keen interest in Chinese literary, philosophical and cultural matters where he recognizes a religiosity that is in conformity with his view of heroes and hero-worship. Therefore, “Chinese matters” contribute significantly to the formation of his view of heroes and of hero-worship and add to his critique of Jesuitism and Benthamism in the Victorian age. As Carlyle looked towards China for inspiration we find his multicultural vision, his open-mindedness and his sense of moral justice confirm him as one of the foremost great social thinkers of the 19th nineteenth century.

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SYLLABUS 20115-16

CARLYLE SOCIETY: PROGRAMME FOR 2015-16

2015

October 10	Ian Campbell	<i>The Carlyle Houses</i>
November 28	David Sorensen	<i>Carlyle and George Orwell</i>
December 5	Mary Hollern	<i>Walking with Carlyle. AGM and Christmas party</i>

2016

January 16	Kathy Chamberlain	<i>Seaforth House: Jane Welsh Carlyle's Inner-life Drama in Utopia</i>
February 20	Aileen Christianson	<i>Going on holiday with Thomas Carlyle, Menton, winter 1866-67</i>
March 12	Maurice Milne	<i>Carlyle and Cagliostro</i>

The meetings for this session are as usual in room 1/07 of the University Library in George Square, starting at 1415. Please obtain a visitor's pass at the entrance on arrival.

All are welcome. Further details from Ian.Campbell@ed.ac.uk