The Unspeakable Victorian: Thomas Carlyle, Ideology and Adaptation

Mark Wallace

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School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies, Dublin City University

Supervisor: Dr Brigitte Le Juez

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Abstract

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This thesis aims to provide an analysis of comparative ideologies through close reading of 19th-century fictional texts and their 20th-/21st-century film and television adaptations, isolating similarities and differences in the presentation of specific socio-political issues. The fictional texts in question have been chosen for their display of a complex and substantial dialogue with the writings of the 19th-century political and cultural commentator Thomas Carlyle, a dialogue whose existence is established through documentary evidence and close reading of the texts themselves. By extending the analysis of these texts to their later screen adaptations, Carlyle's ideas become a background against which changing assumptions about the human condition and changing modes of narrativizing said condition come into relief. The suitability of Carlyle for such a study is demonstrated by an examination of his reception history, which establishes him both as a virtually ubiquitous influence on the Anglophone literature of his day and as a near perfect ideological Other for a 21st-century reader in Western culture, articulating stances at odds with ideological tendencies within contemporary culture and embodied in dominant generic tropes of contemporary narrative. Relevant adaptations are considered as a form of reading Carlyle, one whose elements of debate and struggle with the ideological otherness of the text is explored using Gillian Beer's concept of 'arguing with the past'. The importance of a re-consideration of Carlyle's ideas within the context of 21st-century narratives and cultural assumptions is argued using Paul Feyerabend's conception of knowledge as 'an ever increasing ocean of mutually incompatible alternatives', wherein even failed views must be retained and re-worked to add to the content of the whole.

Introduction and Biographical Note on Thomas Carlyle

Thomas Carlyle was a historian, social critic and sage of the Victorian era, one who was particularly notable for the great breadth and depth of his influence on literary men and women of the time and into the early part of the 20th century. His influence was attested to by many of the most prominent literary names of his era. George Eliot wrote in 1855:

> It is an idle question to ask whether his books will be read a century hence; if they were all burnt as the grandest of Suttees on his funeral pile, it would be only like cutting down an oak after its acorns have sown a forest. For there is hardly a superior or active mind of this generation that has not been modified by Carlyle's writings; there has hardly been an English book written for the last ten or twelve years that would not have been different if Carlyle had not lived. The character of his influence is best seen in the fact that many of the men who have the least agreement with his opinions are those to whom the reading of *Sartor Resartus* was an epoch in the history of their minds.[1]

In the later 19th- and through much of the 20th-century, he became an increasingly discredited thinker, for several reasons which will be explored in Chapter 2 of this thesis. This feature of Carlyle's reception history thus makes it somewhat pertinent for a contemporary scholar to revisit Eliot's metaphor of the oak that sows a forest before being cut down, because Carlyle really is no longer read over a century hence. The influence Eliot described is no longer being felt at first-hand, but the books by other authors that he influenced remain in general cultural circulation. Many such books are still widely read and available in multiple editions, and, in numerous cases, adaptations of these works make them even more widely accessible, after a fashion. A focus on Carlyle's work, then, provides a test case in the use of

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[1] George Eliot, 'Thomas Carlyle', *Selected Critical Writings*, ed. Rosemary Ashton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 187-188.

adaptations and reformulations of narratives to convey, perpetuate and re-invigorate ideologies belonging to a particular culture and era within other historico-spatial settings.

The re-insertion of the Carlylean ideological context into the narratives of contemporary adaptations of well-known 19th-century fictional texts should be seen as a form of 'arguing with the past', in Gillian Beer's term. Beer was describing a certain type of reading, one of a contested, critical and stimulating sort, and one that she applied above all to the reading of literature of the past, in its ineluctable otherness. When it is considered that Thomas Leitch has recently called for a consideration of film adaptations as 'illustrations of the incessant process of rewriting as critical reading',[2] the possibilities of Beer's approach for the field of adaptation studies become clear. This will be elucidated in Chapter 1.

The point of such an ideological re-insertion is not necessarily a demonstration of Carlyle's enduring relevance. The point is, rather, (as well as the aforementioned introduction of a new analytical model to adaptation studies) to acknowledge and demonstrate that the presentation of unwonted viewpoints, of which Carlyle's work will be taken as an exemplar, can still be taken as an addition to knowledge in a broad humanistic sense of that term. To this end, the work on epistemology of Paul Feyerabend will be explored and utilized. Feyerabend argued that science is only useful in so far as its aims are humanistic, and further that the scientific method as commonly understood does not account for or tally with the actual *history* of scientific progress. For humanistic and scientific progress, he insists, a *pluralistic* methodology is essential, and the act of comparison is central. Equally pertinently, even apparently failed attempts at explaining the world are retained for comparative purposes and for potential rehabilitation of elements thereof. The particular applicability of Feyerabendian epistemology to this project is clear: both because of the large-scale rejection of Carlylean thought in contemporary times – it

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[2] Thomas Leitch, *Film Adaptation and its Discontents: From Gone With the Wind to The Passion of the Christ* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), p. 16.

is a failed attempt at explaining the world; and also because Feyerabend's work tends in fact to accord with Carlyle's own approach, which eschews the *disciplinary* pursuit of knowledge for a more generalized and intuitive epistemological mode. Thus Carlyle's thought can be encountered partially from within, and using a mode of analysis which is not wholly alien to his own work, at least in terms of its transdisciplinary epistemology. Feyerabend's approach will be fully elucidated in Chapter 1.

While a seam of Carlylean influence is detectable within many great literary works of the 19th century, the nature of this influence is not always easily delineated. Even to his contemporaries, steeped as they were in his works, it was often difficult to place the particular power of his prose. Walt Whitman declared on Carlyle's death:

> It will be difficult for the future […] to account for the deep hold this author has taken on the present age, and the way he has color'd its method and thought. I am certainly at a loss to account for it all as affecting myself. But there could be no view, or even partial picture, of the middle and latter part of our Nineteenth century, that did not markedly include Thomas Carlyle.[3]

It has indeed proven difficult for later generations to appreciate Carlyle's writings for themselves. Recently, he has been declared to be 'irrelevant', 'not easy to like', or 'pretty much a racist, egotistical windbag'.[4] Nevertheless, the fact of Carlyle's huge influence on literature is indisputable. Dickens inscribed *Hard Times* 'To Thomas Carlyle'; Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* takes its epigraph from Carlyle; Marcel Proust had Carlyle's portrait hanging on the wall of the study where he wrote *À la*

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[3] Jules Paul Seigel, ed., *Carlyle: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971) p. 459.
[4] Courtney Traub, '"The Madness of Forgiveness": Eliza Tamarkin on Thomas Carlyle', *Rothermere American Institute* (11 October 2012) http://www.rai.ox.ac.uk/node/399 [12 July 2014]; Ian Campbell, 'Discriminating Idolatry' *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 45:1 (2012), p. 1; *Goodreads*, 'Elisa's review of *Past and Present*' (23 January 2012) https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/260021419?book_show_action=true&page=1 [18 December 2014].

recherche du temps perdu;[5] and Oscar Wilde wrote many of his most famous works at Carlyle's old desk.[6] Carlyle or his work is name-checked in such diverse fictional works as George Eliot's *Adam Bede* (1859), Thomas Hughes' *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857), H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895) and Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* (1887). In the latter, indeed, Sherlock Holmes' apparent ignorance of Carlyle is a source of amazement to Watson, a reference to Carlyle's ubiquitous fame at the time.[7] The full list would be almost endless: for *Sartor Resartus* (1833-4) alone, Rodger L. Tarr produces dozens of examples of texts whose debts are clear.[8] Many of the specific debts have been documented and analysed. But Eliot's suggestion that even were Carlyle not read a hundred years hence it would not affect the fact of his already established influence has not been specifically attended to. The present thesis will investigate Eliot's contention, by analysing the latter-day adaptations of Carlyle-influenced works and noting how they compare with the Carlylean ideology that pervades much of 19th-century Anglophone literature. No definitive judgement on the accuracy or otherwise of Eliot's statement can be arrived at through this selection of case studies, but openings for possible ways in which Carlyle does or can inform narrative ideologies of the present time will arise, as well as areas where ideologies related to or resembling Carlyle's have become unrepresentable in popular narrative, found especially by analysis of development of the Sherlock Holmes avatar.

In summation, the methodology of this thesis, to be further refined in the first chapter, will involve identifying a selection of significantly Carlyle-influenced writers and fictional texts of the latter half of the 19th-century, and performing comparative analyses between these fictional texts and their late 20th-

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[5] Jean-Yves Tadié, *Marcel Proust*, trans. Euan Cameron (London: Penguin, 2000), pp. 339-342.

[6] Marylu Hill, 'A tale of a table: Oscar Wilde, Virginia Woolf and the legacy of Thomas Carlyle', *Carlyle Studies Annual* (29) 2013, pp. 137-154.

[7] Adaptations leave this reference out, concentrating instead on the exchange during the same conversation during which Holmes admits (or mischievously claims) to know nothing of the earth's movement around the sun. The Carlyle reference is no longer coherent, illustrating neatly his reputational trajectory. In the next Holmes story, *The Sign of Four* (1890), Holmes demonstrates that he *does* know Carlyle.

[8] Rodger L. Tarr, ed., "Introduction", *Sartor Resartus*, b Thomas Carlyle (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp.xxviii-xxxiv.

/early 21st-century screen adaptations with special reference to the *ideological* content of the texts, given Carlyle's primary influence was not as literary stylist but as what could be called a cultural prophet, a social moralist or a sage – that is, one who is concerned above all with setting out a 'Life-Philosophy [...], something that will veritably transform men's outlook'.[9] In order to deal with such an eminently and centrally capacious aim in an open manner without restricting the potential subject matter of the thesis, a capacious analytical concept must be employed. The term 'ideology' and its complex and sometimes contradictory history will be explored in the first chapter, but the definition used will purposely be fairly broad, to allow the maximum scope for conceptualizing and analysing Carlyle's influence. The ideological comparison will then allow for a reading of source and adaptation that focusses on the struggles and debates that take place between them, the argument with the past that is constituted by an adaptation of an earlier text.

The rest of this introduction will comprise a biographical note on Carlyle. Following this, Chapter 1 will present the methodology of the thesis. This chapter has been divided into two sections. The first is on the study of adaptation of narrative works, incorporating also an account of Beer's 'arguing with the past' and its relevance to adaptation studies. The second deals with the history and usage of the term 'ideology', incorporating also a defence of non-disciplinary terms (or terms used in non-disciplinary ways) and of methodologies which transcend disciplinarity. Knowledge will be defined in this section with reference to the work of Paul Feyerabend, whose account of scientific progress demonstrates that no single method can be relied on to produce knowledge, and thus that the act of comparison is key. Following from such an approach to knowledge will be the argument that Comparative Literature is a discipline within which the role of explicit methodology may profitably and appropriately be limited.

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[9] John Holloway, *The Victorian Sage: Studies in Argument* (London: MacMillian, 1953), p. 22.

Chapter 2 will comprise a reception history of Thomas Carlyle, from the 1830s to the present. The remaining chapters, four in all, will be case studies. Chapter 3 will deal with the 2004 BBC serial *North & South*, based on Elizabeth Gaskell's 1854-55 novel, and will be thematically centred on the Carlylean figure of the Captain of Industry, who, it will be argued, appears in Gaskell's work as a figure of social resolution and unification; the alteration of this figure in the 21st-century adaptation will be analysed with a view to ideological comparison. Chapter 4 concerns *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012), the final film in director Christopher Nolan's blockbuster Batman trilogy, and will consider the relation of influence between that film and Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) as one of adaptation, going on to examine resonances between Nolan's film and Carlyle's work on the French Revolution (well known to be a major inspiration for Dickens). It will be argued that the film is more Carlylean than its Dickensian source, and that it explores Carlylean answers to issues of social unrest, political disaffection, the decay of authority. Chapter 5 will deal with Sherlock Holmes, relating Carlyle's Hero-figure to Arthur Conan Doyle's famous detective, and analysing representations of the character in screen adaptations, focussing especially on the BBC series *Sherlock* (2010-), and relating differing depictions of the character's apparent asexuality to dominant ideals of manhood in the surrounding culture at the relevant points in history, particularly the Carlylean ideal, which, it will be shown, influenced Doyle, but which appears in the adaptation to be in tension with popular tropes of 21st-century television, creating an ideological impasse particular to adaptation as a form. The final case study, Chapter 6, concerns Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and its adaptation in Francis Ford Coppola's film *Apocalypse Now* (1979). In this context the thesis will examine the Carlylean figure of the Hero as Man of Letters as a presence in Conrad's novella, and the manner in which this presence is not just reproduced with variations in Coppola's film, but how it informed even Coppola's self-image during the making of *Apocalypse Now*, and the media discourse that surrounded the making of the film, thus

returning to a central consideration of Carlyle's: that the Hero is not a figure of cultural representation, but a realized historical figure, an ideal to be striven for rather than a literary trope.

It will not in every case be argued that these adaptations represent the endurance of Carlylean ideology. Rather, the Carlylean ideology embedded in the source texts may be in tension with cultural norms and generic expectations which also inform the adaptations, potentially articulating an ideological tension or impasse rather than a positive engagement with Carlylean ideological elements. Such ideological tension will be explored further in Chapter 2.

The choice of fictional texts chosen for the case studies was based on a confluence of factors: each study text had to have been adapted for film or television, preferably relatively recently; the source texts had to be of 19th- or early 20th-century vintage, in other words of the period in which it was asserted by Whitman that Carlyle had 'color'd its method and thought'. The degree of actual familiarity and expressed engagement with Carlyle of the authors of these source-texts varied: some were very keen admirers (Dickens, Conan Doyle), others were more equivocal (Gaskell, Conrad). All were of an age that was believed by many of the most distinguished commentators (Eliot, Whitman, Henry David Thoreau)[10] thereof to be suffused with Carlyle's writings and thought, and all produced some of the most widely and enduringly influential literary work of that period. The source texts by Gaskell, Dickens, Doyle and Conrad are relatively homogenous, being all English works of fiction of the Victorian age.[11] The adaptations are generically heterogeneous, but all are self-consciously in dialogue with literature of the 19th century. I will be reading them less in terms of their generic qualities than as narrative works with declared literary predecessors. This form of dialogue transcends genre, to demonstrate which films from

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[10] The former two have already been quoted. For Thoreau, see the review essay 'Thomas Carlyle and his Works', excerpted in Seigel, pp. 277-301.
[11] Some of the Sherlock Holmes stories discussed will be from after the death of Victoria in 1901, but the character was established in 1887 and first came to popularity within the parameters of the Victorian age.

different genres have been chosen. Thus, though *The Dark Knight Rises* can be and often is unproblematically classified as a superhero film, such a classification is limiting as much as it is illuminating. An overview of paratextual material will establish that the authorial intent underlying this film embraced wider influences, and its reception likewise shows it to transcend the superhero genre in the consciousness of its audience.[12] Similarly, *Apocalypse Now* could be considered a war film, but its literary intertexts provide evidence of wider scope. *North & South* is generically a period drama, and thus representative of the genre that might be expected to be informed by Victorian ideologies like Carlyle's. *Sherlock*, notwithstanding its source, is not a period drama, being set in 21st-century London, but is, for the most part, structured along the lines of the detective genre. Thus the focus is transgeneric, embracing specimens of several of the most widespread and popular genres of recent times. The conversations I wish to document and analyse in this thesis (try to) go beyond notions of genre, and attempt to embrace the human condition in its fullness. That they are read as so attempting is imperative to performing a sympathetic engagement of Carlyle, for his aims were distinctly not generic nor disciplinary, relying instead on an epistemology without borders, as delineated in the opening pages of *Sartor Resartus*:

> [W]ould Criticism erect not only finger-posts and turnpikes, but spiked gates and impassable barriers, for the mind of man? It is written, 'Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.' Surely the plain rule is, Let each considerate person have his way, and see what it will lead to. For not this man and that man, but all men make up mankind, and their united tasks the task of mankind. How often have we seen some such adventurous, and perhaps much-censured

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[12] It will be argued in Chapter 4 that *The Dark Knight Rises* is an adaptation. Of course, a more obvious and straightforward example of the form could be chosen, but a focus on straightforward adaptations of 19th-century fictional texts would risk tedium and repetition. The ideological and formal sameness of the classical period adaptation has been outlined in Andrew Higson, *Film England: Culturally English Filmmaking since the 1990s* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

wanderer light on some out-lying, neglected, yet vitally momentous province; the hidden treasures of which he first discovered, and kept proclaiming till the general eye and effort were directed thither, and the conquest was completed;- thereby, in these his seemingly so aimless rambles, planting new standards, founding new habitable colonies, in the immeasurable circumambient realm of Nothingness and Night! Wise man was he who counselled that Speculation should have free course, and look fearlessly towards all the thirty-two points of the compass, whithersoever and howsoever it listed.[13]

Thus Carlyle cannot be fully assessed or engaged with as a generic writer or a disciplinary thinker. Instead, the context to be introduced must be a wide one, demonstrating that various narrative genres can and do intersect with Carlylean themes without exhausting them, and analysing the dialogue between the selected adaptations and these themes with an intent no less capacious than Carlyle's own.

Biographical Note on Thomas Carlyle

Thomas Carlyle's biography has been documented many times, but a brief synopsis at this point will help to ground the analysis of his writings and his reception. His writings have obvious biographical elements, not to mention those of psychological projection, while his nineteenth-century reception did not take place in an autobiographical vacuum – the Death of the Author was still far into the future, [14] and interest in literary figures was huge. In fact, Carlyle himself, in an influential 1832 essay, advocated biography as the sole substantial interest of literature, even purportedly fictional literature:

Again, consider the whole class of Fictitious Narratives: from the highest category of epic or dramatic Poetry, in Shakspeare [sic] and Homer, down to the lowest of froth Prose, in the

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[13] Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, ed. by Kerry McSweeney and Peter Sabor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 5. 'Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased' is from the King James Bible, Daniel 12:4.
[14] Roland Barthes, 'Death of the Author', *Image Music Text*, trans. By Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), pp. 142-148.

Fashionable Novel. *What are all these but so many mimic Biographies?* Attempts, here by an

inspired Speaker, there by an uninspired Babbler, to deliver himself, more or less ineffectually, of

the grand secret wherewith all hearts labour oppressed: The significance of Man's Life;- which

deliverance, even as traced in the unfurnished head, and printed at the Minerva Press, finds

readers. [My italics][15]

If fiction was mimic biography, then, biography was the ideal of fiction, and the most important and

most fundamental of all literary genres. Carlyle's love of the genre was somewhat ironic in view of the

part his own biography was to play in his reputational downfall, to be discussed in Chapter 2.

Thomas Carlyle was born in 1795 in Ecclefechan, a small town in the south of Scotland, in the county of

Dumfriesshire, the eldest of nine children. His father worked as a stonemason, and was 'thrifty and

prudent', meaning the young Carlyles were well-fed and cleanly clothed, and thus, by the standards of

the working-class community of Ecclefechan, well off.[16] Carlyle's father and mother, James and

Margaret Carlyle, were strict and pious Calvinists, and his childhood, he later recalled, was 'not a joyful

life[…], yet a safe and quiet one.'[17] He learned to read and write at home, and began to attend the

Annan Grammar School at age 9. His experience there was not a pleasant one. Of his fellow pupils he

wrote: 'Unspeakable is the damage and defilement I got out of those coarse unguided tyrannous cubs.'[18]

His attitude towards the educational practices of the school is echoed in the semi-autobiographical

Sartor Resartus, in the words of that book's hero Diogenes Teufelsdröckh on his education at the

Hinterschlag Gymnasium:

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[15] *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, 4 vols in 2 (London: Chapman and Hall, 1898), v. 3, pp. 38-39.
[16] James Anthony Froude, *Thomas Carlyle: A History of the First Forty Years of his Life*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, 1882), v. 1, p. 9.
[17] Froude, *First Forty*, v. 1, p. 10.
[18] Froude, *First Forty*, v. 1, p. 17.

My teachers […] were hide-bound pedants, without knowledge of man's nature or of boy's; or of aught save their lexicons and quarterly account-books […]. How can an inanimate, mechanical Gerund-grinder, the like of whom will, in a subsequent century, be manufactured at Nürnberg out of wood and leather, foster the growth of any thing; much more of Mind, which grows, not like a vegetable (by having its roots littered with etymological compost), but like a Spirit, by mysterious contact of Spirit; Thought kindling itself at the fire of living Thought […]? The Hinterschlag Professors knew Syntax enough; and of the human soul thus much: that it had a faculty called Memory, and could be acted on through the muscular integument by appliance of birch rods.[19]

But despite his difficulties with the personnel and the practices of the school, he was early identified as a promising pupil, with the result that the decision was made to send him to Edinburgh University shortly before his 14th birthday.

The Scottish university system was a very particular one, differing substantially from the English one of the time. It provided a 'basic general education, at approximately what we would now regard as secondary level, for a body of unprivileged and often very poor students'.[20] Enrolment was cheap, but resources were scarce and classes were overcrowded. Once again, Carlyle reflected with disdain on this education in *Sartor Resartus*:

It is my painful duty to say that, out of England and Spain, ours was the worst of all hitherto discovered Universities.

[…]

Had you, any where in Crim Tartary, walled in a square enclosure; furnished it with a small, ill-chosen Library; and then turned loose into it eleven hundred Christian striplings, to tumble about

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[19] *Sartor*, pp. 81-82.
[20] A.L. Le Quesne, 'Carlyle', in Le Quesne, et al., *Victorian Thinkers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 11.

as they listed, from three to seven years; certain persons, under the title of Professors, being stationed at the gates, to declare aloud that it was a University, and exact considerable admission-fees,- you had, not indeed in mechanical structure, yet in spirit and result, some imperfect resemblance of our High Seminary.

[…]

What vain jargon of controversial Metaphysic, Etymology, and mechanical Manipulation, falsely named Science, was current there, I indeed learned, better perhaps than the most.[21]

The content of the teaching at the University jarred considerably with the Calvinist theology he had been brought up on, but Carlyle's progress at the University was satisfactory, and he excelled in mathematics – perhaps surprising in a writer renowned for his lack of systematicity and who the eminent 19th-century sociologist and philosopher Herbert Spencer pronounced to be 'almost incapable of consecutive thinking'.[22] Yet his academic progress masked an ongoing emotional/spiritual crisis. His parents expected him to become a minister, but he had quickly begun to lose his faith upon entering University, where he was exposed to writers such as the philosopher David Hume and the historian Edward Gibbon and to the general air of rationalism that permeated the University in the aftermath of the Scottish Enlightenment.[23]

While still enrolled in Edinburgh University, Carlyle took up teaching. He was not obliged to come to an immediate decision regarding joining the ministry, and so teaching bought him time. He taught for four years in the Dumfriesshire area, but detested the occupation, eventually giving it up with the

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[21] *Sartor*, pp. 85-88.
[22] Mark Cumming, ed., *The Carlyle Encyclopedia* (Cranford, NY: Associated University Presses, 2004), p. 438.
[23] 'Scottish Enlightenment', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/529682/Scottish-Enlightenment

observation 'better die than be a schoolmaster for one's living'.[24] By this time, he had fully renounced

the ministry, much to his mother's disappointment. He returned to Edinburgh in 1818 with his small

savings and without any prospects of advancement. As his first and most important biographer James

Anthony Froude put it: '[h]e was poor, unpopular, comparatively unknown, or, if known, known only to

be feared and shunned.'[25] His letters of the time show him becoming increasingly gloomy, as well as

increasingly prone to a painful stomach ailment of mysterious provenance which recurred through much

of his life. Where physical pain began and emotional problems left off is difficult to ascertain:

> [T]o-day the *guts* are all wrong again, the headache, the weakness, the black despondency are
>
> overpowering me. I fear those paltry viscera will fairly dish me at last.
>
> […]
>
> I am grown a very weak creature of late. The heart longs for some kind of sympathy; and in
>
> Edinburgh I find little of it.[26]

 He was never to wholly emerge from these dark moods, as his private writings make clear, but the time

he spent without employment in Edinburgh was among the most difficult of his life, though also the one

in which he began writing for remuneration, in the form of articles for *Brewster's Encyclopaedia*.

Carlyle eventually secured a steady employment as tutor to a wealthy family, but, although he initially

enjoyed the role, after two years he grew discontented and decided to devote all his energies to writing.

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[24] Froude, *First Forty*, v. 1, p. 55.
[25] Froude, *First Forty*, v. 1, p. 57.
[26]   'TC   to   John   A.   Carlyle',   *Carlyle   Letters   Online*   (10   February   1821)
http://carlyleletters.dukejournals.org/cgi/content/full/1/1/lt-18210210-TC-JAC-01 [12 October 2015].
Also quoted in Simon Heffer, *Moral Desperado: A Life of Thomas Carlyle* (London: Phoenix-Orion, 1996), p. 55.
Heffer applies the word 'hypochondriac' to Carlyle in this place. In his 'Psychosomatic Biography' of Carlyle, James
A. Halliday concluded that 'the disturbances of stomach functioning result[ed] from the conflicting operation of the
impulses of hunger-for-love and of anger-guilt'. *Mr. Carlyle, My Patient: A Psychosomatic Biography* (London:
Heinemann, 1949), p. 43. In any case, most biographers agree that Carlyle's stomach and bowel ailments had a
psychosomatic component.

Meanwhile, after a long courtship, he married Jane Welsh in 1826. In an ambiguous semi-acceptance of his marriage proposal, she wrote in 1825: 'I love you, and I should be the most ungrateful and injudicious of mortals if I did not. But I am not *in love* with you […] [.] it is a simple, honest, serene affection, made up of admiration and sympathy, and better perhaps to found domestic enjoyment in than any other.'[27] When they did get married, it was not without evident reservations on her part, both as to their temperamental compatibility and Carlyle's lack of income and prospects, though she was convinced of his genius: 'I am resolved in spirit, and even joyful – joyful in the face of the dreaded ceremony, of starvation, and of every horrible fate. Oh, my dearest friend, be always so good to me, and I shall make the best and happiest wife.'[28] Thus began one of the best-documented and most-discussed marriages of the 19th century, not a happy marriage in the conventional sense – but then Carlyle, at least, did not believe in happiness. They were both highly-strung and difficult people, hence Samuel Butler's famous remark made many years later to the effect that it was 'very good of God to let Carlyle and Mrs Carlyle marry one another, and so make only two people miserable instead of four.'[29]

Jane Welsh Carlyle had a small annuity, and Carlyle himself had, over the following years, occasional but unreliable and rather paltry income from articles written for literary journals. He was by no means an overnight literary success, but as important essays like 'The History of German Literature' (1827), 'Signs of the Times' (1829), 'Characteristics' (1831), 'On History' (1831) and 'Biography' (1832) appeared, he came to the attention of many within literary circles. One of his first and most important admirers was Ralph Waldo Emerson, who looked up Carlyle in his isolated farmhouse in Dumfriesshire in 1833 having read and admired his early essays. The following year, following the serial publication of *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34) in *Fraser's Magazine*, Carlyle and Jane made the necessary move to London to allow him to

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[27] Froude, *First Forty*, v. 1, p. 277.
[28] Froude, *First Forty*, v. 1, p. 359.
[29] Quoted in Rosemary Ashton, *Thomas and Jane Carlyle: Portrait of a Marriage* (Kindle: Random House, 2012), loc. 423. This book is the most complete recent account of the marriage as a whole.

further his writing career. He was now in his late 30s, and in the wake of *Sartor*'s unfavourable reception[30] he considered this to be 'the last chance I shall ever have to redeem my existence from pain and imprisonment, and make something of the faculty I have'.[31] In London, he developed a friendship with John Stuart Mill, and it was through the use of Mill's library of resources on the French Revolution that Carlyle wrote his epic history of that event. Famously, Carlyle lent his only copy of his first draft of volume one of the book to Mill to be told later by a distraught Mill that a careless housemaid had burned the entire volume. Carlyle received the news with relative equanimity, prompting Froude to note: 'It served in fact to show how admirably, though in little things so querulous and irritable, he could behave under real misfortunes.'[32] A guilt-ridden Mill insisted on giving Carlyle £100 as compensation, and Carlyle spent the next several months rewriting the volume.

It was the publication of *The French Revolution: A History* in 1837 that finally brought Carlyle a measure of wider recognition, and, albeit not in the immediate term, financial security. It was helped by a eulogistic review from Mill, partially reflecting his admiration for the work, partially motivated by guilt. Mill later opined that the success of Carlyle's work was 'considerably accelerated' by his review.[33] In any case, Carlyle's reputation took off over the course of the next several years, all the more so as he began to fix his attention on what he called the Condition-of-England Question. In the late 30s he also began to give series of lectures – a useful source of income, but an activity that he disliked: 'I am in no case so sorry for myself as when standing up there bewildered, distracted, nine-tenths of my poor faculty lost in terror and wretchedness, a spectacle to men.'[34] After 1840 and his fourth annual series, he entirely renounced this occupation. His general popularity was rapidly increasing at this point and continued to

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[30] Froude, *First Forty*, v. 2, p. 363.
[31] Froude, *First Forty*, v. 2, p. 413.
[32] Froude, *Thomas Carlyle: A History of His Life in London, 1834-1881,* 2 vols (London: Longmans, 1884), v.1, p. 26.
[33] John Stuart Mill, *Autobiography* (London: Longman, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1874), p. 217.
[34] Froude, *London*, v. 1, p. 184.

do so throughout much of the 1840s, but Jane was in increasingly poor health, and their relationship was fraught and recriminative, partly because Carlyle was spending a great deal of time at the home of aristocratic socialite Lady Harriet Baring. The relation, and his initial insistence that Jane also befriend her, led to a prolonged dispute, and, Froude writes, a festering resentment on Jane's part: '[T]he wound burst out at intervals, embittering Carlyle's life, and saddening a disposition which did not need further clouds upon it.'[35]

Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850) met with considerable controversy, and tended to confirm a view that had been growing through the previous years that Carlyle was inordinately respectful of brute force and tyranny. He derived a certain grim satisfaction from regarding the voluminous criticism: 'The barking babble of the world continues in regard to these Pamphlets, hardly any wise word at all reaching me in reference to them; but I must say out my say in one shape or another, and will, if Heaven help me, not minding that at all.'[36] He effectively retired from social criticism and Condition-of-England reflections thereafter,[37] and he and Jane lived a quiet, retired life through the 50s and into the 60s: she was frequently in poor health. He wrote a short biography of his late friend, the poet John Sterling. It was a work whose gentle mood served somewhat to erase the impression of brutality created by the *Pamphlets*.[38] Thereafter, he spent a torturous thirteen years writing a biography of Frederick the Great of Prussia (written 1852-65; published 1858-65 in six volumes). His mother, to whom he had remained extremely close, died in 1854. He remained an esteemed figure in literary circles (as Eliot's 1855 quote shows) and more widely, but, though often visited by such quasi-disciples as historian James Anthony Froude (his future biographer) and art critic *cum* social critic John Ruskin, his sense of personal isolation

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[35] Froude, *London*, v. 1, p. 393.
[36] Froude, *London*, v. 2, p. 36.
[37] Except the pamphlet 'Shooting Niagara' (1867), a brief return to the Condition-of-England Question after a seventeen-year silence.
[38] See, for example, George Eliot, 'Unsigned Review [of *Life of John Sterling*]', *Carlyle: The Critical Heritage*, Siegel, p. 377.

remained, finding copious expression in his letters and journals.[39] This became particularly apparent

after the death of Jane Welsh Carlyle in 1866; hereafter, Carlyle's private writings began to 'dwell on his

bitter loneliness, his desire to be reunited with Jane, the futility of living on in a world where he seemed

more and more out of place.'[40] Carlyle's own health began a slow decline in the late 1860s, and his

interest in the affairs of mankind waned, occasionally briefly rekindled in response to notable

occurrences – for example, he publicly opposed the movement lead by his old friend Mill to bring to trial

Governor Edward John Eyre of Jamaica for murder when Eyre oversaw the rushed trial and execution of

several hundred Jamaican blacks after the Morant Bay Rebellion.[41] Carlyle and the arch-liberal Mill were

by now used to being on opposite sides of most public debates. Indeed, Carlyle had complained that Mill

had 'taken the function of standing up to contradict whatever I say'.[42]

Carlyle was much honoured in his old age: he was given the honorary position of Rector of Edinburgh

University in 1866; he was awarded the Prussian Order of Merit in 1874; in the same year, Prime

Minister Benjamin Disraeli wrote to offer him a Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath, which he

refused.[43] But one of his few enduring interests into old age, according to Froude, was giving charitably

to all the needy who came within his orbit: 'No donation of his ever appeared on printed lists […]. The

undeserving were seldom wholly refused. The deserving were never forgotten […]. His one expensive

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[39] Carlyle's voluminous correspondence is available online: *The Carlyle Letters Online: A Victorian Culture Reference* http://carlyleletters.dukejournals.org/ [11 December 2014].

[40] Ian Campbell, *Thomas Carlyle* (Edinburgh: Saltire Society, 1993), p. 148.

[41] Sarah Winter, 'On the Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica and the Governor Eyre-George William Gordon Controversy, 1865-1870' *Branch: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History* http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=sarah-winter-on-the-morant-bay-rebellion-in-jamaica-and-the-governor-eyre-george-william-gordon-controversy-1865-70 [28 Oct 2015].

[42] Froude, *London*, v. 2, p. 28. Mill literally stood up to contradict Carlyle during the latter's lecture on Mohammed in 1840, when Carlyle suggested Islam was, at least, preferable to Benthamite utilitarianism. Calling out simply 'No', Mill left the auditorium. For other direct refutations of Carlyle, see Mill's 'Reply to Carlyle, *Examiner*, 1848' in Seigel, pp. 304-309; and John Stuart Mill, 'The Negro Question', *Fraser's Magazine* (1850) http://www.efm.bris.ac.uk/het/mill/negro.htm [11 November 2014].

[43] His reply to Disraeli went as follows: '[T]itles of honour are, in all degrees of them, out of keeping with the tenour of my own poor existence hitherto in this epoch of the world, and would be an encumbrance, not a furtherance to me[.]' Froude, *London*, v. 2, p. 430.

luxury was charity.'[44] Froude even estimates: '[H]e gave away every year perhaps half of what he received.'[45] For the rest, he lived quietly, honoured but somewhat lonely and remaining steadfastly convinced that the world in general had taken quite the wrong path in political, social and economic terms. 'They call me a great man now,' he said to Froude shortly before his death, 'but not one believes what I have told them.'[46] He died on the 4th of February, 1881, at the ripe age of eighty-five. His death was the occasion for many encomiums, but his life and work was soon afterwards to become the subject of a huge public debate, and this will be dealt with in Chapter 2.

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[44] Froude, *London*, v. 2, p. 347.
[45] Froude, *London*, v. 1, p. 474.
[46] Froude, *First Forty*, v. 2, p. 478.

Chapter 1: Methodology

As stated in the introduction, this chapter will be divided into two sections: 'Adaptation' and 'Ideology'. The first will elucidate the particular approaches used in studying narrative as it manifests itself in screen adaptations of literary works. It will also introduce the concept of 'arguing with the past', borrowed from Gillian Beer, as a useful tool for dealing with adaptations, and one that informs the current study. The second section will introduce the history and various meanings of the term ideology, justifying its usage in the thesis, and relating it to the study of narrative and adaptation.

Adaptation

An adaptation is a text which is distinguished by having a particular relation to a text which came before. In Linda Hutcheon's influential definition, it is 'an extended, deliberate, announced revisitation of a particular work of art.'[1] In practice, the 'work of art' referred to by adaptation as a field of academic study is usually a narrative work – most often, adaptation studies have dealt with a novel or other work of literature that is made into a film or other screen text. Although this *transmedial* element is not part of Hutcheon's definition, it has been central to most adaptation studies since George Bluestone's founding text of the discipline, which was published in 1957 under the self-explanatory title *Novels into Film*. Thus the classical subject of adaptation studies is narrative in motion. This is a position that has been challenged, notably by Robert Stam, whose intertextual approach to adaptation is regularly cited in the field. Stam considers that 'every text forms an intersection of textual surfaces. All texts are tissues of anonymous formulae, variations on those formulae, conscious and unconscious quotations, and conflations and inversions of other texts.'[2] For Stam, adaptation studies should situate itself within the broader field of intertextuality, and thus provide more capacious readings of both source and

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[1] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 170.
[2] Robert Stam, 'Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation', *Film Adaptation,* ed., James Naremore, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000), p. 64.

adaptation. While one cannot argue with the general correctness of Stam's view, and it should perhaps be remembered that Stam was writing within a context wherein considerations of fidelity to the source text created the dominant paradigm for adaptation study, intertextuality can only be applied with modification to adaptation. This is because there are two opposing principles that must be borne in mind in creating a methodology for adaptation studies:

1 *The source text cannot be considered as the unique source of material and meaning from which the adaptation is constructed*. The history of adaptation studies was characterized by Robert B. Ray in 2000 as consisting of 'asking about individual movies the same unproductive layman's question (How does the film compare to the book?), [and] getting the same unproductive answer (The book is better).[3] More recently, this approach has been serially debunked by Robert Ray, Thomas Leitch, Hutcheon, Stam and, indeed, countless others, all of whom felt themselves to be almost lone voices in the struggle against the dominance of fidelity criticism.[4] Not only is there, as Stam points out in contradiction to arguments regarding fidelity, an 'automatic difference' between works in different media,[5] but the personnel involved cannot help but bring an automatic difference of their own to the work, be it the director as *auteur*, the actors, or other participants. Further, there is a cultural separation between source and adaptation, spatial or temporal, which is bound to further inflect the material. Each adaptation comes from within a specific community which has its own particular 'structure of feeling' – Raymond Williams' phrase to describe 'the specificity of present being' and the embodiment of social consciousness, particularly of the emergent and kind unincorporated art[6] – and it has long been a commonplace of

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[3] Robert B. Ray, 'The Field of "Literature and Film"', *Film Adaptation*, ed. Naremore, p. 44.
[4] Meanwhile, the debunkings of Stam, Leitch and Brian McFarlane have themselves been debunked as being covertly driven by the very fidelity principle they abjure by Shelley Cobb, 'Adaptation, Fidelity, and Gendered Discourses', *Adaptation* 4:1 (2011), pp. 28-37. They and other critics of the fidelity approach are further taken to task by Casie Hermansson in 'Flogging Fidelity: In Defense of the (Un)Dead Horse', *Adaptation*, 8:2 (2015), pp. 147-160.
[5] Stam, 'Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation', *Film Adaptation*, ed. Naremore, p. 55.
[6] Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 128.

literary and film criticism to attempt to locate this culturally determined or mediated material in a work

and derive insights into the community thereby.[7] All of these factors mean that asking simply 'How does

the film compare to the book?' will invariably produce an impoverished reading of the adapting text.

2 *An adaptation has a particular relation to the source, different in kind from general relations of*

intertextuality. That an adaptation has a particular relation to its source may seem a rather obvious

claim, yet Stam's intertextual approach to adaptation, while overturning conventional overdependence

on source-adaptation comparisons, are in danger of relegating the source to just another intertext, and

thus depriving adaptation study of its claim to individuality. The relation of adaptation to source can be

taken to be, as a general rule perhaps admitting exceptions, more extended and systematic than that

generally comprehended by the notion of intertextuality.[8] There exists between source and adaptation

an, as it were, special relationship, without which the field of adaptation studies does not exist.

The nature of this extended relation may be explored in several ways, among the more productive of

which is by narrative analysis. Tom Gunning has documented how early cinema was concerned almost

exclusively with the 'harnessing of visibility, this act of showing and exhibition'. This was the 'cinema of

attractions' and it was the dominant mode, according to Gunning, until about 1906.[9] Thereafter what

Gunning regards as a total sea-change in the use of cinema took place, with the turn to narrative. It

should, then, be possible to compare source and adaptation using a narrative analysis, as has been most

comprehensively performed by Brian McFarlane in *Novel to Film* (1997). McFarlane contends that: '[t]he

more one considers the phenomenon of adaptation and novel into film – the whole history of the

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[7] At its most extreme, this approach would see all artworks simply as a 'reflection' of socio-economic conditions. See discussion in Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, pp. 95-97.

[8] Christine Geraghty makes a somewhat similar point in 'Foregrounding the Media: *Atonement* as an Adaptation', in Deborah Cartmell, ed., *A Companion to Literature, Film, and Adaptation* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), p. 363.

[9] See Tom Gunning, 'The Cinema of Attractions' http://www.columbia.edu/itc/film/gaines/historiography/Gunning.pdf [11 December 2014].

reliance on the novel as source material for the fiction film – the more one is drawn to consider the central importance of narrative.'[10] Elements of such an analysis will be present within this study, but a total adherence to such a formulaic model as is developed by McFarlane is not conducive to the ideological analysis signalled in the introduction, nor was it designed for that purpose.

It is in the dialectic of these two principles that an adequate methodology for adaptation study must situate itself. Adaptation study must be capable of recognizing the particularity of the source-adaptation relationship while also integrating all of the other conditioning elements that enter into an adaptation, and that contribute to its ideology. The structuralist methodology McFarlane uses, derived from Barthes' 'Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative', performs the first task effectively and in a systematic fashion, but its method of direct narrative comparison is less successful in accounting for other conditioning elements outside the source text. It provides a partial solution to the problems involved in analysing an adaptation, and will underlie much of my modes of narrative analysis in this project, providing a terminology to be used throughout this thesis, at those points where strictly narrative analysis is performed. I will first outline this structuralist method, before moving on to consider ways in which the other conditioning elements may be analysed.

Narrative Structuralism

According to Roland Barthes' approach to the structural analysis of narratives,[11] all units of content of a narrative are divided into two classes: functions and indices. The former correspond to 'a functionality of doing';[12] they combine linearly and consequentially. The latter correspond to 'a functionality of being':[13] that is, they refer 'not to a complementary and consequential act but to a more or less diffuse

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[10] Brian McFarlane, *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
[11] As found in Roland Barthes, 'Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives', *Image Music Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Books, 1977), pp. 79-124.
[12] Barthes, 'Structural Analysis', p. 93.
[13] Barthes, 'Structural Analysis', p. 93.

concept which is nevertheless necessary to the meaning of the story.'[14] Indices most often relate to character or to atmosphere. At the most basic formulation, functions are what happens; indices are related to the way in which the story is told. A unit of narrative may easily be functional *and* indicial, if it is both part of a sequence in the plot and also serves to establish a character trait or to create an atmosphere.

Functions are further divided into cardinal functions, also called nuclei, and catalysers. The former refer to actions whose performance is consequential to the development of the story – cardinal functions tend to operate in sequences (which themselves combine to make up the plot), and are 'at once chronological and logical'.[15] Those functions which do not fall into this category Barthes calls catalysers, which 'fill in' the narrative: they are not consequent, but merely chronological – 'what is described is what separates two moments of the story.'[16] In theory, for the purpose of adapting a text, one could simply remove all catalysers and represent a narrative using only its cardinal functions. Given that these functions are by definition consequential with regard to each other, the plot would retain basic coherence, but, as Barthes notes, the discourse of the narrative would be affected,[17] and the effect would be, perhaps, of a synopsis of the source text.

Indices are divided into indices proper and informants. Indices proper are not consequential, but continuous or parametrical through the narrative. Indices proper refer to 'the character of a narrative agent, a feeling, an atmosphere (for example suspicion) or a philosophy. They are, therefore, integral to the tenor of the text, and to the implications it makes about its author. A single indice which is indexed again and again can become the defining function of a text, more important than the plot; or, in the

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[14] Barthes, 'Structural Analysis', p. 92.
[15] Barthes, 'Structural Analysis', p. 94.
[16] Barthes, 'Structural Analysis', p. 94.
[17] Barthes, 'Structural Analysis', p. 95.

case, of a character index, it may underlie the entire progress of the plot, as in the hamartia of classical tragedy. Informants, on the other hand, are 'pure data'. Their functionality is weak, but they serve, at least, to 'authenticate the reality of the referent, to embed the knowledge in the real world.'[18] Thus Barthes' theory presupposes a certain drive towards realism present in the discourse, which finds expression in the narratively superfluous informants. It may even be that the status of an informant is a function of the reader. There, is, perhaps, no piece of information so blank that it cannot be made to signify or index something beyond itself to the hermeneutically committed reader. The application of critical analysis may be able to create an indice of what had existed for other readers and perhaps the author as merely an informant. But even without specific signification, informants have an important collective role, combining to comprise a reality effect without which the narrative is bare and ineffective.

What this schema is dealing with is narrative, thus excluding another element of the narrative text. Each narrative has, clearly, to be narrated, so apart from the abstract functions and indices which make up the narrative or plot, another element or level is that of narration. Narration comprises '[w]ord choice, sentence length, and narrating agent'.[19] More simply again, it is 'the way in which events and characters are presented'.[20] This will vary from one manifestation of a narrative to the next, particularly in the intermedial shift from literature to screen, which involves the automatic difference mentioned by Stam. So reproduction of all the relevant functions and indices of a narrative will still leave space for an automatic difference in the narration. And even were the narration to entirely reproduce that of the source text, context would create a text bearing a certain uniqueness, as in Pierre Menard's 'adaptation'

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[18] Barthes, 'Structural Analysis', p. 96.
[19] Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck, 'Ideology', *Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 42.
[20] Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck, *Handbook of Narrative Analysis* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), p. 222.

of *Don Quixote* (leaving aside the questions of plagiarism which could hardly be avoided were we to think of Menard's reproduction of the narrative and narration of his source not simply as a fictional conceit of Jorge Luis Borges but as aspiring to the ontological status of a work of literature). Thus there is always a comparative element at play between source and adaptation; they are never simply the same work.

Barthes' schema lends itself to use in adaptation study, being, as Barthes himself points out at the outset, applicable to narrative in whatever form it should take: 'Narrative is first and foremost a prodigious variety of genres, themselves distributed amongst different substances – as though any material were fit to receive man's stories.'[21] Barthes does not himself try to apply his narrative analysis to film, though he does insist on the translatability of the method.[22] Brian McFarlane extends Barthes' analysis to create a methodology for adaptations in which he posits that functions – both of the cardinal and catalysing variety – are directly transferable, as are informants, but indices proper are not. Rather than direct transfer, these indices require adaptation. He does not set out general rules about this adaptation process, but provides certain examples of its workings, such as the use of subjective camera work in David Lean's *Great Expectations* (1946) to adapt the first-person voice of Pip in Dickens' source novel.[23] By discovery of such stylistic analogies, many features of an adaptation which are not directly related to narrative functionality can also be analysed as specific products of the adaptation process.

Author, Genre, and Paratext

While McFarlane's methodology deals adequately with the relationship between the source and the adaptation, McFarlane himself admits that this can never account for every detail of an adaptation.[24]

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[21] Barthes, 'Structural Analysis', p. 79.
[22] Barthes, 'Structural Analysis', p. 121.
[23] McFarlane, pp. 125-126.
[24] McFarlane, p. 21.

Nevertheless, his only methodological concession to factors beyond narrative comparison is a very vaguely conceptualized 'Special Focus' section at the end of each of his case studies. For the purpose of the present study, a general attention to three factors of potentially equal importance to the source text will be maintained: auteur, genre and the most problematic of all, cultural context.

The question of authorships is more complicated with regard to a film than a piece of fiction. The making of a film is of necessity a more collaborative one from an early stage in the process. Hutcheon suggests that for the purposes of adaptation theory, authorship should be considered to be shared between director and screenwriter, while those who have a secondary conditioning role on the material include the music director/composer, costume and set designer, actors, editor. But all of these functionaries are answerable to the director – the 'Sun-King' of a film set. It is only the screenwriter who works with relative independence, because he or she undertakes their task *before* the film set comes into being.[25] This is a convenient stance which will be taken up in this thesis, though with due regard for the potentially pivotal contributions of the other participants mentioned.

Further, each screen adaptation can be seen to place itself in relation to other screen narratives that have come before. These predecessors can be seen as forming the genre from which the adaptation derives. Genre, defined, as 'a particular type of literature, painting, music, film, or other art form which people consider as a class because it has special characteristics'[26] is a term not without difficulty, being 'easier to recognize than to define'.[27] Genres may be distinguished by subject or theme, or by setting: 'A Western is usually about life on some frontier (not necessarily the West […]).'[28] But it is also clear that

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[25] Hutcheon, pp. 81-85.
[26] *TV Tropes*, 'Genre' http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/Genres [13 October 2015].
[27] David Bordwell and Kristen Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction*, 5th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1997), p. 51.
[28] Bordwell and Thompson, p. 52.

'no genre can be defined in a hard and fast way'.[29] Each adaptation and each film necessarily brings with it a selection of generic intertexts. These intertexts react to, sometimes overriding, sometimes mixing with, the cues in the source text.

The case studies in this thesis have not been selected on the basis of genre; so despite the undeniable importance of the concept of genre to any study of screen adaptation, this thesis will not attempt a general definition of genre or of particular genres, but will follow Bordwell and Thompson's approach: 'Instead of abstract definition, the best way to identify a genre is to recognize how audiences and filmmakers, at different historical periods and places, have intuitively distinguished one sort of movie from another.'[30] Bordwell and Thompson here acknowledge not only the conditioning effect of genre on the material of adaptation, but also its framing effect – how it works on the audience by producing specific expectations and encouraging certain interpretations, even at the same time of the content itself is framed by the specific structure of feeling within which a particular audience is situated. Genre is best recognized not as an abstraction but in relation to actual manifestations within specific adaptations in specific contexts. Arguments in favour of malleable and ambiguous terms such as 'genre' over more clearly defined critical terms are presented in the 'Ideology' section below.

The study of Thomas Carlyle's influence at second-hand in this project shows that influence to be so widespread as to be fully transgeneric, not containable by any generic definition, but following certain unpredictable paths at certain times which can sometimes be seen through the filter of named genres, to be specified within the case studies. For example, the depiction of John Thornton in the adaptation of *North and South* is, as will be discussed in Chapter 3, significantly conditioned by the generic conventions of the classic serial, as those were understood in the context of early-2000s British

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[29] Bordwell and Thompson, p. 52.
[30] Bordwell and Thompson, p. 52.

television. These conventions co-exist within the adaptation with various elements of Gaskell's novel. The narrative and pictorial tropes common to the classic serial genre are not such as lend themselves to expression of a Carlylean ideology, but it is in this tension that the ideological analysis of the adaptation begins. Genre and source may embody different ideologies which have to be reconciled in the adaptation.

The framing function of genre is a function that is also carried out to a great extent by the paratext which is found in relation to any text. The paratext, according to Gérard Genette, consists of those 'verbal and other productions […] [that] surround [the literary work] and extend it, precisely in order to *present* it'.[31] Genette's subtitle 'Thresholds of Interpretation' indicates the liminal quality of these productions, which stand somewhere between the text and the world, informing the latter about the former, and about how the former is to be consumed. There are many materials which are considered paratextual by Genette, divided into two broad categories: the peritext (titles, prefaces, notes and other material liminal to the main body of the text) and the epitext (author interviews, reviews, and other elements not materially 'in' the text which nonetheless relate to it and may serve to direct the reception of the text.)[32] The peritext necessarily or at least generally precedes the text in being considered by the consumer, so the manner in which it frames the text, establishing genre, theme or intended audience, may be crucial to analysing its reception. Epitexts may also precede the text, or may be encountered retrospectively – thus, the importance of these materials is not only that they can frame a text for a consumer, but also that they can record how the text *has already been* consumed (reviews) and also how it was intended (author interviews), and the two may contrast sharply, but both complement a structuralist analysis of adaptation.

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[31] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 1.
[32] As summarized in Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 103.

The Cultural Code

Most complex and resistant to theorizing of all is what McFarlane, following Barthes, calls the cultural code.[33] But McFarlane does not build this into his regular methodology, which is one of strictly narrative comparison. Thus it is mostly absent from his case studies, except in the case of the 'Special Focus' section of his reading of *Cape Fear*. His aversion is explained by his admission that 'it is difficult to set up a regular methodology for investigating how far cultural conditions (e.g. the exigencies of wartime or changing sexual mores) might lead to a shift in emphasis in a film as compared with the novel on which it is based'.[34] But this hardly absolves the student of adaptation from taking it into account to the fullest extent possible, even if this entails an attention to specificities of the case, rather than methodologizable generalities. And it has been generally accepted that cultural conditions or context form an element that enters into any adaptation, and that this can account for differences between source and adaptation. In her theoretical account of adaptation, for example, Linda Hutcheon schematizes context as involving the 'Where? [and] When?' of an adaptation.[35] The first subtitle within the relevant chapter of Hutcheon's book is entitled 'The Vastness of Context', which alludes to the difficulty of theorizing context in a comprehensive way, even while acknowledging the incompleteness of a theory that did not take it into consideration. Thus her attitude recalls McFarlane. But the key questions of her chapter effectively highlight the two elements that make up cultural context: time and space. Hutcheon's transcultural adaptation will be subdivided in this thesis into *transtemporal* adaptations and *transspatial* adaptations. For the purpose of this project, the transtemporal element is paramount. The case studies are unified by the transtemporal relation of the adaptation (late 20th-/early 21st century) to the source texts (later 19th century to turn of the 20th). As all of the source texts and adaptations in the case studies are Anglophone, and will be studied within traditions that are, if not

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[33] McFarlane, p. 29.
[34] McFarlane, p. 22.
[35] Hutcheon, p. 141.

homogeneous, at least interlinked in various ways, and which invoke various common intertexts, it is the transtemporal element which is in every case at greatest issue. And it is an element which impacts considerably on adaptations at the level of content. Hutcheon delineates some of the ways in which transcultural (that is, impliedly, both or either transspatial or transtemporal) adaptations are conditioned by context. She finds that there is 'almost always […] an accompanying shift in the political valence': this often takes the form of 'changes in racial and gender politics'[36] – and this is, as will appear, especially true of recent adaptations of 19th-century fictional texts. Such changes imply in themselves ideological differences between the culture of the adaptation and that of the source. These changes are products of an encounter with otherness, a phenomenon inextricable from the acts of reading and interpreting the literature of the past, to be examined in the next section.

Much as each text is specifically situated in time, the act of reading is itself a temporal one. Stanley Fish's literary analysis (mostly concerned with poetry, but equally applicable to narrative fiction and to film) has explored this element in detail. Meaning, for Fish, is what is *experienced* during the reading on a moment by moment basis, rather than the post facto interpretations that can be imposed on the text in the process of analysis. It is 'the making and revision of assumptions, the rendering and regretting of judgments, the coming to and abandoning of conclusions, the giving and withdrawing of approval, the specifying of causes, the asking of questions, the supplying of answers, the solving of puzzles.'[37] In terms of an ideological critique, then, one is not searching for the final 'message' of the narrative, but for the various moments within the narrative which call on the reader or viewer to make an active engagement with the ideological, creating a map of ideological experience which may well be dissonant with the formal meaning of the narrative.

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[36] Hutcheon, p. 145.
[37] Stanley Fish, *Is there a Text in this Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), pp. 158-159.

A further feature of Fish's theory of reading is that it is never a singular or personal activity. Rather, each reader is both enabled and constrained by the interpretive strategies of the relevant interpretive community. Fish claims that these strategies constitute 'a set of practices that are defining of an enterprise and fill the consciousness of an enterprise's members.'[38] In view of the lack of agreement over what consciousness actually is,[39] this – reducing it to a specific 'enterprise' and a specific 'set of practices' – is a patently excessive and indefensible claim, but the concept of the interpretive community is not therefore wholly without applicability, insofar as institutional and wider cultural factors do influence without wholly dictating individual readings or 'filling' individual consciousnesses, and do conform to ideologies which find expression in ways of reading as well as ways of writing.

Reading Carlyle and Reading Source Texts: Encounters with Otherness

For this thesis, two specific readings are involved in each study: the author of the source reads Carlyle; and the adapter, at a considerable temporal distance, reads the source. A central contention will be that Carlyle provokes a specific type of reading. The incomparable level of engagement he created among 19th-century readers will be made clear in Chapter 2. But this engagement does not imply assent. Rather, as Gillian Beer has noted: 'Carlyle's style demands the reader's resistance, and draws energy from that resistance.'[40] Beer's *Arguing with the Past* also puts forward the general point that the type of reading that is the most enduringly powerful is that in which 'the element of debate, of struggle with the text, is intensified'.[41] Such a reading need not necessarily be extensive in duration as regards the initial act itself, for it may be precisely the book which the reader renounces in exasperation, confusion or boredom that leaves a lasting impression, that 'continues to be read in the mind, brooded over,

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[38] Stanley Fish, 'Yet Once More', *Reception Study*: *From Literary Theory to Cultural Studies*, ed. by James L. Machor and Philip Goldstein (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 36.
[39] See Ideology section below.
[40] Beer, *Arguing,* p. 77.
[41] Beer, *Arguing*, p. 7.

repudiated.'[42] Thus Beer prioritizes a sort of critical rather than passive reading. As will be seen in Chapter 2 and thereafter, this is the type of reading with which Carlyle must be associated: unequivocal endorsement of the substantive ideologico-political element of his writings has rarely been granted, but many readers who have been unable to agree with him have been similarly unwilling to dismiss him – or at least slow to do so, and in the temporal gap between reading and dismissal take place forms of engagement which can be materialized in literary influence, even if the materialization takes place much later. The quote given from Walt Whitman at the beginning of the thesis epitomises a type of response to Carlyle which registers both a definite admission of influence and a confusion as to the form this takes.

Thomas Leitch argues that adaptation is a form of rewriting of source texts, and that adaptations therefore operate as a mode of criticism on such texts.[43] A whole spectrum of attitudes towards the source text is available. An adapter may consciously strive for fidelity to the source, and such an attitude is not infrequent among adapters of 19th-century fiction such as is being examined in the case-studies. Or the adapter may maintain a casual attitude whereby the source text has a few elements to be used, and a mass of material to be simply ignored. Alfred Hitchcock was, by his own account, of the latter type: 'What I do is to read the story once, and if I like the basic idea, I just forget all about the book and start to create cinema'.[44] A third possibility, outlined by Stam using the example of Sergio Giral's adaptation of *Francisco: El Ingenio o Las Delicias del Campo*, is the adaptation 'motivated as much by hostility as by affection.'[45] But, even in the absence of conscious hostility as in the case of Giral, a transtemporal adaptation such as those relevant to this thesis is necessarily what Beer calls an

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[42] Beer, *Arguing*, p. 6.
[43] Leitch, pp. 16-21.
[44] Leitch, p. 7.
[45] Stam, in Naremore, ed., p. 63. *Francisco* by Anselmo Suárez y Romero was, according to Stam, 'Cuba's first anti-slavery novel'.

'encounter with the otherness of earlier literature.'[46] Thus to read an adaptation as potentially 'true to the spirit' of its source may be somewhat beside the point:[47] the spirit of the source, if we chose to isolate it, is ineluctably other. By focussing on the Carlylean elements of these source texts, their otherness is brought into relief, for, as the account of his reception history will show further, Carlyle is a near-perfect ideological Other for the 21st-century reader in the Western World, an Other who is confronted in the act of narrative adaptation.

Ideology

If it is in the sphere of the ideological that Carlyle's otherness will be said to lie, it is necessary to explore the term 'ideology'. It is a term with an extremely complex history, and one whose contradictions may be irresolvable. The initial application of the term, by Destutt de Tracy and other Enlightenment French philosophers, was to 'the science of the mind […], the study of the origin and development of ideas'[48]. This rather abstract science soon became synonymous with impracticality and ungrounded speculation. Napoleon Bonaparte is credited with the first pejorative use of the term, emphasizing the distance of such a purported science from material and empirical concerns,[49] but it is the Marxist analysis of ideology which elevated it to a key term in cultural criticism. In *The German Ideology* (written 1846; published 1932), Karl Marx and Frederick Engels attacked their compatriot philosophers' method of presuming the purity of the process of philosophical reflection to arrive at knowledge. The entire body of Western philosophical thought was called into question by Marx and Engels' position that: 'The ideas

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[46] Beer, *Arguing*, p. 1.

[47] As done most recently in Colin MacCabe, ed., *True to the Spirit: Film Adaptation and the Question of Fidelity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). The phrase originates in André Bazin's seminal essay 'Adaptation, or the Cinema as Digest', *Film Adaptation*, ed. Naremore, pp. 19-27.

[48] Tony Bennett, et al., *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Malden, MA; Blackwell, 2005), p. 175

[49] 'Ideology; by which nick-name the French ruler [sc. Bonaparte] used to distinguish every species of theory, which, resting in no respect upon the practical basis of self-interest, could, he thought, prevail with none save hot-brained boys and crazed enthusiasts.' From Walter Scott, L*ife of Napoleon* [1827], cited in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'Ideology' [10 December 2014]; The *OED* also cites in the same place Carlyle's 1839 use of the word in this sense: 'Does the British reader...call all this unpleasant doctrine of ours ideology?'

of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class, which is the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force.'[50] They coincided with Napoleon in finding the material to be primary and the idealistic to be secondary, or even wholly determined by the material.[51] But they used the distinction to critique not only that narrow band of idealistic philosophers whom Napoleon had in mind, but ultimately all of the base assumptions of society. Ideology was not now a science, nor a consciously pursued method of impractical abstract thought, but the entire condition of society, and one by which injustice and class domination was naturalized. The standard ideals of the members of a bourgeois society such as the Germany of Marx and Engels' work (specifically such ideals as freedom and equality) were seen to be not 'rational [or] universally valid',[52] but rather as being those which most nearly approximated to the interest of the ruling class – this class being, in the context of 19th-century Germany, the bourgeoisie.

It was the Marxist version (or versions) or ideology that went on to influence many writers and commentators, such that within academic thought, ideology is seen as a Marxist concept. Yet, historically, this has been seen not to be not quite the case: Marx neither invented the term nor pioneered the pejorative usage that has become widespread. More popularly, the term is used without any connotation that it belongs especially within the province of Marxism. The *OED* gives four definitions, none of which mentions Marx or cite specifically Marxist usage. Terry Eagleton is one of the relatively few academics who even acknowledges popular usage, suggesting that, in everyday language, ideology means approximately 'judging a particular issue through some rigid framework of preconceived ideas.'[53] Again, Eagleton does not suggest that popular usage is concerned with ideology within the

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[50] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, ed. by C.J. Arthur (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1982), p. 64.
[51] See discussion in Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, pp. 83-89.
[52] Marx and Engels, *German Ideology*, pp. 65-66.
[53] Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 2007), p. 3.

framework of Marxism. Yet critiques of ideology in recent times almost exclusively argue against ideology by arguing against Marxist uses and conceptions of the term. And there have been many such critiques, so many and so effective have they been that ideology, long a favoured analytical concept, became by the 1990s 'the academic equivalent of the mullet', that is, 'highly uncool'.[54] For a critic of the concept such as Michèle Barrett, the problem with ideology lies in Marx's 'somewhat chaotic formulations',[55] and her own analyses of Marx's writing demonstrate that, with the application of analytical pressure, the usages therein do not wholly cohere into a single comprehensive vision. Also perceptible in Barrett's work is a strong reaction against the scientistic use of the term especially associated with Louis Althusser. Barrett suggests that ideology is not a useful critical term, and suggests instead a Foucauldian emphasis on discourse analysis, an adoption of 'new and more precise concepts, rather than mobilizing the dubious resonances of the old'.[56]

While ideology may indeed bear some 'dubious resonances', it is precisely the contested readings, to take Gillian Beer's term, that this gives rise to that is of value. 'New and more precise concepts' partake of the glamour and pristine complexion which extended usage and the harsh light of critical attention will eventually tarnish. Indeed, Barrett herself admits a 'major ambiguity' in Foucault, finding that 'his statements about epistemology and truth are loaded to the brim with truth claims'.[57] She does not resolve the ambiguity, but simply gives Foucault the benefit of the doubt, and proceeds *as if* Foucault's position was unproblematic. Yet this is a major theoretical incoherence, one which shows that rather than being essentially superior to older and already debunked models, the new is only superior by way

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[54] Siniša Malešević, *Identity as Ideology: Understanding Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 2-3.

[55] Michèle Barrett, *The Politics of Truth: From Marx to Foucault* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), p. 157.

[56] Barrett, p. 168. The same reasoning, and the same reference to Foucauldian discourse analysis as a preferable alternative, is given in Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 9.

[57] Barrett, p. 145.

of being not yet debunked. Rather than seeing Foucauldian terminology as being inevitably productive of better analysis and theorization, both old and new should be used in conjunction without presumption as to the relative merits of each, and also without the need to mesh them seamlessly together into a single coherent theory or methodology. For the example of Marx shows that within the realm of society and culture an overarching theory, no matter how attractive and influential it becomes, will not be capable of development into a whole theory of society, rather further study will begin to expose its lacunae and biases, its 'major ambiguities', even as it is still being used to generate new insights.

Feyerabendian Epistemology and Comparative Literature

The philosophy of knowledge that can support such an approach to theory and concept is that of Paul Feyerabend, who posited that the history of science shows that true progress came about more often by ignoring or subverting established theories and epistemological rules than by building them. Feyerabend is often associated with the flippant epistemological principle that 'anything goes', but he clarified (perhaps too late) that he did not mean this to be taken literally.[58] More soberly, Feyerabend's study of the history of science led him to conclude that '[w]e must keep our options open and we must not restrict ourselves in advance.'[59] In practice, this resolves itself into a '*pluralistic methodology*',[60] whereby ideas are compared with each other and where even apparently failed views are retained – where methodologies do not converge into one single all-encompassing method, such as what is called the scientific method (which could in any case not correspond to the actual workings of pioneers in the fields that come under the term 'science', as Feyerabend demonstrates using historical examples), but

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[58] Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method* (London: Verso, 2010), p. xvii.
[59] Feyerabend, p. 4.
[60] Feyerabend, p. 13.

where knowledge is 'an ever increasing ocean of *mutually incompatible alternatives*'.[61] The movement, therefore, is not towards greater internal coherence in the dominant theories, but rather towards innovative and improvised attempts to combine as many theories or methodologies, or chosen elements thereof, as required into a cacophonous whole which may result in a sort of harmony which cannot be foreseen until it begins to come into being. Such a pluralism is not to be identified with the relativism that is often associated with postmodernism. Feyerabend's position is not relativistic because it explicitly rejects the assumption that all epistemological methods are equal, insisting rather that no model is perfect and that no *a priori* judgements of any model can be made without a consultation of history.[62]

Part of Feyerabend's pluralistic methodology is the act of comparison. Individual theories are not studied by analysis alone, but also by comparison and contrast with other theories, even refuted ones.[63] This emphasis on comparison provides a bridge between Feyerabendian epistemology and academic disciplinarity. The importance of method to academic research may initially seem at odds with Feyerabend's suggestions, but certain appropriate loci of methodological freedom within academia may be identified. Principally, Comparative Literature is a sort of 'undisciplined discipline',[64] one within which practitioners have long sought to provide exact definitions of what it is that they do, but without approaching consensus. Thus Le Juez has recently suggested that 'uncertainty is in the very nature of comparative studies and ought to be embraced'.[65] But wholly embracing uncertainty proves to be a surprisingly difficult task, as exemplified in the recent introduction to the discipline by Dominguez, Saussy and Villanueva:

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[61] Feyerabend, p. 14.
[62] See Feyerabend, pp. 283-287.
[63] See Feyerabend, pp. 27-32.
[64] Peter Brooks, quoted in Brigitte Le Juez, 'Positive Uncertainty and the Ethos of Comparative Literature', *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 15:7 (2013), p. 6 http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2376 [08 Sep 2015]
[65] Le Juez, 'Positive Uncertainty', p. 2.

[C]omparative literature is the replication, under methodologically stringent conditions, of the common reader's experience, that is, a reading experience that crosses all kinds of borders (temporal, spatial, linguistic, cultural, etc.) in order to build meaning.[66]

The paradox here lies in the fact that the experience the authors refer to can by their own definition *not* be replicated under methodologically stringent conditions, and it is striking how at odds with the rest of the statement that particular clause is. In the call for methodological stringency, even while trying to cross all kinds of borders, the hegemonic structure of contemporary academicism makes itself heard, introducing a contradiction in their own terms, and a border that must not be crossed: that which separates methodological stringency from keeping one's options open. Thus comparative literature, facing such a contradiction, is one field within which Feyerabendian epistemology could operate, and where its methodological uncertainty might be appropriately utilized.

It will be clear also that this approach renders the idea of a complete critical review inapplicable. For the critical review sets certain parameters around the project, such that all extraneous considerations have to be justified in relation to the material discussed in the critical review. This has the effect of locating the project within a definite field of study, but is also a form of 'restrict[ing] ourselves in advance'. Therefore, while many insights and techniques from, in particular, the field of adaptation study are used in this project, it would be counter-productive to allow that field (or any field, or any combinations of fields) to dictate the terms of study, as it would be to restrict critical reading to that field.[67] Similarly, given the capaciousness of Carlyle's own aims, and his Biblical motto from the opening of *Sartor*: 'Many

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[66] César Dominguez, Haun Saussy and Dario Villanueva, *Introducing Comparative Literature: New Trends and Applications* (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. xiv

[67] There are, of course, elements of critical review throughout this chapter, and indeed throughout the thesis: but the texts engaged with have been chosen with more weight given to relevance to the subject of the project and practical usefulness established through trial and error than to current prominence in the field of adaptation or any other designated field.

shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased', any engagement with his work demands an openness of approach beyond the disciplinary norm.[68]

De-centred Ideology

It is in an attempt to retain a looseness and porosity of borders somewhat beyond the academic norm that the present thesis insists on the retention of the academically unfashionable term 'ideology'. The thesis accepts the contentions of Barrett and others that Althusser's scientistic ideology is an unsustainable position,[69] and does not attempt to provide a new, improved theory of ideology. This would be contrary to the thesis' aims. Rather, the aim is to treat ideology as a multi-purpose analytical tool whose facets stretch from Napoleon's anti-metaphysical statements, to Marx's view of the relation between the dominant material class and dominant ideas, to Slavoj Žižek's analysis of cynicism as the essence of ideology, to the most important of the *OED* definitions: 'A systematic scheme of ideas, usually relating to politics, economics, or society and forming the basis of action or policy; a set of beliefs governing conduct. Also: the forming or holding of such a scheme of ideas.' Varying conceptions of ideology will be introduced at different times, not with the aim of coalescing them into a full theory of ideology, but with the Feyerabendian goal of contributing to an ocean of mutually incompatible alternatives wherein nothing is ever settled and comprehensiveness demands the consideration of even supposedly failed theories.[70] At a base level, the common preoccupation revealed in the various formulations and analyses mentioned is around the relations between private thought and material, social and historical context. Consciousness is always potentially susceptible to ideological analysis in this sense, because the relations between consciousness and the context specified are never static, never foreseeable and never uniform among individuals. Consciousness, indeed, is in the last instance

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[68] On Carlyle's epistemology, see, particularly, the "Rationalism without Melancholy" section in Chapter 5 below.
[69] Barrett, pp. 81-120.
[70] Feyerabend, p. 14.

the validating concept for a methodological approach such as that found in this thesis, for consciousness remains beyond science, the 'hard problem' whose solution has evaded all methodologies.[71] Thus, it is in their status as (among other things) products of consciousness, that narratives invite an approach that transcends methodology.

Historically, the concept of ideology in Marxist literary criticism has been related to the notion of determination: according to such an approach, a text is considered to be an element of the ideological superstructure, and thus its content is determined by the economic base. This approach has its basis in Marx and Engels' writings, though their pronouncements on the subject are somewhat ambiguous and contradictory. [72] A moderated view of the doctrine specifies that this determination is 'in the last instance', allowing for the possibility of any number of intermediate effects between the base and the ideological product. But even this more moderate formula has been found untenable in Marxist thought.[73] Hence those commentators who more recently have continued to use the concept of ideology have done so not by sharpening the definition of the term, but rather by loosening it, such that 'the dominant working definition in cultural studies' is now a fairly general and even popularly comprehensible one:

> By ideology I mean the mental frameworks – the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation – which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, figure out and render intelligible the way society works.[74]

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[71] Susan Blackwell, *Consciousness: An Introduction* (Abingdon: Hodder & Stoughton, 2007), pp. 18-21. Blackwell also quotes Daniel Dennett: 'Consciousness is just about the last surviving mystery.' (p. 8)

[72] See, for example, accounts in Barrett, *The Politics of Truth,* pp.3-17; and Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, pp. 83-85.

[73] See discussion in Ernesto Laclau with Chantal Mouffe, 'Post-Marxism without Apologies', *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, ed. by John Storey (Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2009), pp. 153-155.

[74] Stuart Hall, quoted in John Storey, 'Introduction', in Storey, ed., *Cultural Theory*, p. vvii.

This definition, indeed, is so close to the popular that it does not even refer to any specifically Marxist uses, though formulated by the Marxist thinker Stuart Hall. This relative generality and openness of definition, then, along with the historical and connotational richness of the term make 'ideology' most suitable for an analysis along Feyerabendian lines. The very fact of the term's failure in theoretical terms is also an index of its richness in historical terms, not capable of being defined with reference to any single interpretive community: it makes historical and political analysis possible, without unduly trammelling it as a theoretically centred term might do.

Ideology and Narrative

If all consciousness is potentially susceptible to ideological analysis – not to be assumed to be purely the work of a Cartesian individual whose thought processes have independence from their material and social surroundings nor to be a function of pure biology – works of literature and film are also implicated. That narrative is conditioned and inflected by ideological considerations we have seen Hutcheon acknowledge in her reference to the 'political valence' of adaptations, and McFarlane in his 'cultural code'. The creation of a narrative is not a political act in a narrow sense, but there are several established methods of analysing the ideology of a narrative text. Herman and Vervaeck contend that narratives in general aim to be received as 'plausible, trustworthy, and truthful [in order to] bear the stamp of verisimilitude, or lifelikeness',[75] thus by presenting a certain necessarily limited vision of reality as though it were universal, narrative operates ideologically. Analysis of the principle of selection at play in any narrative can reveal the ideological synecdoche in question: selection of events, of focalization, of setting, and so forth. The reality of a given narrative amounts to a naturalization of an inevitably *partial* mode of experiencing life. At the level of recurring tropes within genres or within cultures and at certain moments, a more generalized mode of naturalization can be detected.

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[75] Herman and Vervaeck, 'Ideology', in Herman, ed., p. 218.

The concept of selection implies also that of omission. Slavoj Žižek reads Samuel Moaz' film *Lebanon* (2009), a film about the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 that focusses on one Israeli soldier's experience, as 'ideology at its purest: the re-focus on the perpetrator's traumatic experience enables us to obliterate the entire ethico-political background of the conflict: what was the Israeli army doing deep in Lebanon, etc.' In this private narrative of the war, 'only those "inside" have the right to a "depth of personality"'.[76] To set a narrative within a realistic milieu, then, and fail to take into account the most important socio-political realities of that milieu, provides further material for an ideological analysis. Omission is as important as presence. An implicit assumption in Žižek's critique of *Lebanon* is that this narrative, like those examined by Herman and Vervaeck, *does* aim for verisimilitude and to be read as lifelike: it is only in the context of being read as lifelike that the relegation of the real-life conflict is relevant; otherwise, there is nothing to relegate because that which is outside the text does not exist. The narrated picture of the conflict is not stated by Žižek to be in its presented details inaccurate, rather it is by its omissions that it ideologically aligns itself with the figure of the Israeli soldier, as a figure representative of and embodying the humanity which is the subject of narrative. Similarly, it will be clear in the texts studied in the current project that reality is always present within the textual: background, setting and narrative event implicitly and explicitly rely on the reader's understanding of history and empirical reality.

 Ideological alignment need not fall squarely in line with a single character, but in its totality is a function of what Wayne Booth called the implied author, who comprises 'the sum of [the author's] own choices',[77] and who is not simply the narrator – though that function may coincide or not with the implied author along a spectrum with the wholly unreliable narrator at one end and the author in

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[76] Slavoj Žižek, 'Hollywood Today: Report from an Ideological Frontline', *European Graduate School*. http://www.egs.edu/faculty/slavoj-zizek/articles/hollywood-today-report-from-an-ideological-frontline/ [20 October 2014]

[77] Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 75.

propria persona at the other. Where the protagonist is presented as a hero, then the values of the implied author may be seen to be embodied in this hero – even if the biographical author embodies quite different attributes.[78] The hero, then, is by definition an ideologically saturated figure, a narrative embodiment of personal or cultural ideals.

Carlyle studied the figure of the Hero[79] as a historical rather than narrative phenomenon: in general (though Carlyle's usage has contradictions which will be introduced later), the Hero is the leader of his community, chosen, consciously or not, for his embodiment of the ideals of that community. Thus, Carlyle can sometimes imply that what the Hero embodies are not essentially admirable qualities, but simply qualities that are reflected in the relevant community. This is clear in his account of Voltaire: 'He is the realized ideal of every one of them; the thing they are all wanting to be; of all Frenchmen the most French. *He* is properly their god,– such god as they are fit for.'[80] Nevertheless, the symbolic presence of this Hero always carries a potent social charge, regardless of the values he embodies. Contrary to the romantic hero, the Carlylean Hero is defined by his actions within the socio-political realm, and his effective leadership qualities. Despite the apparent contrasts in the ideological implications of these figures, narrative has provided a tool for attempts at synthesis of romantic heroism with Carlylean Heroism, as will be analysed in the context of *North and South* in Chapter 3.

Ideology and Adaptation

Of all forms of narrative, adaptation seems the most appropriate locus for study of ideology. Slavoj Žižek has pointed out 'The Sad Lesson of Remakes', this lesson being that when we analyse contemporary remakes of stories from earlier times (transtemporal adaptations) we find ourselves confronted with 'a

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[78] Booth, p. 75.
[79] Hereinafter, when Hero is capitalized, specific reference to Carlyle's conception is to be understood. When it is not, reference is to the term in its more general usage.
[80] *On Heroes*, p. 30.

global ideological regression'.[81] It is the comparative nature of the analysis that makes this so starkly evident: within the confines of a broadly similar narrative, we can find minor narrative details, new emphases and remodelled characters that speak of an entirely different individual mindset or set of social norms behind them. Despite the suggestiveness of such a comparative approach, adaptation studies have thus far proved reluctant to incorporate ideology into its purview, and no even minimally developed methodology exists for its study. Writing in 2013, Jørgen Bruhn noted that the narrative level has hitherto been prioritized in adaptation studies, at the expense of 'mood, ideology, and style'.[82] While this project sees a continued attention to the narrative level as beneficial – indeed crucial – it can be profitably melded with historical and contemporary notions of ideology to provide a fuller understanding of the adaptation process, and of cultural processes in general, working on the principle that narrative similarities frame ideological changes, and narrative difference can be (though not that it must be in all cases) explained ideologically.

Same Plot, Different Ideology

In many adaptations, the narrative framework is a given. That is, it is to a great extent taken to be dictated by the source, and the additions at a plot level are occasional and minor rather than structural. In such a case, what is at issue in ideological analysis either concerns the indicial rather than functional content of the adaptation, or is at the level of narration. It is quite possible to change the ideological content of a narrative without changing the cardinal plot functions. Often, characters who are barely functional in the plot are those who are most heavily loaded as ideological functions. An example is the curate in H.G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds* (1898). Aside from giving the narrator someone to talk to (mostly in argument) for a portion of the novel, this character, introduced midway through the work, is

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[81] Žižek, 'Hollywood Today'.
[82] Jørgen Bruhn, 'Now a Major Soundtrack! – Madness, Music, and Ideology in *Shutter Island*', *Adaptation*, 6:3 (2013), pp. 320-337.

of no importance to the development of the principal plot involving the Martian invasion and takeover of the earth. Ideologically, however, he is a very strong and direct expression of Wells' anti-clericalism, being represented as foolish, selfish and cowardly. But in the 1953 Hollywood film adaptation of the novel, the curate is portrayed entirely differently. Again, he ultimately dies at the hand of the Martians, and, again, he is irrelevant to the ultimate working out of the plot, but here he appears initially as an integral part of the community response to the invasion, and ultimately behaves in a heroic and self-sacrificing fashion. By this one indicial change alone, the entire ideological import – or 'political valence', in Hutcheon's terms – of the story is changed. Ironically, it is the very fact that this character is functional only ideologically that makes his re-purposing such a simple matter – had his behaviour been functional in terms of the plot, it could not have been altered without considerable risk of rendering the narrative incoherent. His existence within Wells' text as pure ideology makes him especially vulnerable to ideological re-orientation.

The filmed version of *War of the Worlds* broadly followed the cardinal functions, if not the catalystic detail, of Wells' plot, but there are other cases in which the narrative framework is almost wholly independent of the source, and the 'extended, announced, deliberate revisitation' of the source is a matter of themes or other content at the level of narration. This project will include one fairly extreme case of this: Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012) as an adaptation of Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859). The narratives of the two works are almost entirely dissimilar in terms of functions, but, as will be explored later, the film's repeated textual references to the novel and Nolan's epitextual comments on the relationship of influence make it clear that an 'extended, announced, deliberate revisitation' is precisely what is at issue. Here, far from narrative similarities bringing into relief an ideological drift, we have two separate narratives united by their manner of seeing and considering the socio-political. In either case, though, it is the act of comparison which brings about an insight into ideological features of narratives.

It will be the aim of this thesis, then, to utilize the particularities of the source-adaptation relationship to investigate notions of comparative ideology, proposing the integration of a narratological approach as a means of bringing into relief the ideological whilst also ensuring that the ideological is not presented as the sole source of textual content, so that it appears as conditioning rather than determining narrative works. Further, the use of the work of Carlyle will serve to re-present an outdated ideology, but one which has inflected many surviving cultural works, at first and second hand, in the manner of a dead and decomposed oak whose acorns have played a substantial part in sowing the forest of culture within contemporary Western society.

Chapter 2: Reception History of Thomas Carlyle

To demonstrate that the reading of Carlyle's work is an encounter with otherness, it is first necessary to present a historical summary of readings of Carlyle, one which will make clear that readings of Carlyle have been to a considerable degree temporally conditioned. The types of reading which will be concentrated on in the history following will be those of which explicit accounts have been left – mostly, then, by other writers. Each documented writer's reading of Carlyle contributes to a map of the various ways in which Carlyle has been read, the different reactions he has elicited in individuals and (most notably) across time periods, attesting to changes in structures of feeling on a large scale. Each such reading also suggests the possibility of residue of influence leading to second-hand encounters with Carlylean style and ideology, even in the absence of direct reading. Such changes begin to account for Carlyle's reputational trajectory from 'the noblest man of letters of his generation'[1] to a perceived irrelevance.

The principal hinge-point in Carlyle's reception history is often considered to be his death and its aftermath. G.B. Tennyson, in perhaps the most complete existing account of Carlyle's reception history, finds a 'rising curve' to characterise Carlyle's reputation through his life, followed by a 'drastic fall' after his death.[2] Simon Heffer, in a recent biography of Carlyle, avers that: 'Within four years of Carlyle's death his journey from literary colossus to hypocrite had been completed […]. Carlyle's [reputation] seems never to have recovered. This is true not only in terms of his personal life, but also of his intellectual.'[3] For the pragmatic purpose of structuring this chapter this point of division will be accepted, but qualifications will be introduced. The chapter will have a tripartite structure, similar to

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[1] Leslie Stephen, 'An Unsigned Obituary, *Cornhill Magazine*', Seigel, p. 491.
[2] G.B. Tennyson, 'Carlyle Today', in Kenneth J. Fielding and Rodger L. Tarr, eds., *Carlyle Past and Present: A Collection of New Essays* (London: Vision, 1976), p. 30.
[3] Heffer, *Moral Desperado*, p. 14.

Tennyson's account: the first section, after this introductory section, will cover his reception during his lifetime, from his first really substantial notices in the 1830s until his death in 1881. During this period Carlyle's reception was characterized in tone by idolizing endorsement or respectful dissent. The second section deals with the period from 1881 to approximately 1945, the end of the Second World War. The appearance of certain (auto)biographical materials in the period succeeding Carlyle's death led to the development of a much more ambivalent and questioning discourse around him as writer and as individual. Ultimately, this resulted in a notable reduction in the author's cultural cachet, and this was eventually furthered by the rise of Nazism, during which Carlyle's influence was frequently detected in Fascist politics. In the third section, then, the afterlife of a literary reputation will be discussed, and the limited paths the Chelsea Sage's direct influence has taken will be outlined. Each of these sections will be further subdivided into headed sub-sections, each concerned with a particular theme in reading Carlyle, and each detailing several roughly homogeneous examples of readings. Taken in all, these sections will demonstrate that there is no singular reading that can represent the reception history of this author, but that certain key concepts recur within specific cultural frames. The insights gained will be reverted to in the case-study chapters which follow.

1830s-1881: 'The sound of ten thousand trumpets'

Some of Carlyle's first appreciators were to go on, as he himself was, to be among the most prominent literary voices of the age. When his first significant longer work, *Sartor Resartus*,[4] appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1833, it was greeted with apathy or hostility, so much of the latter that following its

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[4] Carlyle's first long work was his biography of Friedrich Schiller, which has been excluded from detailed examination here because it was little read on first appearance, and was eclipsed in importance and influence by later works which presented Carlyle's particular worldview and style in more concentrated form. Heffer describes it as a 'bridge between hack-work and more considered literary endeavour' (p. 72). Carlyle's individuality is not yet fully apparent.

reception, '[t]o the bookselling world Carlyle's name […] had become an abomination,'[5] according to Froude. However, of the precisely two immediate converts it made, one was the then-unknown Ralph Waldo Emerson. At the same time, Carlyle had established a friendship based on mutual admiration with John Stuart Mill, who considered him 'an artist, and perhaps the only genuine one now living in this country.'[6] But despite the increasing esteem in which Carlyle was held in select literary circles, particularly after he and his wife Jane Welsh Carlyle moved from Dumfriesshire to Chelsea, London in 1834, it was not until the 1837 publication of his *The French Revolution: A History* that he began to be widely and substantially reviewed. In the wake of *French Revolution*'s success, *Sartor* was given its first English book publication[7] (it had received a limited American publication, edited with a preface by Emerson, in 1836). Shortly thereafter, a four-volume collection of his essays appeared, collecting work going back over a decade, encompassing his early work on German literature, his first attempts at cultural prophecy ('Signs of the Times', 'Characteristics'), and much else.[8] These works, *French Revolution*, *Sartor Resartus*, and the early essays, each of which went on to be greatly influential, can from a reception point of view be seen as a unit, as the available work of Carlyle at the moment when his reputation first began to grow, and when his reputation among the literary men and women of Britain quickly reached a peak more lofty than it ever attained again.

Sincerity and Madness

There are several conspicuous threads that run through the critical reaction to Carlyle at this point in his career, and that begin to explain his enormous influence. Perhaps the most salient of these threads is the concept of sincerity. This is picked up on by Mill in his early and influential review of *French*

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[5] Froude, *First Forty*, v. 2, p. 447.
[6] Heffer, *Moral Desperado*, p. 132.
[7] Excluding a private edition of 58 copies produced in 1834.
[8] This important collection was often reprinted during the 19th century, but never in the 20th. I will be consulting the 1898 Chapman and Hall edition, which compresses the 4 volumes into 2, and also includes a few later essays.

Revolution: 'A most original book; original not least in its complete sincerity.'[9] Emerson, similarly, associated Carlyle with sincerity, as he reported after their first meeting: 'The comfort of meeting a man is that he speaks sincerely.'[10] And Carlyle himself encouraged this reading by the calls for and laudation of sincerity that form a central thread of *On Heroes*, in which 'sincere' or 'sincerity' appear no less than 92 times, more than once every two pages in an average edition of that short work.[11] This is a testament to the importance of the concept of sincerity to Carlyle's reading of heroism, as well as to the extreme repetition that characterizes the work in question. Though he was generally dismissive of his own works, he sometimes ameliorated his self-criticism by intimating that, whatever their faults, his were works born out of sincerity. Of *French Revolution* he wrote:

> I do not know whether this book is worth anything, nor what the world will do with it, or misdo, or entirely forbear to do, as is likeliest; but this I could tell the world: You have not had for a hundred years any book that comes more direct and flamingly from the heart of a man. Do what you like with it[.][12]

Carlyle's sense of his own sincerity was picked up on and often unquestioningly accepted by his readers. This is a far more important criterion for the early reviewers of Carlyle than any substantive theories he propounds or specific political or ideological positions he takes up. Indeed, it is the apoliticism and atheoreticism of his early work that is most noted. While Mill took exception to Carlyle's atheoreticism (and his aversion to the use of intellectual 'spectacles' instead of eyes) in his otherwise highly laudatory

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[9] Seigel, ed., p. 67.
[10] Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 2 vols. (Boston: Ticknor, 1888), v. 1, p. 5.
[11] Though in other works Carlyle prefers the related concept of earnestness.
[12] Froude, *London*, v. 1, p. 84.

review,[13] William Makepeace Thackeray, another of *French Revolution*'s earliest reviewers, remarked Carlyle's absence of political agenda:

> He is not a party historian like Scott, who could not, in his benevolent respect for rank and royalty, see duly the faults of either: he is as impartial as Thiers, but with a far loftier and nobler impartiality.
>
> […]
>
> It is better to view it loftily from afar, like our mystic poet Mr Carlyle, than too nearly with sharp-sighted and prosaic Thiers.[14]

Thackeray used block capitals for emphasis when it came to defining the single most outstanding feature of the book:

> Above all, it has no CANT.[15]

Though Carlyle was sometimes considered a philosopher, it was the lack of theoretical content that impressed both Mill and Emerson, and his lack of party partiality that appealed to Thackeray. Mill read *French Revolution* not primarily as history or historical theory, but as an *epic poem*,[16] and always considered Carlyle a poet rather than historian or philosopher (though by this he may have intended an implied criticism, as this was not how Carlyle would have chosen to describe himself).[17] As a poet, he was distinguished in Mill's view by '[a] deep catholic sympathy with human nature, with all natural human feelings'.[18] Emerson likewise described Carlyle's work as primarily poetic;[19] and also as not

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[13] Seigel, pp. 64-65.
[14] Seigel, p. 71.
[15] Seigel, p. 73.
[16] Seigel, p. 52.
[17] Mill, *Autobiography*, p. 176.
[18] Seigel, p. 66.

distinguished by theoretic substance: '[I]t is not so much that Carlyle cares for this or that dogma, but that he likes genuineness (the source of all strength) in his companions.'[20] None of these commentators endorsed in any degree the philosophical or political content of Carlyle's writings, approaching these writings less as thought than as feeling, the province of the poet. Sincerity was the characteristic that weighed heaviest in their enthusiastic readings of Carlyle. Even when he was writing in the genre of history, it was the sincerity and the sympathy with humanity in general that impressed Carlyle's early readers, which allies him less with the figure of the man of ideas than that of the creative artist. [21] Recently, Eugene Eoyang has described creativity in terms of a faculty for 'capacious intuition', associated with 'a generosity of spirit, an expansive vision, that borders on the mystical.'[22] The appeal of such a quality in a work within the genre of history such as Carlyle's *French Revolution* is that it brings the reality of human life and endeavour temporarily home to the reader, actualizing a moment that is past and otherwise beyond recall, creating sympathy, empathy and engagement. It is a quality that partakes fundamentally of the poetic character, making it clear that judging Carlyle purely as a philosopher or as a historian is bound to miss the point of his 19th-century influence.

This association with sincerity is one that marks Carlyle out as a definitively pre-20th century thinker. Lionel Trilling defines sincerity as 'a congruence between avowal and actual feeling', and involving being true to oneself and thus true to the other, which latter is, according to Trilling, the final aim of sincerity.[23] It contrasts with a 20th-century emphasis on authenticity, associated with Eliot, Joyce and others, which retains only the former conception of truth to the self, disregarding truth to the other –

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[19] See his introduction to Carlyle's *Past and Present*.
[20] Ralph Waldo Emerson, 'Carlyle', *The Portable Emerson* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), p. 623.
[21] And that such a sympathy and such an insight were basically synonymous was central to much of Carlyle's later theorizing on Heroes: 'To know a thing, what we can call knowing, a man must first *love* the thing, sympathize with it: that is, be *virtuously* related to it' (*On Heroes, Hero-worship and the Heroic in History*, ed. by David R. Sorensen and Brent E. Kinser [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013], pp. 97-98). This will be discussed in a later chapter.
[22] Eugene Eoyang, *The Promise and Premise of Comparative Literature* (London: Continuum, 2012), p. 8.
[23] Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 2.

the 19th-century means has become a 20th-century end. Yet more recently, sincerity has been critically rehabilitated by work on the 'new sincerity' of David Foster Wallace, wherein it emerges that these precise problems of being true to the other are no less relevant in a 21st-century context. Yet the possibilities for Carlyle's rehabilitation within such a paradigm are lessened by the posthumous debate on Carlyle, discussed in the next section, wherein his sincerity or lack thereof became once again of the utmost importance.

A further near-constant of early Carlyle criticism, and one that was to follow throughout his lifetime, was the imputation of madness. Froude admits that the publication of *Sartor* had seen Carlyle dismissed as 'a literary maniac',[24] while Lady Sydney Morgan, a very hostile early reviewer of *French Revolution*, speculated that Carlyle had gained a qualification in 'the university of Bedlam'; still more pointedly, she wondered if the excessive admiration for German culture evinced in the work was not 'in some way connected to defects in the native constitution of [the author's] mind.'[25] The reference to the university of Bedlam may be not only a reference to the extravagance of Carlyle's style, but also his irregular education (he had attended Edinburgh University desultorily, but had not completed a degree) and deviation from scholarly norms in peppering his work with Germanic references and turns of phrase, providing little evidence of familiarity with classical thinkers such as Plato. But Morgan was not alone in finding something suggestive of insanity in Carlyle's style, as was acknowledged by the more sympathetic Thackeray: 'To hear one party you would fancy that the author was but a dull madman, indulging in wild vagaries of language and dispensing with common sense and reason, while, according to another, his opinions are little short of inspiration, and his eloquence unbounded as his genius,' and, though Thackeray inclined to the latter view, he allowed that 'never did […] a man's style so mar his

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[24] Froude, *First Forty*, v. 2, p. 365.
[25] Seigel, pp. 46-49.

subject and dim his genius.' [26] At this stage, it was Carlyle's style, rather than his opinions, which was cited as the best evidence of insanity, though that was to change.

Sincerity and madness were to become two poles around which Carlyle criticism swung in the 19th century. At the earliest stage, sincerity held the upper hand in the creation of an author-function who had a certain status as an observer of the course of human history. An observer of wide and unconventional learning and without political partiality or dogma; a historian-poet without a discipline, without a school, but with that most necessary of all appurtenances, *an eye* (to use Carlyle's own favourite term). It was what he saw that counted, what he saw and how he described it, not how he theorized it. Thus, it can be said that a critical consideration of Carlyle's ideas as a philosopher or thinker would be beside the point. This may have been how Carlyle presented himself, but it was not really how he was read, certainly not by his fellow writers, who saw him as standing apart from all orthodoxy, and thus partaking of originality and sincerity. He saw with clarity, and described with energeia, and the affective potential of this was not lost on his contemporaries, who nevertheless were rarely to go on to accept his philosophizing and political theorizing, in its developed forms.

Counter to Utilitarianism and Political Economy

If the substantial positive content of Carlyle's theories was quite thin, his placing within the dominant political and social ideas of the time is crucial. It is perhaps as much a matter of what Carlyle's ideas were *not*, as what they were. The utilitarian philosophy of Jeremy Bentham and the political economy of Adam Smith and his followers provided the bedrock on which the intellectual life of the times was built.[27] Smith posited enlightened self-interest as the key motivation for human behaviour, while Bentham went even further in his insistence on a rational basis for the study of humanity and society,

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[26] Seigel, p. 69.
[27] An overview of these theories and their place within the general ideology of the time is found in Eric Hobsbawn, *The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848* (London: Abacus, 2002), pp. 285-305.

constructing a felicific calculus to measure the pleasure and pain associated with any course of action in any situation. Bentham's intention was that at some point all human activity could be measured by this calculus or a variation thereof, and a greatest happiness for the greatest number principle could be put into effect. Writing in the mid-19th century, Marx and Engels held that '[p]olitical economy is the real science of this theory of utility', and that, indeed, utilitarian thinking was a superstructural product of a capitalist base, only possible when the relations between people had already been reduced in material practice to 'one abstract monetary-commercial relation.'[28] Thus utilitarianism was seen to be implicated in much social inequality and deprivation. Carlyle provided a powerful voice for anti-utilitarian sentiment, treating the utilitarian approach as an object of scorn throughout his career. Utilitarianism and its felicific calculus was the nadir of philosophizing activity, as Teufelsdröckh asserted in *Sartor Resartus*:

> Fantastic tricks enough has man played in his time; has fancied himself to be most things, down even to an animated heap of Glass: but to fancy himself a dead Iron-Balance for weighing Pains and Pleasures in, was reserved for this his latter era. There stands he, his Universe one huge Manger, filled with hay and thistles to be weighed against each other, and looks long-eared enough.[29]

Carlyle's philosophy, then, was understood partially in terms of what it most unequivocally was not: utilitarianism and political economy. To view the matter in Carlyle's own terms, the popularly felt antipathy towards coldly mechanistic theories of society was in need of a *symbolic presence* around which to articulate itself. Carlyle emerged at precisely the right time, from the right background, and evincing the right personal characteristics to provide a counterweight to a set of theories and

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[28] Marx and Engels, *German Ideology*, pp. 109-110.
[29] *Sartor Resartus*, p. 167. See also, for example, the 'Happiness' chapter of *Past and Present* for Carlyle's rejection of the greatest happiness principal and of happiness as a measure of well-being.

approaches which seemed unimpugnable on their own terms, but whose application to the industrial sphere and to society in general was nevertheless unpopular. Had the Marxist critique of capitalist ideology emerged some years earlier, perhaps Carlyle's pull would have been less. As it was, he came to symbolize a resistance to the dominant ideas of the time, and the quality and force of this resistance was an essential component of his rise to prominence.

Provisionality, Prophecy and Palingenesia

It is part of the received narrative of Carlyle's life that his peers began to grow disillusioned with his work late in the 1840s, even while he was gaining more recognition among the general public. This disillusionment is crystallized in the oft-quoted complaint the poet Arthur Hugh Clough made to Emerson in 1848: 'Carlyle led us out into the desert, and he has left us there.'[30] Clough's use of the narrative of the Biblical Exodus to allegorize the reading of Carlyle is not accidental: it points to the importance of religion in Carlyle's writing, and to the quasi-religious importance of Carlyle's writing to some of his readers, his status as prophet.[31] It points also, I would argue, to the centrality of its perceived *provisionality* to the excitement created by Carlyle's early writing, particularly in this context *Sartor Resartus*.

Sartor, a critical study of a non-existent study of the origin and influence of clothes by the equally non-existent Professor Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, confronts the challenge to religion as a social force presented by the Enlightenment. In the chapter 'Church Clothes', Carlyle, through Teufelsdröckh, makes three key pronouncements, here summarized:

1: That the birth of religion and the birth of society are mutually interpenetrating processes, neither one of which can occur without the other; and that neither religion nor society can exist

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[30] Heffer, p. 275.
[31] For Carlyle as prophet see, for example, Siegel, pp. 467, 481, 516.

without the other – 'Church Clothes are first spun and woven by society; outward Religion originates by Society, Society becomes possible by religion.'[32]

2: That the Church Clothes in use in the 19th century are relics of an earlier stage of humanity's development, and unfit for their purpose: '[T]hose same Church Clothes have gone sorrowfully out at elbows: nay, far worse, many of them have become mere hollow Shapes, or Masks, under which no living Figure or Spirit any longer dwells; but only spiders and unclean beetles, in horrid accumulation, drive their trade […].'[33]

3: That Teufelsdröckh himself is preparing a sequel to his work on clothes, entitled On the Palingenesia, or Newbirth of Society, in which the 'Re-texture of Spiritual Tissues, or Garments' will be the central theme.

It is this promised volume on Palingenesia that is vital to understanding Carlyle's effect on the intellectual classes of his time, particularly in the absence of a sufficient theoretical underpinning to his work that would explain its effect. Carlyle never produced anything that could be seen as the fulfilment of this Palingenesia project. Indeed, in his more narrowly political texts he looks to the past for his models: a mythicized English past of heroic conquest is introduced in the latter part of *Chartism* (1839), and *Past and Present* (1843) is concerned to limn its critique of the materialism of 19th century society against the purportedly faith- and obedience-based social dynamics and hierarchical power structures of the past, specifically the late 12th/early 13th century, rendering his outlook basically reactionary. Though his positive prescriptions were not made very clear in *Sartor Resartus*, what that book did do effectively was to highlight the absurdity of church rituals and orthodox religious beliefs. The simultaneous insistence on the essentiality of religion to social existence tended to create a difficult double bind both

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[32] *Sartor*, p. 163.
[33] *Sartor*, p. 164.

for Carlyle himself and for any reader who took the book to heart, a resolution to which he was unable to provide in later works. *Sartor* took Clough and others 'out into the desert' by convincing them of the inadequacy of existing religious forms, and hinting towards a radical re-envisioning of religion in concept and practice, but left them there by never adequately delineating this new religion. Carlyle's own wife, Jane Welsh Carlyle, underwent the same negative conversion under his influence, according to Froude: 'She had accepted the destructive part of his opinions like so many others, but he had failed to satisfy her that he knew where positive truth lay. He had taken from her, as she mournfully said, the creed in which she had been bred, but he had been unable to put anything in the place of it.'[34] That Carlyle was more effective as a destroyer of ideals than as a creator of new ones was eventually to become a fairly widespread view; however, had he been perceived as such from the beginning of his career, rather than as potential prophet of a new religion of palingenetic force, it is unlikely he would have attained the breadth of influence that he did.

At this point, to analysis of Carlyle's reception may be added a comparison intended to be illustrative. To make the illustration by way of comparison, and to take up Walt Whitman's comment quoted in the introduction to the thesis, I want to suggest that Carlyle's positioning as a cultural figure finds its nearest late 20th-century analogue not in the literary sphere but in the comedian Bill Hicks. Hicks, who died in 1994 at the age of 32, inhabited the borders between comedian and political commentator. His act was formally that of the stand-up comic: he played comedy clubs and performed slots on TV shows. His content, however, was heavily political, and frequently bluntly aggressive and scathing rather than obviously comedic. His principal targets were the political establishment and corporate and marketing culture. Indeed, perhaps his most famous speech is an angry and rather humourless tirade beginning with the directive: 'By the way, if anyone here is in advertising or marketing, kill yourself. Kill yourselves,

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[34] James Anthony Froude, *My Relations with Carlyle* (London, 1903), n.p.. Accessed at: http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/biography/my_relations_with_carlyle.htm [28 June 2014]

seriously.'[35] Hicks, much like Carlyle, struggled through obscurity for his early career, only beginning to

achieve wider recognition shortly before his death. As he put it: 'It's also hard for me to have a career,

because there's no archetype for what I do. I have to create it, or uncover it.'[36] Indeed, Hicks' sense of

purpose and his cultural and professional marginality for much of his lifetime recall Carlyle's Hero as

Man of Letters, who, unlike the other Heroes dealt with in *On Heroes*, is defined by a lifetime of failure,

with penury his apportioned lot: '[T]here ought to be Literary Men poor,– to shew whether they are

genuine or not!'[37] Only posthumously does the Hero as Man of Letters tend to receive his due: 'Ruling

[…], from his grave, after death, whole nations and generations who would, or would not, give him

bread while living […].'[38] Hicks' struggle to build his career and to articulate his vision of his place in

society was exacerbated by his self-image as being a comic of a new and transcendent type, aiming for

something other than provision of entertainment; at one stage he denominated himself a 'shaman',

which he considered to be 'somewhere between prophet and crackpot… though much closer to

prophet'.[39] The aim he associated with this role was to 'heal [the] perception' of his audience. His notion

of perception was a markedly transcendentalist one, a favoured trope being that of 'squeegeeing the

third eye.'[40] Though this trope recalls Carlyle's central metaphor of *the eye*, Hicks' tendency to associate

such insight with drug-taking is where these two sages part intellectual company. Yet for all his religious

iconoclasm, Hicks was a theist of sorts, retaining the term 'God' as a name for the feeling of

unconditional love that he found to be a part of the drug experience.[41] In all of this, there are many

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[35] Used as a blurb for Bill Hicks, *Love All the People: Letters, Lyrics, Routines* (London: Constable, 2005). The speech/tirade is available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gDW_Hj2K0wo [10 July 2014]. This is currently the most watched Bill Hicks clip on YouTube. Note that there is little if any comedic element in evidence (as Hicks says himself during the clip).

[36] Hicks, *Love All the People*, p. xxi.

[37] *On Heroes*, p. 140

[38] *On Heroes*, p. 132.

[39] Hicks, *Love All the People*, p. 245.

[40] Hicks, *Love All the People*, pp. 215, 232.

[41] Drugs were for Hicks somewhat the reverse of a Marxian 'opium of the people', being instead the final revelation of love and understanding which western governments were desperate to suppress, in order to protect

similarities to Carlyle: in the tone of harsh righteousness and judgementality that permeates their works; in the centrality of tropes of the visual to the epistemology and moral philosophy of both; and in the unorthodox and inchoate but passionately felt notions of God that become central to the philosophies of both. Such similarities are also reflected in the manner in which Carlyle and Hicks were received by the media and their peers in their respective eras – in part, as prophets.

It has been noted that Carlyle appeared to his contemporaries somewhat in the guise of a prophet – and indeed the prophet image was one he fostered and invited, in an equivocal way.[42] Hicks is discussed in similarly religious terms by admirers in the years since his death. Upon the release of a documentary on Hicks in 2010, *The Irish Times* asked: 'What would Bill Hicks have made of his current canonisation? It is now 16 years since the American comedian died of pancreatic cancer, but he has remained impressively ubiquitous in the interim. Angrier young comics cite his influence. His tirades against American foreign policy are replayed to comment upon the nation's continuing inter-continental bellicosity. Hicks' routines - furious, righteous, unrelenting - have become holy texts for a new generation of politically tuned-in comedy fans.'[43] The encomia collected as peritext to *Love All the People* confirm that 'comedian' is an inapt label for Hicks. The emphasis is rather on truth: 'All he did, really, was to tell the truth about himself, and about the way he saw the world' (Bill Bailey); 'blowtorch, excavator, truthsayer, and brain specialist [...]. He will correct your vision' (Tom Waits); 'Ten years after his death, his words still burn with righteous truth' (*Kerrang* [music magazine]). This sense, then, that Hicks was a truth-teller in an age of spin and lies, that his work is an expression of a purity of vision beyond his contemporaries, and that he suffered in his personal life and in his relationship to society on account of this, all point to

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the arms industry and to prevent the realization that 'you're being *fucked* every day of your life'. Hicks, *Love All the People*, p. 215.

[42] For Carlyle's equivocal identification with the figure of the prophet, see James Eli Adams, 'The Hero as Spectacle: Carlyle and the Persistence of Dandyism', *Victorian Literature and the Victorian Visual Imagination*, ed. by Carol T. Christ and John O. Jordan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 213-230.

[43] Donald Clarke, 'Still Gagging for Saint Bill', *Irish Times* (10 May 2010), p. 18.

affinities both with Carlyle's ideal of the Hero as Man of Letters, and with the discourse that surrounded Carlyle in the early part of his career. Perhaps most of all it is the searing bluntness – the sometimes abusive stance towards their audience – that marks their rhetoric out from other critics of consumer society. This contemptuous rage both expressed is the most accessible emotional entry point into their work, and requires of the audience a total submission to the moral sensibility of the author-prophet. It is this construction of Carlyle as prophetic voice, iconoclast and sincere and unbiased enemy of imposture that needs to be borne in mind when trying to understand his early reputation, in which such later connotations as racist, reactionary, power-worshipper and authoritarian play little or no part. Relating him to the righteous anger and contempt for worldliness of a latter-day alternative prophet like Bill Hicks may help in thus visualizing Carlyle.

The Condition-of-England Novel

One genre in which Carlyle's influence was particularly apparent was The Condition-of-England Novel, otherwise The Industrial Novel. Carlyle himself had coined the phrase Condition-of-England in opening pages of *Chartism* (1839):

> Canada question, Irish Appropriation question, West-India question, Queen's Bedchamber question; Game Laws, Usury Laws; African Blacks, Hill Coolies, Smithfield cattle, and Dog-carts,– all manner of questions and subjects, except simply this the alpha and omega of all! Surely Honourable Members ought to speak of the Condition-of-England question too.[44]

The ensuing debate was 'a discourse unto itself, creating and absorbing new fields of inquiry',[45] a moment of pure interdisciplinarity in the intellectual life of the time. The novel, in particular, became a place for reflection on the class struggle that Carlyle insisted was central to the Condition-of-England

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[44] *Chartism*, in *Selected Writings*, ed. by Alan Shelston (London: Penguin, 1988), p. 154.
[45] Catherine Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form, 1832-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 1.

question.[46] These novels were concerned to provide documentary accounts of the lives of the working and the ruling classes, and to provide models of response and behaviour among both classes, as will be shown in this project's reading of *North and South*. The essential canon of Condition-of-England novels is a small and fairly stable one. The classic texts are most often considered to be: Benjamin Disraeli's *Sybil* (1845), Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848) and *North and South* (1854-55), Charles Kingsley's *Alton Locke* (1850), Charles Dickens' *Hard Times* (1854), and George Eliot's *Felix Holt* (1866).[47] These novels aimed to be less escapist than documentary and exemplary. They often incorporated didacticism and general reflections on social conditions and were in obvious dialogue with the philosophy and cultural criticism of the day, notably the utilitarianism whose chief exponent at the time was John Stuart Mill, and the various doctrines of Carlyle. This, too, will become clear in the reading of *North and South*. Gaskell's decision to use a quote from Carlyle's 1830 essay 'Biography' as epigraph to her first Condition-of-England novel, *Mary Barton*, is revealing. It was in that essay that Carlyle ridiculed all of the 'three Thousand men, women and children, that make up the army of British Authors' because 'there is no *Reality* in them […] [they do not] *see* anything whatever', and called on the said army to begin 'the faithful study of Reality […], of great, everlasting Nature, and of Man's ways and doings therein', the true task of the Poet, as he saw it.[48] It was precisely this subordination of the romantic notion of the imaginative task as involving *creatio ex nihilo*, to one wherein the imagination was deeply implicated in reality, and in the history, the present, and the future of humanity that underlay the development of the Condition-of-England novel, and, perhaps, the realist novel of the remainder of the 19th century.

The Death of Prophecy

As a perceived prophet, Carlyle's peak came in the early 1840s. As Froude put it:

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[46] Diniejko, Andrej, 'Condition-of-England Novels', *Victorian Web* (22 Feb 2010) http://www.victorianweb.org/genre/diniejko.html [14 Jan 2015].

[47] This selection derives from Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society* (London: Hogarth Press, 1990), p. 87-109. It is used also by Gallagher in *Industrial Reformation*. Diniejko lists some others.

[48] *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, v.3, pp. 47-48.

Amidst the controversies, the arguments, the doubts, the crowding uncertainties of forty years ago, Carlyle's voice was to the young generation of Englishmen like the sound of 'ten thousand trumpets' in their ears[.][49]

But Arthur Hugh Clough's lament quoted earlier is an indice of the partial turning away from Carlylean ideas that marked the late 1840s. According to Froude, the pivotal moment came with the 'Occasional Discourse of the Negro Question' pamphlet of 1849:[50] the pro-slavery stance of this document finally made an association of Carlyle with 19th-century radicalism utterly impossible, particularly in conjunction with Carlyle's rhetorical and anti-logical mode of argument, and the insulting caricatures of West Indian blacks, unnecessarily derogatory even within the context of a defence of slavery. One-time friend John Stuart Mill issued an angry rebuttal,[51] but the long-term consequences to Carlyle's reputation of this and the similarly extreme *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850) involved less a decline than a repositioning: through the 1850s and beyond, it is still evident that Carlyle's contemporaries were respectful and generous in their written allusions to him, even while subtly but distinctly dissociating themselves from his practical politics.

Such an approach is seen in George Eliot's 1855 reflection on Carlyle, quoted at the beginning of this thesis. The final sentence of that quote needs to be re-emphasized here: 'The character of his influence is best seen in the fact that many of the men who have the least agreement with his opinions are those to whom the reading of *Sartor Resartus* was an epoch in the history of their minds.'[52] Eliot makes the important distinction that the reading of Carlyle's works is epochal, but said works are not likely to provide concrete answers or guidance on socio-political or moral questions. It is significant also that she

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[49] Froude, *London*, v 1, p. 292.
[50] Froude, *London*, v. 2, p. 23.
[51] John Stuart Mill, 'Negro Question', *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* (1850) http://www.efm.bris.ac.uk/het/mill/negro.htm [12 July 2014].
[52] Eliot, p. 187-188.

singles out Carlyle's first major work, *Sartor Resartus*, as the most important locus of influence in his oeuvre, avoiding his more specifically political works. If *Sartor* can be said to advocate any specific approach to politics, it is one of demystification, a disentanglement of the symbols of power and privilege from the bearers thereof, so that each may be accorded the respect to which they are entitled by intrinsic qualities. The provisionality of Carlyle's work is no longer a feature in Eliot's summation: there is no expectation of more to come, no refining or clarifying that can be done that will amend his position. He is seen to be quite unequivocally and finally *wrong*, in practical terms, which impacts his position, but does not by any means disqualify him from respect and admiration: 'It is not as a theorist, but as a great and beautiful human nature, that Carlyle influences us.'[53] His relevance is seen to lie most substantially in his much earlier work, and the respect he continues to receive is partly down to all of his later works being read through the earlier, and the residual persistence of the aura of sincerity he had earlier acquired. But, though this chapter is concentrating on his reception among the literary classes, where his standing diminished somewhat, among the wider population his popularity actually widened in the latter part of his career, peaking with the address he gave at his inauguration as rector of Edinburgh University,[54] and reaching a new peak shortly after his death. From an initial confinement to the literary classes, a growth from the literary journals outwards, Carlyle had come to be accepted as a philosopher – even *the* philosopher of the age – by the mainstream of society.

1881-1945: 'The Most Insincere of All'

The Froudian Turn

Carlyle's literary influence became manifest in the 1840s, notably in the Condition-of-England genre of novels described above. By 1859, literary reviewer George Gilfillan could write: 'His power, though, we trust, lessening, is still great – especially over three classes – litterateurs, the more intelligent of our

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[53] Eliot, p. 188.
[54] Froude, *London*, v. 2, p. 306.

working men, and young thoughtful people generally.'[55] That Carlyle's influence over working men and women long continued is apparent from Jonathan Rose's *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, discussed below, while his influence on 'young thoughtful people' is perhaps best seen in the literary works of the next generation, still in an ideologically and professionally unformed state in 1859. Simon Heffer's claim, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, that within four years of his death, Carlyle was simply seen as a hypocrite thus needs considerable qualification, because Carlyle's influence on late 19th-century litterateurs was no less than that on his own contemporaries. Similarly, in nominating this period as 'the Reactionary Period', Tennyson underestimates the great influence Carlyle continued to have.[56] This is despite the fact that the discourse surrounding him in the press was indeed growing sharply more critical. Shortly after his death in 1881 came the publication of his *Reminiscences*, a two-volume set edited by Carlyle's friend, the historian James Anthony Froude, the reception of which involved many negative evaluations on Carlyle not only as writer, but as an individual – bitter, self-pitying, grudging in praise and profligate in contemptuous scorn for people who had apparently done little or nothing to incur his displeasure. The debate on *Reminiscences* was intense and protracted, the flames fanned further by the publication of four volumes of biography written by Froude, works composed to a great extent of Carlyle's letters, and revealing the strain in Carlyle's marriage to Jane Welsh Carlyle. Much has been written on the 'Carlyle-Froude Controversy', perhaps the most useful and in-depth recent account being that contained in Trev Broughton's *Men of Letters, Writing Lives*. Broughton notes that there is to the modern reader little that is shocking in the revelations of the Froude publications (as I will call them for convenience, referring to the four volumes of biography written by Froude, the two volumes of *Reminiscences* edited by him, and the edition of Jane Welsh Carlyle's letters annotated by Carlyle, edited

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[55] Seigel, p. 431.
[56] G.B. Tennyson, 'Carlyle Today', in Fielding and Tarr, eds., p. 36.

by Froude and published in 1883), nothing that is illicit or immoral. She concludes: 'It was not the *magnitude* of Carlyle's offences that outraged public sensibility, but their *pettiness*, their *pointlessness*.'[57]

A display of pettiness in itself is usually not the cause of controversy, but in this case it contrasts so markedly with Carlyle's expressed philosophy, expressed in such maxims as 'Do the duty that lies nearest thee', 'Close thy Byron, open thy Goethe', etc., that it tended to call into question Carlyle's sincerity, on which his reputation had to a large extent been based. The evidence of the Froude books made clear to any reader that 'no effort at all was made to recast his own character, temper and habits, in accordance with those views of duty which he was perpetually inculcating upon others.'[58] It was the content of Carlyle's philosophy that made his conduct so problematic; there was no way of assessing the one without the other coming to mind. Throughout the 1880s and into the 1890s, Carlyle's character was debated in the English press. Broughton notes that 'Carlyle was talked about more, and more heatedly, in the years after his death, than he had been for over a decade.'[59] Indeed, Carlyle may have been talked about more in the 1880s than at any time previous, though certainly far more critically.

Coming of Age with Carlyle

But the period of the 1880s and 1890s was also that in which a generation which had grown up reading or being otherwise exposed to Carlyle's writings was coming of age in literature, politics and elsewhere, and this fact has been perhaps under-emphasized in writing on Carlyle. In literary terms, Carlyle is an especially prominent presence in many of the English bildungsromans of the later 19th and early 20th century. In Samuel Butler's semi-autobiographical *The Way of All Flesh* (published after Butler's death in 1902, but written between 1873 and 1884), the life of the young hero, Ernest Pontifex, turns on an encounter with an old tinker called Mr Shaw, who in a short conversation questions the value of institutional education

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[57] Trev Broughton, *Men of Letters, Writing Lives: Masculinity and Literary Auto/Biography in the Late Victorian Period* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 102.
[58] Contemporary review by William Cowley of Froude's volumes, quoted in Broughton, pp. 101-102.
[59] Broughton, p. 108.

as opposed to the education he himself has gained from 'examin[ing] the bottoms of old kettles and saucepans',[60] advises the younger man to read the gospels carefully and critically, and tells him 'I think you will make a kind of Carlyle sort of a man some day'.[61] This is Shaw's only appearance in the book, but Pontifex credits him with causing his loss of faith in Christian theology,[62] ultimately leading him to the realization that: 'By far the greater part, moreover, of his education had been an attempt, not so much to keep him in blinkers as to gouge his eyes out altogether.'[63] This realization arrived at, he determines that all of the 'shams which want attacking, and yet no one attacks them'[64] are to be the great subject of his writings. This appears to be the fulfilment of Shaw's prophecy: the essence of the Carlylean worldview is the 'deep fixed Determination to have done with Shams',[65] foremost among them the 'dead Letter of Religion';[66] attacking shams, therefore, is precisely what a 'Carlylean sort of man' would do. Perhaps further echoing Carlyle's development, this ultimately turns out not to be a political aim at all: in the closing paragraphs of *The Way of All Flesh*, the narrator clarifies that Pontifex always votes Conservative, but that, nevertheless 'in all other respects, he is an advanced Radical'.[67] Ultimately, he has modified his definition of 'truth' such that 'the dead letter of religion' is politically true, if not so in a pedantic sense: 'The spirit behind the Church is true, though her letter – once true – is now true no longer.'[68] The hatred of sham, originally linked to a rebellion against Victorian ideals and institutions of education and religious indoctrination, end in practice by being totally divorced from them, which are now revealed to be *effectively* true – though not actually so, according to a conventional definition of the word 'true'. In this

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[60] Samuel Butler, *The Way of All Flesh* (Kindle: Amazon, 2014), loc. 3813.
[61] Butler, loc. 3822.
[62] Butler, loc. 3903
[63] Butler, loc. 3918. This anger against his upbringing notwithstanding, the end of the protagonist's ideological journey is the withdrawal from all practical politics except to the extent of voting Conservative; nevertheless, the narrator notes, 'in all other respects, he is an advanced Radical' (loc.6026).
[64] Butler, loc. 5687.
[65] Thomas Carlyle, *The French Revolution: A History*, ed. John Rosenberg (New York, Modern Library, 2002), p. 126.
[66] *Sartor*, p. 89.
[67] Butler, loc. 6026.
[68] Butler, loc. 5645.

sense *The Way of All Flesh* is the quintessentially Carlylean novel, following his thought right to the end ('the end', temporally speaking – the implication is not that the radicalism of Carlyle's early work *logically* ends in his later conservatism [though this is basically both Butler's and {the later} Carlyle's argument],[69] but that the personal and the political interacted so as to make this position most attractive to both writers), through declared Radicalism into a practical Conservatism that sees itself as ideologically Radical. This is the temporal logic of Carlylism, as enacted in Carlyle's own journey from Sartorean radicalism to the political conservatism that dominates the *Occasional Discourse* and other late works: hatred of conventional shams turning itself into disillusioned defense of the ideological apparatus behind the 'shams', which are now seen as effectively true. It is not, however, the internal logic of Carlylism as expressed by Shaw in *The Way of All Flesh* (or in many of the earlier of Carlyle's own articulations of it): here there is only the declaration of a commitment to truth in a straightforward and unmodified sense. But Butler and Carlyle's own ideological trajectories appear to indicate that the practical logic of such a stance can be very different from its internal logic.

Butler's novel is – in the sense outlined above, at least – the paradigmatic Carlylean bildungsroman, but there are many English bildungsromans of the period heavily indebted to Carlyle. Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Stark Munro Letters* (1895) is certainly one, and that will be discussed in a later chapter. And in Jerome Klapka Jerome's semi-autobiographical *Paul Kelver* (1902), there is the decidedly Carlylean quasi-father figure Dr Hal, employed among the poor of inner- city London, who regard him as 'medicine man and priest combined'.[70] Dr Hal's parting advice to the eponymous protagonist is as follows: 'Put your Carlyle in your pocket. He is not all voices, but he is the best maker of men I know. The great thing to

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[69] Butler's diegetic narrator tells Pontifex: 'You are trying to make people resume consciousness about things, which, with sensible men, have already passed into the unconscious stage. The men whom you would disturb are in front of you, and not, as you fancy, behind you; it is you who are in the lagger, not they' (loc. 4813.). This is what Pontifex comes to accept himself: the implication is that practical Conservatism is a manifestation of developed Radicalism; practical Radicalism is simply an early stage of development.

[70] Jerome K. Jerome, *Paul Kelver* (Kindle: Amazon, 2011), loc. 2269.

learn of life is not to be afraid of it.'[71] And Paul does so, effectively 'reducing [his] denominator', as Carlyle had recommended; indeed, he finds that particular injunction to be nothing less than *a solution to life*.[72] The reading of Carlyle by Paul Kelver is a particularly active and dynamic one. The repercussions of this reading for Paul extended far beyond the sphere of the literary, its scope as wide as life itself. It provided a means of confronting societal shams, and of eventually coming to terms with said shams, guiding youthful impetuousness and idealism into a more conservative course, wherein what Freud called the pleasure principle makes way for the conformist reality principle.[73] Ironically, it was the very strength and passion of Carlyle's denunciations of societal forms that gave his ultimate endorsement of the socio-political *status quo* and alignment with the aristocratic classes such an authority and a ring of sincerity to readers like Butler and Jerome.

Influential as such a reading of Carlyle was, and helpful as it may have been in the coming-of-age process for 'young thoughtful people generally', as Gilfillan had noted, a politically opposed reading was also quite prevalent. H.G. Wells provides a partial example of this: a member of the socialist Fabian society at one point, he may at times have veered towards what would now be considered Fascism, but he never arrived at the Conservatism that Butler posits as the end of political reflection.[74] Wells' career-long propensity for cultural prophecy was predicated to some extent on his early reading of Carlyle. A collection of Wells' prophetical writings opens with an early piece called 'The Man of the Year Million', introduced by the volume's editor with the observation that 'traces of the crude Carlylean pomposity of his student writing are not difficult

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[71] Jerome, loc. 2518.
[72] Jerome, loc. 2653.
[73] For these terms see, for example Sigmund Freud*, Civilization and its Discontents* (London: Penguin, 2004), pp. 16-17.
[74] For Wells and Fascism, see John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia 1880-1939* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992).

to detect'.[75] Indeed, as well as being an anticipation of the themes of *The Time Machine* (1895), the piece is a pastiche of Carlyle, being based on excerpts from a 'great unwritten volume' by one Professor Holzkopf, 'presumably Professor at Weissnichtwo'[76] – Weissnichtwo being the fictional university where Professor Teufelsdröckh in *Sartor Resartus* held his Chair in *Allerley-wissenschaft,* and thus a direct evocation of the Carlylean intertext. Holzkopf theorizes extravagantly on the future of humankind, on the possible directions of physical and psychical evolution of the species: 'great hands they have, enormous brains, soft, liquid, soulful eyes. Their whole muscular system, their legs, their abdomens, are shriveled to nothing, a dangling, degraded pendant to their minds.'[77] 'The Man of the Year Million' takes a Carlylean form, juxtaposing excerpts from a fictional treatise on the future development of humankind with blandly skeptical commentary from an unnamed narrator, comprising a generically unplaceable work, a non-narrative fiction with overtones of cultural prophecy. This is a form that allows for the most radical and unbounded speculation, and that prompts a reading without closure, as the competing voices are not organized in an identifiable hierarchy. It illustrates that still for Wells' generation the Carlyle of *Sartor Resartus* represented an openness to the newest ideas (the future of human evolution, in this case), ideas that could only just be grasped, and were still too new to be unequivocally endorsed in their ultimate ramifications. Even within a post-Darwinian cultural climate, Carlyle provided models for intellectual exploration. He represented, too, a directing of the mind towards the future rather than the past, a mind taking as its province no less a question than the future development of the human species, and of the world.

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[75] H.G. Wells, *Journalism and Prophecy, 1893-1946*, ed. W. Warren Wager (London: Bodley Head, 1965), p. 3.
[76] Wells, *Journalism and Prophecy*, p. 3.
[77] Wells, *Journalism and Prophecy*, p. 7.

And in thus reading Carlyle Wells was characteristic of a large sector of the Carlyle-reading public. In *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, Jonathan Rose includes a section entitled 'Conservative Authors and Radical Readers', which mostly focusses on Carlyle, and makes Carlyle's effect on the developing trade union movement in the later-19th and early-20th century very clear, confirming Yeats' assertion that Carlyle was 'the chief inspirer of self-educated men in the `eighties and early `nineties.'[78] Rose finds Carlyle to have a particular 'ability to attract disciples from all points on the political spectrum, from Communists to Nazis', and concludes that he was particularly popular with auto-didactic members of the working-class.[79] Helen Crawford, described by Rose as a militant suffragette, testified:

> He stripped naked the Law, the Church and many of the fraudulent shams of his day. I was deeply impressed by his denunciation of quackery masquerading as Truth, his honour of honest work, his exposure of war, his gift of stripping people of all the vestures designed to overawe the simple – the bombazine gown, the horsehair wig of the judge, the Crown and Scepter of the Kings and Queens [...].[80]

The through line between such conservative readers as Butler and such radicals as Crawford was the shared sense of a necessary clearing away of shams which was performed with the help of an active reading of Carlyle. Reading Carlyle was for these readers a particularly encouraging experience: that is, it actively infused them with courage, a sense that obedience to social conventions and conventional authorities was not an unquestionable duty; that there was another narrative of selfhood available, involving a greater degree of faith in those convictions

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[78] Yeats, *Autobiographies,* eds. William H. O'Donnell and Douglas N. Archibald (New York: Scribner, 1999), p. 179.
[79] Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the English Working Classes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 41.
[80] Rose, p. 44.

which have been arrived at on an individual level, and a much greater tendency to mockery and open criticism of the received wisdom concerning the socio-political. This is undoubtedly a rather selective reading of Carlyle's actual texts, but it is a reading comprising the elements of most import in analyzing Carlyle's influence throughout the late-19th and early-20th centuries.

The International Influence

It has been famously said that 'Poetry is what gets lost in translation', so, if Carlyle was fundamentally a poet as Emerson and Mill believed, his work would not be expected to travel beyond the Anglophone world. And this is to some extent borne out by Carlyle's actual reception history. In France he has never been widely influential, according to Catherine Heyrendt, who attributes this to 'misfortunes and poor timing, or […] political circumstances that no longer exist'.[81] So while he was to be read with great enthusiasm by a young Marcel Proust, who also had James Whistler's portrait of Carlyle hanging on his study wall,[82] a wide readership did not become established in the 19th century, nor has it arisen since. In Germany, however, Carlyle was more popular, and had been for many years, having come to the attention of Bismarck with his letter to the *Times* of 1870 in which he blamed 'vapouring, vainglorious, gesticulating, quarrelsome, restless and over-sensitive France' for the Franco-Prussian War.[83] It has even been suggested that 'Carlyle's letter helped quell any British interference on France's behalf'.[84] Bismarck evidently felt obliged to Carlyle, for he bestowed on him the Prussian Order of Merit in 1874. The high esteem Carlyle was held in in Germany was to eventually lead to a co-optation of his work by the Nazis (discussed below).

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[81] Catherine Heyrendt, '"My Books were not, nor ever will be popular": Reappraising Carlyle in and through France', in *Thomas Carlyle Resartus: Reappraising Carlyle's Contribution to the Philosophy of History, Political Theory, and Cultural Criticism*, ed. Paul E. Kerry, Marylu Hill (Madison, Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2010), p. 179.

[82] Jean-Yves Tadié, *Marcel Proust*, trans. Euan Cameron (London: Penguin, 2000), pp. 339-342.

[83] Cumming, p. 32.

[84] Cumming, p. 32.

Growing Insincere

So the period following Carlyle's death was not only one in which his personal character was much discussed and criticized, but one in which his formative influence on the literary youth of his day came to fruition. But the Carlyle-Froude Controversy once again became the central topic of discussion in 1903, when Froude had a small volume called *My Relations with Carlyle* published posthumously. Here Froude took exception to the critics of his treatment of Carlyle, and expanded on his portrait of the Carlyle's marriage: principally, he divulged his belief, based on information from Jane Welsh Carlyle's friend Geraldine Jewsbury, that Carlyle had been sexually impotent throughout the 40-year marriage. This, Froude wrote, 'had been at the bottom of all the quarrels and all the unhappiness.'[85] Froude's book provoked strongly-worded denials from Carlylean loyalists,[86] but despite, or perhaps because of, this trenchant reaction, the allegation entered into the culture-text[87] of Carlylean biography, the very absence of definitive evidence making it an unending and ceaselessly controversial argument.[88]

This period also coincides with the beginning of Carlyle's fall from cultural ubiquity as a writer. Yeats had seen Carlyle as a major force in late 19th-century culture, but in 1915 he averred that Carlyle was 'as dead as Ossian' in a conversation with future British Prime Minister Arthur Balfour. Balfour, Yeats recorded, said that, for all his invective against insincerity, Carlyle himself was 'the most insincere of all'.[89] Balfour's judgment was made possible by the Froude publications and the controversy surrounding them. The content of Carlyle's work was now less

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[85] Froude, *My Relations with Carlyle*.

[86] Most notably James Crichton-Browne, Alexander Carlyle, *The Nemesis of Froude: A Rejoinder to James Anthony Froude's 'My Relations with Carlyle'* (London: J. Lane, 1903) https://archive.org/details/nemesisfroudear01carlgoog [24 July 2014].

[87] The term, referring to the version of a story present in the public consciousness (which may not be entirely consistent with any single formal version of the text), is taken from Paul Davis, *The Many Lives of Ebenezer Scrooge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

[88] Ashton, *Thomas and Jane*, loc. 1870.

[89] R.F. Foster, *The Arch-Poet* [*W.B. Yeats: A Life*, volume 2] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 27.

important than his character, and his work was read through the prism of his character and his life. His insistence on sincerity was particularly problematic – to an earlier generation it was precisely this sincerity that was his most salient feature, and that rendered his works worthy even when the precise political ramifications of these works were rejected. For Carlyle to be accepted as insincere, then, impacted on his reputation to a far greater degree than would have been the case in another writer. That Carlyle might have been wrong in the general terms of his worldview was unimportant to his contemporaries, so long as he remained *sincerely* wrong. In the light cast by the Froude publications Carlyle did not appear to be a man in the idealistic sense he himself had insisted upon (stoicism, worship of silence, self-forgetfulness, etc.) nor did he make any apparent attempts to emulate his own expressed ideals, nor had he ever acknowledged or sought to remedy his apparent conjugal failure. The disconnection between theory and practice was seen to amount to insincerity, and his reputation was not built to sustain such a charge.

The Political Influence

Carlyle influenced not only literary figures, but some political figures as well. His influence on burgeoning socialist politics of the turn of the 20th century is clear from Rose. Socialist Party leader Keir Hardie found *Sartor Resartus* to be an epoch in the making of his mind;[90] while William Morris, a truly Carlylean Hero in his endeavours in several professions – literature, politics, textile design – responded to being asked about the formative influences on his socialist doctrine with: 'Carlyle and Ruskin, but somebody should have been beside Carlyle and punched his head every five minutes.'[91] A more surprising instance is Gandhi. Surprising because of the pacifist principles he espoused and his anti-colonialism, yet Gandhi read several of Carlyle's

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[90] Fred Reid, *Keir Hardie* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), pp. 42-44, 69.
[91] Quoted in Yeats, *Autobiographies*, pp. 134-135.

works beginning with a reading of the essay on Mohammed from *On Heroes* during his first stay in England in the 1890s, as noted in his autobiography, though in that work he gives primary credit to John Ruskin for providing him with a political template.[92] He considered translating some of Carlyle's works at one point, but, though he did translate Ruskin's *Unto This Last*, he never got around to doing the same for Carlyle. Twenty years later, he wrote: 'I can still read with love some of the writings of Carlyle and Ruskin.'[93] David Amigoni suggests that Gandhi felt a sense of self-identification with 'Carlyle's heroes' self-abnegation, dilemmas, wanderings, lack of vocation, timidity and shyness, and their stutterings and silences that signify their purity, innocence, credibility and authenticity'.[94] With regard to Gandhi's developed political stance, Carlyle's 'advocacy of austerity, simplicity and respect for all kinds of labour' were obvious points of convergence.[95] And Amigoni suggests that Gandhi's enduring self-consciousness about clothes and their social significance echoes Carlyle's preoccupations in *Sartor Resartus*: 'Gandhi became increasingly naked in seeking a distilled 'Indian' self. As Gandhi declassed, re-cast(e), and re-gendered himself, he re-tailored and re-dressed (in both meanings) himself and others to fit a nearly naked Indian world […].'[96] It is in keeping with the general trend of Carlyle influence that his works could aid Gandhi in freeing himself from the baggage of social expectation, encouraging him to create his own practical politics, based on his own worldview. Gandhi was not a Hero-worshipper, noting in *Autobiography* that though he 'believe[d] in the Hindu theory of Guru and his importance in spiritual realization', he had never been able to find an acceptable

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[92] Mohandas K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography:The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (Kindle: no publisher information), loc.1151, locs. 4807-4817.

[93] David Amigoni, *Life Writing and Victorian Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 125.

[94] Amigoni, p. 125.

[95] Amigoni, p. 125.

[96] Amigoni, p. 136.

one for himself: 'The throne has remained vacant and my search still continues.'[97] In practice, Gandhi was his own Guru, Carlyle having helped him 're-cast(e)' himself and attain an intellectual independence that placed him in many respects at the opposite end of the ideological spectrum from that advocated by *On Heroes*. Gandhi, then, was a radical reader who took encouragement from Carlyle in a similar manner to those working-class British described by Rose.

Carlyle's name frequently arose in the context of discussions of Fascism. The link was present from the beginning in the Italian poet, revolutionary and proto-fascist Gabriele D'Annunzio. As his biographer Lucy Hughes-Hallett put it: 'D'Annunzio was not a fascist, but Fascism was D'Annunzian.[98] In his endeavours in two fields D'Annunzio was – like Morris, and like Napoleon, who 'had poems in him like Austerlitz battles' – an ideally Carlylean figure, and Hughes-Hallett reports that it was his early reading of *On Heroes* that 'would confirm D'Annunzio's veneration for great men, and reinforce his conviction that it was not economic forces, as the socialists maintained, but the actions of superb individuals that shaped human history.'[99] In accordance with which, D'Annunzio and a small irregular army took over the city of Fiume in 1919, holding it for a year before the Italian army attacked and overthrew the regime. With the rise of Fascism proper, debate in the Anglophone world consistently placed Fascism within western intellectual history, and understood it within that frame of reference. Carlyle was seen as an important progenitor. Bertrand Russell's 'Ancestry of Fascism' posits that Carlyle adopted the nationalism of Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and embellished it with 'a kind of Socialism and solicitude for the proletariat which is really dislike of industrialism and of the *nouveau riche*', and that this became

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[97] Gandhi, loc. 1441.
[98] Lucy Hughes-Hallett, *The Pike: Gabrielle d'Annunzio, Poet, Seducer and Preacher of War* (Kindle: Fourth Estate, 2013), loc. 115.
[99] Hughes-Hallett, *The Pike*, loc. 1553.

thereafter a characteristic of fascistic movements, including Nazism: 'In view of this, we can scarcely wonder that many people were taken in by the socialistic façade in National Socialism.'[100] Orwell similarly described Carlyle as 'one of the intellectual fathers of Fascism'.[101] And Carlyle was adopted to a certain extent by the Third Reich as intellectual ballast for their views, *On Heroes* being compulsory reading in Nazi schools and a book of selections from his works selling three hundred thousand copies between 1926 and 1932.[102] The link remains, and has indeed been embedded in public consciousness by the account Hugh Trevor-Roper gives of Goebbels reading uplifting passages from Carlyle's *Frederick the Great* to Hitler in the bunker in the last days of their lives, and moving *Der Führer* to tears thereby.[103] More sympathetic Carlyle scholars tend to disagree; for Owen Dudley Edwards, for example, the efforts of Orwell, Trevor-Roper and others to associate Carlyle with National Socialism have constituted a 'witch-hunt'.[104] Carlyle's reputation was already evidently on a downward trajectory before the rise of Fascism, but it undoubtedly provided another negative connotation for the Chelsea Sage. Those writers who wrote on Carlyle's ideological affinities with Fascism rarely considered them in isolation from his personality, and particularly his married life (even if not generally explicitly reproducing Froude's impotence claims). J. Salwyn Schapiro's reflection is typical:

> Much has been written and much more whispered about the unhappy marital life of the Carlyles. She was brilliant, caustic, and fond of society. He was a prophet, a dyspeptic, and,

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[100]Bertrand Russell, 'The Ancestry of Fascism', *In Praise of Idleness* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), p.62

[101] George Orwell, *I Belong to the Left 1945* [*The Complete Works*, volume 17], ed. Peter Davison (London: Secker and Warburg, 1998), p. 151.

[102] J. Salwyn Schapiro, 'Thomas Carlyle, Prophet of Fascism', *Journal of Modern History*, 17: 2 (1945), p. 115.

[103] Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Last Days of Hitler* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p.140.

[104] Owen Dudley Edwards, '"The Hero as Historian": Pieter Gel and the Condition of Carlyle after Hitler', *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 45:1 (2012), p. 172.

at times, a morose recluse. If, according to Voltaire, one cannot argue with a prophet, it is even more difficult to live with one, especially for a vivacious, clever woman.[105]

It appears from commentators of that time that Froude's works had provided the accepted culture-text of Carlyle's life, and this culture-text was implicitly treated as relevant to the consideration of Carlyle's theories. Nor was such an approach explicitly defended by those who adopted it, yet it illustrates Feyerabend's point that the causal efficacy of an argument is not limited to the questions of the argument's own terms, but to potentially any number of extraneous circumstances, such as, in this case, the available biographical material on Carlyle.[106]

Carlyle's fall from critical and popular favour was perhaps overdetermined, both the effects of biographical appraisals and the connotations of fascism prompting considerable criticism. Further, his style, early noted for its difficulty by reviewers such as Thackeray and Mill, held biblical and other archaic resonances and allusions that became both less comprehensible and that carried less resonance with basic cultural ideals. Orwell objected to Carlyle's style almost as much as to his politics, judging that Carlyle had become unreadable because 'with all his cleverness he had not even the wit to write in plain straightforward English.'[107] Orwell's generation were generally familiar with Carlyle's works to some extent, but found little of interest in them. They were equally familiar with his life and character, and found little to admire in them.

One effect that the Rise of Fascism had that adversely affected Carlyle's reputation was that it focused attention on certain works and excerpts: namely, those that were most authoritarian and accorded best with Fascist ideology. These were precisely the passages that earlier readers

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[105] Schapiro, p. 98.
[106] See Feyerabend, p. 9.
[107] Orwell, *I Belong to the Left*, p. 349.

like George Eliot had glossed over or considered of secondary importance. Thus Fascism provided a lens through which to read Carlyle, and, read through this lens, he clearly *was* proto-fascistic. Innumerable other readings were theoretically possible, but practically unusual, for it was difficult to read his works without prior knowledge of the politico-intellectual lineage into which they had been placed by certain authorities.

1946-Present: 'The Grand Silence'[108]

It is difficult to construct a narrative of Carlylean influence in the years from the end of World War II to the present. Both his political imprint and his literary have faded rapidly, almost but not quite to vanishing point. One scholar who attempted to reinstate Carlyle as central to an English tradition of politically engaged literature was Raymond Williams, whose essay on Carlyle in *Culture and Society* (1959) has been considered 'the boldest and most successful attempt to revive Carlyle's standing as a prophet'.[109] Williams was of a socialist mindset, later an avowed Marxist,[110] yet he was evidently highly sympathetic to Carlyle's social analysis. He emphasized the socialist and progressive elements of Carlyle's thought; his selective reading concentrated particularly on the very early essay 'Signs of the Times' (1829), of which he wrote:

> [T]here is genuine balance in this essay, as well as a fine, and now rare, unity of insight and determination. A man who began in this way might well seem qualified to become the most important social thinker of his century.

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[108] Ashton, *Thomas and Jane*, loc. 6415.
[109] David R. Sorenson, 'Introduction' to *On Heroes*, p. 1.
[110] Williams, *Marxism and Literature*.

There was a time, of course, when it was quite widely believed that this was in fact what

Carlyle became. I suppose that no one believes this now[.][111]

Williams stressed the importance of Carlyle's early work, and ascribed his later ideological

developments to the social pressures of an isolating and materialistic society – developments

that in fact served to demonstrate the accuracy of Carlyle's initial social diagnosis:

This indeed is the tragedy of the situation: that a genuine insight, a genuine vision, should

be dragged down by the very situation, the very structure of relationships, to which it was

opposed, until a civilizing insight became in its operation barbarous, and a heroic purpose,

a 'high vocation', found its final expression in a conception of human relationships which is

only an idealized version of industrial class-society.[112]

Williams' assessment of Carlyle differs from many contemporaries in that it posits, isolates and

defines a primary insight existing apart from Carlyle's more problematic doctrines, which

doctrines are not seen as arising from this insight in an intellectual or conceptual sense – thus

maintaining the integrity of this original insight, saving it from its tainted association with

Carlyle's thought as commonly understood. Carlyle's writing career is read temporally – an early

period of vision and balance; a later period of brutal excess. The fascist Carlyle is taken into

account by Williams but is seen to be, in a sense, not the essential or important Carlyle, but only

Carlyle after the industrial society he hated had thoroughly ideologized his consciousness – in

itself demonstrating the validity of Carlyle's own critiques. Thus even the later Carlyle is partially

rehabilitated by its revelation of the intellectual consequences of industrial society on a 'genuine

insight'.

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[111] Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society* (London: Hogarth, 1992), p. 76. See also Williams' later reflections on Carlyle in *Politics and Letters: Interviews with* New Left Review (London: Verso, 1981), especially pp. 99, 103.
[112] Williams, *Culture and Society*, p. 77.

But though subsequent Marxist critics like Terry Eagleton admit that 'the working-class movement is as a matter of historical fact deeply inflected with the Carlylean and Ruskinian ideology',[113] Carlyle has not become a reference point in Marxist thought: Eagleton finds Williams' reading to be 'drastically partial and distorted';[114] while the interviewers of *New Left Review* challenged Williams on the subject, noting that Carlyle was 'an unbridled racist and imperialist': Williams in response allows that Carlyle was in his later career responsible for 'some of the worst thinking of the century', though he maintains that 'Signs of the Times' was a seminal essay in post-industrial thought.[115] Williams aside, then, as a political theorist Carlyle has little currency on the left. On the other side, one can find in internet culture small groups of very far-right ideologues who use him for his anti-progressive, anti-democratic, sexist and racist elements, albeit these are very much fringe movements (at the time of writing).[116] Thus as a political doctrinist, Carlyle has no substantial currency.

In more general terms, the doctrine of political Heroism which he propounded is one which has largely fallen by the wayside. A popular lament is that where once we honoured heroes, now we give our attention to celebrities, famous for being famous. In her book on heroes, Lucy Hughes-

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[113] Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology* (London: Verso, 1986), p. 25.

[114] Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology*, p. 25.

[115] Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters*, p. 104-5.

[116] See the *Unqualified Reservations* blog in general, or in particular: Mencius Moldbug, 'Why Carlyle Matters', *Unqualified Reservations* (16 July 2009) http://unqualified-reservations.blogspot.ie/2009/07/why-carlyle-matters.htm [13 May 2013]. See also the blogzine *The Radish* (produced by 'The Thomas Carlyle Club for Young Reactionaries [Students against a Democratic Society]'), especially their inaugural post, 'Thomas Carlyle' http://radishmag.wordpress.com/2013/01/11/thomas-carlyle/ [25 July 2014]. Like Carlyle himself, these writers use a certain eccentric humour as garnish for their extreme political ideas. Both Moldbug and *Radish* identify themselves with 'The Dark Enlightenment', an internet movement in political theory which a recent *Telegraph* article considered to be 'spreading fast' – Jamie Bartlett, 'Meet the Dark Enlightenment: Sophisticated Neo-Fascism that's Spreading Fast on the Net', *Telegraph* (20 January 2014) http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/technology/jamiebartlett/100012093/meet-the-dark-enlightenment-sophisticated-neo-Fascism-thats-spreading-fast-on-the-net/ [25 July 2014] (note also the huge comments thread following the article: closed at 931 comments).

For a negative view of this movement: Corey Pein, 'Mouthbreathing Machiavellis Dream of a Silicon Reich', *The Baffler* (19 May 2014) http://www.thebaffler.com/blog/mouthbreathing-machiavellis/ [21 Jue 2015]

Hallett acknowledges this turn from heroism to celebrity, but contends that 'such collective frivolity should be cherished as one of the privileges of peace. It is desperation that prompts people to crave a champion, a protector, or a redeemer and, having identified one, to offer him their worship.'[117] It might, therefore, be suspected that within cultures at war or otherwise in need of a champion or redeemer, Carlyle might fare better. However, there is little evidence that that is the case. But he has attracted a certain amount of attention from Islamist scholars; specifically, his essay on Muhammad in *On Heroes* has won him praise from this quarter. Ebtisam Sadiq, in an essay on *The Satanic Verses*, compares Rushdie's 'essentialist' depiction of Islam unfavorably with Carlyle's approach: 'Unlike Rushdie, Carlyle has chosen to positively respond to other cultures and to understand their faith.'[118] Even the discourse of multi-culturalism, then, can find an ally in Carlyle, if he is read very selectively. And the British author Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood provides an introduction for a publication of the Muhammad essay in which she lauds the work as 'interesting and brave',[119] stressing the strength of anti-Islamic sentiment at the time Carlyle wrote, and against which he sets himself. But Maqsood's introduction, which assumes its readers' unfamiliarity with Carlyle, also warns that an initial reading may create the impression that 'Carlyle was quite mad',[120] with particular reference to his description of the Qur'an as 'as toilsome reading as I ever undertook. A wearisome confused jumble, crude, incondite […].'[121] In

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[117] Lucy Hughes-Hallett, *Heroes: Saviours, Traitors and Supermen* (Kindle: Harper Collins, 2013.), loc. 76. Notwithstanding Hughes-Hallett's remark, a nascent 'Heroism Science' has emerged: see Scott T. Allison, 'The Initiation of Heroism Science', *International Advances in Heroism Science*, 1(2015), pp. 1-8. Carlyle is cited semi-approvingly by Allison.

[118] Ebtisam Ali Sadiq, 'Acts of Negation: Modality and Spatiality in *The Satanic Verses*', *Jordan Journal of Modern Languages and Literature*, 5:2 (2013), p. 89.

[119] Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood, 'Introduction', *Muhammad: The Hero as Prophet*, by Thomas Carlyle (New Delhi: Goodword, 2005), p. 18

[120] Maqsood, 'Introduction', p. 26.

[121] *On Heroes*, p. 67.

any case, such Islamic interest in Carlyle thus far extends only to his essay on Mohammad, not comprising an extensive engagement with his theories and his worldview.

As to scholarly writing more generally, Carlyle still receives some attention. The Froude controversy is still live in Carlylean circles.[122] Recent approaches to Carlyle are often obliged to start from a question along the lines of 'Why is he still relevant?', and to attempt to provide an answer of some sort. In a 2007 conference called 'Thomas Carlyle Resartus: Reappraising Carlyle for our Times' at Villanova University in Pennsylvania, conference co-chair Paul Kerry offered as the central lesson to be learned from Carlyle, 'Don't perform a rhizotomy'[123] – that is, don't become cut off from one's own roots (social, institutional, religious, etc.). This is certainly one message that can be drawn from Carlyle, but at other points in his corpus the message is that a rhizotomy is just the operation that his society needed to perform (see especially Chapter 4 below for the unmistakably rhizotomic implications of Carlyle's theories of symbols). And these latter points were extremely important in terms of their influence and the creative reception which they engendered. At the time when Carlyle was, as Williams noted, widely considered the greatest social thinker of the time, this was the substance of the Carlylean approach as understood by many of his readers. And these points are still more important for being downplayed in much recent scholarly work on Carlyle, which often comes from a more traditionalist perspective – most commonly a Catholic perspective, as Kerry notes at Villanova.[124] It is only through cataloguing and analyzing the workings of Carlyle's influence on his contemporaries that the source of his actual power as a writer can be understood, and it is by

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[122] See, for example, Kenneth J. Fielding, 'Justice to Carlyle's Memory: The Later Carlyle', *The Carlyles at Home and Abroad*, ed. David R. Sorenson, Rodger L. Tarr (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p. 1-14.
[123] Kerry and Marylu Hill's opening discussion of Carlyle is available from the Villanova University YouTube page http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbAlSqGouwY The 'rhizotomy' discussion takes place from around 41:20
[124] At around 19:10 of the Villanova discussion.

following the trail of this influence at second-hand through adaptation that Carlyle's placement

or potential placement within a contemporary ideological context can de delineated. For this to

occur, it must be remembered that Carlyle was as often (or more often) read as a radical thinker

as he was a conservative.

Chapter 3: Towards a Wise Despotism: Gaskell's *North and South* (1854-55) and the BBC adaptation *North & South* (2004)

Part of the initial wave of Carlyle-influenced fiction was Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*, an essential member of the Condition-of-England canon. This novel dealt in considerable depth with the industrial disputes of the mid-19th century, and did so in a manner which sustainedly evokes Carlylean notions of class relations. This chapter will examine Gaskell's reading of and use in her own work of Carlyle, with particular focus on Carlylean implications in the presentation of John Thornton, a factory owner engaged in conflict with his employees in *North and South*. The figure of Thornton and his relationship with the story's focalizer Margaret Hale will be used as the basis for a comparison between the novel and its 2004 BBC television serial adaptation, wherein formal differences between the two texts and directorial and scripting choices in the adaptation will be analyzed with a view to explicating the ideological re-articulations that can occur in the adaptation of a text.

Mary Barton: Carlylean Peritext

Carlyle's influence on the Condition-of-England novel has already been noted. It has been noted also that Gaskell gave peritextual note of this influence in her first novel *Mary Barton,* considered a Condition-of-England novel by Williams, Gallagher and others. The epigraph to this work was a quote from Carlyle's 1832 essay 'Biography':

'How knowest thou,' may the distressed Novel-wright exclaim, 'that I, here where I sit, am the Foolishest of existing mortals; that this my Long-ear of a fictitious Biography shall not find one and the other, into whose still longer ears it may be the means, under Providence,

of instilling somewhat?' We answer, 'None knows, none can certainly know: therefore, write on, worthy Brother, even as thou canst, even as it is given thee.'[1]

This is part of a longer passage in which Carlyle makes the comic point that nobody can know for sure who the 'individual Stupidest man now extant in London' is, simply because no one can know every single individual in the city; therefore, even the most apparently vacuous of Fashionable Novels[2] should be treated with indulgence: there is always the possibility of a still more vacuous person who may encounter said novel and 'partially replenish themselves therefrom and esteem it [the Fashionable Novel] a *plenum*'.[3] Removed from the wider context of the essay as a whole, this may seem an odd choice of epigraph, its tone decidedly at variance with that of Gaskell's novel. *Mary Barton* is anything but comic; rather it was described by Raymond Williams as 'the most moving response in literature to the industrial suffering of the 1840s', as well as 'a dramatization of the *fear of violence* which was widespread among the upper and middle classes at the time'.[4] Therefore, to understand how this element of the peritext frames the text of *Mary Barton*, one must not look within the epigraph itself, but rather at Carlyle's essay on 'Biography' in its entirety. For this essay, as noted in the previous discussion of the Condition-of-England novel, is not just or even primarily a comic reflection on the Fashionable Novel, but a prescription for the novelists of the coming times, who are to deal not with the impossible, or even the possible, but with 'the faithful study of Reality'.[5] Carlyle further noted that a successful representation of reality was contingent upon the author's possession of

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[1] Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, ed. Alan Shelston (London: J.M. Dent, 1996), p. 1.
[2] See Tamara S. Wagner, 'The Silver Fork Novel', *Victorian Web* (12 Dec 2012) http://www.victorianweb.org/genre/silverfork.html; Tamara Wagner, 'Silver Fork Novel (Fashionable Novel), *Oxford Bibliographies* http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199799558/obo-9780199799558-0136.xml [14 Jan 2015]
[3] 'Biography', *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, v. 3, p. 39.
[4] Williams, *Culture and Society*, pp. 87, 90.
[5] 'Biography', p. 48.

an 'open loving heart', a sympathy for the thing represented – again, a capacious intuition, in Eoyang's terms, demonstrating the creative spirit at the base of much of Carlyle's writing.[6] And 'a deep sympathy' with the industrial working-class was Gaskell's express motive for writing *Mary Barton*; to express the 'agony' of the members of this class with whom she had come into contact, and to give voice to a 'state of feeling' which had as yet received no literary expression. 'I have tried to write truthfully', she concluded.[7] In was in the context of such aims that Carlyle's work was relevant, notably his impassioned injunctions against the literature of fiction and for the literature of reality at a time when the expression of social realities was essential to the emendation of disturbed class-relations. (The more explicitly social writings of Carlyle will be dealt with in more depth later in this chapter, in relation to their presence in *North and South*.) Such an extensive familiarity with Carlyle's work is demanded by the epigraph of *Mary Barton*, if one is to grasp the urgency and sense of social commitment with which Gaskell was writing in this novel.

Gaskell instructed her publisher to send a copy of *Mary Barton* to Carlyle, with whom she was at the time unacquainted. Carlyle was probably somewhat gratified to receive Gaskell's book, as the choice of epigraph allied to the fact of his having been sent a copy implied that Gaskell had aspired to create the kind of literature that he himself had been advocating. He correctly divined that the author of the anonymous book was a woman, and wrote to her via her publisher:

> [*Mary Barton*] is a Book seeming to take its place far above the ordinary garbage of Novels,—a Book which every intelligent person may read with entertainment, and which it will do every one some good to read. I gratefully accept it as a real contribution (almost

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[6] 'Biography', p. 46.
[7] Gaskell, 'Preface', *Mary Barton*, p. 3.

the first real one) towards developing a huge subject, which has lain dumb too long, and really ought to speak for itself, and tell us its meaning a little, if there be any voice in it at all!

[…]

Unless I mistake, you are capable of going still deeper into this subject, and of bringing up Portraits of Manchester Existence still more strikingly *real*,—which latter quality is the grand value of them in the end.[8]

Gaskell was heartened by this response, particularly when the book came in for criticism from other quarters:

I had no idea it would have proved such a fire brand; meanwhile no one seems to see my idea of a tragic poem; so I, in reality, mourn over my failure. –Mr Carlyle's letter remains my true gain.[9]

Gaskell's initial engagement with the Condition-of-England question, then, was clearly informed by Carlyle's stance, which is apparent even as one stands on the threshold of the text, before entering the novel proper. Her second novel on the subject, *North and South*, bore no such peritextual indication of influence, but that it was in discourse with Carlyle's pronouncements on social questions will be made clear, a discourse to which the adapters of the novel in 2004 added

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[8] 'TC to Elizabeth C. Gaskell, 8 November 1848', *Carlyle Letters Online*, ed. Bret E. Kinser http://carlyleletters.dukejournals.org/cgi/content/full/23/1/lt-18481108-TC-ECG-01?maxtoshow=&hits=10&RESULTFORMAT=&fulltext=gaskell&searchid=1&FIRSTINDEX=0&resourcetype=HWCIT [16 Jan 2015].
[9] J.A.V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard, eds., *The Letters of Elizabeth Gaskell* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966), p. 68.

their own voices, resulting in an ideological cacophony wherein the temporal modifications in the dominant structures of feeling becomes clear.

Unfinished Reading: Gaskell and Carlyle

Notwithstanding her use of Carlyle for an epigraph for *Mary Barton*, Gaskell's reading of his work was probably less than exhaustive. Her most enthusiastic reference to Carlyle's writings in her personal correspondence is to a short piece he wrote on the death of Liberal Member of Parliament and Carlyle's former pupil Charles Buller in 1848, which Gaskell considered a 'beautiful testimonial', and which she quoted from memory.[10] She probably read *The Life of John Sterling* (and may have had it in mind as a model when writing her *Life of Charlotte Brontë*).[11] An early story, 'The Doom of the Griffiths', contained a reflection on *On Heroes*,[12] indicating that she had read or was otherwise familiar through reviews and conversation with that much-discussed work. Carlyle was heavily reviewed and otherwise discussed in the literary journals of the time. Long reviews of each of his works, including substantial excerpts, were as standard. Such reviews were often polarized. As noted in Chapter 2, the notion of 'madness' was sometimes invoked. A highly unfavourable 1846 review of *Cromwell* in the influential *Blackwood's* magazine referred to Carlyle as 'a terrorist and a fanatic', and other reviews in the same publication were similarly hostile.[13] As Gaskell was several times published in *Blackwood's*, she was undoubtedly familiar with this mode of discoursing on Carlyle, and the sense of danger attaching to his writings. As she had also clearly read 'Biography', it is more than likely that she also read other of the essays collected in the 1838 edition of *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, but they do not appear in her

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[10] Chapple and Pollard, p. 70.
[11] Chapple and Pollard, p. 372.
[12] Jenny Uglow, *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Habit of Stories* (London: Faber, 1994), p. 147.
[13] Anon, 'Cromwell' *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 61:378 (April 1847) p. 393. http://www.gutenberg.org/files/23690/23690-h/23690-h.htm [24 Jan 2015]

correspondence. As for *Sartor Resartus*, she conceded: 'I never cd [sic] enter into *Sartor Resartus*, but I brought away one sentence which does capitally for a reference when I get perplexed sometimes. "Do the duty that lies nearest to thee."''[14] *Sartor Resartus* was for Gaskell, then, an unfinished reading of the type, identified by Beer, described earlier. For Gaskell, *Sartor* was a text that she could never enter into (that 'never' seems to imply several attempts, rather than just one), but that she could also never quite repudiate, still clinging on to that single sentence in the book from which she could garner a productive meaning. So strenuous a non-reading of the book is undoubtedly a tribute to its then cultural status as a pre-eminently serious work, notwithstanding its comic attributes. This status was owed to its avocation of a particular moral stance, one based on sincerity and an uncompromising devotion to truth, such that it could constitute for its readers 'an epoch in their minds', as Eliot put it, or even 'a solution to life', as Jerome stated in *Paul Kelver*.[15] In the face of such a prevalent reading, Gaskell could not dismiss the work, even if she could not assimilate it either – rather it remained to be brooded over in the psyche, a literary presence of undoubted but unplaceable merit, but one related, in any case, to the doing of one's duty.

North and South and the Condition of England

Published six years after *Mary Barton*, *North and South* was clearly another contribution by Gaskell to the Condition-of-England question. Following *Mary Barton* a friend had suggested she write another novel on the industrial disputes, but this time concentrating on the factory owners' point of view. Gaskell replied that 'whatever power there was in *Mary Barton* was caused by my feeling strongly on the side which I took', and that she could not bring such strength of feeling to the employer's side; nevertheless, she continued, 'I believe that there is

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[14] Chapple and Pollard, p. 117.
[15] Jerome, loc. 2563.

much to be discovered yet as to the right position and mutual duties, of employer, and employed[.]'[16] Written several years after this letter, *North and South* was to be a further attempt towards articulating those rights and duties as embodied in the relationship between model employer John Thornton and Trade Union agitator turned model employee Nicholas Higgins – going 'still deeper into th[e] subject' as Carlyle's letter had recommended. Here the focalization of the novel is not through the working-class characters like the Higginses, but primarily through aristocratic southerner Margaret Hale, through whose foreign gaze we come to know the industrialized North. As such, Gaskell's two Condition-of-England novels complement each other and perhaps add up to a 360° focalization of the industrial conflicts of mid-19th-century England.

It was because of the choices in focalization made by Gaskell in *North and South* that Raymond Williams found it inferior to *Mary Barton*, opining that the fact that Margaret Hale's position as philanthropic upper-class outsider in industrialized Milton was 'largely Gaskell's own situation' made the later novel 'less interesting'.[17] But because the novel was focalized through such a character, it allows for greater engagement with the political and social discourses of the time, bringing into relief in particular the conflict between the Carlylean point of view and that of the political economists when it came to industrial relations. The characters in the novel are aware of theoretical approaches to the problem, and as the novel progresses, the arguments delineated at length therein move towards a sort of synthesis of these positions, albeit a rather hazy one.

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[16] Chapple and Pollard, p. 119. See also Angus Easson's 'Introduction' to Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). This edition of the novel will be cited throughout this chapter.
[17] Williams, *Culture and Society*, p. 91.

The Carlylean Position on Industrial Relations

The Condition-of-England debate began, or came by its name at least, with Carlyle's 1839 tract *Chartism*.

Here Carlyle introduced a more spatio-temporally specific formulation of his earlier injunction to 'the

faithful study of Reality'. The character of that Reality, in contemporary terms, was vividly if sometimes

repetitively sketched out in *Chartism* and *Past and Present* (1843). The basic insight informing these

works was that 'Cash Payment has become the sole nexus of man to man!'[18] This phrase was presented

in several formulations throughout these works, entering the political consciousness of the times

enough to find an echo in the English version of *The Communist Manifesto* (1848):

> The bourgeoisie, whenever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal,
>
> idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his 'natural
>
> superiors', and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest,
>
> than callous 'cash payment'.[19]

The status of cash payment as the sole nexus of man to man was, Carlyle diagnosed, at the root of the

workers' agitation that had taken the form of the Chartist movement. This movement called for votes

for all men and other electoral reforms,[20] but Carlyle interpreted it quite contrarily to its express aims:

> Bellowings, inarticulate cries as of a dumb creature in rage and pain; to the ear of wisdom they
>
> are inarticulate prayers: 'Guide me, govern me! I am mad and miserable, and cannot guide

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[18] *Chartism*, p. 195.

[19] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Selected Works* (London: Lawrence and Wishart), p. 37. For Engels' admiration of Carlyle see 'A Review of *Past and Present*, by Thomas Carlyle, London , 1843', trans. Christophe Upward, *marxists.org* https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/df-jahrbucher/carlyle.htm [16 Sep 2015]

[20] Glenn Everett, 'Chartism or The Chartist Movement', *The Victorian Web* http://www.victorianweb.org/history/hist3.html [2 Feb 2015].

myself.' Surely of all 'rights of man', this right of the ignorant man to be guided by the wiser, to

be, gently or forcibly, held in the true course by him, is the indisputablest.[21]

Thus, while often expressing sympathy for the plight of the poor and castigating the decadent ruling

classes in the course of *Chartism* and *Past and Present*, Carlyle was emphatically not a supporter of

Chartism or other movements for empowerment of the working-classes. The stated aims of the Chartist

movement were entirely anathema to his conviction, expressed with increasing intensity from *Chartism*

onwards, that democracy was an inefficient and demoralizing form of government. Carlyle's stance

mixes a stated sympathy with working-class suffering with an absolute inattention to working-class

remedies. The direct expressions of working-class discontent are contrasted with what is heard by 'the

ear of wisdom' when confronted with the utterances of an allegedly wholly inarticulate class.

Rather than further refining the apparatuses of democratic government, therefore, Carlyle was

interested in the provision of strong leadership for his society, which would render complicated

mechanisms of government unnecessary. This leadership was to be provided by the Hero, otherwise the

Ableman:

> Find in any country the Ablest Man that exists there; raise *him* to the supreme place, and loyally
>
> reverence him: you have a perfect government for that country; no ballot-box, parliamentary
>
> eloquence, voting, constitution-building, or other machinery whatsoever can improve it a whit.[22]

Carlyle's diagnosis of the ills of his society ('the Valet-world') is simply the absence of such a leader:

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[21] *Chartism*, p. 189.
[22] *On Heroes*, p. 162.

> We shall either learn to know a Hero, a true Governor and Captain, somewhat better, when we
>
> see him; or else go on to be forever governed by the Unheroic;– had we ballot-boxes clattering on
>
> every corner, there were no remedy in these.[23]

The contemptuous reference to the clattering of ballot-boxes indicates Carlyle's abiding hatred of

democracy, and his general distrust of legal and political processes: 'Acts of Parliament, on the whole,

are small, notwithstanding the noise they make'.[24] Carlyle's call was to obey not laws, but men: to seek

out the Ableman/Hero and exalt him appropriately; the task of the exalted one being then to rule with

wisdom, bravery and, when necessary, as he was in no doubt that it not infrequently was, severity.

Rather than worship of material things, Carlyle called for the worship of Great Man, the 'Hero-Souls' of

the age. In what way the Hero is to be worshipped is a function of the circumstances; Carlyle found that

in former ages, Heroes became divinities or prophets; in his own age, he found the Hero most

commonly in the less ambitious character of Man of Letters.[25] This detail was relatively unimportant; the

Great Man had it within him to be any of these things:

> Given your Hero, is he to become Conqueror, King, Philosopher, Poet? It is an inexplicably
>
> complex controversial-calculation between the word and him! He will read the world and its
>
> laws; the world with its laws will be there to be read.[26]

Heroism inheres in the individual and may be expressed in any way that circumstances permit. Carlyle's

desire was that society recognize the bearers of this inherent heroism and allow them free rein to lead.

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[23] *On Heroes*, p. 177.

[24] *On Heroes*, p. 94.

[25] Man of Letters being, effectively, Carlyle's own calling. Heffer notes that '[t]he element of implicit self-reference in [*On Heroes*] is unmistakable' (*Moral Desperado*, p. 207). Similarly, John Gross finds that '[i]n retrospect, it is tempting to see the myth of the Hero as Man of Letters as a fairly transparent exercise in self-glorification.' (*The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters: English Literary Life since 1830* [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973], pp. 45-46).

[26] *On Heroes*, p. 78.

In *Past and Present*, Carlyle named the factory-owners or 'Captains of Industry' (a phrase, still in use today, coined by Carlyle) as those best placed to take on the role of Heroes to their society. He urged them to form a new Aristocracy of Talent, with the aim of restoring order to the industrial world:

> Ye shall reduce them to order, begin reducing them. To order, to just subordination; noble loyalty in return for noble guidance. Their souls are driven nigh mad; let yours be sane and ever saner. Not as a bewildered, bewildering mob but as a firm regimented mass, with real captains over them, will these men march any more.[27]

These bringers of order were to overturn the cash-nexus relations endemic to society at the time, and to re-instil a respect or reverence for the activity of work, seeing it not as a financial transaction or a means to an end, but as the defining activity of the human condition. Correcting Socrates, Carlyle wrote: 'Think it not thy business, this of knowing thyself; thou art an unknowable individual: know what thou canst work at; and work at it, like a Hercules! That will be thy better plan.'[28] Carlyle's entire position could at times be reduced a simple injunction along these lines, as exemplified by Gaskell in her experience of *Sartor* and its central moral lesson, 'Do the duty that lies nearest to thee.' *Sartor* is vague about what type of duty this may be, but by *Past and Present* Carlyle has made the important clarification that the duty for all his contemporaries lies in the industrial sphere, a potential locus of Heroism and spiritual regeneration. Even for writers like Gaskell, the value of literature lay chiefly in the attempt to render a 'portrait of Manchester existence' – Manchester being the most industrialized city in the world at that point.

That man was born to work, and work is the primary good in life; that man's relation to his fellow man is one of master and servant; that a good master is one who is strong and severe; that the work of the

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[27] Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present*, ed. by Richard D. Altick (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1965), p. 272.
[28] *Past and Present*, p. 196.

master is to ensure by any means necessary that the servant performs the work he is fit for: these are some central tenets of Carlyle's view of social relations. To the intellectual classes among whom Carlyle was most avidly read in the mid-19th century, his writings tended to inculcate a deep sense of the importance of their own position as Men or even Women of Letters (though the latter category does not appear in Carlyle's writings). Carlyle's Heroic vision of writing in industrial society allowed for a writerly self-image as agent of social change; it also sounded a warning of the disastrous consequences of a failure of leadership, or of leadership falling into the hands of the Unheroic, establishing a 'Valet-world' constructed around the cash-nexus, where interpersonal relations were dictated by financial concerns. Ultimately, such a state of affairs would result in the revolt of the underclass who were already seen to be inarticulately bellowing for moral governance. In those who would identify with Carlyle's Aristocracy of Talent was engendered a deep sense of personal engagement with society – a social vocation. The lack of any coherent method of defining and identifying Heroism, and the increasing power-worship, racism and destructively contemptuous tone of Carlyle's later works (what George Eliot politely terms 'the exaggerations of the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*')[29] ultimately led many to renounce his influence, but its acorns had already sunk deep and sown the forest. Carlyle set the terms for the debate on the mid-Victorian Condition-of-England debate, convincing his readers by his powers of rhetoric and his apparent sincerity. He successfully cut through middle- and upper-class complacency, if ultimately proving less adept at, or even interested in, providing constructive alternatives than in critiquing prevailing attitudes.

Wise Despotism in Gaskell's *North and South*

North and South is, for the most part, focalized on Margaret Hale, a clergywoman's daughter who moves with her parents from an idyllic rural homeland in the South to a black, smoky industrial town in the North of England. The plot follows Margaret's progress in matters industrial and romantic, both, as it

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[29] Eliot, p. 188.

transpires, revolving around John Thornton, a local mill-owner with a powerful personality and an abrasive manner. Thornton is proud, Margaret is prejudiced against all those who, like Thornton, are involved in trade – 'shoppy people' – [30] and, abstracted from the Manchester setting, the novel follows a distinctly Austen trajectory.[31] But a great deal of the substance of *North and South* is given to discussions of class relations and political economy, and to documenting the relations of the factory-owners with their employees. In some long chapters of debate between characters, the difficulties of industrial relations are explored in considerable depth, and the characters take on the status of clearly defined class representatives.

Carlylean Echoes

At the centre of *North and South* is Elizabeth Gaskell's conception of the class struggle, and her proposed solution to it. *North and South* is an optimistic work – optimistic in its views of the possibilities of personal development and self-actualization in Victorian society, and in its belief in the potential for the defusing of the industrial unrest then prevailing.[32] The ultimate conduit for the quelling of unrest in Milton is John Thornton; he, in turn, as we shall see, is influenced by the policy suggestions of Margaret Hale. Thornton is, in almost all respects, the type of the Carlylean Hero, and the ideals he professes on those occasions when he does articulate his position are derived from Carlyle:

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[30] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 19.

[31] See Janine Barchas, 'Mrs. Gaskell's *North and South*: Austen's Early Legacy', *Persuasions*, 30 (2008), pp. 53-66.

[32] Hilary Schor writes that *North and South* is 'sceptical of solutions per se' (Hilary M. Schor, *Scheherazade in the Marketplace: Elizabeth Gaskell and the Victorian Novel* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992], p. 121. This is true in the same sense that Carlyle is sceptical of solutions, insofar as these can be systematically delineated and set down in theoretical form divorced from history. This is the thrust of Carlyle's 'Morrison's Pill' critique in *Past and Present*: 'Brother, I am sorry I have got no Morrison's Pill for curing the maladies of society. It were infinitely handier if we had a Morrison's Pill, Act of Parliament, or remedial measure, which men could swallow, one good time, and then go on in their old courses, cleared from all miseries and mischiefs!' (*Past and Present*, p. 28.) But scepticism about schematized solutions is very different to scepticism about individuals, as Carlyle demonstrates, and so, I argue, does Gaskell.

In our infancy we require a wise despotism to govern us. Indeed, long past infancy, children and young people are the happiest under the unfailing laws of a discreet, firm authority. I […] consider our people in the condition of children, while I deny that we, the masters, have anything to do with the making or keeping them so. I maintain that despotism is the best kind of government for them; so that in the hours in which I come in contact with them I must necessarily be something of an autocrat.[33]

Later in the exchange, Thornton confirms the Carlylean basis for his thought when he remarks: 'Cromwell would have made a capital mill-owner, Miss Hale. I wish we had him to put down this strike for us'.[34] Thus he cites the pre-eminent Carlylean Hero, lauded first in *On Heroes*, and then again in Carlyle's introductions and elucidations to his edition of *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* (1845) as his country's last great leader of men, 'the last glimpse of the God-like vanishing from this England, conviction and veracity giving place to hollow cant and formulism'.[35] But Carlyle's eulogies for Cromwell had attracted considerable criticism, being prime evidence of his willingness to excuse brutality when exercised by an ostensible Hero. The Sage's expressions of unbounded admiration for Cromwell were among those which had led to the partial turning away from his teachings in the late 1840s. For Thornton to ally himself with this figure, then, in the 1850s, both ascribes to him as a character that sincerity with which Carlyle was almost invariably credited (as well as those other characteristics which were associated with the Carlylean Hero, and, generally, Carlyle himself: 'manliness',[36] broadly speaking), and to mark him

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[33] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 120.

[34] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 123.

[35] Thomas Carlyle, ed., *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches with Elucidations*, 3 vols in 1 (London: Ward Lock, n.d. [1888?]), p. 1.

[36] 'Manliness' and related concepts are also clearly central to Carlyle's work and his influence. These concepts will be explored throughout this thesis, but particularly in Chapter 5, on the figure of Sherlock Holmes.

out as a dangerous and possibly destructive force, 'a terrorist and a fanatic', if not channelled in an advantageous manner.

Similarly inflected with Carlylism is Thornton's disquisition on 'Teutonic blood', which also incorporates a paean to the glory of work and a statement of opposition to government interference and centralization:

> I belong to Teutonic blood; it is little mingled in this part of England to what it is in others; we retain much of their language; we retain more of their spirit; we do not look upon life as a time for enjoyment, but as a time for action and exertion. Our glory and our beauty arises out of our inward strength, which makes us victorious over material resistance, and over greater difficulties still. We are Teutonic up here in Darkshire in another way. We hate to have laws made for us at a distance. We wish people would allow us to right ourselves, instead of continually meddling with their imperfect legislation. We stand up for self-government, and oppose centralization.[37]

In thus mythifying the possession of Teutonic blood, Thornton is following in the footsteps of Carlyle, who had interrupted the avowedly empirical pamphlet *Chartism* with a long section alleged to be a translation from the German of an anonymous author (but 'we have heard him called Professor Sauerteig, and indeed think we know him under that name'). 'History of the Teuton Kindred' (*Geschichte der Teutschen Sippschaft*) includes a recreation of a mythic racial/national past in which the long task of 'subdue[ing] a portion of our common planet' was begun by the early sons of 'the tribe of *Theuth*'.[38] Like Carlyle (or Sauerteig), Thornton employs a rhetoric of conflict, strength and dominance over nature to frame and to create a

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[37] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 334.
[38] *Chartism*, pp. 201-202.

(pseudo-)historical context for the industrial situation in Milton. With such pride in an achieved dominance over nature comes a resentment of political interference: 'self-government' at a local level, but not at an individual level for all Miltonians, rather incorporating a wise despotism under a working aristocracy of one (that is, Thornton), directly involved in the material production that is taking place in Milton.

At this point in the text, this position is not by any means presented with unequivocal endorsement. Rather, Margaret sums up Thornton's position by saying scornfully: 'In short, you would like the Heptarchy back again. I revoke what I said this morning – that you Milton people did not reverence the past. You are regular worshippers of Thor.'[39] Margaret's statement conflates two mythico-historical milieus: the Heptarchy of Saxon England and the Scandinavia of pagan times. Both of these are key Carlylean settings: the latter in the first lecture in *On Heroes*, on Odin, and the former in *Chartism*, as the birth-site of national heroism, wherein 'forests [were] felled, bogs drained, fields made arable, towns built, laws made, and the Thought and Practice of men in many ways perfected'. This work of material production was accompanied, of course, by much bloodshed and conflict: 'experiments they were, not always conclusive, to ascertain who had the might over whom, the right over whom.'[40] The Carlylean position is presented within a dialogical framework, embodied by the evidently heroic Thornton but opposed by the book's protagonist, Margaret.

Thornton himself is potentially suitable for the station of a wise despot in the Cromwellian vein, as is most fully demonstrated by his reaction to the riot of Volume I, Chapter XXII, 'A Blow and its Consequences'. The rhetoric of this chapter is designed to present the working-class mob as an

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[39] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 334.
[40] *Chartism*, p. 203, see also *Past and Present*, p. 243.

object of unparalleled threat and lawlessness: 'demoniac desire of some terrible wild beast', 'gaunt as wolves, and mad for prey', 'a troop of animals'.[41] Individually, none of the novel's working-class are depicted particularly negatively, it is only as a group they carry a threat. Significantly, the mob has no apparent leader, and it is this that makes them so dangerous, allowing for an undirected and unbridled release of their aggressive energies. They have no apparent goal, either, and so become a threat not only to Mr Thornton, but to all those with whom they come into contact. Even impoverished worker and union sceptic John Boucher recognizes the danger of the mob, telling Nicholas Higgins: 'Yo' may be kind hearts, each separate; but, once banded together, yo've no more pity for a man than a wild, hunger-maddened wolf'.[42] In a novel without any identifiable individual villain, the greatest danger comes from the 'banding together' of the workers, which will always tend towards anarchy, though Gaskell is careful not to link this to any individual personal defects in the workers. Rather, it is the act of 'binding together' itself that creates the uncontrollable monster, independent of any individual volition. That the working class needs to be led is Gaskell's position, and how they are to be led, and how they are brought to consent to being led, and who is to lead them – these are questions with which, it will be shown, *North and South* occupies itself.

Thornton and the Mob

The reactions of the various characters to the mob presence reveal a considerable correlation between social position and calmness and leadership in a time of crisis: Thornton's servants 'retreated into the garrets with many a cry and shriek';[43] his imported Irish workers are yet more

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[41] Gaskell, *North and South*, pp. 176-178.
[42] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 155.
[43] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 175.

affected, 'crying and shouting as if they were mad with fright'[44] – here and throughout the novel Gaskell superficially avoids the demonization of the Irish that Carlyle had indulged in in *Chartism*, but only to present in its place an infantilized portrait which as an ideological function fulfils the same role: that of presenting mass Irish immigration as a disruptive and unhelpful phenomenon. It is left to Thornton and Margaret (and later Mrs Thornton, fetching the doctor when her maid refuses to leave the house) to react with composure and avert the bedlam which threatens. Thornton approaches the task as a battle of wills between himself and the mob, and this is exactly the view endorsed at the level of narration: 'They were trying to intimidate him, to make him flinch; each was urging the other on to some immediate act of personal violence'.[45] Thornton does not flinch, does not show fear or indecision, even at the moment of crisis, when two objects are thrown, a clog and a sharp pebble, the latter of which wounds Margaret:

> [H]e went slowly down the steps right into the middle of the crowd. 'Now kill me if it is your brutal will. There is no woman to shield me. You may beat me to death – you will never move me from what I have determined upon – not you.' He stood amongst them, with his arms folded, in precisely the same attitude as he had been in on the steps.[46]

Then, as if they have only been awaiting Thornton's decision, as if the riot was intended only as a trial of Thornton's fitness to lead, which he has now demonstrated, the crowd begins to retreat. The narrator does not draw an explicit link between Thornton's defiant and masterly stance and the dispersal of the mob, but the dispersal is narrated as occurring precisely at the moment Thornton concludes his speech, and the chronological continuity between the two implies a consequential link, without explicit confirmation. Subsequent events confirm this: the strike

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[44] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 181.
[45] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 178.
[46] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 180.

breaks up and the workers return to their posts; Thornton is henceforth the undisputed master at the Mill.

The indexing of Thornton as a person of intrinsic power is not limited to this key scene: rather it is a feature of all of his personal interactions. On his first introduction, it is noted that he is in 'habits of authority',[47] and when he meets with his fellow mill-owners, his standing among them is described as follows: 'He was regarded by them as a man of great force of character; of power in many ways. There was no need to struggle for their respect. He had it and he knew it[…].'[48] Thus Thornton is singled out even among his peers in the Working Aristocracy of Milton as the one most fitted to lead, the 'acknowledged strongest', as Carlyle would put it.[49] Further, he has now demonstrated the ability to remain 'sane and ever saner' amongst a mob whose 'souls are driven nigh mad'. At a time when workers' movements have proved incapable of providing effective leadership, Thornton comes forward as a last hope against a descent into lawlessness and bestiality.

Margaret's Powers of Subjection

Similarly, Margaret Hale's most notable characteristic is her ability to impose her will on others, to secure and wield social power in any situation. The particular pride and dignity of Margaret's appearance is noted very often, both by the narrator and by most of the characters who come into contact with her. The earliest physical description of her notes 'a tall stately girl'. Just after this, Margaret is prevailed upon to try on some of Edith's Indian shawls, 'the usual garb of a princess'. These garments, 'that would have half smothered Edith' are set off especially well by

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[47] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 62.
[48] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 163.
[49] *French Revolution*, p. 9.

Margaret's 'tall, finely made figure'.[50] That Margaret's appearance has an aristocratic quality observable to all is something that the text insists upon throughout. Her social bearing is even more strongly marked by its ability to place others in a position of subjection – but willing and not forced subjection. Dr Donaldson's reaction, meeting Margaret to tell her of her mother's terminal condition, is typical in kind, if particularly effusive in its expression:

> Who would have thought that little hand could have given such a squeeze? But the bones were well put together, and that gives immense power. What a queen she is! With her head thrown back at first, to force me into speaking the truth […] it's astonishing how much these thorough-bred creatures can and do suffer. That girl's game to the backbone.[51]

Here the Doctor notes with pronounced admiration the imperious power of Margaret's will.[52] She is a 'queen' in looks and in comportment, and by manner alone she 'forced' him to speak the truth. As to where she comes by such characteristics, the Doctor reinforces the class element with the term 'thorough-bred'. Such a power of will is of utility in the romantic sphere, the Doctor noting that she would 'win his heart' if he were 30 years younger. But within the scope of the Condition-of-England novel, such a power is relevant far beyond the borders of the romantic.

Margaret exercises her powers of subjection in many situations. Particularly indicative is her early battle of wills with the Hales' servant Dixon, a woman of uncertain temper and self-righteous tendencies inappropriate to her station. Dixon presumes to criticize Mr Hale's decision to resign his position in Helstone, prompting chastisement from Margaret. The form of this chastisement is less relevant than Dixon's response to it:

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[50] Gaskell, *North and South*, pp. 8-9.
[51] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 127.
[52] Along similar lines is Mr Bell's reaction to Margaret on pages 349-350 of *North and South*: '[T]his visit I paid to Milton made me her slave. I went, a willing old victim, following the car of the conqueror'.

> [S]he, who would have resented such words from anyone less haughty and determined in manner, was subdued enough to say, in a half-humble, half-injured tone-
>
> 'Mayn't I unfasten your gown, Miss, and undo your hair?' […]
>
> From henceforth Dixon obeyed and admired Margaret […]. [T]he truth was, that Dixon, as do many others, liked to feel herself ruled by a powerful and decided nature.[53]

This is Gaskell's most overt articulation of the general ideological tendency of the novel, that there are those who would be ruled, and there are those who are marked out as fit to rule – in some unfathomable but always clearly identifiable way, this latter group are 'powerful'. It rests with the leader to be 'haughty and determined', to assume to the position by being uncompromising and masterly. Without such a manner, this passage makes quite clear, leadership cannot be effectually exercised. Implicit in the ideology of this key passage is that it is the essence of leadership that it be taken, it cannot be granted. On the contrary, a working-class character like Dixon will respond unsatisfactorily to suggestion or reason, but correctly to imperious direction, and will even prefer to be subject to the latter; Dixon is seen to have been inarticulately *demanding* such direction, and her morale is immediately and irreversibly improved by it.

Thornton's Power for Conquest

If, on a small scale, Margaret is with ease able to assert her inherent aristocracy, Thornton's task is considerably more complex, involving the imposition of his will on a large group of dissatisfied workers. This corresponds to John Ruskins's classical statement of Victorian patriarchal ideology in 'Of Queen's Gardens', wherein he notes that the 'woman's power is for rule', but only within

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[53] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 48.

the domestic sphere. The man, on the other hand, has power 'for war, and for conquest, wherever war is just, wherever conquest necessary.'[54] Thus large-scale public conquest falls to the lot of Thornton. The greatest threat comes from Nicholas Higgins, leader of the strike and a character granted a considerable degree of moral authority by the narrative in his role as spokesman for the ills of the working classes. This is at least until the failure of the strike. Once the failure of the strike is confirmed, Gaskell's narrator is able to reach some general conclusions on strikes:

> [T]he workmen's calculations were based (like too many of their masters') on false premises. They reckoned on their fellow-men as if they possessed the calculable power of machines, no more, no less; no allowance for human passions getting the better of reason, as in the case of Boucher and the rioters.[55]

Then Mr Hale confirms the inefficacy of striking in conversation with Higgins:

> [W]ages find their own level, and […] the most successful strike can only force them up for a moment, to sink in far greater proportion afterwards, in consequence of that very strike.[56]

Strikes are hereby condemned on two fronts: Mr Hale's is the standard economic argument, while the narrator's criticism invokes a man-machine dichotomy, recalling one of Carlyle's abiding concerns from 1829's 'Signs of the Times' onwards, the mechanization of humanity in the age of industry and utilitarianism: 'Not the external and physical is now managed by

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[54] John Ruskin, 'Of Queen's Gardens', *Sesame and Lilies* (New York: Silver, Burdett, 1900), p. 84.
[55] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 228.
[56] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 230.

machinery, but the internal and spiritual also'.[57] For once, then, Political Economy and Carlylean

dynamism are in agreement, united in their condemnation of the workers' action. Gaskell's aim

is not, finally, to play one philosophical stance off against the other, but to use as much of both

as is conducive to her aim of providing a model of leadership in industrial England.

Gaskell's narrator's reflection on the calculations of the striking workmen also implies that men,

or at least the working-class men at issue here, cannot be trusted to themselves, being subject

to unruly and destructive passions. Higgins has failed to account for this, and has thus been

shown unfit to rule. He is troubled by the consequences of his strike and half-convinced by Mr

Hale's arguments, though he still defends the necessity for Trade Unions in times of injustice. He

is also in particular crisis at this moment as his long-ailing daughter has finally died. After

inconclusive argument, Mr Hale and Margaret convince Higgins to pray with them. The passage

ends with Higgins being convinced to kneel and pray with the Hales. 'It did them no harm',

Gaskell's narrator observes.[58] Following the powerful binding ritual of common prayer, Higgins's

co-optation to the side of order is inevitable, leaving to be decided only the nature of the

compromise that will be reached between Higgins, as representative of the hungry working-

classes, and Thornton, as representative of the master-class.

It is Thornton who finally gives employment to the blacklisted Higgins. After first refusing him,

he makes the unexampled gesture of visiting Higgins's house to inform him of his change of

heart and offer him a job:

> [Higgins:] 'So, measter, I'll come; and what's more, I'll thank yo'; and that's a deal fro' me
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> […]

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[57] 'Signs of the Times', *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, v. 2, p. 101.
[58] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 233.

'And this is a deal from me,' said Mr Thornton, giving Higgins's hand a good grip. 'Now mind you come sharp to your time,' continued he, resuming the master. 'I'll have no laggards at my mill. What fines we have, we keep pretty sharply. And the first time I catch you making mischief, off you go. So now you know where you are'.[59]

The text here displays considerable anxiety about Higgins's threat to Thornton's mastery, an anxiety manifested in the emphasis in the description of the handshake: Thornton is active, Higgins is passive – 'a good grip' could be taken to mean a particularly hearty handshake, or a particularly forceful one; it is also manifested in his hurried 'resuming the master' following the brief show of fellowship. The sharpness of his tone in warning Higgins about timekeeping is unmotivated by any reason to doubt Higgins in this regard, it is simply a particularly blunt reminder that the strength and the power is all on Thornton's side. This scene marks both the co-optation and the emasculation of Nicholas Higgins.

The text somewhat loses interest in Higgins after this point, but when he does appear, it is usually in a different guise. Thornton tells a humorous story about Higgins's attempts to pass off Thornton's idea for a workers' food-kitchen as his own, not from dishonesty but from a childish pride that caused him to reject the original idea, then propose the same idea to Thornton as if it were his own. Higgins's motivation is so transparent that Thornton can laugh indulgently. A later conversation between the two finds Higgins giving away the secret of Frederick Hale's return to England, thinking Thornton already knows:

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[59] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 326.

'Stop a minute, measter.' Then, going up confidentially close, he said, 'Is th' young gentleman cleared?' He enforced the depth of his intelligence by a wink of the eye, which only made things more mysterious to Mr Thornton.[60]

This slip leads to Margaret's redemption in Thornton's eyes, but Higgins's ingratiating language and buffoonish body language in this scene is an utter departure from the prickly dignity of the character as delineated in earlier episodes. This change is also apparent in his meeting with Margaret in Chapter XLIII, where his speech is both effusive and inane. There is a re-indexing of Higgins' character in these later scenes. Having been neutralized at the level of the plot by his failure as master of the workers, and by his acceptance of Thornton's magnanimous job offer, Higgins is mercilessly infantilized by the text. His status as a responsible and thinking human being, obvious in his earlier conduct and dialogue, is now denied.

The new regime at Thornton's mill is one marked by increased good will between master and hands. Thornton sees his role here in explicitly Carlylean terms: 'My only wish is to have the opportunity of cultivating some intercourse with the hands beyond the mere "cash nexus"'.[61] The practical changes wrought in Thornton's style by this revised ideology are summed up in his closing remark to Higgins when he hires him: 'So now you know where you are.' Thornton is communicating more directly to his workers. There are no systemic changes at Marlborough Mills. The food-kitchen, for example, is to be worker-funded: 'I don't want it to fall into a charity', says Thornton sharply, consistent with his formerly-expressed principles.[62] Nor do the workers have any new powers that are apparent. Mr Thornton is still called the 'master'. The good will arising from Thornton's increased interaction with the workers is attained without in

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[60] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 422.
[61] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 431.
[62] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 363.

any noticeable way conflicting with Thornton's earlier ideal of the 'wise despotism' quoted above, except that his despotism is now presented to be 'wiser' than before. His power remains totally unchecked at the mill except by himself. When it becomes clear that the damage caused by the strike may ultimately result in the failure of the mill, Thornton's self-control is tested:

> Often, when his eye fell on Higgins, he could have spoken angrily to him without any present cause, just from feeling how serious was the injury that had arisen from this affair in which he was implicated. But when he became conscious of this sudden, quick resentment, he resolved to curb it. It would not satisfy him to avoid Higgins; he must convince himself that he was master over his own anger, by being particularly careful to allow Higgins access to him.[63]

This passage demonstrates that Thornton is answerable only to himself, while also crediting him with a total and difficult self-mastery. The insistence on this complete self-mastery is the alibi[64] by which his despotism is seen to be acceptable.

The eventual failure of Thornton's business serves to bolster up Mr Hale's argument regarding the counter-productive nature of strikes. An immediate failure would have allowed the strikers to see themselves as victors, so it is important to the ideology of North and South that the failure is postponed until the workers have come to appreciate the regime that they work under and that they have jeopardized. By now they have come to recognize Thornton as what Carlyle called

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[63] Gaskell, North and South, p. 420.

[64] The word 'alibi' is used in Peter Gay's account of aggression in the Victorian era, The Cultivation of Hatred, to denote : 'beliefs, principles, rhetorical platitudes that legitimated verbal or physical militancy on religious, political or, best of all, scientific grounds' (The Cultivation of Hatred [New York, London: Norton, 1993], p. 6). Substituting social control and dominance for 'verbal and physical militancy', my use of 'alibi' is to be understood in the same sense, but I wish to also include in the meaning of the word all features of narrative and narration in the text in question whose presence serves to legitimate instances of social control and dominance. Thus an alibi can be, for example, a plot function, or an indicial notation of a place, character or event – anything whose presence in the text can be accounted for by a wish to effect such legitimation.

the Ableman, the one among them most fitted to lead, in return for whose guidance they must offer their labour and their submission. The consequence of the rebellion against the strong leadership of Thornton has been seen to be not democratic equality, but lawless anarchy. As for Thornton himself, the loss of his mill was never to be a terminal setback. It is noted that 'there was an immediate choice of situations offered to [him]'.[65] Unlike Higgins, he has not become outcast by his failure. His fellow masters had long been aware that he was 'a man of great force of character; of power in many ways'[66] – power not only of circumstance, but as an inherent characteristic that can be usefully brought to bear on the workers. Finally, he is given the opportunity to go into partnership with Margaret, an apt choice as she too has been seen to be possessed of great social power of the same inherent sort. On one level, their alliance is a meeting of equivalent personal forces, a relationship whose ambiguity is seen in the 'gentle violence' with which Margaret attempts to wrest the flower from Thornton's hand in the closing scene;[67] as a resolution to that part of the novel which is an investigation into social relations, Thornton and Margaret are models of the mastery by which the working-classes may be controlled and brought to order, how the old order might be maintained while the workers' dissatisfaction with it is eradicated.

Ultimately, Gaskell's *North and South* provides an illustration of the working of important elements of Carlyle's social and political doctrine. Thornton is shown to be worthy of unlimited power because of his moral fibre.[68] Thornton, as a magistrate, is the law, and is above the law:

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[65] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 426.

[66] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 163.

[67] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 436.

[68] The Carlylean notion of the wise despotism that this invokes is obviously paternalistic in nature. On this, Patsy Stoneman writes: '[The] notion of the 'wise parent' as a model of authority still seems condescending, however, unless we realise that none of the authority-bodies dealt with in the novel measures up to this standard. The church, the universities, the law, the army, the navy and the employers are all exposed as complacent, self-seeking and inhumane' (Patsy Stoneman, *Elizabeth Gaskell* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006], p. 81). Yet

he takes the highly irregular step of closing the case of Leonards' death because it implicates Margaret. As circumstances clearly do not justify Thornton's decision, the only rationale is that Margaret's complicity is unthinkable, therefore the common law must be overruled. Similarly, the policeman's deferential and apologetic attitude to Margaret in the interview also belies the seriousness of her situation and her compromised position. The pristine character of both Margaret and Thornton must be taken as given (by the other characters), because neither of them are responsible to any external authority for their actions. Gaskell normalizes this situation by making both of the characters conscientious and morally responsible to the utmost degree, so not in need of any external authority. In Carlylean terms, it is not to 'brute force' but to moral greatness[69] that the lesser characters of *North and South* are yielding themselves. That such a moral greatness can be trusted to exist and be reliably identifiable, and can be exalted above the law, is the utopianism of Gaskell's social vision, and it is also the means by which she attempts to placate her middle-class audience, who found themselves represented in the text by Margaret Hale, as to the rightness of their privileged status; they had it in them to be an Aristocracy of Talent, and their highest judge, like Margaret Hale's, was to be their own conscience.

North & South (BBC, 2004)

The 2004 BBC 4-part serial *North & South* (scr. Sandy Welch, dir. Brian Percival), launched with little pre-publicity, met with great popular approbation, and it remains one of the most beloved of period adaptations.[70] In particular the character of John Thornton, portrayed by Richard Armitage in the serial, created a considerable impact: shortly after the serial's transmission, *The Times* noted: 'The BBC Drama

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this misses the Carlylean point: it is not *institutions* that embody wise despotism, but *individuals*. Thornton is not complacent, self-seeking and inhumane, even if other employers are.

[69] On Dante: 'Morally great, above all, we must call him; it is the beginning of all.' (*On Heroes*, p. 89.)

[70] See, for example, Sarah Seltzer, '10 Years Later, 'North & South' Remains the Greatest Period-Drama of All Time', *Flavorwire* (14 Nov 2014) http://flavorwire.com/488347/10-year-later-north-south-remains-the-greatest-period-drama-miniseries-of-all-time [25 Feb 2014].

website contains the outpourings of hundreds of thirty- and forty-something women for this year's romantic hero. He is John Thornton, the northern millowner in Mrs Gaskell's *North & South*, recently serialised on BBC One. Thornton was played smoulderingly by the previously little-known Richard Armitage as a blue-eyed, dark-haired stunner, the Darcy de nos jours'.[71] This piece illustrates Thornton's impact on *North & South*'s audience, but attributes it narrowly to his status as a 'blue-eyed, dark-haired stunner',[72] suggesting that Armitage's physical appearance alone is needed to explain the effect. But other elements of the character need to be acknowledged. In fact, the depiction of Thornton in the BBC serial is most notable for the interest in Thornton as a figure of power, going beyond even Gaskell's original. Thornton's power in the serial is not only displayed in his social relations, but is also made physically manifest. Correspondingly, the character of Margaret Hale, played by Daniela Denby-Ashe, is less characterized in the serial by her ability to wield social power and more by her ability to empathize with other characters.

An Intertextual Presence in *North & South*

In his study of the sub-industry of Jane Austen adaptations of the 1990-2000s, Andrew Higson notes that 'the film business was more concerned to provide experiences that might meet the expectations of contemporary movie audiences than it was to create texts that reproduced exactly what Austen intended, or that represented the early nineteenth-century world in precise historical detail'.[73] Through the many Austen adaptations of this period, a set of expectations were built up revolving around, among other things, spirited heroines, distant and superficially antipathetic heroes, and a cathartic romantic resolution between the two. *Pride and Prejudice* (1995, dir. Simon Langton, scr. Andrew Davies) is generally credited with being central to initiating the rush of adaptations and (later) otherwise Austen-

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[71] Anne Ashworth, 'A dashing object of desire', *The Times* (22 December 2004). Accessed at: http://www.richardarmitageonline.com/articles/times-22dec2004-lg.jpg [23 February 2015].
[72] Ashworth.
[73] Andrew Higson, *Film England*, p. 130.

related and romance-themed films and serials (*Becoming Jane* [2007], *Lost in Austen* [2008]) that were produced over the period in question. The difficulty with this subgenre is the slenderness of the Austen canon: she only wrote six novels, and between 1995 and 2000, all of them were produced for cinema or TV at least once, with the exception of the problematically parodic *Northanger Abbey*.[74] It was clear that demand greatly outstripped supply in the genre. It is in this tradition of the Austen adaptation that the BBC *North and South* must be placed, casting Gaskell's novel as an Austen surrogate which functions to the ready-made Austen-loving audience as a 'deftly refashioned *Pride and Prejudice*'.[75] The marketing of the film recognized the power of this comparison: the cover of the DVD release reproduced a comment from the *Sunday Express* summing the serial up as '*Pride and Prejudice* with a social conscience.' Reaction to the film, too, displayed less interest in fidelity arguments typically applied to the classic serial than in comparisons with *Pride and Prejudice*: 'It has even eclipsed the BBC *P&P* film in my heart […] forget Darcy, Thornton is so much better';[76] 'Truly I can safely say that it is better than the acclaimed *Pride and Prejudice* and is now officially my favourite book and drama of all time.';[77] 'Forget *Pride and Prejudice*, it has nothing on *North and South*.'; 'Rivals *Pride and Prejudice* with both main characters being every bit as endearing as Darcy and Elizabeth.';[78] 'If you like *Pride and Prejudice* or if you're just looking for a period drama, I highly recommend this one.'[79] In short, *Pride and Prejudice* was a far more common point of reference for viewers than Gaskell's novel. The peritext of the DVD release somewhat calls for this response, but it is a function also of the textual detail of the series, as will be shown.

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[74] See Higson, *Film England*, pp. 158-159.

[75] Barchas, p. 53.

[76] April79maries's review of *North & South* http://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/aw/cr/rR2FBKQ3T12XT8C [23 February 2015].

[77] Ed's review of *North & South* http://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/aw/cr/rRYR5IC20M9PH [23 February 2015].

[78] Hattie's review of *North & South* http://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/cdp/member-reviews/AHXDOEUFPP8V0/ref=pdp_new_read_full_review_link?ie=UTF8&page=1&sort_by=MostRecentReview#RO8R7RXP3RILP [10 March 2015].

[79] Ginger Ninja's review of *North & South* http://www.amazon.co.uk/review/R1R3U4169DASN6 [23 February 2015].

North & South: Thornton and Heroism, Carlylean and Otherwise

The first appearance of Thornton in the serial comes early in the first episode, in a scene entirely without parallel in the source novel, and, indeed, without parallel in the genre of period drama. In this scene, Thornton is seen administering a heavy beating to a worker who he has seen attempting to smoke a pipe in the mill. From a raised platform on which he stands calmly but keenly surveying his workers, Thornton grows suddenly animated and calls on one Stephens to 'Put that pipe out!' He descends rapidly from the platform and breaks into a sprint in pursuit of Stephens, soon overtaking him; he punches him several times in the face, the kinetic-style cinematography, sometimes adopting Stephens's point-of-view as Thornton's fist approaches at speed, creating a sense of unbridled violence. Stephens, his face bloodied, falls to the ground, at which point Thornton begins to kick him, before telling him 'Crawl away on your belly and don't come back.' 'I have little ones', Stephens groans weakly, to which Thornton's response is another vicious kick aimed at Stephens's stomach.[80] Margaret looks on at this scene with an expression of some surprise, and calls on Thornton (of whom this is her first sight) to stop, much to his annoyance: 'Get that woman out of here!' he roars, and his foreman escorts her from the premises.

Thornton's position of social power is obvious from the beginning of this scene. His workers are placed physically beneath him; he stands above the bustling activity and watches impassively, nothing moving but his eyes, which range over the length of the factory floor. He is neatly dressed in a black suit while those around wear grey and dull brown work-clothes. These signifiers of social power are accompanied by an apparent intrinsic personal power. Margaret's gaze is immediately drawn to him, and he becomes the object of her (and the camera's) gaze for several seconds before he performs any action which could render him of interest. His very stillness seems to hold her attention. It is by the particular intentness

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[80] *North & South*, scr. Sandy Welsh, dir. Brian Percival (BBCDVD 1695, 2005), ep. 1.

with which Margaret regards Thornton that we are made immediately aware that Thornton is to provide the romantic interest in the serial (if we have the DVD cover, the peritext will already have implied this both in the blurb and by Thornton's conspicuousness on the front cover – indeed, he's foregrounded above Margaret herself, the work's main focalizer); he is to be the hero, in the non-Carlylean sense. The moment of Margaret's first sight of Thornton is also signalled as a pivot point in the story's development by the tone of expectancy that has been introduced in the preceding moments. Before she enters Thornton's mill, Margaret is tracked by the camera walking down a long corridor to a doorway, to the accompaniment of non-diegetic violins. At the moment of Margaret's opening the door, as the musical accompaniment swells, the tracking shot gives way to a reaction shot of Margaret's face, her mouth open in apparent wonderment. Falling softly through the air are what look and move very like snowflakes, though it is diegetically identified as cotton from the mills – actually made by 'snow candles', usually used, as the name suggests, to simulate snow fall. This is Margaret's introduction to another world, far outside the realms of the hitherto experienced. What is surprising, given that Margaret is to liken the mill to a vision of hell later in the episode, is the wonderland quality which the mill is given in this sequence, a function of the orchestral swells, the snowy dust and other elements of the scene's staging. This wonderland quality, even if it is denied later by Margaret herself, provides a further context in which Thornton's first appearance is romanticized, and his status as romantic hero is indexed, notwithstanding the fact that his first action is a display of brute violence.

If we read Thornton from his first appearance as a hero, as we can hardly fail to do, this creates an expectation that the beating of Stephens will be explained and justified, and shortly afterwards it is. Margaret tells Thornton that a 'gentleman' would not have done what he did to Stephens. Thornton angrily replies: 'I dare say a gentleman has not had to see 300 corpses laid out on a Yorkshire hillside as I

did last May. Many of them were children, and that was an accidental flame.'[81] Thus Thornton is given

the strongest, most unimpeachable alibi for his treatment of Stephens. Validation of Thornton's actions

even comes from the workers' side, with Nicholas Higgins's assertion that 'He was right to do it'.[82] But

even this post-facto exoneration of Thornton is less important than the expectation that is created by

the indexing of Thornton as hero that such an exoneration will be forthcoming. Experientially, to view

the early scene of Stevens' beating in the knowledge that Thornton is the hero is to know him to be

always already exonerated. Particularly when experienced in generic context, the incident registers as a

misunderstanding to be explained, rather than an act of villainy, even before the explanation is

provided. In recognizing Thornton as a 'Darcy de nos jours', as almost all of the viewers of *North & South*

seem to have done, we see him as one whose personality does not always appear to best advantage but

whose moral sense is unimpeachable and would prevent him carrying out an unjust act, if not a brutal

one. The accusations unjustly levelled against D'Arcy by Wickham in *Pride and Prejudice* provide an

analogy by which this scene is read by the period-drama-literate viewer, and helps to creates a context

around the character of Thornton wherein Welch and Percival are able to insert with impunity a scene

of inter-class violence, one which defines heroism as the ability to wield social power through the

bluntest tool possible – physical force.

Thornton is depicted throughout the serial as being an effective agent of social control, and the

inhabitants of Milton are subjects of the Thorntonian gaze. Within Marlborough Mill his power is

absolute, and it is rendered more pervasive by the fact that his house is situated within the mill itself.

Thus, Thornton and/or Mrs Thornton are seen at several important points in the series standing at their

living-room window looking out and down over the mill, stern and impassive. Indeed, the workers say of

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[81] *North & South*, ep. 1. 'Gentleman' is a loaded and ambiguous term in Gaskell's novel. See the exchange between Margaret and Thornton on page 164.
[82] *North & South*, ep. 1.

Mrs. Thornton that 'she can smell it when you're not working'.[83] The Thornton living-room serves as the diegetic community's locus of power, a panopticon in the micro-society of the mill, a vantage-point from which the workers can be surveyed, but towards which the workers cannot direct their gaze without incurring suspicion – to be attentive to the presence of the authority is to admit guilt. Margaret, too, soon discovers that the mill is a place of ceaseless surveillance: leaving after her first visit she looks up to find herself watched from the window by Mrs Thornton (her first encounter with her), 'like a great angry black crow', as she later puts it;[84] and on her second visit, her attempts to engage some workers in conversation on the subject of the threatened strike are interrupted by the appearance of Thornton, standing silently behind her, his presence instantly quelling the conversation. A shot later in the scene reveals that Mrs Thornton, too, has been watching Margaret from her living-room window. On the single occasion in which Margaret's behaviour places her in a compromising position – her parting from her brother Frederick at the railway station – Thornton is seen looking on silently (this, unlike the other instances, is taken from the novel), and when the workers congregate to discuss strike action, Thornton and other 'masters' are situated in a nearby property, looking down on them as they enter the hall. Thornton sees all in Milton, while remaining himself unknowable to those below. He functions as an idealized embodiment of panoptic power, whose gaze brings with it the stimulus to morality, a stimulus overdetermined by the several ways in which Thornton can express his power: economically, socially, politically (in his position as magistrate), and physically.

But consistent with the Carlylean concept of power, Mr Thornton's power is felt to have a moral underpinning. This is acknowledged, especially, by Margaret herself when she is seen in the compromising situation at the railway station at the time of Leonards' death, and is unable to explain herself because of her brother Frederick's fugitive status, and so lies to the investigating officer, who is

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[83] *North & South*, ep. 2.
[84] *North & South*, ep. 2.

reporting to Thornton. Thornton chooses not to exercise his political power against Margaret with regard to this episode, but she remains tormented by the knowledge of his moral disapproval. Though Gaskell ascribes Margaret's uneasiness on this score partially to religious scruples: 'It was wrong, disobedient, faithless'[85] – Welch's script omits all such references and places fear of Thornton's disapproval at the centre of Margaret's consciousness of wrongdoing: 'I lied, and Mr Thornton knows it […]. I hate to think that Mr Thornton thinks badly of me'. Thornton thus takes over the place the novel ascribes to the religious conscience, becoming a powerful moral arbiter, whose approval is to be gained by the display of moral purity, and from whose evaluating gaze no action in Milton is safe.

When the morality of Thornton's own actions is questioned, in relation to his violence towards Stephens, he displays no such anxiety, he simply orders the ostensibly disapproving Margaret out of the mill, without divulging the strong motivation which is an alibi for his reaction, and when he does later reveal this it is in a spirit of righteous anger, in response to Margaret's suggestion that his conduct was not gentlemanly. Similarly, he does not explain the reasons for his decision to close the Leonards case to Inspector Watson, simply saying 'I will take the responsibility'.[86] To whom Thornton is responsible, except perhaps his own conscience, does not appear. His word, as far as the diegetic society is considered, is law, and greater than the codified law, but the adaptation, like Gaskell before, tries to normalize this by carefully justifying his excesses and his extra-legal activities.

So Margaret is troubled by Thornton's impression of her wrongdoing with regard to the scene in the railway station, but Thornton is untroubled by the impression of his apparent wrongdoing on Margaret: this is indicative of the introduction of an imbalance into their relationship in the serial *North & South*, because the serial is less interested in exploring Margaret's attempts to attain social power, and more

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[85] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 397.
[86] *North & South*, ep. 3.

willing to allow Thornton to be the wielder of power, motivating the decision to introduce Thornton to Margaret and to the viewer in a scene of violent subjugation of a disobedient worker. Margaret's own primary instance of subjugating a social inferior in Gaskell's novel, the chastising of Dixon for her remarks critical of Mr Hale, is softened by Welch/Percival. Margaret's language is moderated, and her body language is mild and conciliatory, incorporating a reassuring hand on the shoulder. She introduces a degree of compromise into the scene by promising that she will help Dixon in household work thereafter. Meanwhile, Dixon's ensuing offer to fix Margaret's shawl, an indice of pure submission in Gaskell's text, and accompanied by narrative comment to that effect, is here omitted. Dixon's relationship to the Hales is sentimentalized by Percival/Welch, including a couple of prominent scenes which employ indices of Dixon's loyalty as opportunities for emotional catharsis. Her attitude is less in need of correction than in Gaskell, and so the issue of Margaret's campaign of dominance over her is largely avoided.

Consistent with this less censorious portrayal of Dixon is that of Nicholas, the narrative of whose co-optation is less marked by anxiety, sparing the screen Higgins from the infantilization that is undergone by his novelistic counterpart. Higgins's final appearance in the serial occurs as Marlborough Mills is about to close, when he engages in a conversation with Thornton. As noted above, Gaskell's narration of this scene serves to further entrench Thornton's innate superiority, and to present Higgins in an infantilized light. The scene functions narratively to facilitate Thornton's reconciliation with Margaret, because Higgins tells him the man seen in her company at the railway station was in fact her brother Frederick. The serial retains the scene for its narrative functionality, but does not perpetuate the Hero/drudge dynamic of Gaskell's exchange. So, when Higgins addresses Thornton as 'master', Welch's script incorporates a disavowal of the title from Thornton: 'I'm nobody's master now'; and later in the scene Higgins does indeed address him as 'Thornton', allowing the class struggle to end on a note of

apparent equality.[87] The adaptation, then, is clearly more sensitive to ascribing dignity to its working-class characters, yet in a seeming paradox it has been shown to be *more* concerned with presenting the factory owner Thornton as a figure of untrammelled power, and in the mould of a Carlylean Hero. This contradiction is resolved when we realize that Thornton's power, though expressed in the context of the class struggle in 19th-century England, is in the adaptation important to Thornton as a romantic hero, rather than a socio-political Hero, transcending rather than transforming the public sphere. Thornton's introduction as a conqueror of Stephens is ultimately less about social control than it is about the seduction ritual between Thornton and Margaret that is thereby initiated, and communicated through the visual coding of the scene. Stephens's identity as an employee of Thornton is incidental to the adaptation except in so far as it renders him an appropriate subject for punishment, and Thornton's ability to administer said punishment is what draws Margaret's attention to him, and renders him desirable, though this remains unacknowledged and Margaret maintains a front of hostility to Thornton for long periods of the serial, as in the novel.

In both Margaret's hostility outlives even the scene of her confronting the rioters to save Mr Thornton, an act which she insists any woman would have done. The falsity of this statement is not directly registered by the narrator. It is registered in the text, however, by the indice of the servants' gossip about the incident, which indicates that the action was a highly unusual one, such as would not be undertaken by just any woman. In the serial, Margaret is seen throwing her arms around Thornton, then falling into a swoon in his arms when struck by a stone. Like the earlier scene introducing Thornton, this scene is given a long, portentous build-up, beginning with Margaret's walking through the deserted streets of Milton. She is dressed in pristine white – unusual, as her excursions through the Milton streets are generally undertaken while clothed in duller and darker colours; nor is the change in dress

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[87] *North & South*, ep. 4.

motivated by the object of her peregrination, which is simply to request from Mrs Thornton the loan of a water mattress which could help improve Mrs Hale's health. The unusual dress, then, is of some significance and seems to have symbolic meaning appropriate to the riot scene. This supposition is strengthened by Margaret's appearance in scenes directly afterwards, in which the white dress has a single blood-stain below the left shoulder. The white dress appears to function as a trope of purity and the blood-stain as a signifier of Margaret's 'fall', by which reading the riot scene as a whole functions as a sort of consummation of Thornton's and Margaret's relationship. It serves also to demonstrate the re-focusing of the scene, nominally the climax of the worker-master dispute. The Margaret/Thornton romance is not yet acknowledged on her side, and when he soon after proposes marriage to her, she is represented as being shocked. She, and in this Gaskell's narrative tends to collude with her and against the other characters who impugn her motives, insists her embrace of Thornton was motivated by a wish to protect him from the maddened crowd.[88] The choice of dress in the adaptation acknowledges what Gaskell did not, that the gossiping servants are right, and Margaret's act is an obvious move in the seduction sequence ongoing between her and Thornton. The surging crowd of rioters is now revealed as being not so important in itself as it is as a symbol of the turbulent passions of Margaret and Thornton that begin to find expression in this scene; and important as well as an alibi for Margaret's action, a means of facilitating it without revealing its motivation, as she has yet to acknowledge any passionate, or even friendly, feelings for Thornton – even, it appears, to herself. The deep structure of the scene, then, reduced to a single facet, is Margaret's embrace of Thornton, with the riot only having corollary importance.

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[88] The stance of the narrator and implied author here has been criticized, notably by P.N. Furbank, 'Mendacity in Mrs Gaskell', *Encounters* (June 1973), pp. 51-55 http://www.unz.org/Pub/Encounter-1973jun-00051 [2 Feb 2015].

This appears confirmed by a sequence of shots in the first post-strike scene in which Thornton appears. The other masters are discussing the riot and adjudging it to have 'broken the strike'. Thornton is not taking part in the conversation, instead he is standing looking out the window in characteristic fashion, and appears in close-up directing a look of particular intensity at an undisclosed object; the close-up fades out into a shot of Margaret lying prone on the ground, a trickle of blood at her temple – obviously Thornton's remembered image of Margaret after having been struck – then fades back to the Thornton close-up before the scene comes to an end. Thornton, then, is certainly not thinking of the breaking of the strike, but of Margaret, the intensity of his look seeming to convey less of concern for a possible injury to Margaret than of possession and desire.

By the final episode of the BBC's *North and South*, trade union politics has become little more than a running joke. When Higgins speaks in complimentary terms about Thornton, Margaret smilingly says 'Someone will report you to the Union if they hear you talking like that'.[89] Shortly afterwards, Higgins and Thornton meet and the latter makes some suggestions for workers initiatives, causing the former to remark: 'Careful, someone will report you to the masters' union for that kind of talk', provoking a wry smile from Thornton.[90] In the same conversation, Thornton comments on some masters being 'idiots', showing a level of trust and equality between himself and Higgins far exceeding Gaskell's book, and showing once again that class allegiance is here irrelevant. Then Mrs Shaw tells Margaret: 'You're sounding a little… Well, I hate to notice it, but a little revolutionary',[91] when Margaret says she would prefer to earn money than to have it accumulate by speculation. This reference to revolution has no wider applicability than as a comic indice of Mrs Shaw's ignorance, so fully have class tensions been erased since the riot. The treatment of Higgins in the scene at the closure of Marlborough Mills

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[89] *North & South*, ep. 4.
[90] *North & South*, ep. 4.
[91] *North & South*, ep. 4.

discussed above confirms that class relations were a source of less anxiety to the adapters than to Gaskell, but also a source of less dramatic interest. The social aspects of the novel have served their purpose In the earlier episodes, having provided a setting within which Thornton can be seen to advantage, but as the adaptation reaches its climax, the absence of deep class tension, means that the focus falls more squarely onto the romantic aspects of the plot. Thornton, before he is a man of business, is a romantic lead, and Margaret is less important for her interactions with society at large than for how these interactions affect her relationship with Thornton, and how they appear to him.

The Kiss and Society Transcended

The decreasing importance of wider social factors in the serial is most obvious in the final scene, which is situated in a railway station (rather than Mrs Shaw's drawing-room where Thornton and Margaret are alone) and is embellished with the addition of a passionate kiss between the two. This scene garnered a certain amount of criticism for the inclusion of a public kiss as a marked deviation from norms of Victorian society, as acknowledged by producer Kate Bartlett in the audio commentary to the serial:

> I have heard comments that this simply wouldn't have happened in Victorian [society]. I
>
> think the fact that there they are makes it more powerful. They're not remotely interested
>
> in anyone else, or anything going on around them.[92]

The kiss is rendered all the more scandalous by the fact that it takes place while Margaret is on a train journey with another young man, Henry Lennox, who proposed marriage to her earlier in the serial, and whose hopes have been re-ignited, understandably enough, by her request that he undertake the journey with her. Further, the kiss takes place *in full view* of the unfortunate Lennox (and, Lennox being brother-in-law to Margaret's cousin Edith, a consequence of this action within the diegetic world of the serial would surely be that it would become impossible for Margaret's relations to accept her society

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[92] Commentary, *North & South*, ep. 4.

henceforth, or to 'know' her at all). A final, and apparently unintentional, irony of the scene is that Margaret is here performing the very offence that she has earlier been accused of – an accusation to which she responded with shock and self-righteousness. As social beings, Thornton and Margaret have ceased to exist. In the language of Barthes' *Mythology*, 'history evaporates' in this image of the kiss,[93] meaning is impoverished to make way for the transcendence of romantic love. This climactic scene marks a final break with the Carlylean ideology embodied in Gaskell's characterizations. Social duty and the importance of leading by example are defeated by the transcendent power of love, and all alibis are laid aside to reveal the deeper preoccupations of the adaptation.

With regard to this final overcoming of all consideration of social pressures on behaviour, *North and South* is conforming to what Kamilla Elliott referred to as the De(Re)Composing model of adaptation, one where 'novel and film decompose, merge, and form a new composition at 'underground' levels of reading.' Elliott observes that:

> [M]any so-called 'unfaithful' adaptations are operating under a de(re)composing model. But […] one often finds the alleged infidelities clearly in the text. These 'infidelities' represent rejections of certain parts of the novel in favor of others, not total departures from the novel.[94]

The *North & South* adaptation is of course favouring the romance of the novel, and emphasizing it.[95] Even the anachronous public display of physical affection between Margaret and Thornton has its precedent in the source, in Margaret's embrace of Thornton before the mob. The departure is less in the

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[93] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. by Annette Lavers (New York: Noonday, 1972), p. 117.
[94] Elliott, Kamilla, *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 157.
[95] The generic influence is certainly crucial here. On the importance of a climactic kiss in 1990s period drama, see Higson, *Film England*, pp. 140-141.

action than in the failure to place it inside any social context or to provide some sort of social sanction or alibi for it. It thus enjoys a transcendence impossible within the ideology of Gaskell's novel.

If the tendency of the latter parts of *North & South* is away from the politico-social, this cannot efface what came before. The adaptation moves inexorably from violence to reconciliation, from displays of power to romantic communion. It appears fully prepared to commit to the formula that 'might is right' in Milton, and that Thornton and Margaret constitute a supra-legal Aristocracy of Talent, but the final resolution of all class antagonisms leaves little need for their energies to be directed outward. Rather, drives of aggression, no longer needed in the new regime at Marlborough Mills, are turned to affection, without a shadow of conflict.

Finally, then, the Carlylean Hero-figure of John Thornton is of interest less for the social application of his personal power than for the romantic possibilities of this power. Expressed physically and in the context of the wider social struggle, this power is regarded by the serial with ostensible disapproval, but certainly with fascination. Later, his power is domesticated, as in the scenes depicting Thornton's relationship with young Tom Boucher in the final episode, preparing us to view Thornton as husband and father material. The greatest application of his Heroic soul is seen to be as a family man. Carlyle himself noted that:

> [T]he Hero can be Poet, Prophet, King, Priest or what you will, according to the kind of world he finds himself born into [...]. The grand fundamental character is that of Great Man; that the man be great. Napoleon has words in him which are like Austerlitz battles.[96]

Carlyle did not posit a category of the Hero as Romantic Interest, and the notion would hardly have appealed to him, but the Carlylean Captain of Industry, reborn into the 21st century, finds himself in a

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[96] *On Heroes*, pp. 77.

form more suited to the genre demands of the contemporary period drama, and finds that his Heroic energies remain a source of attraction, but are less needed for the purposes of social control and better devoted to familial relationships.

Chapter 4: Heroism and Social Palingenesis in Thomas Carlyle and *The Dark Knight Rises*

It was pointed out in the introduction that a story can have often have its political valence changed without affecting the structure of the narrative. Using the example of H.G. Wells' curate in *The War of the Worlds*, it was noted how a character may perform the same functions at the cardinal points of the narrative, yet may, through changes in indexing the character and in his or her behaviours at catalysing moments that are not directly consequential to the plot, contribute to an ideological inversion of the story. In such a case, it appears that ideology is to a considerable extent independent of narrative structure, and any ideology can be grafted on to a pre-existing narrative structure. The converse of such an ideologically subversive adaptation as *War of the Worlds* (subversive with regard to the source; if related to social mores of 1950s USA, the film would undoubtedly prove to be rather conservative) would be an adaptation that wished only to retain the ideological content of the source, placed in the service of an entirely different narrative. Such an adaptation is *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012), the final film in director Christopher Nolan's massively successful Batman trilogy. [1]

The Dark Knight Rises built on the positive critical and commercial response to the first two episodes of the trilogy, *Batman Begins* (2005) and *The Dark Knight* (2008), and invited superlative praise for the series on a number of fronts. It was hailed as a contemporary epic in an ancient tradition, 'the modern equivalent to Greek myths', [2] and also as a large-scale critique of American society: '[C]ritically important

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[1] *The Dark Knight Rises* currently stands at ninth in the all-time list of highest grossing films (*Box-office Mojo*, http://boxofficemojo.com/alltime/world/ [29 May 2013]).
[2] Richard Corliss, 'TIME's Review of *The Dark Knight Rises*: to the Depths, to the Heights', *Time* (16 July 2012) http://entertainment.time.com/2012/07/16/times-review-of-the-dark-knight-rises-to-the-depths-to-the-heights/?iid=ent-main-lede [16 Apr. 13].

for America itself – as a mirror of both sober reflection and resilient hope.'[3] Co-screenwriter of the last

two films in the trilogy, Jonathan Nolan, was conscious of parallels with Greek tragedy, and of writing in

that tradition in his depiction of heroism: 'What struck me about the *Iliad* was the reason for its

enduring appeal is it's an examination of what it means to be a man […] I think, to a degree, maybe

some of that filtered into the writing of the trilogy.'[4] When it came specifically to *The Dark Knight Rises*,

however, another literary source was acknowledged by both Nolan brothers to be central to the

scriptwriting process: Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859). This chapter aims to locate the

substance of Nolan's[5] adaptation of Dickens in the social backdrop to the superhero plot of the film, the

fictive evocation of a precise moment in history, a moment of total social breakdown which will be

defined in this chapter using Carlyle's phrase as the bankruptcy of imposture. Similarly central to both

Dickens' and Nolan's work is the historical background to such a moment – how it can come into being

and what are the conditions that can make it an inevitability. Given that the connections between

Carlyle's history and Dickens' novel are well documented, this chapter will focus more on *Rises*, and use

close textual analysis of some of the scenes of the film to support the view that the underlying

philosophy of history is remarkably close to that delineate in Carlyle's early works. The argument will be

made that the commonalities in philosophy of history of both works can be best explicated using

Carlyle's analysis of symbols, his notion of palengenesia and his concept of bankruptcy of imposture.

Finally, the question will be asked whether and to what extent these commonalities are the product of a

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[3] Todd Gilchrist, 'Review: Visceral *The Dark Knight Rises* Is A Cinematic, Cultural & Personal Triumph', *The Playlist* (16 June 2012) http://entertainment.time.com/2012/07/16/times-review-of-the-dark-knight-rises-to-the-depths-to-the-heights/?iid=ent-main-lede [16 Apr. 2013].

[4] Quoted in 'Introduction', in Christopher Nolan, Jonathan Nolan, David S. Goyer, *The Dark Knight Trilogy: The Complete Screenplays* (London: Faber and Faber, 2012), p. viii. This edition will also be used for quotes from the films themselves. Citations will include name of the individual film plus page number from this edition.

[5] A convenient synecdoche for authorship of *The Dark Knight Rises* and the other films of the trilogy. The Warner Brothers 2012 DVD release of *Rises* includes the following script credits: 'Based upon Batman characters created by Bob Kane and published by DC Comics. Story by Christopher Nolan & David S. Goyer. Screenplay by Jonathan Nolan and Christopher Nolan.' Given his involvement at every stage of the process, Christopher Nolan is effectively a prototypical 'Sun-King' as described by Hutcheon.

double adaptation process (Carlyle by Dickens; Dickens by Nolan) and to what extent they have other roots.

Relations of Influence and Adaptation – Carlyle, Dickens, Nolan

Dickens was never reticent about declaring his debt to Carlyle. When writing in 1854 to ask if he could inscribe the first edition of *Hard Times* 'To Thomas Carlyle', Dickens added, 'I am always trying to go your way […]. I know that it [*Hard Times*] contains nothing in which you do not think with me, for no man knows your books better than I.'[6] *Hard Times* has been seen as the novelist's attempt to 'weave in as many of [Carlyle's] teachings as possible'.[7] But Dickens' favourite among Carlyle's works was evidently *French Revolution*, 'that wonderful book' which, he declared in 1851, he had already read 500 times.[8] There is a famous picture of Dickens from the late 1850s or early 1860s in which he is on the lawn in Gads Hill, reading to his daughters. The book he is reading, according to Peter Ackroyd (who reproduces the photo), is *French Revolution*.[9] Accordingly, when he came to depict the revolution in his own work, it was to Carlyle's history he turned, or returned. He also asked Carlyle for a list of useful works on the revolution, and received in return a not altogether welcome 'cartload' of volumes from the London Library.[10] When he came to write the preface for *A Tale of Two Cities*, Dickens stated:

> It has been one of my hopes to add something to the popular and picturesque means of understanding that terrible time, though no one can hope to add anything to the philosophy of Mr Carlyle's wonderful book.[11]

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[6] Quoted in Edgar Johnson, *Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph* [one-volume abridged version] (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), p. 409.

[7] Mildred G. Christian, 'Carlyle's Influence upon the Social Theory of Dickens. Part Two: Their Literary Relationship' *Trollopian* 2.1 (1947), p. 19.

[8] Christian, 'Literary', p. 12.

[9] Peter Ackroyd, *Dickens* [one-volume abridged version] (London: Vintage, 2002), p. 445.

[10] Ackroyd, *Dickens*, p. 443.

[11] Stephen Wall, ed., *Charles Dickens: A Critical Anthology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), p. 145.

For Dickens, then, the historical philosophy of *The French Revolution* was the historical philosophy of the French Revolution: there was nothing substantially new to be said, only modes of illustration and popular dissemination of the lessons already contained in Carlyle. Dickens slips easily from referring to 'that terrible time' to 'Mr Carlyle's wonderful book', blurring the lines between event and interpretation. In the wake of Carlyle's work, the French Revolution was wholly *knowable*, and fiction's task was to be 'popular' – to bring the already-established knowledge before a more general public in a fashion they would understand and embrace. Thus Dickens' novel may be seen as a sort of 'collaboration with Carlyle's history'.[12]

Dickens's perception of the task involved in adapting the French Revolution and *French Revolution* corresponds to the 'Incarnational Concept of Adaptation' identified by Kamilla Elliott, which Elliott herself sees as analogous to the concept of 'realization' operative in Victorian culture. Realization in the 19th century was 'the adapting of more abstract arts to less abstract arts'.[13] Carlyle was seen to be working in the esoteric field of philosophy and was, moreover, notorious for obscurity of style: 'never did […] a man's style so mar his subject and dim his genius.'[14] His work needed to be realized for a popular audience, which Dickens brought about by integrating the Carlylean interpretation of history into a 'story of incident'.

Just as Dickens was quick to credit Carlyle's influence, the novelist's own on *The Dark Knight Rises* has been outlined by Christopher Nolan:

> As part of a primer when he handed [the first draft of the script] to me, [Jonathan Nolan] said, 'You've got to think of *A Tale of Two Cities* which, of course, you've read.' I said, 'Absolutely.' I

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[12] Angus Easson, quoted in David R Sorenson, '"The Unseen Heart of the Whole": Carlyle, Dickens, and the Sources of the French Revolution in *A Tale of Two Cities*', *Dickens Quarterly* 30:1 (2013), p. 6. See also, for example, David D Marcus, 'The Carlylean Vision of *A Tale of Two Cities*', *Studies in the Novel*, 8.1 (1976), pp. 56-68.
[13] Kamilla Elliott, *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 162.
[14] Seigel, p. 69.

read the script and was a little baffled by a few things and realized that I'd never read *A Tale of Two Cities*. It was just one of those things that I thought I had done. Then I got it, read it and absolutely loved it and got completely what he was talking about [...]. When I did my draft on the script, it was all about A *Tale of Two Cities* [...]. What Dickens does in that book in terms of having all his characters come together in one unified story with all these thematic elements and all this great emotionalism and drama, it was exactly the tone we were looking for.[15]

Jonathan Nolan gives a more succinct and specific account of the importance of the *Tale* to the writing of *Rises*:

A Tale of Two Cities was, to me, one of the most harrowing portraits of a relatable, recognizable civilization that completely folded to pieces with the terrors in Paris in France in that period. It's hard to imagine that things can go that badly wrong.[16]

If Christopher Nolan's draft was truly 'all about *A Tale of Two Cities*' and Jonathan Nolan was inspired by the novel's depiction of civilizational breakdown, it may be profitable to think of the film as not just one in which certain allusions to the *Tale* are plainly visible, but as one which is in a certain sense an *adaptation* of that novel.

There are certain obvious ways in which the film is not an adaptation of Dickens' novel. No attempt is made in *Rises* to reproduce the cardinal functions of the plot of the novel, or, for the most part, to register characters corresponding in function or indicial substance to those of the *Tale*. Bruce Wayne is suffused with a partially Cartonian spirit in the early part of the film, in which he evinces a resigned hopelessness, but his final and defining act of self-affirmation and self-annihilation is of a different order

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[15] Silas Lesnick, 'Christopher Nolan on *The Dark Knight Rises'* Literary Inspiration', *comingsoon.net* (8 July 2012) http://www.comingsoon.net/news/movienews.php?id=92305 [1 January 2013].
[16] Lesnick, 'Christopher Nolan'.

from Carton's, as will be discussed later in the chapter. It will also be demonstrated that the intertextual web within which any Batman text situates itself is so complex as to render any close narrative replication of an extra-canonical work difficult. Yet the influential definition of adaptation proposed by Linda Hutcheon is an expansive one: an adaptation is 'an extended, deliberate, announced revisitation of a particular work of art'.[17] That *Rises* was intended as a deliberate and extended revisitation of Dickens' novel is clear from the Nolans' comments on the matter. What is to constitute an 'announced' revisitation is perhaps less clear. The screen credits do not note any debt, but the Nolan's keenness to play up the debt in promotional interviews announced the relationship to the many fans eagerly awaiting the film's release (as do the clear textual echoes within the film which will be discussed later). So, *Rises* is not an adaptation of Dickens in the standard narratological or characterological sense: what is being adapted and reintegrated into a narrative of triumphant heroism is that element of Dickens' novel which is an historico-imaginative account of societal decay, disintegration and descent into anarchy. Jonathan Nolan as quoted indicates that the *Tale* was not read by him as a work of fiction, but as an interpretation of *something that actually happened* – which, indeed, it is. The emphasis in Jonathan Nolan's statement is not, as might be expected, on Dickens as Author Function, with its late 20th- and early 21st-century connotations of high literary seriousness and intellectualism, purveyor of 'the canonical novel at its strongest',[18] but on the French Revolution as Event, integrated into dramatic narrative. The implication of Nolan's statement is further that this event is not wholly an outlier: it is *a* civilization which folded to pieces, and thus a potential exemplar of how civilizations, even 'relatable, recognizable' ones, fold to pieces. In depicting such an event, Dickens had relied heavily on his readings Dickens' novel is, above all, an accessible entry point into historico-political reflections, its human drama limned against the vividly evoked backdrop of the Terror and Dickens' own narratorial comment on the

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[17]Hutcheon, p. 170.
[18] Bloom, *Western Canon*, p. 310.

historical events. As noted above, Dickens himself felt that the philosophy articulated therein was owed to his reading of Carlyle.

Carlyle's Philosophy of History

From early in his career, Carlyle was guided by the principle that history was the most important of disciplines, and should not be approached as a study of the past, or not that alone. In the early essay 'On History' (1830), he wrote: 'It is a looking both before and after; as, indeed, the coming Time already waits, unseen, yet definitely shaped, predetermined and inevitable, in the Time come.'[19] The true role of historian, then, becomes conflated with that of prophet or seer, reading the past for signs of the future, in opposition to the more common but lesser 'dryasdust' historian devoted to 'trivialisms and constitutional cobwebberies'.[20] The dryasdust historian is defined by attention to detail, the seer historian by 'an Idea of the Whole';[21] for history, to Carlyle, is a unified field of meaning, a meaning absolute and all-encompassing, if only it can be attained: '[I]n that complex Manuscript, covered over with formless inextricably-entangled unknown characters,– nay, which is a *Palimpsest*, and had once prophetic writing, still dimly legible there,– some letters, some words, may be deciphered.'[22] In this early essay, Carlyle only hints at the hidden unity of some transcendental or religious nature that underlies the development of history hitherto, and that renders the chaos of time and human activity only apparent, not real.

The first major practice of Carlyle's view of history was *French Revolution*, the book which brought him to literary fame after years of near penury. In the wake of its success, *Sartor Resartus*, a purported critical study of the work of the German Philosopher and Professor of *Allerley-Wissenschaft* or Things in

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[19] 'On History', *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays,* v. 2, p. 168.
[20] *Past and Present*, p. 212.
[21] *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, v. 2, p. 173.
[22] *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, v. 2, p. 173.

General, Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, was finally published in its own right in 1838, having been serialized in

Fraser's Magazine in 1833-4 to 'unqualified disapproval'.[23] But on publication proper, *Sartor* benefitted

from *French Revolution*'s relative popularity and these two works combined to establish Carlyle's

reputation as a radical critic of existing social forms and structures and prophet of a coming social dawn.

Considered together, they go some way towards outlining a whole theory of society and social progress.

The starting point of Carlyle's theories during this period was the observation that symbols operate

dynamically on human consciousness, and that this, in fact, is the primary driver of human endeavour

and insurance of social cohesion. The significance of this to his own moment was twofold. Firstly, the

available symbology, principally associated with church and monarchy, was inappropriate, being a

leftover from an earlier and different society. There existed a primal religious impulse in man, but that

was no longer expressible through the existing religious forms and symbols, taken together to be

'clothes' in *Sartor Resartus*:

> [T]hose same Church Clothes have gone sorrowfully out at elbows: nay, far worse, many of them
>
> have become mere hollow Shapes, or Masks, under which no living Figure or Spirit any longer
>
> dwells; but only spiders and unclean beetles, in horrid accumulation, drive their trade; and the
>
> Mask still glares on you with its glass-eyes, in ghastly affectation of Life,– some generation and
>
> half after Religion has quite withdrawn from it, and in unnoticed nooks is weaving for herself new
>
> Vestures, wherewith to reappear, and bless us, or our sons or grandsons.[24]

Alongside this inadequacy of existing dynamic symbology, and made possible by that inadequacy, was

the rise of the utilitarian mind-set, which viewed the human mind in purely mechanical terms, being

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[23]Froude, *First Forty*, v. 2, p. 410.
[24] *Sartor*, p. 164.

interested only in the 'physical, practical, economical conditions' of the human subject.[25] For Carlyle it was impossible that mankind could ever be wholly motivated by rational self-interest: 'happiness' was to him a chimerical concept, and the utilitarian 'greatest happiness principle' inapplicable to humanity; rather than happiness, '[d]ifficulty, abnegation, martyrdom, death are the *allurements* that act on the heart of man'.[26] Thus the conditions under which man was then living were demoralizing and contrary to his own deepest wishes.

In the absence of a more exalted symbology, Carlyle suggested that the post-industrial English society that was subject to his observation had come to idealize the pursuit of money, making a practical if not nominal ideology of this pursuit. Human relations had become secondary to and dependent on financial relations: 'Cash Payment has become the sole nexus of man to man!'[27] Carlyle was particularly anxious that authority should be invested in the individuals best equipped to wield it, and was disagreeably aware of the close link between money and authority; the social reality that the latter could be bought with the former: '[W]hoso has sixpence is Sovereign (to the length of sixpence) over all men.'[28] The effective economy of power in operation offended against the fundamental Carlylean assumption of the non-rationality of humankind, whose deepest springs could no more be economically quantified than they could be verbally articulated – they could be, at best, symbolically revealed.

The French Revolution was the central event in modern history to Carlyle because he came to see it as the natural consequence of a society operating without a true and living symbology, and a warning for other western societies. He posited for France and for all societies an idealized primal scene in which

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[25] *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, p. 106.
[26] *On Heroes*, p. 71.
[27] *Chartism*, p. 195.
[28] *Sartor*, p. 31.

King as symbol of Strength (often, though not always, the pre-eminent virtue in Carlyle) was entirely identifiable with the person holding that station:

> Neither was that an inconsiderable moment when wild armed men first raised their Strongest aloft on the buckler-throne; and, with clanging armour and hearts, said solemnly: Be thou our Acknowledged Strongest! In such Acknowledged Strongest (well named King, *Könning*, Can-ning, or Man that was Able) what a Symbol shone now for them,– significant with the destinies of the world![29]

At the moment of creation, each symbol is a 'Realized Ideal', at once arising from the communal mind and wholly embodied in the person or institution that it represents: 'kingliness' is wholly expressed by the actually existing king, and the concept is one closely based on ideals generally present within the community. There follows a very gradual but inevitable disconnect, or hollowing out of the symbol, in response to changes in social experience. A symbol which once expressed communal truth tends to be retained to a point when 'Belief and Loyalty have passed away, and only the cant and false echo of them remains; and all Solemnity has become Pageantry.'[30] While '[a]ll things are in revolution; in change from moment to moment',[31] the symbol alone is static, and incapable of adjustment. Through force of habit, it may be accepted beyond its relevance, but as society as lived departs further from the realized ideals which have, by this point, become enshrined in structures of authority, this authority must be either 'an Imbecility or a Machiavelism'[32] – 'true Guidance' is impossible because upholding existing structures in their alienation from life as lived involves a dedication to cant and insincerity, the province of the Quack, not the Hero or Ableman. Resulting is a growing tendency towards '*Quack*ocracy',[33] rule by the dextrous

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[29] *French Revolution*, pp. 9-10.
[30] *French Revolution*, p. 11.
[31] *French Revolution*, p. 178.
[32] *French Revolution*, p. 11.
[33] *French Revolution*, p. 113.

talker rather than the man of action. Yet this is always at odds with a fundamental and ineradicable sincerity in the hearts of the common man, ever seeking the aforementioned true guidance. This is the state of pre-revolutionary France – a system of dynamic symbology wholly devoid of application to life as lived, and being used as a mask for exploitation and self-indulgence by the aristocracy. Carlyle stated with some insistence that there was a natural and universal law which stated that *a Lie cannot be believed*[34] and must sooner or later be disowned by nature and by the sincerity in men; a lie of particularly magnificent proportions, such as the *ancien régime* had become, called up in response 'a horror of great darkness, and shakings of the world, and a cup of trembling from which all the nations shall drink.'[35] Carlyle's later formulation for this wholescale rejection of sham once it reaches a tipping-point of prevalence, which it will be convenient to use here, was *The Bankruptcy of Imposture*.[36] This concept, if not the precise formulation, is central to *French Revolution*:

> IMPOSTURE is in flames, Imposture is burnt up: one red sea of Fire, wild-bellowing, enwraps the World; with its fire-tongue licks at the very Stars. Thrones are hurled into it, and Dubois Mitres, and Prebendal Stalls that drip fatness […]. RESPECTABILITY, with all her collected gigs inflamed for funeral pyre, wailing, leaves the Earth: not to return save under new Avatar. Imposture how it burns, through generations: how it is burnt up; for a time. The world is black ashes […]. For it is the end of the dominion of IMPOSTURE (which is darkness and opaque Fire-damp); and the burning up, with unquenchable fire, of all the Gigs that are in the Earth.[37]

The elimination of imposture from human affairs, then, was no simple matter, but involved a wholescale retreat from all social forms and a return to a primal anarchy, out of which a new paradigm of living

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[34] *French Revolution*, p. 14.
[35] *French Revolution*, p. 13.
[36] *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1898), p. 12. In this work, Carlyle uses the term 'bankruptcy of imposture' with specific reference to the Europe-wide revolutions of 1848.
[37] *French Revolution*, p. 774.

would emerge. Significant to the retreat from society as it then existed was the destruction of various symbols of authority; in fact, rather than dealing in the concepts and practices that make up the dominion of imposture, Carlyle often prefers to deal with symbolic objects (gigs ['respectability'] and shovel-hats ['religious conventionalism'] being perhaps the most common) which are weighted with great significance, so loaded with dynamic potential and implied historico-social connotations as to be *constitutive* of the consciousness of those who hold allegiance to them. Characteristic was Carlyle's response on first meeting the poet Robert Southey: 'Shovel-hatted; the shovel-hat is *grown* to him.'[38] A symbol such as the shovel-hat was for Carlyle potentially productive of a widespread false consciousness – it symbolized an institution that once embodied something of the 'Divine Idea of the Universe',[39] but religious practice had eventually been reduced to the worship of the signifier without reference to the original signified.[40] The Bankruptcy of Imposture, therefore, is the moment when worn-out and false symbols become demystified, and the community is forced to re-establish its relationship with the Divine Idea of the Universe, having to pass through chaos and anarchy on the way.

A question that is left somewhat uncertain in Carlyle's early work is how a new dynamic symbology can be created. His account of the French Revolution ends with the bankruptcy of imposture that was the Terror, climaxing with the execution of Robespierre. What comes after is uncertain, though Napoleon makes a brief appearance in terms suggesting he may be destined to play a significant role in the rebuilding of France: he is described as 'a natural terror and horror to all Phantasms, being himself of the genus Reality!'[41] Similarly, in *Sartor Resartus*, Teufelsdröckh's doctrine calls for the abandonment of superannuated symbols and antiquated forms, but details of societal reconstruction are held over for

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[38] Letter to Emerson, 13 May 1835, in Carlyle and Emerson, *Correspondence*, v. 1, p. 72.
[39] *Sartor*, p. 158.
[40] This semiotic language is perhaps surprisingly close to Carlyle's own choice of words: 'The symbol shall be held sacred, defended everywhere with tipstaves, ropes, and gibbets; the thing signified shall be composedly cast to the dogs.' (*Past and Present*, p. 194)
[41] *French Revolution*, p. 750.

'that promised volume on the *Palingenesie der menschlichen Gesellschaft* (Newbirth of Society)'.[42] The direction Carlyle's thought was taking was indicated in *Chartism* (1839) and made wholly clear in *On Heroes, Hero-worship and the Heroic in History* (1841), which picks up from scattered passages of earlier works and defines the only permissible form the new religion could take: 'We all love great men; love, venerate and bow down submissive before great men: nay can we honestly bow down to anything else?'[43] Implying that 'No' was the answer to this question, Carlyle was to devote most of the rest of his writing career to the study of heroic personalities. But what is a Hero? To Carlyle the possession of certain talents were taken as invariable indices of moral worth: 'The strong man, what is he if we will consider? The wise man; the man with the gift of method, of faithfulness and valour, all of which are of the basis of wisdom.'[44] Or again: '[T]he man of true intellect, as I assert and believe always, is the noblehearted man withal, the true, just, humane and valiant man.'[45] Carlyle uses repeated assertion rather than constructive argument to justify this line of thinking, but it is central to all of his work from this period forward: that there is a nebulous essence of greatness, variably identified with strength, intelligence, sincerity, or the ability to '[look] through the shews of things into *Things*'.[46] Whichever of these characteristics is seen as the fundamental index of Heroism, is then taken as a guarantor of all other qualities Carlyle considers Heroic. At a semantic level this involves an apparently arbitrary redefinition of words: strength is wisdom; to possess intellect is to be valiant. Individually each of these characteristics is simply a manifestation of an inner essence which can (and in the appropriate circumstances certainly will) take any of these forms. The Hero never has one gift in isolation, but must be presumed to have all in unison, to a superlative degree: 'Napoleon has words in him which are like

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[42] *Sartor*, p. 205.
[43] *On Heroes*, p. 31.
[44] *Chartism*, p. 179.
[45] *On Heroes*, p. 143.
[46] *On Heroes*, p. 60.

Austerlitz Battles. […] Burns, a gifted song-writer, might have made a still better Mirabeau.'[47] Once this omni-gifted Hero has been established as an actually existing if rare type, it is perhaps natural to wish for him to be given ultimate authority, and to become the object of 'heartfelt prostrate admiration, submission, burning, boundless, for a noblest godlike Form of Man'.[48] In this figure all social contradiction is resolved: he is not only a symbol of the godlike Form of Man, but an actual embodiment; demystification of the dynamic symbol is impossible, because behind the mask of Heroism is a core of the same metaphysical substance. This, then, proved to be Carlyle's formula for social palingenesis, as promised in *Sartor*: sincere reverence for the Great Man, attention to and emulation of his symbolic and actual presence, from which was to be born 'a whole World of Heroes'.[49]

The Dark Knight Rises: Adapting Many Sources. Parable of Democracy in *The Dark Knight*.

So the Carlylean schema of history which has just been outlined can, in its most basic form, be schematized somewhat as follows:

1 Realized Ideals: the ideals of the community wholly expressed by the symbols of authority; leader is he who is actually fittest to lead.

2 Slow deterioration: symbology remains static; life within the community is in constant evolution; forms and ceremonies become pageantry, symbols become hollow; rule of the sham-hero

3 Bankruptcy of Imposture: sham reaches tipping-point; rejected by the community and by 'nature'

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[47] *On Heroes*, pp. 77-78.
[48] *On Heroes*, p. 28.
[49] *On Heroes*, p. 112.

4 Rule of Darkness and Anarchy: in which all imposture is burned up; a necessary, though violent and chaotic stage.

5 Palingenesis: as specified in Carlyle's later work, dependent on the rise of a 'godlike' Hero; *Sartor Resartus* identifies this stage more with an unembodied (and unspecified) dynamic symbology expressive of eternal, transcendent truths as lived at a specific moment.

A textual analysis of *The Dark Knight Rises* will demonstrate that this schema closely underlies the film: as a fictional portrait of a society in a state of revolutionary flux, *Rises* observes the stages outlined by Carlyle, and posits also the importance of a living symbolism to social morale and social order. This adds another strand to the intertextual web surrounding an adaptation of the Batman mythos. Will Brooker noted that of the ten Batman films made before *Rises*, none had been an adaptation of a single specific text,[50] and *Rises* continues the trend. All take elements from different Batman comics, and finally produce a 'selective collage of these sources, stuck together and filled out with original, connecting material.'[51] What the Nolan films adapted from the selective Batman tradition was, according to Brooker (writing before *Rises* was released in completion of the trilogy), much of the series' characterological substance, various narrative functions, visual motifs and ideas in an unsystematic fashion, and perhaps most distinctively (in comparison with previous films) the 'tone and appearance – that is, dark, grim, gritty'[52] which Brooker associates with Nolan's selected canon of Batman comics by Dennis O'Neill, Frank Miller and Jeph Loeb. *Rises* maintains a stylistic and tonal, as well as narrative, continuity from Nolan's other Batman films.

But though *Rises* aimed to go beyond the genre restrictions of the comic book adaptation. The Nolan trilogy were dedicated not only to differentiating themselves from previous Batman films (especially the

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[50] Will Brooker, *Hunting the Dark Knight: Twenty-First Century Batman* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), p. 49.
[51] Brooker, p. 63.
[52] Brooker, p. 65.

Joel Schumacher films of the mid-90s), but also from superhero films in general. David S. Goyer noted: 'What I like about Batman is that he is the most realistic of the super heroes. There is a grittiness and a grimness to him.'[53] The key term in the discourse around the trilogy was identified by Brooker as 'realism'.[54] Brooker's analysis of the reception of *Begins* and *Dark Knight* demonstrates how they, particularly the latter, were credited with inaugurating a new type of Hollywood blockbuster, 'allowing action flicks to become more serious, capable of intelligence […] a piece of artwork' and 'transcend[ing] the genre of the superhero film', according to viewers.[55] In furtherance of this aim, the writers looked beyond the comic book genre for sources when it came to supplementing the narrative with a large-scale reflection on social dynamics and historical movement, a more realistic and historically informed narrative focus. This was to be where Dickens and, at second hand, Carlyle, came in.

Before moving on to *Rises*, it is worth looking at a single important scene from its immediate predecessor *Dark Knight*, a scene which encapsulates the criticism of democracy that is a feature of the trilogy. In the latter part of the film, the Joker performs a 'social experiment' on the people of Gotham.[56] He rigs up two passenger ferries with explosives, and leaves on each ship the detonator to the other ship's bomb. Whichever blows up the other first will be spared, but if neither detonates the other, both ships will be blown up. One ship is full of prisoners; the other, of respectable and law-abiding Gothamites. On the former ship, the dilemma is resolved when one of the prisoners flings the detonator out the window. On the latter, a vote is proposed, which ends in a comfortable victory for those who wish to detonate. However, none of the occupants wants to be the one who presses the button, and a besuited businessman who offers his services begins to tremble and cannot complete the action. Thus the deadline passes with no detonation on either side. The moral of this short parable appears to be

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[53] Quoted in Brooker, p. 90.
[54] Brooker, pp. 89-104.
[55] Quoted in Brooker, p. 33.
[56] Nolan, *Dark Knight*, p. 299.

that it is very easy to vote for selfish, inhumane and ruthless actions, while it is very difficult to take personal responsibility for such actions. Voting, therefore, the preferred mode of decision for the Gotham bourgeoisie but not for the prisoners, is an impersonal and consequenceless mode of engaging with history, and one that is productive of a sense of alienation from its own results, so long as there is a person willing to implement these results. The paradigm of the individual who does not narrowly rely on a public mandate for his actions, and thus takes full responsibility for them, is Batman. Batman's status as a non-democratic or even anti-democratic hero is made clear in *Rises*, as will be shown.

Textual Analysis of The Dark Knight Rises

The first three scenes of *Rises* form a single unit of meaning in terms of the film's socio-historical philosophy and announce quite clearly some themes which are to be central. The film opens with Police Commissioner Gordon standing in front of City Hall and giving a memorial speech on Harvey Dent, the district attorney who is publicly believed to have died heroically in combat with Batman when Batman turned murderous, a sacrifice to the public good. This is a reprisal of the closing scene of *Dark Knight*, establishing the strict narrative continuity between the two films. In fact, we saw at the end of *Dark Knight* that, though Dent did die in combat with Batman, the actual roles of the two combatants were the reverse of the publicized narrative – Dent was threatening to kill Gordon's family when Batman heroically intervened. Gordon and Batman are alone privy to the truth of Dent's demise, and they agree to hide the facts because 'sometimes the truth isn't good enough. Sometimes, people deserve more.'[57] What happens at the end of *Dark Knight*, then, is that the lie is elevated into truth. The film enacts, according to Slavoj Žižek's analysis, 'a resigned coming to terms with lying as a social principle', something Žižek believes 'touches a nerve in our ideologico-political constellation'.[58]

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[57] Nolan, *Dark Knight*, p. 322.
[58] Slavoj Žižek, *Living in the End Times* (London: Verso, 2010), pp. 59-61.

The people do not need to know the truth about Dent because his status while living as a 'symbol of hope'[59] and Gotham's 'White Knight'[60] makes his unmasking as a murderer disadvantageous for reasons of public morale. As Gordon gives his speech, he is standing in front of a huge image of Dent, and an American flag. The final words Gordon speaks are, 'I believed in Harvey Dent', before we cut to the next scene, in which a CIA flight is violently hijacked by Bane and accomplices. Then we cut to another speech on Harvey Dent. In this scene we are placed temporally eight years on from Dent's death, and probably shortly after or contemporaneously with the hijack. In the speech, made by the mayor of Gotham to the 'wealthy and powerful' of the city,[61] we are given several indicators of the growth of an institutionalized Dent-worship in Gotham: it is 'Harvey Dent Day' that is the occasion of the speech, and the mayor stands flanked by two large portraits of Dent. A significant practical effect of the heroization of Dent is also alluded to: the Dent Act has been brought into effect, finally eliminating organized crime in Gotham, and allowing for the incarceration of one thousand 'violent criminals'.[62] Dent, following the propagation of the narrative of his self-sacrifice, is not only the pre-eminent iconic presence in Gotham, but the dynamism of his symbology has been systematically appropriated by the authorities for purposes of social control.

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[59] Nolan, *Dark Knight*, p. 242.
[60] Nolan, *Dark Knight*, p. 314.
[61] Nolan, *Rises*, p. 358.
[62] Nolan, *Rises*, p. 360.

Gotham at this moment, then, is in a state of apparent stability, directly attributable to the propagation

of the Dent mythology, which is continually bolstered up by conspicuous use of his image – Dent (Aaron

Eckhart) is a man of about 40 years, of a conventionally 'All-American' appearance: thick blonde hair,

strong features, clean-shaven, gazing at the camera in a confident and direct manner in the iconic

image; he is neatly dressed in a suit and tie. Visually, Dent embodies an American ideal, immaculately

presented in the standard apparel of the American politico-economic system. Yet this system has proved

bankrupt, not only incapable of combatting the anarcho-terrorism of the Joker in *Dark Knight*, but

internally wholly corrupt, a mask behind which lay those 'spiders and unclean beetles' to which Carlyle

had referred. At an individual level Dent himself retraced the progress of the system as a whole, brought

from idealistic commitment to entire scepticism and amorality by first-hand knowledge of the potency

of the evil he wished to combat: 'You thought we could be decent men in an indecent world. [...] You

were wrong. The world is cruel. [...] And the only morality in a cruel world is chance.'[63] Carlyle wrote that

'in a symbol there is concealment and yet revelation': in Dent as a symbol of the victory of law and order

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[63] Nolan, *Dark Knight*, p. 317.

in Gotham there is concealment, certainly, of Dent's actual deeds, but only false revelation. The true revelation will come when the failing system propped up by the Dent mythology reaches its final, irrevocable bankruptcy of imposture.

The timing of the cut between the first two scenes is also significant. It comes as Commissioner Gordon speaks the closing words of his speech, 'I believed in Harvey Dent'; then the set-piece of the terroristic hijacking begins. The placement of this cut introduces a central preoccupation of the film: *lying*, particularly public and officially sanctioned lying, and its consequences. Gordon didn't believe in Harvey Dent – that is, he may have at one time, but as he makes the speech he is deliberately presenting a falsely heroized Dent. The relationship between the two scenes is not just chronological, but consequential, and presents the entire ideological drift of the film in microcosm – Gordon's misrepresentation is a seed which, institutionalized and with the passage of years, begets Bane's violent uprising. The rise of Bane in his implacable hostility to established authority demonstrates what Carlyle never tired of affirming in his analysis of pre-revolutionary France, and elsewhere: that *a Lie cannot be believed*,[64] but by its ontological status as a lie, contains within it the seeds of its own inevitable destruction.

The hijack scene also includes the film's first textual reference to *A Tale of Two Cities*, when Bane tells his accomplice that '[t]he fire rises',[65] 'Fire Rises' being the title of the chapter of the novel in which the Marquis St. Evrémonde's chateau is burned to the ground. A more extended adaptation of the novel occurs shortly after with the masked ball scene in which Bruce Wayne meets Selina Kyle (identifiable as Catwoman from the Batman mythos, though never nominally identified as such in *Rises*) and Miranda Tate/Talia Al Ghul. This is an analogous scene to the Monseigneur's reception in the first book of the

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[64] *French Revolution*, p. 14.
[65] Nolan, *Rises*, p. 357.

Tale. Dickens emphasizes the elaborate ostentation of the reception, the triumph of appearance which is undercut in the narrative by reference to the wider social context, in light of which the 'leprosy of unreality' that afflicts the reception is apparent.[66] Dickens introduces the nominal professions of the attendees (military officers, ecclesiastics, etc.), before remarking that they were 'lying horribly in pretending to belong to them.'[67] In *Rises* the notion of the unreality of the ball is literalized in the notion of it being a *masked* ball. In the absence of narratorial commentary, Selina Kyle's dialogue introduces the excluded social context and foreshadows later events:

> You think all this can last? […] There's a storm coming, Mr. Wayne. You and your friends better batten down the hatches, because when it hits you're all going to wonder how you ever thought you could live so large and leave so little for the rest of us.[68]

The aristocratic classes in both works have created an unreal set of conditions under which they can live, entirely divorced from the underclass, and without any understanding of the problems of that class. The high-society gathering is for Dickens and Nolan a chronotope of luxury, splendour, idleness and indifference to the plight of others. Such is the investment in unreality of the elite classes that revolutionary anger can go about translating itself into plans of action without their cognisance. The notion of a Damoclean sword hanging over the aristocracy, from an ever-fraying thread, as they carry on in ignorant self-satisfaction, was taken by Dickens from the early part of *French Revolution*, where Carlyle instils a sense of foreboding into his descriptions of aristocratic life, representing them as steeped in debauchery and self-indulgence: 'Dance on, ye foolish ones; ye sought not wisdom, neither have ye found it. Ye and your fathers have sown the wind, ye shall reap the whirlwind.'[69] Whether

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[66] Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 111.
[67] Dickens, p. 110.
[68] Nolan, *Rises*, pp. 394-5.
[69] *French Revolution*, p. 42.

considered as a whirlwind, a storm, or a fire, the impression of an impending social apocalypse rendered inevitable by aristocratic greed and selfishness, but to which the same aristocracy is nevertheless oblivious, is central to all three works. The three metaphors are also linked by their connotations of absolute uncontrollability and lack of human agency. Less than political forces they are forces of nature that arise in reaction to endemic injustice and hypocrisy.

The operations of the financial elite are also viewed with suspicion in *Rises*, and are sharply contrasted with the former business model of Wayne Enterprises under Thomas Wayne, Bruce's father. Thomas Wayne appeared in flashback in *Begins*, a locally omnipotent Captain of Industry, a man of business and a philanthropist. He has been responsible for the development of Gotham's transport infrastructure, built around the hub of Wayne Tower, but is also heavily involved in the municipal hospital and devoted to helping '[p]eople less fortunate',[70] the pre-eminent financial and moral force in the city. The time of Thomas Wayne is from the start of the trilogy depicted as a long-vanished Golden Age, before corruption and social disunion had set in. This is associated with the centralization of power in one superior individual, and the sense created of Thomas Wayne as unofficial overlord of Gotham is quite in line with Christopher Nolan's intention: '[W]e talked about how Gotham was a sort of proxy for his father's legacy – not just Wayne Manor but Gotham itself.'[71] By *Rises* the financial governance at Wayne Tower has become decidedly unheroic; power is bought and sold by whatever means possible. The embodiments of this new outlook are Daggett and Stryver, the latter named after a character in the *Tale*.[72] Dickens' Stryver is an adherent of the Victorian ideal of getting-on,[73] a vulgarly ambitious

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[70] Nolan, *Batman Begins,* p. 13.
[71] Conversation between Christopher and Jonathan Nolan, David S. Goyer, and Jordan Golberg, included in *The Dark Knight Trilogy: The Complete Screenplays*, p. x.
[72] There is another character in *Rises* who takes his name from the *Tale*: Barsad is the henchman of the villain Bane. A very minor character, he is not in fact named during the film, but only in the end credits.
[73] For a contemporary critique of which ideal, see John Ruskin, 'Traffic', *The Portable Victorian Reader*, Ed. by Gordon S. Haight (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), pp. 179-189.

barrister, interested only in 'shouldering his way to a large and lucrative practice'.[74] Nolan's Stryver is

not in any narrow sense adapted from Dickens' character: certainly none of his dialogue echoes the

novel in any overt way, and rather than pompous and overbearing like Dickens' character, he is

ingratiating but treacherous and self-serving (a closer Dickensian correspondence would perhaps be

Uriah Heep. It is also worth noting that the actor playing Stryver, Burn Gorman, gave an acclaimed

performance as Mr Guppy in *Bleak House* (2005)). His character arc is different, too: he plots with

Daggett against Bruce Wayne, and is eventually dispatched by the revolutionary court after a show trial.

As an ideological function, however, he does recall his namesake. He is similarly representative of a

certain type of individual that comes into being in a cash-nexus society, and who is shown in *Rises* to

thrive and rise to positions of some prominence therein. But this point is made more explicitly in the

dialogue concerning Stryver's close associate John Daggett, who enters into an alliance with Bane in the

hope of becoming head of Wayne Enterprises - Daggett actually physically introduces Bane into Gotham,

as well as in the figurative sense that Daggett and his ilk create a leadership vacuum which Bane must

fill. Daggett thinks he has bought off Bane, little comprehending that the latter has no interest in

financial gain, but is intent on implementing a Return to Fact (as Carlyle would say), and a complete

break with the false relations of the cash-nexus:

DAGGETT

I've paid you a small fortune.

BANE

And that gives you power over me?[75]

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[74] Dickens, p. 72.
[75] Nolan, *Rises*, p. 424.

Following this exchange, Bane, rather than installing Daggett in his desired position, kills him with his bare hands, providing a small-scale anticipation of the new paradigm of control that Bane is set to implement, in which unadorned physical power trumps the power of wealth.

Predating and facilitating the creation of the bubble society of Gotham's elite, existing outside of material history, but as it turns out precariously and unsustainably so, was the imposition of the Dent mythology, a desperate last throw of the dice for the ruling classes. The ideals of western political thought – democracy, the rule of law, etc. – have already proved ineffective and very much open to corruption in Gotham at the opening of *Batman Begins*, when Bruce tells his friend and the District Attorney's assistant Rachel Dawes, 'Your system is broken'.[76] Dent as icon is not a way of fixing the system, but is instead a private admission of systemic failure at the same time as it is an attempt to mask this failure behind a figure of inspiration. This attempt is initially successful, but its instability is owed to the very iconicity that is its power – all it takes for the system to be finally and wholly invalidated is for the Dent-icon to be demythologized, which is, given the unambiguously evil nature of Dent's actual conduct, always a distinct possibility. The reduction to such an inadequate and inappropriate symbol is itself a reflection on the system's moral bankruptcy. The Bankruptcy of Imposture is finally reached at the moment when Bane takes over the city, ostensibly in the name of the people. As he stands before Blackgate Prison, he holds up a photograph of Dent, a copy of the same image seen earlier during the Mayor's and Gordon's speeches. The Prison is, as Bane says, 'a symbol of oppression';[77] Dent's photo is a symbol of the imposture, rather than 'true guidance', which underlay that oppression. The final overthrow of authority in Gotham is not a reaction to simple oppression, but, more immediately, to revealed imposture – the lie is the central historical force in the diegesis. Bane goes on to read out Gordon's hitherto unheard statement on the circumstances of Dent's death, and his

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[76] Nolan, *Batman Begins*, p. 30.
[77] Nolan, *Rises*, p. 456.

admission that he 'buil[t] a lie around this fallen idol',[78] then tears the photo of Dent into shreds live on air, and proceeds to throw open the gates to the prison. There follows a wholesale structural breakdown in Gotham, for the structures that have held Gotham together have themselves been held together by the image of strong and just leadership found in the Dent-icon, and its demythification unleashes a primal anarchy among the inhabitants of Gotham.
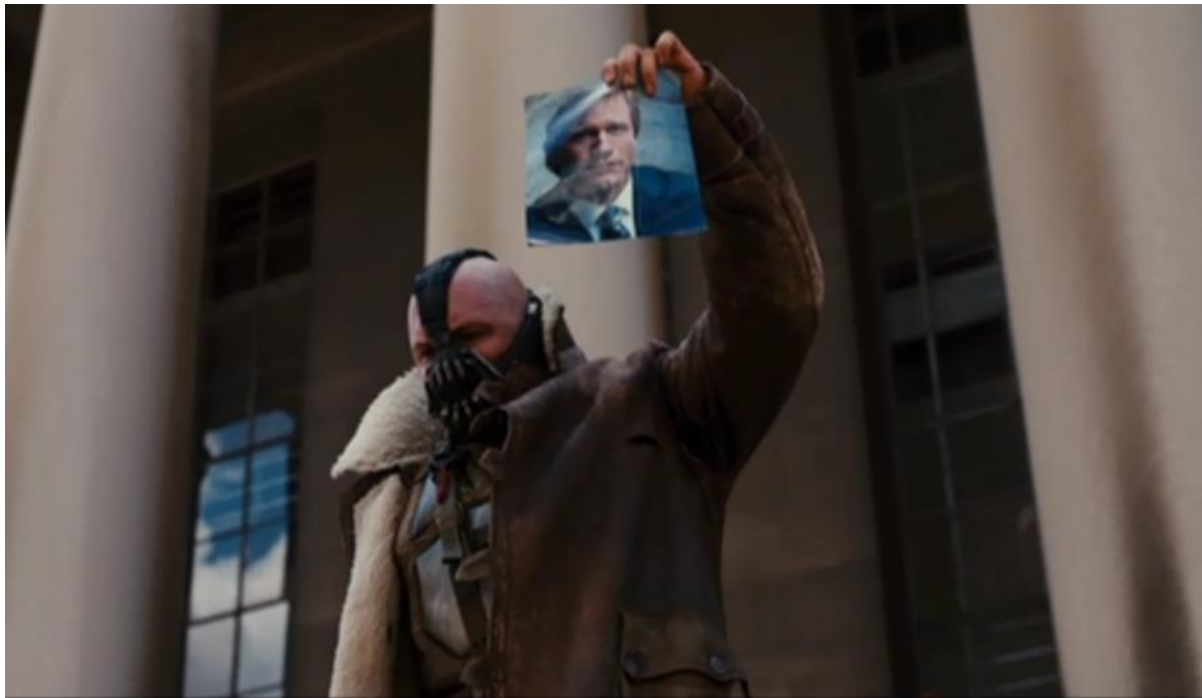
FIGURE 2: THE BANKRUPTCY OF IMPOSTURE – BANE AND THE ICONIC IMAGE OF HARVEY DENT

Such mob violence was to Carlyle a phenomenon not to be deplored, but to be considered as a return to nature, a necessarily violent break with long-established but unnatural modes of living:

[F]ew terrestrial appearances are better worth considering than mobs. Your mob is a genuine outburst of Nature; issuing from, or communicating with, the deepest deep of Nature. When so

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[78] Nolan, *Rises*, p. 457.

much goes grimacing as a lifeless Formality, and under the stiff buckram no heart can be felt

beating, here once more, if nowhere else, is a Sincerity and Reality.'[79]

It is a necessary stage in civilizational development – at least once insincerity has become endemic to

social relations. Anarchy is the only corrective to a wholly insincere society. Similarly, Bane views himself

as 'a necessary evil.'[80] Significantly, he states this to Daggett, the embodiment of the forms of evil that

make Bane necessary, of the moral degeneration that Gotham has undergone since the days of Thomas

Wayne. With Bane's takeover of Gotham, the implication of money relations in relations of power is

overturned; it is reversed, and all of the financial elite of Gotham are brought before jeering crowds in

kangaroo courts whose function is not to try, but simply to punish the erstwhile aristocrats, much like

the courts of the Terror as described by Dickens. Gotham is now effectively a mobocracy. Such a state of

affairs is to Carlyle at least a return to Nature and Fact:

> The lowest, least blessed fact one knows of, on which necessitous mortals have ever based
>
> themselves, seems to be the primitive one of Cannibalism: That *I* can devour *Thee*. What if such
>
> Primitive Fact were precisely the one we had (with our improved methods) to revert to, and begin
>
> anew from![81]

Thanks to the strong-arm tactics of Bane, then, Gotham has at least burned up the decades of deposited

imposture, and has returned to primitive and unblessed Fact. Bane has thus performed his historical

function, he has destroyed what needed to be destroyed, but is unable and disinclined to perform the

summation of the work – the remaking of order which is the task of all Great Men.[82]

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[79] *French Revolution*, p. 211.
[80] Nolan, *Rises*, p. 424.
[81] *French Revolution*, p. 47.
[82] See *On Heroes*, p. 167.

Batman's task is not only to re-establish order and to remove the threat of destruction Bane and Talia Al Ghul pose to Gotham, but to provide a basis on which the city can rebuild itself physically, and, more importantly, morally. The steadily growing institutionalized corruption apparent from early in *Batman Begins* has finally been eradicated, albeit at the cost of destroying the entire social framework. The demythification of the Dent-icon has left Gotham bereft of a controlling and validating symbology, and provides Batman with the opportunity to fulfil what has throughout the trilogy been his ultimate aim: 'The idea was to be a symbol.'[83] In order to be worthy of providing the symbolic basis for a new Gotham, Batman performs an act of public heroism, saving Gotham from Talia Al Ghul's plot by transporting the reactor out to sea in the Batmobile to explode over the bay, immolating the Batmobile in a blaze of light and apparently killing himself, but saving Gotham. Importantly, too, the action is witnessed and understood by all of Gotham, who are aware of how close the city has come to total destruction. Batman becomes, and is seen to be, the saviour of his people.

Batman's self-sacrifice of course recalls Sidney Carton's in the *Tale*, and the parallel is confirmed in the scene of Bruce Wayne's graveside oration, at which Commissioner Gordon reads a condensed version of Carton's final speech, ending with the famous lines: 'It is a far, far better thing, that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to, than I have ever known.'[84] But an important difference resides in the much wider relevance of Batman's sacrifice to the diegetic society in which he operates. Following the deliverance of the city from danger, Batman's iconic presence takes centre stage in his bodily absence. Gordon and all the other municipal dignitaries gather in City Hall to witness the unveiling of a lifelike but larger-than-life statue of Batman: the city has come full circle from the film's beginning in the sense of having a new iconic presence, with the difference that Batman truly embodies the heroism which he has come to signify. A long bird's-eye shot of the unveiling of the statue shows the

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[83] Nolan, *Rises,* p. 425.
[84] Dickens, p. 390; Nolan, *Rises*, p.507.

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assembled worthies sitting around the statue in concentric circles; the tile pattern on the floor is similarly composed of concentric circles, radiating from a centre on which the statue stands. Batman is no longer the Dark Knight, lurking in the shadows; now he, in iconic form, has been physically centred in the symbolic centre of the metropolis, City Hall, reflective of his status as a centre of dynamic moral power, having created a heroic founding myth for the new Gotham.

FIGURE 3: BATMAN AS ICON TAKES CENTRE STAGE

Batman has finally attained the status of pure heroic symbol, purged of all prior associations and of the ambiguity that traditionally clung to his image in Gotham. It is definitively Batman, as opposed to Bruce Wayne, who has achieved this status:

BLAKE

The injustice […] no one's ever going to know who saved an entire city.

GORDON

They know. (*Off look*.) It was Batman.[85]

Batman's personal identity has ceased to be of importance, and the symbol has broken free of its fallible human base. In the moment of attaching the nuclear core to the Batmobile and carrying it away from the city, Batman becomes a realized ideal, emblematic of true heroism and sacrifice for the citizens he has undertaken to protect. His physical absence lends itself to a more manageable symbolic presence, now finally incorporated into the structures of power of Gotham – indeed providing the iconographic base around which they can rebuild themselves, and finally regain credibility. It is his almost total emptiness as a political symbol, aided by his physical absence, that renders him so suitable for the role.

Yet Bruce Wayne is not, in fact, dead. Having seen the funeral, the eulogy and the institutionalization of the Batman-icon, we finally learn that he managed to eject from the Batmobile before the explosion and is living in Florence (or perhaps just visiting) with Selina Kyle. His sacrifice is not quite the same as Sidney Carton, then. Batman at this point is far closer to the pattern of mythological heroism. The mythical hero's journey ends always in either death or departure, but he is never wholly dead; rather he is a 'synthesizing image […] [who] sleeps only and will arise in the hour of destiny, or he is among us in another form.'[86] The liminal state of the traditional mythical hero at the end of his journey is also suggested by the fact that generally his body is not buried, but still he has one or more 'holy

[85] Nolan, *Dark Knight,* p. 508.
[86] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (London: Fontana, 1993), p. 358.

sepulchres',[87] as does Bruce Wayne – he has a place of burial, within the hallowed grounds of Wayne Manor, but there is no body. The hero has by the close of the film become fully transcendent, both alive and not, wholly present as a dynamic force, but bodily absent. He has vanished from history, a history he himself created and continues to shape, but now as an absent presence, a symbol and memory of mythic humanity, of the godlike in man.

Comparative Structures of Feeling

The Carlylean view of history is outlined quite closely in *Rises*. The strength of this correspondence is to some extent explained as a process of adaptation, carried out at second hand through Dickens' *Tale*. Various specific points of adaptation have been noted, whether corresponding scenes, textual quotes, representative characters, or the larger politico-historical setting. In *Rises* all of this serves as a backdrop for the heroism of Batman. Dickens' novel also has a heroic finale, of course, with Carton's self-sacrifice for the sake of Charles Darnay, Lucy and their family. Carton, however, despite Dickens' debt to Carlyle's work on the French Revolution, is not a Hero in the Carlylean sense: his act of heroism has no social function, and is apparently destined to remain unknown to those outside the Darnay-Manette circle. He is not nor has ever been a leader of men or the 'acknowledged strongest' of any group or community. Therefore the notion of Hero as social symbol, iconic presence and agent of communal moral regeneration which has been seen to be present in Nolan's film and in Carlyle's hypotext is not a product of the adaptation process, and must be otherwise explained.

The historical theory implicit in the film's treatment of the Hero may be considered an element of the cultural code. This code can be elucidated using Raymond Williams' concept of the structure of feeling. Wiliiams' concept emphasizes that the making of art is always 'within a specific present', and expressive

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[87] Points 21 and 22 of Lord Raglan's hero pattern in *The Hero: A Study in Tradition* in *In Quest of the Hero*, by Otto Rank, Lord Raglan and Alan Dundes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 87-175.

of the 'practical consciousness' of that present. He was particularly interested in that art which was constituted by an *emergent* structure of feeling – in other words, art that gave articulation to forms of social experience and relationships that had not yet been codified or institutionalized, that contained substantial elements that did not pertain to dominant economic to political structures. Art, he contended, was frequently the first site upon which changes in 'practical consciousness' were manifest, thus providing a rationale for the study of certain artworks – they could have potentially an almost prophetic quality, embodying nascent forms of consciousness and expression which would later have to be incorporated into formal socio-political structures. Such forms of consciousness could perhaps also be described as ideology, in the wider senses in which that term is used, and Terry Eagleton has made the argument that Williams' term means nothing more than ideology.[88] However, to speak of structures of feeling creates some additional emphases: structures of feeling have a definite temporal specificity, for example, pertaining to 'a generation or […] a period';[89] and in Williams' description they are more narrowly linked with artistic expression and innovation than the more broadly situated ideology.

Structures of feeling are related further to historical conditions, and the year 2011, in which *The Dark Knight Rises* was produced, was a notable one in which certain tendencies in politico-social consciousness were crystallized into event. Full-scale revolution occurred in several Arab countries in the 'Arab spring' of 2011, and the Western World saw much in the way of rioting and public protest. Foremost among the ideological elements which underlay such political action was a suspicion and hostility towards political leaders. Slavoj Zizek described 2011 in a book-title as *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously* and linked the revolts and disturbances to the fact that 'the ruling elite is clearly losing its

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[88] See Andrew Milner, *Re-Imagining Cultural Studies: The Promise of Cultural Materialism* (London: SAGE Publications, 2002), pp. 173-174.
[89] Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, p. 131.

ability to rule', and that, further, 'democracy isn't working'.[90] These failures are precisely the ones that are dramatized in Nolan's Batman trilogy, coming to a head in *Rises*.

Within the Western World, democratic dysfunction reached its greatest height in Greece. In his account of 2011 as 'the year it all kicked off', a temporal locus of massive upheaval and societal change, journalist Paul Mason studies Greece as the most developed example of the decay of authority in the West:

> Greece is the modern case study of what happens when the political elite of a developed country allows its legitimacy to go up in flames. Democracy and globalization itself are challenged. The minds of a whole generation begin to switch off the dreams that have sustained them. And there is reason to fear that Greece might not be unique.[91]

Mason's answer to the radically de-motivating presence of present-day political leaders is what he calls the 'network effect'; the network's social operation is dynamic because it allows for 'the creation, out of two people's interaction, of a 'third thing' which comes for free.'[92] It is this network effect, as developed through new technologies and particularly social media, that has turned anomie and passive cynicism into anti-authoritarian action, and which promises a coming 'horizontalist' or non-hierarchical socio-political structure. Mason welcomes the perceived democratization of social relations new technologies bring and is in this sense at the opposite pole to an observer like Carlyle. The dynamic and unifying effect of strong leadership is not discounted by Mason, but he considers this possibility not as an aid to

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[90] Slavoj Žižek, *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously* (London: Verso, 2012), p. 127.
[91] Paul Mason, *Why It's Kicking Off Everywhere: The New Global Revolutions* (London: Verso, 2012), p. 104.
[92] Mason, *Kicking Off*, p. 74.

the imposition of a desirable order, but as the 'strongman *threat*' [my italics];[93] the necessary dynamic

effect identified by Carlyle is seen as better achieved through network relationships.

Still closer to the diegetic situation of *Rises* was the civil unrest in New York in 2011, in the form of the

Occupy Wall Street movement, and the polarized social model identified by that movement as being in

place in the West: the 99 per cent (ordinary people) versus the 1 per cent (the financial elite).[94] Many

reviewers found this conflict reflected in *Rises's* anarchistic outbreak,[95] with Bane's rhetoric of 'giving

Gotham back to the people' reflecting Occupy's professedly leaderless and 'people-powered' model.[96]

Such a movement was obviously a prime manifestation of Mason's great 'kicking-off', right at the centre

of western capitalism. The events of 2011, then, in New York and elsewhere, gave rise to another wave

of apocalyptic reflections on the western way, a renewed sense that 'a horror of great darkness, and

shakings of the world', a throwing off of bankrupt authority, was approaching.

It was within such a context that *Rises* was produced, and that the dynamic social function of Batman's

heroism was pushed to the limit of effectiveness. Rather than a self-contained artwork, the film is

profoundly responsive to political movement and cultural discourse, and may pertain to an emergent

structure of feeling, a point at which unformulated responses to political pressures are embodied in an

artistic work. *Rises* provides formulations that differ from the anti-individualist conclusions of Mason,

but whose elucidation within a narrative of such wide reach and popularity suggests their presence in

practical consciousness. A film like *Rises* is both constituted by such a consciousness and potentially

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[93] Mason, *Kicking Off*, p. 177.

[94] www.occupywallst.org

[95] For reference to Bane and the '99 per cent' see, for example, Gilchrist, 'Review'; Lou Lumenick, 'Best Knight of your Life', *New York Post* (19 July 2012) http://www.nypost.com/p/entertainment/movies/best_knight_of_your_life_tTNNWAwFogzdgLz5HDeRBN [18 May 2013]; Slavoj Zizek, 'The Politics of Batman', *New Statesman* (23 August 2012) http://www.newstatesman.com/culture/culture/2012/08/slavoj-%C5%BEi%C5%BEek-politics-batman [25 September 2014].

[96] www.occupywallst.org/about/

constitutive of it, opening up new pathways of discourse among its popular audience, even as it eschews overt didacticism or political intent; and it is itself a product of an affective, not necessarily conscious response to social and cultural conditions.

Such conditions have their own specificity, as well as their own echoes of histories past, as recognized by Jonathan Nolan in his decision to evoke the French Revolution in his early draft of the script. The extent to which *Rises* really does partake of the nature of a sign of the times, an expression of a structure of feeling in its pre-emergent state, is perhaps a question for cultural historians of the future. But what this chapter has attempted to demonstrate is that *Rises* displays an eminently historicized Gotham, and a Batman who is both more historicized and more mythologized. It has attempted, also, to investigate the connections between the film and its 19th-century source: both works are seen to exist at a posited moment of society-wide crisis, a moment best understood in Carlylean terms as the bankruptcy of imposture, a moment which calls forth from the citizenry a certain kind of response, horrific but ultimately accepted as inevitable, a necessary evil. What is to follow this tearing down of imposture is the most difficult question, but in the person of Bruce Wayne/Batman, Gotham has a realized, embodied answer. This is both a new Batman who is not only a deterrent to criminals but a symbol of heroism on which the law-abiding citizenry of Gotham can build their new society. He is a new Batman, but one who displays great continuities with previous avatars of the Hero archetype – continuities that can be traced both through the adaptation process, through the relationship between artistic representation and the historical moment, and through comparative artistic responses to history, responses which show Carlyle's response to be less bound to the specific conditions of his own society than might be expected.

Chapter 5: Representations of Celibate Heroism: Carlyle and *Sherlock*

The bourgeois ideal of masculinity which was dominant in the 19th century and through to contemporary times prescribes 'heterosexual fulfilment through marriage and […] success as breadwinner for a domestic establishment'.[1] Sexual prowess is called for, but allied to self-restraint, both of which are demanded of the hero of a typical marriage-plot narrative – the first is evidently inherent to the hero once he attains puberty, while the second is learned through a process of self-disciplining, a gradual and difficult conformity to Freud's reality principle, and distantiation from the pleasure principle which holds sway over the immature psyche, the not or not-yet manly. A secondary but nevertheless culturally important figure has been the hero who is apparently distanced from all romantic and sexual matters, whose existence is defined by his abstraction from this realm of social interaction, and who devotes his energies to great feats of wider social significance. The heroism of this figure is impliedly or explicitly linked to his celibate lifestyle, as well as being coded as specifically male, despite its departure from a central aspect of the predominant male ideal. In this positive view, the celibate lifestyle is seen as a function of one of two underlying characteristics: the absence of, otherwise framed as a freedom from, sexual desire, or the heroic overcoming of sexual temptation. The latter model has had an important part to play in western culture, being central to Christianity, as will be outlined later in this chapter. The former is conceptually more modern; defined as 'asexuality', it has become a subject of sociological discourse, but still remains at the sociological level relatively unstudied, a phenomenon 'peculiarly absent from research on human sexuality'.[2] However, the importance of celibate figures in the 19th-century literary work of Thomas Carlyle and Arthur Conan Doyle provides a means of placing celibacy within the culture of the time, exploring its integration into concepts of manliness, and linking it to

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[1] Herbert Sussman, *Victorian Masculinities: Manhood and Masculine Politics in Early Victorian Literature and Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 16.

[2] Jacinthe Flore, 'Mismeasures of Asexual Desires', in Karli June Cerankowski and Megan Milks, ed., *Asexualities: Feminist and Queer Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 17.

whilst differentiating it from contemporary notions of asexuality. Scope for comparison is offered both by more recent academic studies of asexuality and recent reincarnations of Doyle's enduring celibate, perhaps asexual, hero Sherlock Holmes, who has undergone a great surge in popularity in recent times. The character thus provides a palimpsest upon which have been painted the views of various cultures at various moments regarding the unsexed male hero. At a further remove are the celibate Heroes of Carlyle, both fictional and historical. Carlyle was an important influence on Doyle, and so his writings on celibate males will be shown to inform the creation of Sherlock Holmes, and to provide insight into the anxieties surrounding celibacy that were of the age but that Carlyle and Doyle himself countered through their heroic characterizations. This chapter will be concerned to analyze the discourse of celibacy and its relation to heroism and other elements of the ideology that underlie the creation of character in these pivotally influential 19th-century texts, and to move onto recent Sherlock Holmes adaptations, especially the BBC series *Sherlock* (2010-), with a view to emphasizing and delineating some elements of comparative ideology as it relates to male sexuality and ideals of masculinity.

Temptation, The Making of a Man and Heroic Celibacy in Carlyle

The central concept of much of Carlyle's oeuvre was Heroism, much of his later work designed to illustrate his belief that 'Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here'.[3] Such Great Men were distinguished by a certain insight: 'A Hero, as I repeat, has this first distinction, which indeed we may call first and last, the Alpha and Omega of his whole Heroism, That he looks through the shews of things into *things*.'[4] Allied to this quality of insight was a sincerity without which, indeed, nothing could be seen in its true light. And it followed that this seeing of things in their true light, and acting accordingly, was transcendently *moral*. The concept of morality was one Carlyle used in a very particular sense:

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[3] *On Heroes*, p. 21.
[4] *On Heroes*, p. 60.

Without hands a man might have feet, and could still walk: but, consider it, without morality, intellect were impossible for him, he could not know anything at all! To know a thing, what we can call knowing, a man must first *love* the thing, sympathize with it; that is, be *virtuously* related to it […]. [D]oes not the very Fox know something of Nature? Exactly so: it knows where the geese lodge! The human Reynard, very frequent everywhere in the world, what more does he know but this and the like of this? Nay, it should be considered too, that if the Fox had not a certain vulpine *morality*, he could not even know where the geese were, or get at the geese![5]

The Fox is here deemed to be a moral creature because he 'know[s] something of Nature'. He has insight into his own biological needs (sustenance) and the means of meeting them (hunting geese), and he acts directly in accordance with them. In so doing, he is deemed to be behaving morally. But vulpine morality, Carlyle meanwhile suggests, is not the whole morality. For humans, apart from the 'human Reynard', further insight is possible. But the nature of this further insight is not followed up in the passage – no clear instance of moral action beyond the vulpine is given, so the vulpine remains the only clearly delineated morality in the Carlylean universe. What is revealed in the passage is Carlyle's view of insight, specifically insight into biological needs, and its necessary relation to morality. By insisting that fulfilment of a need like (carnivorous) eating is not merely natural, but actually moral (even an expression of *love*), Carlyle laid the groundwork for a vitalistic and individualist form of Heroism. The Hero who demonstrates his insight into things and acts accordingly is obeying primal insights lost to the more fully socialized, for whom truth always comes wrapped in 'clothes', reshaped and partly obscured. The beginning of Heroism, then, was the casting away of ideological or socially conditioned forms of knowledge, for access to truth-morality in its primal essence.

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[5] *On Heroes*, p. 98.

Carlyle's model of Heroic manhood owed much to reigning ideals related to the 'masculinities of empire' central to British ruling-class ideology,[6] but differed in at least one important respect: while traditional social analyses tended to apportion differing spheres of action to the male and the female, Carlyle to presented a locus of heroism from which the female was almost entirely absent, even as representative of an Other realm from that of 'breathless impetuous toil and struggle' through which man must make his way.[7] Thus Carlyle does not quite reproduce the man = public realm/woman = private realm equation that is historically dominant.[8] While exceptionally interested in the struggle for public effectiveness of the heroic male, his private realm tends also to be predominantly or wholly male, and his ideal private relationship is one between Hero and worshipper/follower: the Carlylean Heroes which we will examine in this section are solitary and taciturn individuals, but have one follower who is admitted into their life, if never into their whole psyche, and who chronicles the association with loyalty and reverence. All relationships of a romantic or sexual nature are superfluous to the Hero, immersed in his great, world-historical work, but his human sensibility, if not human frailty, is shown in his interaction with his worshipper-chronicler.

Sartor Resartus (1833-34) was to become a crucial text in the Victorian definition of adulthood and adaptation to the reality principle, providing a socially specific paradigm for what the Greeks called 'the good life'.[9] As George Eliot later observed: '[M]any of the men who have the least agreement with [Carlyle's] opinions are those to whom the reading of *Sartor Resartus* was an epoch in the history of their minds.'[10] Eliot, though she confines Carlyle's influence to 'men', was among those on whom *Sartor* was an important influence. Like many of its most appreciative readers, she encountered the book in her

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[6] Raewyn Connell, *The Men and the Boys* (Berkeley: University of California, 2000), p. 48.
[7] *On Heroes*, p. 64.
[8] Connell, p. 42; and see, again, John Ruskin, 'Of Queen's Gardens', *Sesame and Lilies*.
[9] Jeff Mason, 'Happiness and the Good Life', *Talking Philosophy* (17 Sep 2009) http://blog.talkingphilosophy.com/?p=1307 [18 Dec 2013].
[10] Eliot, pp. 187-188.

teenage years, and was greatly enthused by it.[11] *Sartor* became even more widely popular in the latter part of the 19th century: the cheap edition of 1881 (immediately after Carlyle's death) sold 70,000 copies in its first year[12] – an astonishing number for a book which was both already widely known and notoriously obscure. Perhaps the most important single function of *Sartor* among its 19th-century readership was that outlined by Dr Hal to the protagonist of *Paul Kelver*: 'Put your Carlyle in your back pocket; he is not all voices but he is the best maker of men I know. The great thing to learn in life is not to be afraid of it.'[13] It is in *Sartor Resartus* that Carlyle gives the most complete picture of *the making of a man*, in his Hero Teufelsdröckh's progression from alienation and trembling pusillanimity to the 'Everlasting Yea'. Unlike the figures described in *On Heroes* and *Past and Present*, the reader comes to know a great deal about the pre-Heroic youth of Teufelsdröckh and about Heroism as the end-point of a particular path, rather than as an innate characteristic.

At the narrative starting point of *Sartor*, Teufelsdröckh is Professor of *Allerley-Wissenschaft* or Things-in-General at Weissnichtwo University, tenured though not active on campus. He is a confirmed bachelor of, it appears, late middle age, 'a man not only who would never wed, but who would never even flirt'.[14] His only companionship is his housekeeper, Lieschen, a silent elderly woman, but assiduous and 'with a look of helpful intelligence, almost of benevolence';[15] and his sole friend, Hofrath Heuschrecke, who 'hung on the Professor with a fondness like a Boswell for his Johnson. And perhaps with the like return; for Teufelsdröckh treated his gaunt admirer with little outward regard, as some half-rational or altogether irrational friend, and at best loved him out of gratitude and by habit.'[16] Teufelsdröckh's is not

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[11] 'GE to Martha Jackson, Foleshill, 16 December 1841', *The George Eliot Letters*, 9 vols., ed. Gordon S. Haight (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), vol. 1, pp. 122-123.

[12] John Gross gives this statistic in *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters*. He goes on to note that 'few works as esoteric can ever have enjoyed such wide popularity' (p. 44).

[13] See Chapter 2 above.

[14] *Sartor*, p. 106.

[15] *Sartor*, p. 19.

[16] *Sartor*, p. 20.

a sociable nor a sensual nature, and he comes by the insight which characterizes him into things by observing humanity from afar – from above, in the physical and figurative senses. He lives on 'the attic floor of the highest house in the Wahngasse', from which vantage point he 'look[s] down into all that wasp-nest or bee-hive […], and witness[es] their wax-laying and honey-making and poison-brewing, and choking by sulphur.'[17] But though he observes human interactions from an emotional and geographical distance, Teufelsdröckh's emotional history is a complex one, and is set out in the influential central portion of *Sartor*, in which the Professor tells how he came to be a man.

Everlasting No and Yea

Following the bliss of childhood, Teufelsdröckh is awakened to both himself and to the true nature of the world in adolescence. He undergoes a prolonged process of alienation and disillusionment, finally passing through three stages: The Everlasting No, The Centre of Indifference, and The Everlasting Yea. The first is marked by absolute alienation, loss of the religious faith of his family and community, terror in the face of a mechanical and indifferent universe, and severe depression. This stage is brought to an end by renouncing the fear (personified as 'the Devil' at this point, as the character returns to the religious terminology of his upbringing) that has plagued Teufelsdröckh, and embracing 'Indignation and Defiance'.[18] In recollection of this moment, Teufelsdröckh adds: '[P]erhaps I directly thereupon began to be a man.'[19] Becoming a man, then, is primarily a refusal to entertain negative thoughts or to accept the validity or inevitability of existential angst, and to embrace a religion in some form, however vaguely conceived and arbitrarily denominated: 'Or what is Nature? Ha! why do I not name thee GOD.'[20] Accepted notions of heterosexual fulfilment would appear to play no part in this process, to be entirely incidental to the pivotal moment and thus a secondary issue in the definition of masculinity. However,

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[17] *Sartor*, p. 16.
[18] *Sartor*, p. 129.
[19] *Sartor*, p. 129.
[20] *Sartor*, p. 143.

there is a marked discontinuity in the intellectual and moral progress of Carlyle's Hero, one which is best exposed in his relationship to the concept of temptation.

Temptation is central to the Christian ethos, most notably in the Biblical tales of Eve falling into temptation through the serpent, and Jesus resisting the temptations of the Devil during his nights in the wilderness. Sexual desire undoubtedly forms a large portion of that which is to be resisted. In the works of the early Christian theologians, notably St. Paul, celibacy is very much encouraged. 'Our ideal is not to experience desire at all', wrote the second-century church father, Clement of Alexandria.[21] The extreme difficulty of sexual abstinence is acknowledged – indeed heavily stressed –but its necessity insisted upon. The ideal, then, consisted in resisting and overcoming, though not generally finally dispelling, these strong but ungodly urges.

Teufelsdröckh makes two contradictory statements on his own relation to temptation, and its part in his troubled youth. The first comes in the chapter 'The Everlasting No,' thus, when Teufelsdröckh is at a low ebb, convinced that he is destined to be outcast and friendless forever, and without the consolation of the religious faith of his fathers, which he has lost:

> Some comfort it would have been, could I, like a Faust, have fancied myself tempted and tormented of the Devil; for a Hell, as I imagine, without Life, though only Diabolic life, were more frightful: but in our age of Downpulling and Disbelief, the very Devil has been pulled down, you cannot so much as believe in the Devil. To me the Universe was all void of Life, of Purpose, of Volition, even of Hostility: it was one huge, dead, immeasurable Steam-engine, rolling on in its dead indifference, to grind me limb from limb.[22]

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[21] Quoted in Robert A. Nye, *Sexuality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 32.
[22] *Sartor*, p.127.

Thus Teufelsdröckh's difficulties do not come about through diabolic temptation, but through an inability to feel positive sensations, or anhedonia. But in 'The Everlasting Yea' chapter, in which the Professor recounts his maturation and escape from depression, he frames this struggle in a quite different way:

> To me nothing seems more natural than that the Son of Man […] should be carried of the spirit into grim Solitudes, and there fronting the Tempter do grimmest battle with him; defiantly setting him at naught, till he yield and fly. Name it as we choose; with or without visible Devil, whether in the natural Desart [sic] of rocks and sands, or in the populous, moral Desart of selfishness and baseness,- to such Temptation are we all called. Unhappy if we are not! Unhappy if we are but Half-men, in whom that divine handwriting has never blazed forth, all-subduing, in true sun-splendour […]. Our wilderness is the wide World in an Atheistic Century; our forty days are long years of suffering and fasting; nevertheless, to these also comes an end. Yes, to me also was given, if not Victory, yet the consciousness of battle, and the resolve to persevere therein while life or faculty is left.[23]

In this retelling, temptation and an eventual hard-fought victory over it are central to Teufelsdröckh's development. He even denigrates those who have not felt such temptation: 'half-men'. But by comparing this description with the earlier description of The Everlasting No, it is clear that temptation is not part of that period, rather *the narrative of overcoming temptation is what gives rise to the self-definition as wholly manful*, and thus allows entry into the state he calls The Everlasting Yea. Once Teufelsdröckh is able to return to his past and see in it this development through temptation, his anxiety and fear disappear (superficially at least). He has appropriated for himself an existing narrative of masculine development familiar from Christian writing: the temptation of the self, and the heroic

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[23] *Sartor*, p. 140.

resistance to said temptation. It is only within this narrative that celibacy can be seen as heroic, and the fullest expression of manliness. However, as the earlier passage indicates, this is a post-facto reading of Teufelsdröckh's experience, one whose affective power works to convince him of his own heroism, his own belonging to a heritage of masculinity. It is a myth of the masculine self borrowed from existing sources and imposed on personal experience; the narrative is simply taken from the story of Jesus' temptation in the desert in the Gospel of Matthew, with Teufelsdröckh imagining himself into the place of Jesus, accosted by 'the tempter'. The importance of temptation, therefore, as it presented itself to Teufelsdröckh, is not that it be overcome, but *that it be felt in the first place*, so that the Heroic overcoming can take effect – this is the essence of the 'masculine plot'. To not feel this temptation in the first place is far more distressing than to not have overcome it in a manful fashion.

Carlyle's idealization of celibacy continues throughout his major works, notably in the figure of Abbot Samson, a 12th-century religious functionary celebrated in *Past and Present* (1843). Unlike in the case of Teufelsdröckh, little information is provided on Samson's pre-Heroic stage; rather he appears fully formed as a true Hero and leader of men, operating within a wholly male social sphere, the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds. If Teufelsdröckh is a Hero as Man of Letters according to the Carlylean typology, Samson is an amalgam of Hero as Priest and Hero as King. He represents a progression on Teufelsdröckh in bringing the celibate Hero right into the midst of society, no longer observing and judging from afar. Sussman notes the phallic imagery used to describe Samson (e.g. 'erect as a pillar') throughout, and finds in it Carlyle's need 'to transform the celibate male into the phallic hero'. As Sussman further notes, 'it is the very power of Samson's male desire that makes his celibacy heroic'.[24] Having established the idea of celibacy as heroic overcoming of temptation in the earlier work, Carlyle takes it as given here. Samson is, having *fought through* to celibacy, the paradigm of self-government, which is what qualifies

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[24] Sussman, p. 32.

him for government of others, thus intricately entwining ideas of celibacy with those of Heroism, practice of the former providing a necessary training for the latter.

Celibacy was Heroized by Carlyle, just as sensuality and what he called 'phallus-worship'[25] were demonized. There may have been personal reasons for this: Carlyle's alleged impotence possibly provides a psychological basis for his use of a narrative of temptation to extricate Teufelsdröckh from his existential angst. To be tempted was to be a man and of the family of man. To be untempted potentially placed Teufelsdröckh and Carlyle himself outside all available narratives of manliness. In response to this, Carlyle had taken the celibate ideal out of its historical locus in the priesthood, and applied it to masculinity in all stations, creating in the process a 'masculine plot' defined by Sussman as involving 'a rejection of the domestic sphere', a world without women, sexually chaste male bonding, and achieving closure through 'the sublimation of dangerous male desire into productive work and initiation into a male community rather than with joining in marriage.'[26] While Carlyle's masculine plot is clear, what Sussman leaves out is the first step that has been outlined above: the ascription to the Hero of a dangerous desire in order to provide him with a way in to masculinity through overcoming it. The underlying fear is less of excessive sexual desire than a shortfall of it, the only situation that cannot be overcome by strength of will. The excess of sexual desire, dangerous as it is, is pre-eminently and conventionally masculine, and it provides the link which allows Carlyle's mythologization of masculinity to provide a fairly seamless progression from the Christian concepts which were coming under scrutiny.

Celibacy Heroized in Doyle's Sherlock Holmes Stories

Arthur Conan Doyle was a keen admirer of Carlyle from his youth. In common with many of his generation, it was the perceived post-Christian element of Carlyle's thought that appealed to him. Doyle

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[25] *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, p. 81.
[26] Sussman, p. 36.

was resolutely theist, but became early disillusioned with Christianity and its lack of truth-value. The semi-autobiographical protagonist of *The Stark Munro Letters* (1895) traced the same trajectory, at which point, 'Good old Carlyle came to the rescue,'[27] offering a doctrine which recognized Christian doctrine as the truth for its time, but not of the present, which required a new symbology expressive of contemporary modes of engagement with the Divine Idea of the Universe. But Doyle's reading of Carlyle was more complicated and equivocal than that, providing another example of the unfinished reading described by Gillian Beer and already discussed with regard to Elizabeth Gaskell. Characteristic of such a reading is that it allows no fixed conclusion to be drawn, neither as to the quality or validity of the work read, nor as to the actual authorial intention behind it. Doyle's struggle with Carlyle's thought is revealed to be long-lasting and inconclusive. He wrote in 1883, in a letter to his mother about his first steps in an authorial career: 'Carlyle has started a fermentation in my soul and made me ambitious.'[28] Yet upon longer acquaintance with Carlyle's writings, he was uncertain what exactly could be taken from them with regard to their larger social and political relevance: 'What was it that this great man was striving for so strenuously during his long life. I confess that I don't know. He proclaims war against shams and yet never has a word to say against the Christian explanation of the universe. What has he ever suggested that was practical?'[29] There follows a long passage dissecting the practical suggestions in Carlyle's work, ending irresolutely: 'What then is this trouble which is so pressing…'?[30]The initial affective power of Carlyle had given way to a more equivocal engagement, but the intensity of that engagement is clear in Doyle's almost agonized questioning of 'this great man' and of the source of his discontent. This discontent was presumed by Doyle to be a disinterested response to social conditions,

[27] Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Stark Munro Letters* (Kindle: Amazon, 2012), loc 402.
[28] Jon Lellenberg, Daniel Stashower, Charles Foley, eds., *Arthur Conan Doyle: A Life in Letters* (London: Harper, 2007), p. 207. The date of the letter is an estimate of Lellenberg, et al., as Doyle never dated his letters.
[29] Quoted in Pierre Nordon, *Conan Doyle*, trans. By Frances Partridge (London: John Murray, 1966), p. 155.
[30] Nordon, p. 155.

rather than, as had begun to be suggested in the wake of the Froude publications, related to conditions of Carlyle's personal life and his particular psychology.[31]

Doyle's reading of Carlyle, then, was an enduringly active one. Doyle's detective hero has been sometimes read in the light of Nietzsche's *Übermensch* theory, most recently by Timothy Sexton,[32] but bearing in mind Doyle's reading history, it is perhaps more fruitful to study Holmes' relation to Carlylean Heroism. As with Nietzsche, Carlyle's Heroism involved a presumption that God in the received sense was dead, but he further insisted that the religious impulse in man remained, and the need for a transcendent goal, its parameters to be defined by the Great Man, was paramount. Doyle in his ambitious youth identified with the strenuous quest of the Great Man, but found wanting in Carlyle an articulation of the goal of this quest, and even the specific forms the quest was to take. What Carlyle had brought before Doyle was the supreme importance of being earnest, of disinterested devotion to a cause, thus satiating or sublimating his ambition, for, as Carlyle paradoxically put it: 'Only in reverently bowing down before the Higher does [Man] feel himself exalted.'[33] 'The Higher' was potentially embodied in human form, as set out in *On Heroes*, but work in itself was the highest form of activity, and the only base from which a good life could be constructed: '[A] man perfects himself by working. Foul jungles are cleared away, fair seedfields rise instead, and stately cities; and withal the man himself first ceases to be a jungle and foul unwholesome desert thereby.'[34] Work in Carlyle is opposed to sexuality, with the latter appearing in metaphorical guise as 'jungle' or 'desert', uncultivated topographies analogous to the man in thrall to the pleasure principle. Notably, Carlyle did not sanction ambition as such, seeing all real work as involving submission to the higher, but Doyle found an implied

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[31] Arthur Conan Doyle, 'Carlyle: His Character and Philosophy', *The Conan Doyle Encyclopedia* (20 Nov 2013) http://www.sshf.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Carlyle:_His_Character_and_Philosophy [24 June 2014]

[32] Timothy Sexton, 'Calculating Humanity', in *Sherlock Holmes and Philosophy: The Footprints of a Gigantic Mind,* ed. Josef Steiff (Chicago, Ill: Open Court, 2011), pp. 15-26.

[33] *Sartor*, p. 190.

[34] *Past and Present*, p. 196.

personal ambition at work in the texts, in the identification the author felt with the Heroes he lauded, an identification also available to the reader.[35]

 In the Sherlock Holmes stories Doyle was interested, no less than Carlyle himself had been, in the creation of a character, a model of being, who was entirely focused on the quest, whose entire being was dedicated to his work, all competing drives sublimated into working. As Diana Barsham pithily observes, Doyle's literary oeuvre is characterized by a 'lifelong demonization of the inner being'.[36] A difficulty he had found unresolved in Carlyle was what *kind* of work could bear the load, could plausibly be posited as a be-all and end-all for a healthy, active and, perhaps most importantly, unself-conscious mind. The solution characterized in Sherlock Holmes bears traces of the Carlylean life-formula whilst also being in certain respects incompatible with it, creating a synthesis of the earnestness, social commitment and emotional aloofness of the Carlylean Hero with the intellectual tools of rationalism, hitherto outside the purview of Carlylean doctrine, lamented as a proof of the fact that '[m]en are grown mechanical in head and in heart, as well as in hand.'[37] Ralph Jessop has argued that one of Carlyle's chief concerns (and that of several other prominent 19th-century thinkers) was the 'melancholy' or profound despair that accompanies the rationalist viewpoint.[38] Doyle's character will in the following section be analyzed as an attempt to demonstrate something that, to a reader of Carlyle, would have seemed of the greatest importance: that a rationalist epistemology was compatible with an exalted Carlylean view of individual and human capabilities.

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[35] See Chapter 3, note 24 above.

[36] Diana Barsham, *Arthur Conan Doyle and the Meaning of Masculinity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p. 7.

[37] 'Signs of the Times', *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, v. 2., p. 103.

[38] Ralph Jessop, 'Resisting the Enlightenment's Instrumentalist Legacy: James, Hamilton, and Carlyle on the Mechanisation of the Human Condition', *History of European Ideas*, 39:5 (2012), pp. 631-649

Rationalism without Melancholy

Knowledge for Holmes is attained through both rationalist and intuitionist processes, though it is as a purely rationalist intellect that he is known in the public consciousness, as the great master of deduction. This is in line with certain textual indications in Doyle's stories, including some of Holmes' own statements, but it has been argued that in practice his conclusions are rarely if ever based on true deduction. Rather, it is *abduction* that he uses, reasoning to the best explanation, even if Holmes sometimes presents as deductive an inference that is at best abductive, and thus only the most likely explanation given the known facts, rather than the only possible, as in true deduction.[39]

Holmes' loosely abductive method also begins to shade into an intuitonist model like that set out by Carlyle in his early essays in opposition to rationalism. In 'On History', Carlyle notes that the human method of observing and registering phenomena, aside from its proneness to error, is necessarily *successive*, while the progress of history involves *simultaneity* of happenings, clashings and overlappings without apparent form: '[History] is an ever-living, ever-working chaos of being, wherein shape after shape bodies itself forth from innumerable elements.'[40] History is not, therefore, just one thing after another; rather it is innumerable things, a chaos of things which resist temporal arrangement, and which cannot be isolated from each other, or from other things which may be unknown and unknowable to even the most assiduous historian. Things which may be entirely unavailable to be known as empirical facts, or to even be posited by the purely rational observer. The only observer who can hope to make sense of such an agglomeration of happenings is he who brings to the matter an Idea of the Whole,[41] and who thereby can place any given fact within its cosmic context, without having to go through the

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[39] 'Abduction', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (9 Mar 2011) http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/abduction/ [03 Jan 2013]. On Holmes and abductive reasoning see Sami Paavola and Lauri Jarvilehto, 'Action Man or Dreamy Detective' in Steiff, ed., pp. 45-54.
[40] 'On History', *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, v. 2, p. 172.
[41] *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, v.2, p. 173.

laborious, and indeed impossible, task of documenting every other relevant fact. This seer has a breadth

of vision which is not related to disciplinary learning but quite the reverse, in that Carlyle frequently

comprehends knowledge using the trope of the eye, and relating spectacles to a culturally or

institutionally conditioned and epistemologically inferior mode of vision.[42] Carlyle, rather than

subdividing knowledge into disciplines, finds that history is effectively the sum of all human knowledge:

'All books, therefore, were they but Song-books or treatises on Mathematics, are in the long-run

historical documents – as indeed all Speech is; thus might we say, History is not only the fittest study,

but the only study, and includes all others whatsoever.'[43] Carlyle's view of history, as outlined in these

early essays, included not only the political and the military, but the cultural and even an approach

similar to what was to become known as historical materialism in Marxism, the history of working life in

everyday communities: '[the history] of Phoenician mariners, of Italian masons and Saxon metallurgists,

of philosophers, alchymists, prophets, and all the long-forgotten train of artists and artisans[.]'[44] The

significance of all of these everyday histories was their relation to an unspecified (and never fully

knowable) Whole, given its integrity by a certain 'Him, whose path is in the great deep of time',[45]

evidently God or a god of some description, but He remains a shadowy figure in the essays, who is

introduced from time to time as a means of dispelling the sense of chaos Carlyle associates with

empirical history. He validates the notion of an Idea of the Whole, offering an entity allowing for the

possibility of a unified Whole, a Whole available for inspection in even the smallest, most insignificant

historical happening.

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[42] For example, Letter to Emerson, 13 May 1835, in Carlyle and Emerson, *Correspondence*, v. 1, p. 67; *On Heroes*, p. 147. See also Marylu Hill, 'The "Magical Speculum": Vision and Truth in Carlyle's Early Histories', in Sorenson, Tarr eds., pp. 83-90.

[43] 'On History Again', *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, v.3, p. 181.

[44] *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, p. 58.

[45] *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, p. 60.

In 'The Science of Deduction', the second chapter of Doyle's first Holmes adventure, *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), Holmes sets out his theory of knowledge and world-interpretation. Holmes' theory is Heroic in the Carlylean sense in its refusal to categorize fields of knowledge or disciplines, and in its assumption of a fundamental unity at the bottom of all human activity and interaction, and indeed of nature itself. Holmes' field of study is nothing less than 'The Book of Life', the title of the article by Holmes excerpted in the chapter upon which he elucidates for Watson's benefit. The article goes as follows:

> From a drop of water, a logician could infer the possibility of an Atlantic or a Niagara without having seen or heard of one or the other. So all life is a great chain, the nature of which is known wherever we are shown a single link of it.[46]

Rather than being primarily logical or rational, Holmes' theory is really closer to a transcendentalist notion of a great chain, an interconnectedness of all natural things; a notion whose Anglophone antecedents were to be found in Carlyle and Emerson. This transcendent link is regarded as being accessible to the intellectual operations of the logician – but what is designated here by the term 'logician' is, as manifested in the course of Holmes' investigations, a set of intellectual operations that extend far without the bounds of formal deduction to encompass the borderline rationality of induction,[47] as well as 'instinct',[48] and a good deal of guesswork.[49] In other words, Holmes is close to a Feyerabendian anything-goes position, and methodology is secondary to situational factors.

The pronounced strain of transcendentalism in Holmes' approach to knowledge acquisition is further illustrated by his consideration of epistemology as *looking behind or through* objects or appearances. At

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[46] Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*, in *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, ed. Leslie S. Klinger, 3 vols. (New York: Norton, 2005-2006), v. 3, p. 40.
[47] See section 3 of 'Abduction', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
[48] For example, Doyle, 'The Problem of Thor Bridge', in *Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, v. 2, p. 1629 [Volumes 1 and 2 (the short stories) are paginated successively; Volume 3 (the novels) is paginated separately].
[49] J. Solomon Johnson, 'Is Holmes Really Just Lucky?', in Steiff, ed., pp. 27-36.

the opening of 'A Scandal in Bohemia', he notes that the observation of emotion is central to his technique, as through this he succeeds in 'drawing the veil from men's motives and actions.'[50] The truth of human activity and human relationships is for Holmes always veiled, and the stories always culminate in Holmes' unveiling of the motive underlying an action, usually criminal. All situations are capable of being seen in a Holmesian manner. The serene beauty of a countryside dwelling is not seen as it appears by the detective, but seen *through*, revealing an underlying darkness:

> You look at these scattered houses and you are impressed by their beauty. I look at them, and the only thought that comes to me is of their isolation and of the impunity with which crime may be committed there […]. Think of the deeds of hellish cruelty, the hidden wickedness which may go on, year in, year out, in such places, and none the wiser.[51]

The Holmesian unveiling is therefore of a melodramatic character, his language reminiscent of Peter Brooks' analysis of melodramatic narrative, which 'leads us in a movement through and beyond the surface of things to what lies behind, to the spiritual reality which is the true scene of the highly colored drama to be played out in the novel.'[52] In Brooks' analysis, melodrama posits a moral occult in each situation, wherein the good and the evil ultimately show themselves to be separable, embodied in some definable way. The moral occult is what melodrama shows to lie beneath any given everyday action and interaction, innocuous and even uninteresting as it may initially seem. Starting with the Holmes stories, the detective story becomes the perfect narrative locus for a melodramatic account of minutiae. For Holmes, no detail is uninteresting, each is significant in relation to the pursuit and dispensation of justice - is a sign with a single specific signified. But it is only the exceptional individual (Holmes himself) who is

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[50] Doyle, 'A Scandal in Bohemia', in *Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, v. 1, p. 5.
[51] Doyle, 'The Copper Beeches', in *Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, v. 1, p. 363.
[52] Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 2.

able to read the signs, to read *through* people and objects, through the exterior of stately country houses into the cruelties of the human heart.

In this approach to knowledge acquisition, Holmes begins to resemble the transcendentalist Professor Teufelsdröckh. Teufelsdröckh's sphere of study is no less unbounded than Holmes' 'Book of Life': it is *Allerley-Wissenschaft*, or Things-in-General. Teufelsdröckh has attained to great wisdom, having 'looked fixedly on Existence, till, one after the other, its earthly hulls and garnitures have all melted away'.[53] This allies the Professor with Carlyle's later formulation of the first characteristic of the Hero, as discussed above: he looks through the shows of things into things. This was the centrally Heroic trait, above any traditionally heroic political or military prowess. In Teufelsdröckh it is allied closely with the knowledge borne of wide reading or close observation, and in this he provides a contrast to Carlyle's later Heroes, often particularly inarticulate men who scorned learning (pre-eminently, Cromwell). Rather, his devotion to knowledge resembles Holmes, though he is not especially concerned with criminality. But the similarities of these two characters is not limited to their theories of knowledge, but to their entire mode of being – a mode of being dependent on a certain social being, all of which seems to be closely bound up with their pretensions to ultimate knowledgeability.

It is the state of bachelorhood which both Teufelsdröckh and Holmes find conducive to the life dedicated to the pursuit of ultimate knowledge. That there is a correlation between bachelorhood and this pursuit is occasionally suggested by Holmes. He famously states that: 'I should never marry myself, lest it should bias my judgement.'[54] The logic of this position lies in the age-old equation of man with rationality and woman with irrationality or emotionalism.[55] The entire abstention of both of these

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[53] *Sartor*, p. 193.

[54] Doyle, *The Sign of Four*, in *Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, v. 3, p. 378.

[55] Susan J. Hekman, *Gender and Knowledge: Elements of a Postmodern Feminism* (Cambridge: Polity, 1992), pp. 33-39. It can be seen as a point of literary influence that Carlyle and Doyle reproduce this bachelorhood-knowledge nexus; as a philosophical point, however it could perhaps be considered in greater depth. Freud postulates that

characters from the romantic sphere is somewhat radical in literary history. One can compare them with

the four heroes central to modern Western culture, according to Ian Watt's *Myths of Modern*

Individualism: Faust, Don Quixote, Don Juan and Robinson Crusoe.[56] In canonical retellings, none of

these characters enter into the marriage plot: Robinson Crusoe is geographically removed from any

possibility of marriage; Don Juan is dedicated to romantic escapades without marriage; and Don Quixote

is a keen but unsuccessful suitor. Faust is closer to Holmes, finally dedicated to knowledge, but he does

retain the image of the eternal feminine or *Ewig-Weibliche[57]* as a dynamic symbol, and engages in a

sexual relationship with Gretchen (in Goethe's retelling). This symbol of the eternal feminine can also be

seen as the archetype motivating Don Quixote's chivalric behaviour, and even Don Juan's promiscuity.

Holmes, then, is deeply unusual in his rejection of the archetype of the eternal feminine: not only is he

romantically unattached, he explicitly and in practice rejects the entire notion of romantic attachment.

In the opening paragraphs of 'A Scandal in Bohemia', Holmes' stance on passion, romance and women is

set out and never really deviated from throughout the canon. 'All emotions, and that one [love]

particularly, were abhorrent to his cold, precise but admirably balanced mind,' Watson as narrator

proclaims.[58] Passion is to the operation of the intellect as '[g]rit in a sensitive instrument'.[59] Thus Holmes

flees passion, and almost the whole sphere of human relationships. His only important personal

relationship appears to be with Watson, and their personal interactions revolve around their working

partnership. Very rarely do their conversations move into the personal, making the few occasions when

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sexual love is predicated on over-estimation of the sexual object, and taking into account this consideration the
dialectic of bachelorhood and knowledge becomes clearer: it is an avoidance of the primal epistemological
abdication that besets most of mankind. Of course Freud would not avow that such over-valuation in one way or
another could actually be avoided, but this is another indice of the radicalism of the Holmes character in literary
and philosophical traditions, and especially in post-Freudian times. Sigmund Freud, 'Three Contributions to the
Theory of Sex', *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay (London: Vintage, 1995), pp. 247-248.

[56] Ian Watt, *Myths of Modern Individualism: Faust, Don Quixote, Don Juan, Robinson Crusoe* (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 1997)

[57] See Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 21.

[58] Doyle, 'A Scandal in Bohemia', in *Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, v. 1, p. 5.

[59] Doyle, 'A Scandal in Bohemia', in *Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, v. 1, p. 5.

Doyle does allow Holmes some expression of emotion towards Watson particularly noteworthy. According to E.M. Forster's categorization, Holmes is a remarkably 'flat' character:[60] the Holmes we meet in *A Study in Scarlet* does not change, grow or develop; his habits and his attitudes barely alter. Holmes' freedom from the marriage plot and the dynamic symbology of the eternal feminine are essential to his stasis, and to his single-minded dedication to being a detective. He suggests, as already noted, the entire incompatibility of Heroic insight and marriage. According to dominant Victorian ideology, the feminine is linked not only to irrationalism, but to passivity as well. In Gilbert and Gubar's analysis, the 19th-century female is associated with 'contemplative purity' while the male is associated with 'significant action'. The eternal feminine might have the power to '[draw] us to higher spheres',[61] but it therefore by definition serves to abstract and distract from social engagement, from the Work (capitalized here to invoke Carlyle's usage)[62] in society that Holmes engages in, and that is dependent on close observation of all physical phenomena. In other words, Holmes cannot afford to concentrate on 'higher spheres', if his Work is to be done.

Instead, the homestead Holmes organizes for himself mirrors that of Teufeldsröckh, and features a similar gender-based division of labour: an elderly landlady to prepare meals and maintain a degree of tidiness; and a friend who performs as a sort of personal assistant, and, incidentally, a chronicler. Between these characters is created the perfect milieu within which Holmes can operate, free from the distraction of purely social or romantic relationships, yet fulfilling his emotional needs through the closeness of his bond with Watson, though it is a bond wholly structured by work. For it is work that is the central value that Holmes lives by, and even human relations are subordinate to it. Holmes' entire lifestyle recalls Carlyle's injunction that to prevent oneself remaining a 'jungle and foul unwholesome

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[60] E.M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), pp. 73-81.
[61] Gilbert and Gubar, p. 21.
[62] 'Work' is capitalized at various points in *Past and Present*: for example, 'On the present scheme and principle, Work cannot continue' (p. 290). 'Worker' is more frequently capitalized.

desert' one must apply oneself vigorously to work. As outlined in *The Sign of Four*, Holmes must work to maintain mental well-being:

> My mind rebels at stagnation. Give me problems, give me work, give me the most abstruse cryptogram, or the most intricate analysis, and I am in my proper atmosphere. But I abhor the dull routine of existence. I crave for mental exaltation. That is why I have chosen my own particular profession, or rather created it, for I am the only one in the world.[63]

The detective's physiological reaction to work is described over and over by Watson throughout the stories. It is as though a transfiguration takes place in Holmes at the moment he undertakes a case:

> His face flushed and darkened. His brows were drawn into two hard, black lines, while his eyes shone out from beneath them with a steely glitter. His face was bent downwards, his shoulders bowed, his lips compressed, and the veins stood out like whip-cord in his long, sinewy neck. His nostrils seemed to dilate with a purely animal lust for the chase, and his mind was so absolutely concentrated upon the matter before him, that a question or remark fell unheeded upon his ears, or at the most only provoked a quick, impatient snarl in reply.[64]

Holmes' immersion in his work is not only intellectual, but also physical. It is the physiological changes wrought in him that Doyle focusses on. Holmes' immersion approaches a level associated with sex – it is a moment of complete surrender to the moment and to the activity at hand. Detection is revealed to be the one area of employment in which intense intellectual engagement can persist alongside a 'purely animal lust'. The set of activities which make up the detective's duties combine the rational with the intuitional, and the intellectual with the physical. The slow-burning intellectual intensity of deduction gives way to the adrenaline high of the pursuit. Allied to this is the final pay-off of the accomplishment

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[63] Doyle, *The Sign of Four*, in *Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, v. 3, pp. 216-217.
[64] Doyle, 'The Boscombe Valley Mystery', in *Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, v. 1, pp. 121-122.

of justice, Holmes' final decision of whether to tell the police or not, sometimes electing to overrule the law of the land and cover up criminal activity, as is the case in 'The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton', a story which will be considered later in this chapter. Given his centrality to all stages of the process, Holmes is the embodiment of unalienated (superstructural) labour. Whereas the average worker toils for an interest that is ultimately opposed to his own, In a capitalist economy which incorporates an 'entire system of estrangement',[65] he for one has stepped out of the cash-nexus and is not at all alienated from his work, either from the totality of its processes, or from its results. He stands as the total fulfillment of the Carlylean updating of Socrates: *Know thyself* should be translated into *Know what thou canst work at*.[66] It is indeed then ultimately possible to know thyself, first by knowing what to work at, then by reducing the self to the working self, and refraining from any further reflection on the self not appertaining to work. Holmes appears to bring this same total unself-consciousness to his work: he has unquestioning faith in his own abilities, and has no need for further reflection. The moment of reflection is that of alienation from the work, and this Holmes never experiences. Thus he provides literature's greatest manifestation of the idealistic view of work as the central and defining activity of human experience, whilst simultaneously operating as a riposte to the influential 'melancholic' view of rationalism espoused by Carlyle and others.

21st-century Holmes: Elements of Adaptation

Holmes has been adapted onto TV and cinema screen many times, with *IMDb* currently listing 97 incarnations of the great detective dating back to 1911.[67] It is possible that his popularity in the Anglophone world has never been greater than in the last few years. The *Sherlock Holmes* film series (2009-) starring Robert Downey, Jr. and Jude Law has been a huge box-office success, and the third

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[65] Peter Osborne, *How to Read Marx* (London: Granta, 2005), p. 49. See also, Marx and Engels, *German Ideology*, p. 54.
[66] *Sartor*, p. 126.
[67] As of 27 September 2015.

instalment is currently in production. Recently in cinemas was an unrelated movie called *Mr. Holmes* (2015), starring Ian McKellan as the character in his later years, after retirement from active detection, thus a sequel of sorts to Doyle's stories, incorporating certain elements mentioned but unexplored in the stories, such as Holmes' bee-keeping. Two high-profile television series are currently in production, one British, one American.[68] The American series, now in its fourth series, is *Elementary* (2012-), starring Johnny Lee Miller as Holmes and Lucy Liu as a rare female Watson. The British series, in pre-production for its fourth season, is the phenomenally popular *Sherlock* (2010-), starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman. Both series involve an updating of the setting, bringing the character into the 21st-century. In this they are unlike most previous adaptations, including their nearest important precursor, the highly-regarded 1980s-90s Granada series *Sherlock Holmes*, which was set in a carefully staged Victorian London. Also unlike the Granada series, neither of these contemporary series directly adapt specific Holmes stories – *Elementary* presents plots often bearing no reference to canonical Holmes stories, while *Sherlock*, which will be the primary subject of the close readings in this chapter, has a somewhat more complicated relationship with the source. Most of the episodes are named after canonical Holmes stories,[69] but never exactly, always involving some play on the Doyle titles: 'A Study in Scarlet' becomes 'A Study in Pink'; 'His Last Bow' becomes 'His Last Vow', and so on. Nor are the title stories necessarily those most substantially evoked in the episode. A minority of the episodes could be seen as particularly loose adaptations of the stories indicated, retaining a few cardinal

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[68] An ambitious and somewhat revisionary Russian serial was also aired in 2013, constituting 8 90-minute episodes, but its continuance is unlikely due to the untimely death of Andrey Panin, the actor playing Dr Watson, shortly after shooting the series: *Sherlok Kholms* page on *IMDb.com* http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2465266/ [25 Dec 2015].

[69] Discussion of Sherlock (as, for example, on *sherlockforum.com*) tends to adopt the convention of referring to Doyle's four novels and five short-story collections featuring Holmes as 'the canon'; this convention will also be adopted here, for the sake of convenience. It is an unresolved question as to what degree of irony and/or playfulness is intended by this use of a word associated with religious writings. See Benjamin Poore, 'Sherlock Holmes and the Leap of Faith: The Forces of Fandom and Convergence in Adaptations of the Holmes and Watson Stories', *Adaptation*, 6(2) (2000), pp. 158-171.

points of Doyle's narratives ('Hounds of Baskerville' borrows the central idea of a spectral hound, but the final reveal is entirely different from Doyle's novel), while adding various characters and subplots, altering most of the catalyzers, all or almost all of the dialogue, and the temporal if not necessarily the geographical setting. But episodes of *Sherlock* are invariably littered with references to Doyle's stories: bits of dialogue from one story; proper names from another; pieces of character background from still another. The entire canon is a well from which elements are lifted in an *ad hoc* fashion in each episode, without any story wholly dictating the course of an episode. These canonical indicators (as I will call them: they seem to me to be important enough elements in the writing and reception of this series to merit a name of their own) are often superfluous to the plot, but function in themselves and by their profusion as markers of fidelity, proof of the writers' deep familiarity with Doyle's stories, notwithstanding the formal differences in the narrative. It is their occasional, extra-structural nature that makes them so effective – unpredictable little treats for the viewer. Canonical indicators are an important factor in the highly favorable reception Sherlock has received from traditionalist Holmes enthusiasts ('Sherlockians' or 'Holmesians', as they call themselves), despite the temporal shift and inadherence to Doyle's plotlines. The result is 'stories that are entirely of our time, though their roots are firmly in Conan Doyle'.[70] The general structure of the detective story is also retained: a mystery is established, with Sherlock gradually peeling away layers, sometimes even as new layers of mystery are being added, ending with the catharsis of a final complete reveal, in which all becomes clear and the *shows of things* make way, leaving only *things* just as they are. This is obviously central to *Sherlock*, though since the show has established itself, the detection element has been less central in certain episodes, notably 'The Sign of Three' in series three.

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[70] Roger Johnson and Jean Upson, *The Sherlock Holmes Miscellany* (Gloucestershire: History Press, 2012), p. 101.

Along with the generic structure, the other central plank of the relationship of adaptation between the canon and *Sherlock* is characterological. The central characters of Sherlock Holmes and John Watson[71] are placed in similar situations, with similar backgrounds and similar relations to each other, as in Doyle's works. Other lesser characters are also retained in the series: Moriarty, Mycroft Holmes, Lestrade, Mrs Hudson, and so on. The series makes one significant addition to the list of recurring characters: morgue worker (a 'specialist registrar', specifically)[72] Molly Hooper, whose outstanding personal characteristic is her enduring crush on Sherlock, apparently wholly unreciprocated. But the existence of Molly brings into relief one of the series' central preoccupations, which is with Sherlock's presumed celibate status, and the sexual being which underlies it. The real mystery of the series is Sherlock himself, and specifically his (a)sexuality. This is the point, as will be seen, at which the series' makers' reading of Doyle is at its most contested and irresolute.

In his first scene in the first episode 'A Study in Pink', Sherlock is found in the mortuary beating a corpse with a riding crop – a canonically Holmesian practice alluded to in the opening pages of *A Study in Scarlet* – watched by Molly, 'her face […] full of admiration'.[73] She afterwards makes a tentative effort to ask him on a date. He misunderstands, thinking she's offering to make him a cup of coffee (which he accepts). In Sherlock's next scene, he is house-hunting with John, whom he has just met – these opening scenes follow the basic parameters of the opening chapter of *A Study in Scarlet* – during which the two are mistakenly identified as a gay couple by Mrs Hudson, setting in course another recurring theme of the series: the duo's being (mis)identified as gay by various characters. They even identify each other as

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[71] The characters will be referred to as 'Sherlock' and 'John' with specific reference to their *Sherlock* incarnations, as this is how they are addressed in the series. 'Holmes' and 'Watson' is used otherwise, both with specific reference to Doyle's writings, and to the characters as culture-text.

[72] *Baker Street Wiki*, 'Molly Hooper' http://bakerstreet.wikia.com/wiki/Molly_Hooper#cite_note-Twitter-0 [14 Jan 2014].

[73] This piece of commentary describing Molly's reaction if from the unofficial transcript of 'A Study in Pink' by Ariane de Vere http://arianedevere.livejournal.com/43794.html [19 Oct 2015]. The official script has not been published.

gay in a restaurant scene in 'A Study in Pink', in which Sherlock ends by politely rejecting what he thinks are John's romantic advances towards him, but are actually John's efforts to discover what his housemate's sexual orientation is. It is notable that in this scene, contrasting with the Molly scene, Sherlock is *not* oblivious to romantic approaches, and is so sensitive as to see one where it is not being made. Speculation about a gay relationship between the two characters is nothing new, and is certainly a staple of recent fan discourse on the detective. The gay subtext of the series, and its use in a 'playful' mood and for 'humorous effect' is explored by Carmen Lavigne.[74] *Sherlock* speculates on this possible relationship through almost all of the characters making assumptions at one point or another about a romantic relationship between the pair, assumptions which prove a source of annoyance and discomfort to John, in particular.

A primary canonical starting point for speculation on Holmes' sexuality is evidently found in the early short story 'A Scandal in Bohemia'[75] which simultaneously outlines his admiration for '*the* woman', Irene Adler, while reinforcing his celibate lifestyle and aromantic principles: 'It was not that he felt any emotion akin to love for Irene Adler. All emotions, but that one particularly, were abhorrent to his cold, precise but admirably balanced mind. He never spoke of the softer passions, save with a gibe and a sneer.'[76] In the *Sherlock* episode taking elements of this story, 'A Scandal in Belgravia', the admiration remains, but the text is decidedly less unequivocal about Sherlock's aromanticism. Rather than an opera singer as in Doyle, Irene is here a professional dominatrix, whose clientele is apparently made up of the royalty of various nations. Her demeanour towards Sherlock is immediately and consistently flirtatious, indeed provocative: when he turns up at her house to meet her for the first time, she arrives into the

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[74] Carlen Lavigne, 'The Noble Bachelor and the Crooked Man: Sexuality and Subtext in the BBC's Sherlock', *Sherlock Holmes for the 21st century: Essays on New Adaptations,* ed. Lynnette Porter (Jeffersen, N.C.: McFarland, 2012), p. 13. See also, Sawyer J. Lahr, 'Dark Rumors and Hereditary Tendencies', in Steiff, ed., pp. 189-196.
[75] Published in 1891 as the first short story concerning the character, but preceded by two short novels, *A Study in Scarlet* (1887) and *The Sign of Four* (1890).
[76] Doyle, 'A Scandal in Bohemia', in *Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, v. 1, p. 5.

sitting-room totally naked. Later in the scene, when John enters, Sherlock notes that he 'doesn't know where to look' – John is embarrassed, and is trying to avoid looking towards Irene. Irene replies: 'Oh, I think he knows *exactly* where to look. I'm not sure about you, though.' Irene's echo of Sherlock's phrasing communicates a quite different sense, that confronted with female nudity Sherlock is not, or does not appear to be, reacting in the expected way. She is using 'look' in a less literal sense than Sherlock had, for Sherlock *is* in fact looking concentratedly at her in an effort to read her. It is simply that it is not clear that his looking is communicating sexual desire. In his persistent efforts to read the signs of Irene's personality and history, Sherlock is not looking in the manner she has come to expect. This conventional male manner of looking implied in Irene's comment incorporates appraisal of her as a sexual object, an appraisal she invites and anticipates being made positively. Sherlock's unreadability in this regard troubles but also intrigues Irene: the undecidability of Sherlock's sexuality in this episode means that any reading of the character must be unfinished in Beer's sense, and this remains true of later episodes, where the preoccupation expressed by Irene is mirrored at the plot level. The plot becomes dependent on the engineering of situations in which Sherlock's sexuality becomes an issue of central interest, particularly in the season 3 episode, 'His Last Vow', which will be discussed in more detail below.

The Sexual Assumption

Sherlock's failure to provide the sexual appraisal Irene expected may be behind her characterization of him in that same scene as 'damaged', as it is hard to see how else she could have come up with this diagnosis based on their interaction during this scene. But if so, if the absence of sexual appraisal and/or desire in the Sherlockian gaze is what is interpreted as evidence of damage by Irene, this may not only reflect her status as a professional and independent sex worker, but rather be an expression of a socially dominant attitude. This is what asexuality scholar Mark Carrigan calls the *sexual assumption*:

[T]he usually unexamined presupposition that sexual attraction is both universal (everyone has 'it') and uniform (it's fundamentally the same thing in all instances) such that its absence must be explicable in terms of a distinguishable pathology.[77]

Related to this assumption, for Carrigan, is the tendency to 'explain away' asexuality, popular explanations including: 'it's a hormone deficiency, the person was sexually abused, they're lying, they're gay but repressed, they've just not met the right person yet.'[78] Irene's judgement of 'damaged' implies some of these hypotheses, while the 'gay' hypothesis is dealt with brought into play throughout the series, as already noted. This gay reading of Sherlock Holmes, prevalent as it has been in writing about the character as well as in the writing of *Sherlock*, can be seen is yet another form of explaining away the character's asexuality.

It is worthy of note that the two characters whose dialogue tends to identify Sherlock as asexual rather than gay are the two who are most strongly coded as intelligent in the series, as much so as Sherlock himself: Mycroft Holmes, and Moriarty. Moriarty, we are told, refers to Sherlock as 'The Virgin',[79] while Mycroft responds to Sherlock's assertion that 'Sex doesn't scare me' with 'How would you know?',[80] thus implying, again, that Sherlock is a virgin – a state not to be entirely conflated with asexuality, but nonetheless according to some measures predictive of it.

Three ways of measuring asexuality have been used: behaviour, desire, and identity.[81] The first is closely linked to the notion of virginity, but is not prevalent in current usage as a definitional trait of asexuality.

[77] Carrigan, Mark, 'Why sexual people don't get asexuality and why it matters', *markcarrigan.net* (21 Aug 2013) http://markcarrigan.net/2012/08/21/why-sexual-people-dont-get-asexuality-and-why-it-matters/ [14 Jan 2014].
[78] Carrigan, 'Why sexual people'.
[79] *Sherlock: Season 2*, 'A Scandal in Belgravia', scr. Mark Gatiss, Steven Moffat, and Steve Thompson (BBCDVD 3494, 2011) [DVD].
[80] *Sherlock: Season 2*, 'A Scandal in Belgravia.'
[81] Dudley L. Poston, Jr. and Amanda K. Baumle 'Patterns of Asexuality in the United States', *Demographic Research* 23:18 (2010), pp. 509-530.

Rather, the definition currently favoured by the Asexuality Visibility and Education Network (AVEN) is: 'An asexual person is a person who does not experience sexual attraction.'[82] It is notable that the term used is *attraction* rather than desire; the difference lies in the greater emphasis on the object with regard to attraction, the impossibility of conceiving attraction without an object, while Freud states that desire is (before socialization takes place, at any rate) polymorphously perverse, and the sexual impulse may exist without an object.[83] Thus an asexual person under AVEN's definition may experience sexual feelings, but they will not wish to carry them out in reality – they will not have a real-life object of attraction. Whether this is relevant to Sherlock is a complicated question. If we read the text of *Sherlock* along the grain, the protagonist is not conclusively shown to feel sexual attraction. Yet in series 3 episode 3, 'His Last Vow', the episode's arch-villain Charles Augustus Magnusson's file on Sherlock reveals his 'Porn Preference' as 'Normal'. Thus perhaps he does experience desire but not attraction, assuming that 'Normal' indicates *some* amount of porn usage, rather than none.[84] Assuming, also, that Magnusson is accurate in his information on Sherlock's porn habits, but as he, too, is presented as a rival to Sherlock in his prodigious intelligence and people-reading skills and thus a worthy opponent, this assumption is central to his plot function.

Holmes' Courtship: 'Charles Augustus Milverton'

The mode of representation of (a)sexuality in the character of Sherlock is not reducible to a single formulation, for it remains an open discourse through the series. But an interesting textual moment to use to explore the character's sexuality comes via Doyle's story 'Charles Augustus Milverton'. The aforementioned 'His Last Vow' episode takes certain elements from this story in which the blackmailer

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[82] http://www.asexuality.org/home/
[83] Sigmund Freud, 'Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex', *The Freud Reader,* p. 268.
[84] Which is, in the context of the character's canonical representation, a controversial detail. It is discussed at length on the following forum thread: 'Sherlock Holmes, porn preference: normal', *Sherlock Forum* http://www.sherlockforum.com/forum/topic/2108-sherlock-holmes-porn-preference-normal/ [06 June 2015]

Milverton is pursued by Holmes, who finally witnesses (and covers up) the murder of this nefarious person by an enraged blackmailee. This story also includes Holmes' only foray into the romantic sphere, when he, under an assumed name, becomes engaged to Milverton's housemaid. This singular development is not directly presented by Doyle, and only revealed offhand by Holmes in a conversation with Watson:

'You'll be interested to hear that I am engaged.'

'My dear fellow! I congrat-'

'To Milverton's housemaid.'

'Good heavens, Holmes!'

'I wanted information, Watson.'

'Surely you have gone too far?'

'It was a most necessary step. I am a plumber with a rising business, Escott by name. I have walked out with her each evening, and I have talked with her. Good heavens, those talks! However, I have got all I wanted. I know Milverton's house as I know the back of my hand.'

'But the girl, Holmes?'

He shrugged his shoulders.

'You can't help it, my dear Watson. You must play your cards as best you can when such a stake is on the table. However, I rejoice to say that I have a hated rival who will certainly cut me out the instant that my back is turned.'[85]

And that is it. Holmes' insouciance about his fiancée is made clear: his aromanticism is not under threat, with the housemaid clearly not forming an embodiment of *Das Ewig-Weibliche* for him, not even arousing in him the sympathy and protectiveness he feels for some of his young female clients (for example, Violet Smith in 'The Solitary Cyclist'); nor, given the conventions of 19th-century courtship, would his celibacy be threatened at this point in the relationship. His fiancée's conversation was evidently not to his taste, and his belief that the 'hated rival' will serve as a replacement for him expresses a possibly class-based assumption that her affections are superficial and quickly and easily transferred. This short passage alluding to Holmes' courtship has been greatly expanded in some adaptations. The Granada *Sherlock Holmes* series (1984-1994; with Jeremy Brett as Holmes), consisting mostly of 50 minute episodes, devoted a feature-length (100 minutes) episode to the adaptation of the story, under the title 'The Master Blackmailer'. This episode featured extended scenes from the courtship of Holmes, disguised as a plumber, and Aggie (Agatha in Doyle): she asks him to kiss her, to which he dolefully replies, 'I don't know how'; but he eventually does so, bringing their romance to its climax. Later, he unceremoniously drops her, but on being questioned about the affair by Watson (Edward Hardwicke) is testy and defensive. The unfeelingness of Holmes' behaviour is further emphasized in an unadapted scene when he later turns up at Milverton's house in his own guise; Aggie recognizes him, but he pretends not to know her, and she remains silent. The camera lingers on her face for some seconds afterwards as tears well up. And in an unadapted dialogue between Holmes and Watson at the film's end, Holmes interrupts Watson as he begins to write: 'No, Watson. There are

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[85] Doyle, 'Charles Augustus Milverton', *Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, v. 2, p.1015-1016.

certain aspects of which I am not proud. Please, bury this case deep in your pile.'[86] Then his face

assumes an anguished expression before he covers it in his hands. Roll credits. Though he could be

considering his decision to hide from the police his knowledge of Milverton's murder, he has been

consistent in his absolute denunciations of Milverton – 'the worst man in London', provoking more

'revulsion' in Holmes than any murderer ever;[87] nor is it his first time shielding a murderer in the series

(he agreed to hide the identity of the murderers in 'The Abbey Grange' and 'The Devil's Foot' – in both

cases the plots follow Doyle's stories). It appears, therefore, that he is belatedly considering Watson's

point that he has 'gone too far' this time, in positing that the end (putting a stop to Milverton's

campaign of blackmail) justified the means (the pseudo-engagement). The film, then, is providing a

corrective to Doyle's use of the housemaid as an uncharacterized plot function, and it is also

interrogating the hidden continent of Holmes' emotional being – that the courtship is designed as a ruse

is clear from the outset, but what it *becomes* to Holmes is less clear. The romantic scenes with Aggie are

played straight, and his unusual despondency at the film's end hints at some emotional upheaval,

though its nature is never specified.

In *Sherlock*, the brief but suggestive courtship passage in Doyle is taken even further, providing a plot

line spanning two feature-length episodes of season 3. Here, Sherlock is romantically linked with Janine,

who he meets at John's wedding in 'A Sign of Three', the series' second episode. She flirts with him over

several scenes, but with little apparent effect. In episode 3, however, a scene focalized on John follows

him into Sherlock's apartment, where he meets Janine, just getting out of (Sherlock's) bed, and wearing

his shirt and nothing else. Shortly afterwards, she and Sherlock are seen being physically affectionate. It

is revealed that she has been living at his place for the last month. John is astounded. After she leaves,

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[86] 'The Master Blackmailer', *Sherlock Holmes: The Complete Collection*, perfs. Jeremy Brett, Edward Hardwicke (ITV Studios Home Entertainment, 2009) [DVD].
[87] 'The Master Blackmailer', *Sherlock Holmes*.

Sherlock reveals that he is using her to get close to Charles Augustus Magnusson – she is the master blackmailer's PA. A slight formal difference in the presentation of the affair in Sherlock makes a great difference to the experience of this series, compared to its 1980s predecessor: this is that we are only given the rationale for his courtship *after* we have viewed it. It is difficult for the viewer to predict that Janine could be of relevance to the investigation rather than a true romantic interest– indeed it is a remarkable coincidence that this woman who attempts to seduce Sherlock at a wedding turns out to be Magnusson's PA, but in the formal terms of the plot, it *is* just a coincidence. Thus a formal analysis of Sherlock's quasi-romances, both with Janine and Irene Adler, could legitimitely conclude that Sherlock is simply uninterested in relationships, and probably asexual, not prone to feelings of desire for anybody, much like the character of the canon and most other adaptations. This is where closure arrives in each of these plots of *Sherlock*, with Holmes showing that all along he had quite other aims than those related to the building of sexual or romantic relationships. Yet in using Fish's category of the experiential analysis, we are enabled to come to a totally different conclusion, and find that *Sherlock* is unlike other versions in that the viewer is frequently prompted to consider Sherlock's sexuality, frequently challenged to consider him as a sexual being, and frequently witness to Sherlock operating within the conventions of the romantic relationship or experiencing what appears to be sexual attraction. It is only at the last possible moment that the series returns to the canonical asexual reading of the character. The series, for the first time, effectively puts forward that among the most important facets of Sherlock is his sexual life, even (or perhaps especially) if he doesn't have one.[88]

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[88] Though such an approach is unprecedented in the long-running series of Holmes screen adaptations mostly considered for this chapter (the 14 Basil Rathbone-Nigel Bruce films of 1939-1946; the Jeremy Brett Granada series), approaches to Holmes' sexuality are not wholly absent in the adapted canon. The most notable example is the film *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* (dir. Billy Wilder, 1970), which traces the detective's apparent mistrust of women to a fiancée who died suddenly. Roger Ebert notes that Wilder's film opens as an exploration of Holmes' private (sexual/romantic) side, but that 'before the movie is 20 minutes old, Wilder has settled for simply telling a Sherlock Holmes adventure' (Roger Ebert, '[Review of] *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes'* [Original publication: 23 Feb 1971], *rogerebert.com* http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-private-life-of-sherlock-holmes-1971 [26 Dec

Conclusion

The ideologies underlying the depictions of Sherlock Holmes discussed above differ considerably, and it can be seen how with regard to *Sherlock* they begin to apply a certain pressure to the plot structure, with the adaptation unable to keep silent about issues that arise from the behaviour and expressed attitude of the character of Sherlock Holmes in Doyle's writings. The material of the adaptation is evidently not *determined* by the source – just as a pure form of economic determinism has been found untenable in Marxist thought, so an approach positing source determinism in adaptation study is clearly inadequate. Instead, generic tropes centered on romantic relationships serve as a default narrative content, notwithstanding conflict with the source. The ultimate resolution is in favour of fidelity to the source, but this is in tension with much of the content of the adaptation.

The temporal distance between source and adaptation and the differing cultural contexts of each, is key. Carlyle's work, notably *Sartor Resartus* and *Past and Present*, had implicitly heroized asexuality and aromanticism, and in a manner which resounded through Victorian fiction, and can be seen tracing itself through the figure of Holmes, indebted as he undoubtedly is to other literary sources as well. One way of understanding *Sherlock*'s constant pull towards the sexualisation of its protagonist is to figure it as precisely the absence of this iconic representation of the Carlylean Hero, a powerful validating presence for Holmes as an ideal figure in Doyle's time, but not conformable with an ideal of any culturally powerful ideology in the 21st century. Thus the dialectic at play in *Sherlock* as an adaptation is between source at one ideological pole, and immediate cultural context at the other, and it is in the continued interplay between the opposing ideologies in question that interest is created, and the endless

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2015]. Indeed, the 'private' part of the main plot is that Holmes fails and endangers national security, rather than any personal disclosures. Thus, this film does not display the same difficulty with the construction of character narration without the romance plot that becomes apparent in the course of the development of *Sherlock*.

oscillations are productive of those unfinished and engaged readings that Gillian Beer sees as being of the most importance.

Finally, the comparison of textual and narrative details of BBC *Sherlock* with the Doyle writings bring into relief certain temporal shifts in attitudes to asexuality. In particular, the contemporary attitude is comprehended in a way that would not be possible were the analysis not carried out comparatively – using Doyle's original conception to show that the later manifestation is *bringing with it* (as opposed to adapting) and encoding into its narrative material an attitude which seems to correspond to Corrigan's finding of a 'failure of comprehension' among the general public with regard to asexuality. He asks:

> Is this failure to understand something which is historically and culturally novel? It is difficult not to speculate as to whether this literal failure of comprehension would have been quite as pervasive were the relevant circumstances present in past times. Would asexual individuals have even felt the need to articulate an asexual identity in earlier times?[89]

If not a failure of comprehension in *Sherlock*, there is certainly present a will to interrogation of the notion of asexuality, which co-exists uneasily alongside the canonical injunction to respect that feature most central to the character's lifestyle: celibacy. The tension means that asexuality in *Sherlock* can neither be accepted nor explained away, but only endlessly circled around. While Carlyle had a long-established religious narrative to fall back on and from which to derive a heroic reading of celibacy, and while Doyle had both this (including Carlyle's updated validation) and a faith in pure rationality to render (a)sexuality unproblematic, modern retellings have neither, and the result is the inscription in the narrative content of a constant tension about the detective's sexual being. Such a tension could only be removed by one of two developments: at a wider cultural level the re-introduction of potent tropes of

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[89] Mark Carrigan, 'Working Paper: Realism, Biography and Asexuality', *markcarrigan.net* (22 Jan 2014) http://markcarrigan.net/2014/01/22/working-paper-realism-biography-and-asexuality/ [19 Oct 2015]

celibate and aromantic heroism, which would run counter to almost all dominant narrativizations of human experience in contemporary culture; or, alternatively, until the culture-text of Sherlock Holmes becomes sufficiently distanced from Doyle's writings as to allow this whole trait to be jettisoned, though this is unlikely, as the books still frame any reaction to a new adaptation and look set to remain perpetually canonical. In its contradictions, *Sherlock* expresses contemporary concerns juxtaposed with past solutions, from which considerations ultimately a newly emergent structure of feeling may be seen to arise. But, as Lavigne concluded in her study of the gay subtext of the series, the sexual politics of *Sherlock* are 'mainly conservative',[90] so it does not itself partake of this emergent structure, rather it signals the anxiety which precedes such a development.

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[90] Lavigne, 'The Noble Bachelor and the Crooked Man', Porter, ed., p. 21.

Chapter 6: The Creator as the Voice of History: Carlyle, *Heart of Darkness* (1899), and *Apocalypse Now* (1979)

Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad was first published in 1899, some eight years after the first batch of Sherlock Holmes short stories had become a cultural phenomenon. But Conrad's novella belonged to a different age, or at least to a different mindset. Susan Jones has demonstrated that Conrad is often considered a 'protomodernist', pre-dating and anticipating James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and other exponents of new forms of representing complex interiority in the novel.[1] This brings with it the consequence that it is Conrad's relationship to the literary work which came after him that he is most often juxtaposed with, rather than what came before. *Heart of Darkness* is a work eminently of the 20th and early 21st century. Though largely ignored on first publication,[2] the quantity of debate it has engendered since has set it 'among the most interpreted books in English fiction'.[3] It has stood as a literary embodiment of the end of a certain mode of thinking about the world: the end of the progressivist view of history, rendered untenable by the unmasking of imperialist practice as an exercise in, in Conrad's words, 'inefficiency and pure selfishness'.[4] Here he certainly struck at the heart of the Carlylean programme for social and moral regeneration, for this took as a central principle that the English people were designated the task of 'conquering some half or more of this Terraqueous Planet for the use of man'.[5] This chapter will argue for the presence of Carlylean strands of thought in Conrad's novella – following, in this, some previous scholars whose conclusions will be

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[1] Susan Jones, 'Conrad on the Borderlands of Modernism', in *Conrad in the Twenty-First Century: Contemporary Approaches and Perspectives*, ed. Carola M. Kaplan, Peter Mallios, and Andrea White (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 196.

[2] Gene M. Moore, 'Introduction', in *Joseph Conrad's* Heart of Darkness: *A Casebook*, ed. Moore (London: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 4.

[3] Benita Parry, 'The Moment and Afterlife of *Heart of Darkness*', *Conrad in the Twenty-First Century*, p. 39.

[4] Letter to William Blackwood, 31 December 1898, excerpted in *Heart of Darkness*, ed. Robert Kimbrough (New York: Norton, 1988), p. 201.

[5] *Chartism*, p. 205.

introduced. This chapter's particular focus will be on the figure of Kurtz as he relates to Carlyle's Hero and to other elements of Carlylean ideology. In particular, it is the inter-relation between the character of Kurtz and the notion of the Voice as the most potent powerful ideological weapon that will be considered in its relevance to Carlyle, both in terms of the content of his work and in terms of the reception of Carlyle himself and his work. Carlyle's theorization of the Voice is considered in relation to his own enactment of that theory (using 'theory' and 'theorization' loosely), and his own implicit self-identification therewith, such that when he wrote on historical subjects, it was not in the character of a voice discoursing *on* history, but that of *the Voice of History* itself. *Heart of Darkness* will be considered as a meditation on such themes, taking into account the substantive ideological shift that occurs in the context of a predominantly ironic tone such as is often associated with Conrad[6] – a tone which, at first glance, would seem to be entirely at odds with Carlyle's apparent fanaticism. Finally this chapter will consider Francis Ford Coppola's film *Apocalypse Now* (1979), loosely based on *Heart of Darkness*, though it is transplanted both in time – like the previously analyzed *Sherlock* – and space – unlike *Sherlock*. Above almost any film, the myth of *Apocalypse Now* is inextricable from its protracted, troubled and well-documented production process. This chapter aims to explore both the textuality of the film and the circumstances of its production, positing that it was through the Conradian meditation on the Heroic Voice that Coppola was able to produce the film in its final form, and that it is not only that elements of this form are directly transferred from Conrad, but that through internalizing certain elements of Conrad's Kurtz, Coppola was consciously producing a self-image of the creative artist as Heroic force and Voice of History that allies him to the fanatical Kurtz rather than the ironic Conrad, and allies him, also, to Carlyle

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[6] Gene M. Moore, Owen Knowles, eds., *Oxford Reader's Companion to Conrad* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), entry for 'Irony' [accessed online through Oxford Reference database].

himself. Further, it will be argued that Coppola's self-mythification not only sees him adopt a Carlylean model of artistic self-perception, but is also indirectly derived therefrom, in the form of certain memes found in Carlyle and differentially replicated in Coppola's immediate source, *Heart of Darkness.* Through this formalistic process of influence, authorial consciousness is also created and altered, and it is the basically Carlylean mode of artistic consciousness at work in Coppola's film that will be finally demonstrated.

Carlyle and *Heart of Darkness*

Certain basic similarities in ideologies between Conrad and Carlyle have been noted by numerous scholars, although most have concluded by drawing a sharp distinction between the two writers. Terry Eagleton, citing the work of Avrom Fleishman, summarizes as follows:

> [Conrad's] positive values, incarnate above all in the virile solidarity of the ship's crew, are the reactionary Carlylean imperatives of work, duty, fidelity and stoical submission — values which bind men spontaneously to the social whole. Yet his fiction, with its recurrent motif of the divided self, is also shot through with a guilty, lawless Romantic individualism which struggles to subject itself to communal discipline.[7]

Such a formulation does not distinguish Conrad from Carlyle with total success, for Carlyle's work also has a distinct strain of 'lawless Romantic individualism', evident in the political doctrine of Heroism, predicated on the precedence of the individual insight over any codified laws.[8] Indeed, as much as Carlyle's work is about 'bind[ing] men spontaneously to the social whole', it is equally and perhaps more so about binding the social whole to certain specified

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[7] Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology*, p. 134.
[8] On Carlyle and romanticism, see, for example, Brian John, 'The Fictive World: *Past and Present*', *Thomas Carlyle*, ed. Harold Bloom (New Haven, CT: Chelsea House, 1986), pp. 77-94.

men. And, in fact, this is also a feature of Conrad's writing, especially in his most renowned works, *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim* (1902) and *Nostromo* (1904). These works do not celebrate the Hero in the rapturously unequivocal Carlylean fashion, but it will be shown that they, and especially *Heart of Darkness*, are investigations of the concept.

Allan Hunter states: '[T]hat *Lord Jim* is a novel concerned with heroism is self-evident.'[9] Hunter suggests Conrad read *On Heroes*: Conrad left no documentary evidence of this, but Hunter cites Ian Watt and Edward Said's contention that a quote from Novalis in Conrad uses Carlyle's exact translation, and must come from its use in *On Heroes* rather than the original.[10] Hunter goes on to explore the notion that *Lord Jim* and *Heart of Darkness* respond to Carlyle, concluding that 'the 'great-man-theory' is inverted' in the latter. However, this conclusion is dependent on reading Kurtz as 'evil'[11] – and few if any readers except for Hunter have found him to be as simple as that. Hunter's position ignores the stance of the narrator Marlow, who describes Kurtz as 'the nightmare of [his] choice', a phrase (to be discussed later in this chapter) which is loaded with ambivalence but yet expresses a basic position regarding Kurtz that is far from a total dismissal. Great Man theory is not quite inverted in Conrad's work, though neither is it wholly endorsed. It is, however, accepted in *Heart of Darkness* as a source of social energies and cohesion, and, once again, as an opposing force to that melancholic rationalism which was discussed in the preceding chapter. Whether that force tends towards good or evil ends is much

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[9] Allan Hunter, *Conrad and the Ethics of Darwinism* (Beckenham, Kent: Croom Helm, 1983), p. 91.
[10] Hunter, p. 91.
[11] Hunter, *Conrad and the Ethics of Darwinism*, p. 105. Also on *Lord Jim* and Carlyle, see Stanley Renner, '*Sartor Resartus* Retailored? Conrad's *Lord Jim* and the Peril of Idealism', *REAL: The Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature*, Vol. 3, ed. Herbert Grabes, Hans-Jürgen Diller (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1985), pp. 185-222. A reading of *Nostromo* in terms of Carlylean socio-political problematics is found in Albert J. LaValley, *Carlyle and the Idea of the Modern* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 175-181.

less clear, and in this very ambivalence a considerable distance from Carlyle's stated position is evident.

If the Great Man or Hero is one Carlylean theme which is central to *Heart of Darkness*, another is that of imperialism, a subject whose presence in the novella has already engendered much comment, some of which will appear in this discussion. The two articles dealing in depth with Carlyle's influence on or presence in *Heart of Darkness* both read the novella as an anti-imperialist text. Perhaps as a consequence of this, they find it to express an antipathy to Carlyle's politics. Thus Alison L. Hopwood concludes that it is 'Conrad's rejection of the Carlylean view of imperialism',[12] while V.J. Emmet, Jr. considers it 'a critique of the widespread nineteenth-century phenomenon of hero-worship', with especial regard to *On Heroes*.[13] The base assumption of both writers is that Conrad's politics are fundamentally anti-imperialist and liberal humanist, oppositional to racist and authoritarian Victorian ideals. Published in 1972 and 1975 respectively, these articles predate Chinua Achebe's famous essay on *Heart of Darkness*, first published in 1977, which provides a diametrically opposed reading of the Conradian worldview, and which has, to a greater or lesser extent, inflected all subsequent criticism.

Achebe argues that the novella reveals Conrad to be a 'thoroughgoing racist', and that the fact that criticism of the work until that time had rarely mentioned this aspect of the work was proof of how normalized such racism was.[14] The central ideological tendency of *Heart of Darkness*, for Achebe, was to present African blacks as being ontologically inferior to European whites, but as

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[12] Alison L. Hopwood, 'Carlyle and Conrad: *Past and Present* and *Heart of Darkness*', *The Review of English Studies*, n.s., 23:90 (1972), p. 172.

[13] V.J. Emmett, Jr., 'Carlyle, Conrad, and the Politics of Charisma: Another Perspective of *Heart of Darkness*', *Conradiana*, 7 (1975), p. 146.

[14] Chinua Achebe, 'A Vision of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*' [1977], in *Heart of Darkness*, ed. Robert Kimbrough (New York: Norton, 1988), p. 257.

nevertheless laying a disturbing claim to 'distant kinship'.[15] Such essays as Hopwood's and Emmett's could serve as evidence for Achebe's case, as neither takes into account Conrad's racism in reaching conclusions about his position on elements of Carlylean ideology, and in seeing *Heart of Darkness* as predominantly an idealistic meditation with universal themes, rather than a work directly implicated in the specific historical conditions of the late 19th-century Congo. A few years before Achebe, Raymond Williams had anticipated this last point:

> [I]t is […] astonishing that a whole school of criticism has succeeded in emptying *The Heart of Darkness* [sic] of its social and historical content, about which Conrad leaves us in no possible doubt. My quarrel with a whole tradition of criticism of fiction is about just this kind of endless reduction of deliberately created realities to analogues, symbolic circumstances, abstract situations.[16]

Williams complains about the lack of account of reality in literary criticism, just as Carlyle had complained of the lack of reality in 19th-century fiction. And just as the Condition-of-England novelists of the mid-19th century provided a response to Carlyle's complaints, so subsequent critics have re-inserted the historical specificity of Conrad's setting into discussion of the novella, albeit less in direct response to Williams than to Achebe. In Edward Said's post-colonialist reading, a sort of fusion of the Achebian bloody-racist stance and the predominantly pre-Achebian great-literature-transcending-history stance is attempted. Conrad is seen as somewhat ahead of his time in recognizing the contingency of imperialism, though he himself is unable to visualize an alternative. Nevertheless, by the force of his criticism, he does ultimately 'permit his later readers to imagine something other than an Africa carved up into dozens of European

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[15] Achebe, 'A Vision', in Kimbrough, ed., p. 257.
[16] Raymond Williams, *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973), p. 145.

colonies'.[17] This essay is exemplary of contemporary readings of *Heart of Darkness* in its ambivalence, and, when considered in conjunction with Said's other writings on the novella and on Conrad throughout his career, one finds a paradigm of the unfinished reading, wherein the debate and struggle with the text is intense and ongoing, and in which the relevance of the work demonstrates it to be more than simply a work of fiction to an engaged reader such as Said.[18]

Arguments for the contemporary relevance of *Heart of Darkness* are easily made, and Kaplan, Mallios, and White go over a few of them in their introduction to *Conrad in the Twenty-First Century*.[19] Some quarter of a century before that, Francis Ford Coppola made an indirect argument for the book's relevance to the Vietnam War with his adaptation *Apocalypse Now* (1979). Given this enduring resonance, it is timely to use the insights into the text to explore its relation to Carlylean ideology and rhetoric. The readings of Hopwood and Emmett, both conceiving the relationship as one of *rejection*, are too narrow – too determined, perhaps, to save Conrad from association with the imperialist and racist Carlyle. But Conrad's explorations of imperialism and Great Man Theory are far more receptive to the dynamic power of these ideologies than such readings allow, and the following analysis will show how Kurtz represents a powerful phenotype of the Great Man meme, and one which remained in the cultural meme pool to reproduce itself not only in Coppola's film, but in Coppola as constructed during and through the making of the film, and as presented in the documentary *Hearts of Darkness*, wherein Coppola appears as the Last Hero.

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[17] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), p. 28.
[18] See Said's comments on *Heart of Darkness* in 'An Interview with Edward Said', in Kaplan, et al., eds., pp. 283-303.
[19] Kaplan, et al., eds., pp. xiii-xv.

Conrad reading (about) Carlyle

Sartor Resartus is alluded to as being read by Marlow in 'Youth', a companion piece of sorts to *Heart of Darkness*. As has been noted, Hunter, Said, and Watt reasonably argue that Conrad must have read *On Heroes*. Hopwood suggests that *Heart of Darkness* strongly echoes certain passages of *Past and Present*. The *Oxford Reader's Companion to Conrad* also suggests *French Revolution* and 'Signs of the Times'.[20] Yet Conrad left no substantial direct comment on his reading of Carlyle. The closest he came was in a letter of 1908:

> And I am earnest, terribly earnest? Carlyle bending over the history of Frederick called the Great was a mere trifle, a volatile butterfly, in comparison. For that good man had only to translate himself out of bad German [of his source materials] into the English we know whereas I had to work like a coalminer in his pit quarrying all my English sentences out of a black night.
>
> [...]
>
> At any rate I think if have always written with dignity, with more dignity that [sic] the above-alluded-to butterfly could ever command.[21]

The comment on Carlyle follows a pattern of imaginative identification followed by rejection. Conrad chooses Carlyle as the model of his own ideal of the writer as worker, then dismisses him for lacking in the dignity that Conrad sees himself as possessing. Yet to focus on the dismissal is to ignore the disclosure in the passage that Conrad's self-image as an artist is in a sense an

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[20] Moore, Knowles, eds., entry for 'Carlyle, Thomas'.
[21] Joseph Conrad, *The Selected Letters of Joseph Conrad*, ed. by Laurence Davies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 234-235.

adaptation of Carlyle's – Carlyle appears as the original which has to be first internalized and then outgrown.

But Conrad's letter reveals little about his opinion of the content of Carlyle's work. Such opinions have been adduced from his fictional texts by Emmett, Hopwood and others. As noted, both Emmett and Hopwood see Conrad as rejecting Carlylean ideology. But Carlyle's place in Conrad's construction of a self-image suggests a more equivocal stance – 'a struggle with the text' possibly ending in rejection,[22] but encompassing also an empathetic identification, based on a common sense of the author as Hero.

Imperialism is thematically important both in Carlyle's work and in *Heart of Darkness*. Thus it may be taken as a concept whose analysis will allow us to reach certain conclusions about the relationship of influence which existed between the two. Carlyle's texts on imperialism long predate the 'scramble for Africa', and the time when imperialism became an explicit ideology on a grand scale among English writers – this period of widespread jingoism could be said to begin after the Second Reform Bill of 1867, according to Patrick Brantlinger.[23] Carlyle is rather a prophetic precursor to this movement, one who became ripe for incorporation into the selective tradition of imperialist thought as a pre-existing and generally recognized philosophical authority. He was referenced quite frequently in literature on imperialism. In 1898, the year in which *Heart of Darkness* was written, Henry Stanley, explorer and national hero, wrote in his eulogy on Belgian imperialism in the Congo:

> Carlyle says that 'to subdue mutiny, discord, widespread despair by manfulness, justice, mercy and wisdom, to let light on chaos, and make it instead a green flowery world, is beyond all other

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[22] Beer. *Arguing*, p. 7.
[23] Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism 1830-1914* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 4.

greatness, work for a God!' Who can doubt that God chose the King [Leopold II of Belgium] for his instrument to redeem this vast slave park[?][24]

Stanley reads Carlyle as considering the imperialist worker and conqueror of chaos as an instrument of God, but Carlyle's phraseology rather implies that the worker *is* himself a God. While Carlyle's language can often be quoted in a spirit of orthodox Christianity, it is also characterized by a blurring of the lines between human and diety, a feature important to *Heart of Darkness* and which will be discussed later.

In the same year, indeed in the same month Conrad wrote *Heart of Darkness*,[25] *Blackwood's Magazine* (where the novella, along with several other Conrad works, was to appear) published a philosophico-political overview of 'The Ethics of Conquest'. The anonymous author thereof characterized Carlyle's imperialism as 'the most famous apology for the theory of Superior Force', but he allowed that Carlylean theory did not *explicitly* adopt force as its fundamental value: 'He applauds not because he regards the physical force as constituting the moral justification; but because he looks upon it as revealing a moral power, and therefore having a moral justification behind it. Is not God omnipotent? and the strongest, therefore, most divine?'[26] The author rejects this view, noting that power for Carlyle remains the empirical measure of right – no quantifiable measure of judging right is given except for power, especially enduring power, which thus becomes a signifier of right in Carlylean ideology.[27] But ultimately the author admits that no code of ethics is anywhere apparent in imperialist

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[24] Henry M. Stanley, 'Introduction', in *The Land of the Pigmies*, by Guy Burrows (London: C. Arthur Pearson, 1898), p. 10. Stanley is quoting, slightly inaccurately, from *Past and Present*, pp. 293-294.
[25] Zdzislaw Najder, *Joseph Conrad: A Chronicle*, trans. Halina Carroll-Najder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 249.
[26] Anon, 'The Ethics of Conquest', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 164 (1898), p. 814.
[27] Anon, 'Ethics of Conquest', p. 814. Of course such a view is not accepted by many commentators on Carlyle. Goldberg cites approvingly G.K. Chesterton's riposte that those who saw Carlyle as espousing might-is-right principles were misled by certain 'hasty and choleric passages' which were 'a great deal more connected with his temperament than with his philosophy' (quoted in Michael K. Goldberg, 'Introduction', *On Heroes, Hero-Worship*

activity, and further suggests that any country who attempted to operate in accordance with such would render itself vulnerable to its neighbours. Though the article ends on a note of relative satisfaction with the status quo, it has at least registered an ethical lacuna in imperialism: the Carlylean justification is indefensible, but a retreat from aggressive colonialism is inconceivable. Such was the impasse between practice and ethics that was beginning to form part of an emergent structure of feeling, to be given powerful expression in *Heart of Darkness*.

Sauerteig's Heroic National Past

But first it will be necessary to explore Carlyle's imperialism in some detail. He began to advocate imperialism in 1839, with *Chartism*. This work was postulated specifically as a response to a *domestic* problem: discontent among the working class, as this took the form of the Chartist movement. Carlyle advocated education for all as a national solution, along with 'the grand Industrial task of conquering some half of more of this Terraqueous Planet for the use of man; then secondly, the grand Constitutional task of sharing, in some pacific endurable manner, the fruit of said conquest, and showing all people how it might be done.'[28] In advocating this measure, Carlyle was responding to the disturbing implications of Malthusian theory, which foretold the expansion of population beyond sustainable limits.[29] But this element is only introduced much later in the argument. Carlyle's initial argument is based on much more speculative and indistinct grounds. Indeed, the form in which the argument is given is itself notable: though *Chartism* announces itself as an investigation into 'the most ominous of all

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and the Heroic in History, by Thomas Carlyle [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993], p. lxii). This passage rather concedes the case by admitting that some passages by Carlyle can be legitimately read as espousing might-is-right, before establishing a division between Carlyle's temperament and his philosophy, and ascribing his less savoury passages to the latter. This division is unsustainable when applied to any thinker, but especially Carlyle, who has no minimally acceptable coherent philosophy by which he may be judged, and so has depended on experiential readings of his texts rather than theoretical, on engagement rather than agreement.
[28] *Chartism*, p. 205.
[29] *Chartism*, pp. 229-232.

practical matters whatever'[30] and an attempt to address the 'measurable questions'[31] associated with the matter, the chapter dealing with imperialism – the longest in the book – is made up almost entirely of a pseudo-extract from the work of Carlyle's occasional alter ego Professor Sauerteig, and does not address any 'measurable questions', but rather constitutes a series of imagined scenes from a supposed national past, scenes involving much Heroic physical labour and taming of wilderness.

John Holloway notes that Carlyle's use of pseudo-authorities is frequently the occasion for his 'wildest passages of rhetoric', and this is the case with regard to the Saurteig section of C*hartism*.[32] The chapter even marks something of a watershed in Carlyle's career, in its departure from an empirical premise into unprecedentedly wild speculative pseudo-history, delivered with an apparent conviction and urgency at odds with its fictiveness. The appearance of Sauerteig is a formal announcement of sorts that the arguments to be made will be extravagant and unsubstantiated, but, nevertheless, in later chapters (and in later works) these arguments will form the basis of much of Carlyle's worldview. The initial voicing of these arguments required a distancing mechanism, but once they have been made, they become realized and have the same status in Carlyle's work as arguments made in his own persona. The act of voicing is key, for, once given voice by Sauerteig or other of Carlyle's personae, the most extravagant ideas become realized and available to be endorsed by the author himself. John Rosenberg has noted that passages from pseudo-authorities in Carlyle tend to be cited by commentators as if they were Carlyle's own:[33] I suggest that this is understandable and even unavoidable because he often, as in *Chartism*, goes on to confirm or re-make the arguments in

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[30] *Chartism*, p. 51.
[31] *Chartism*, p. 56.
[32] John Holloway, *The Victorian Sage: Studies in Argument* (London: MacMillian, 1953), p. 27.
[33] John Rosenberg, *Carlyle and the Burden of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 18n.

his own voice once they have been developed. The point is here made at length because one can see in *Chartism* that at this nascent stage the ideological underpinnings of imperialism are introduced with indirection, not as claims made by the imperial nation about itself, but as observed by an independent and scholarly authority of another nationality.

The specific content of Carlyle/Sauerteig's imperialism is rooted in a sketch of world and especially English history, in which the empire-building activities of the English are placed within a legacy of heroic conquest including the Roman Empire, and are associated further with a legacy of heroic physical labour on the part of the 'Teuton kindred':

> How many brawny arms, generation after generation, sank down wearied; how many noble hearts, toiling while life lasted, and wise heads wore themselves dim with scanning and discerning, before this waste *White-cliff*, Albion so-called […], became a BRITISH EMPIRE! The stream of world history has altered its complexion; Romans are dead out, English are come in.[34]

Carlyle places physical labour firmly at the forefront of all heroic activity, and by associating it principally with the English, establishes a rationale for national dominance. Carlyle's advocation of imperialism was inextricable from his reverence for physical labour: images of the cultivation of waste-land into fertility were among Carlyle's favourites, and provide a metaphor for the individual self's accommodation to the reality principle – the turning of foul jungles to fair seedfields and so on.[35] Both as metaphor and in their physical actuality, such spaces were central to Carlylean ideology. And the potentiality for the creation of such was to be found not in industrialized England, but everywhere else: '[T]o the overcrowded little western nook of

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[34] *Chartism*, p. 202.
[35] *Past and Present*, p. 196. See also discussion in 'Celibacy Heroized in Doyle' section of Chapter 5 above.

Europe, our Terrestrial Planet, nine-tenths of it yet vacant or tenanted by nomades, is still crying, Come and till me, come and reap me!'[36] The issue of the people of such lands, the supposed 'nomades', and their relation to English imperialism, is not here entered into. Ideologically, they do not really exist. This is, at this early stage, the blind spot in Carlylean imperialist dogma: the true complexity and difficulty will arise not so much from issues of land cultivation as from encounters with other races and cultures.

Carlyle's militarism, which was soon to become extremely pronounced in his work, is also present in this early product of his imperialist vision, primarily in his choice of emblematic Hero: Robert Clive, who had gone to India as a book-keeper, but while there had begun to take part in military affairs, eventually embarking on a career of combat and pillage, 'conquering Nawaubs, founding kingdoms, Indian empires!'.[37] The imperial setting is then established as a locus of Heroism, wherein humble book-keepers step outside of the cash-nexus and enter into a narrative of national glory.

Carlyle himself was to gain some knowledge of imperialism in practice by his visits to Ireland, particularly his longest and last in 1849, in the latter days of the Famine, during which he travelled around much of the country and recorded notes with a view to a potential book. However, so hopeless did he find the situation there that: 'He noted down what he had seen, and then dismissed the unhappy subject from his mind; giving his manuscript to a friend as something of which he desired to hear no more for ever.'[38] His posthumously published notes

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[36] *Chartism*, p. 231.

[37] *Chartism*, p. 213. On various English responses to Clive, including Carlyle's, see Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, pp. 79-82.

[38] Froude, *London*, v. 2, p. 2. It is not that hitherto Carlyle had avoided consideration of violence and evil. It is rather that violence usually ends up being justified by the contention that 'the Great Soul of the world is just' (*Past and Present*, p. 227), or similar. Carlyle's insistence on the existence of a cosmic justice means that he is, in theory,

reveal the depths of his disgust at what he had witnessed at sights such as the Westport workhouse; it was here, he recorded, that 'human swinery ha[d] reached its acme'; here was the 'Abomination of desolation'.[39] It was shortly after this, in his next substantial publication, that he firmly announced himself as a violently authoritarian reactionary:

> A paper on the Negro or Nigger question, properly the first of the 'Latter-Day Pamphlets', was Carlyle's declaration of war against modern Radicalism. Hitherto, though his orthodoxy was questionable, the radicals had been glad to claim him as belonging to them […]. His objection was to the cant of Radicalism; the philosophy of it, 'bred of philanthropy and the Dismal Science'.[40]

The paper mentioned by Froude, 'Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question', was Carlyle's vision of the imperial nightmare that had ensued on the repeal of slavery in the West Indies, which he considered to be in danger of turning into a '*Black Ireland*'.[41] The freed slaves, he reported, were now:

> Sitting yonder with their beautiful muzzles up to the ears in pumpkins, imbibing sweet pulps and juices; the grinder and incisor teeth ready for every new work, and the pumpkins cheap as grass in those rich climates: while the sugar-crops rot round them uncut, because labour cannot be hired, so cheap are the pumpkins.[42]

To these free slaves he warned:

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an entirely optimistic philosopher – an optimism tested by acquaintance with the Irish Famine, but not one that he ever renounced.

[39] *Reminiscences of my Irish Journey in 1849*, ed. James Anthony Froude (New York: Harper, 1882), p. 175.

[40] Froude, *London*, v. 2, p. 23.

[41] 'Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question', *Fraser's Magazine*, 40 (1849), p. 671. The perhaps better known 1853 amended text is called 'The Nigger Question', and is found in Thomas Carlyle, *English and Other Miscellanies* (London: Dent, 1964), pp. 303-333.

[42] 'Occasional Discourse', p. 671.

The State wants sugar from these Islands, and means to have it; wants virtuous industry in

these Islands, and must have it.[43]

It is the *commodity* – sugar – that becomes the defining symbolic presence in the ideology of this essay.

The need for sugar – a need whose basis is never explored but which is presented as absolute –

overcomes any potential humanistic considerations. Unlike the earlier account in *Chartism*, the human

relations of imperialism are not ignored; rather, the need to enforce rigorous discipline is very heavily

stressed. However, what marks this essay out from other reflection on the relations specific to

imperialism is that, according to Edward Said's analysis, '[t]he lesser species are offered nothing to

speak of […]. The status of the Black is decreed by 'eternal Act of Parliament', so there is no real

opportunity for self-help, upward mobility or even something better than outright slavery (though

Carlyle says he opposes slavery).'[44] In other words, it is an unusually 'frank' imperialist statement, from

Said's post-colonialist viewpoint.[45] Yet Carlyle's images of freed slaves guzzling pumpkins are too

rhetorically excessive to be explicable as simple frankness. Rather in the progress of Carlyle's thought

between *Chartism* and the 'Occasional Discourse', one finds the traces of his experience in the Irish

'Abomination of desolation' inflecting the latter, his hopelessness translated into rage against the abject

bodies of the poor and unworking. Ideals have come into conflict with an empirical reality that, until

physically visited, remained unimaginable. Rather than seeing Carlyle's discourses on imperialist topics

as having a formal political content to be extracted and (adversely) judged, it is the development

between the different statements that is symptomatic.

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[43] 'Occasional Discourse', p. 676.
[44] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 122. Carlyle's stated preference is not the re-imposition of slavery, exactly, but the creation of 'servant[s] hired for life […] or by a contract of long continuance and not easily dissoluble' ('Occasional Discourse', p. 677). But see also his discussion of the two terms as synonyms in *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, p. 42.
[45] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 121.

Nevertheless, here again in the 'Occasional Discourse', the voice we hear is, in formal terms, not the author's. A framing device is incorporated into the essay according to which the political content is provided by 'Absconded Reporter' Dr. Phelim M'Quirk.[46] Carlyle's contemporaries generally ignored the framing, and treated the work as if it was in Carlyle's own voice,[47] and modern commentators like Said have done likewise. On the other hand, several more recent Carlyle scholars offer another reading of this somewhat notorious work. Ralph Jessop suggests that:

> [T]he *Occasional Discourse* challenges he reader to engage with it in ways that call to attention the reader's own moral and political agency and how integral to these aspects of our humanity is the great task of exercising and continually striving to develop our critical acumen.[48]

This approach, while plausible with regard to the form of Carlyle's essay, is debatable on historical grounds. 'Occasional Discourse' is one work which has not lent itself to readings of an emancipatory or even contested nature. The lineage of radicals and socialists who read and admired works like *Sartor* and *On Heroes* is not available for 'Occasional Discourse'; on the other hand, the essay was particular well-received in the ante-bellum American South for its pro-slavery stance.[49] And examination of Carlyle's personal writings and those of his public writings which are, formally, in his own voice, tends to indicate that M'Quirk's position is

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[46] 'Occasional Discourse', p. 670.

[47] As in, for example, John Stuart Mill's response: 'Negro Question', *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* (1850) http://www.efm.bris.ac.uk/het/mill/negro.htm [12 July 2014]

[48] Ralph Jessop, 'Shooting the Enlightenment: A Brave New Era for Carlyle?', in Kerry and Hill, eds., p. 81. Along similar lines, the 'Occasional Discourse' has been read as a Swiftian text in Carol Collins, 'Anti-Dogmatism and the "Metaphorical Quashee": Thomas Carlyle's "An Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question"', *Carlyle Studies Annual*, 20 (1997), pp. 23-40. More equivocal is Brent E. Kinser, 'Fearful Symmetry: Hypocrisy and Bigotry in Thomas Carlyle's "Occasional Discourse[s] on the Negro Question"', *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 45:1 (2012), pp. 140-165.

[49] Gerald M. Straka, 'The Spirit of Carlyle in the Old South', *The Historian* 20:1 (1957), pp. 39-57.

generally close to the author's own. Therefore, even though the presence of M'Quirk allows for a degree of distantiation, this formal point cannot outweigh the reception history of the text, or extraneous documentary evidence. Yet it is significant that in making his most developed statement on the imperial relation, Carlyle felt the need to disembody his voice. The voice itself is in any case unmistakable, but every effort is being made to dissociate it from Carlyle's own person. It is as though the imperial relation is so shameful that it cannot be explicitly and directly advocated, but has to enter the meme-pool attended by misdirection and unattended by a palpable author-figure. Thus, instead of being simply a brutal authoritarian, Carlyle evinces an acute self-consciousness about his own position, one which results not in a more nuanced expression of that position, but in a distancing of himself from his own voice.

As an aside in her article on the relationship between *Past and Present* and *Heart of Darkness*, Hopwood remarks: 'as a journalist with a turn for the exalted and the rhetorical, a prophetic voice of civilization and empire, Kurtz looks rather like a sardonic sketch of Carlyle himself.'[50] This would have to be weighed against the several other individuals who have been seen as models for Kurtz. Najder considers a few of them, and concludes: 'The model for Kurtz was supplied on the one hand by literary and philosophical tradition, on the other by the behaviour of a great many Europeans in Africa. In the end, as a character with his own specific life history, Kurtz is the author's own creation.'[51] Nevertheless, Hopwood's remark is suggestive, and implies the viability of a quite different reading than she herself provides. It was noted in Chapter 2 of this thesis that Carlyle was talked about *as an individual* more during the 1880s and 90s than ever before or since, even while he remained widely-read among many groups, from working-class radicals to nationalistic imperialists. The debate centered on the Froude publications of the early 1880s, and, according to Broughton, primarily on two themes: the nature of heroism and the practice of

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[50] Hopwood, 'Carlyle and Conrad', p. 168.
[51] Najder, p. 526n.

biography. Carlyle's biography could not be considered in isolation from the theme of heroism, with which he had been so concerned in his writing.

Carlyle had been Victorian England's primary theorist of heroism: a trait interwoven with concepts of masculinity, stoicism, self-control, transcendence of the pleasure principle, and various forms of conquest. Conquest over one's baser nature, conquest over the earth – the turning of jungles and deserts into seedfields and stately cities, and so forth – and military conquest, as embodied in the central figures of Cromwell and Frederick the Great. Carlyle never once made any explicit claim to heroism on his own behalf, yet John Gross suggested a reading of Carlyle's portrait of the Man of Letters as 'a fairly transparent exercise in self-glorification',[52] and Heffer notes that '[t]he element of implicit self-reference in [*On Heroes*] is unmistakable.'[53] That Carlyle was widely read to be (at least some approximation of) the Hero he lauded appears confirmed by the 'mass shudder' that greeted the portrait of him that Froude drew: one which contains ostensibly 'relatively unspectacular revelations of domestic discontent and remorse.'[54] Such faults as Carlyle had might be petty rather than mortal, but they were faults of the eminently Unheroic variety, by the standards he himself had defined. Stoicism and self-control were seen to be entirely absent:

> When we say a man should control himself, we do not in ordinary circumstances mean that he should control himself as long as his nerves are in good condition. It is a miserable effeminacy, which no one would have scorned more than the great man who has given so much occasion for it, to plead that when duty becomes difficult it ceases to be a duty.[55]

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[52] Gross, pp. 45-46.
[53] Heffer, p. 207.
[54] Broughton, pp. 94-95. It should be noted that all the biographical documents discussed in this chapter, and *Heart of Darkness* itself, predate the most enduringly controversial allegation of Froude's: that regarding Carlyle's impotence (Broughton, p. 110).
[55] Julia Wedgwood's review of Carlyle's *Reminiscences*, quoted in Broughton, p. 185n.

The point is that such flaws are of less moment *in themselves*, and that Carlyle's philosophy was not falsified *in itself*, but that it was the confluence of the biographical and the philosophical that mattered, and that the importance of each was dependent on the existence of the other. An approach that attempts to read Carlyle's writings in themselves falls prey to the methodological fallacy outlined by Feyerabend, in which a domain of research is 'separated from the rest from history […] and given a logic of its own.'[56] There are several ways of re-inserting the history which is somewhat elided by scholars like Hopwood and Emmet (albeit not totally ignored: Hopwood mentions the central point that Kurtz is reminiscent of Carlyle, implying the figure, not the work. However, this remains an *obiter dictum* outside the parameters of the main argument). It seems that *a* relevant field is that of biography, incorporating all of the biographical reflections found in obituaries, reviews, retrospectives, and so on, of Carlyle in the 1880s and 1890s.

Carlyle and Biography in the 1890s

It must remain a matter of speculation what precise biographical material on Carlyle Conrad encountered. He may have read Froude's biography – he notes having borrowed a copy to read, much later, in 1917, but it is not clear if this was a first acquaintance. His image of Carlyle working on Frederick the Great indicates he had knowledge of Carlyle's biography, whether from Froude or elsewhere. *Blackwood's*, again, took a keen interest in the subject. An 1896 architectural anecdote takes a detour into reflection on the Carlyle-Froude controversy:

> What arrant rubbish we talk and preach about our great men. We deify them, and rage if the
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> truth, that they are much like their fellows, be told. The inner life of a Carlyle is published, and all

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[56] Feyerabend, p. 3.

critics howl that time has not been left to its usual effect of blotting out all of human and leaving untouched only the godlike.[57]

This writer was evidently undisturbed by the revealed discrepancies in Carlylean theory and practice, retaining a view of Carlyle as a 'great man', but a few months earlier another contributor's 'Recollections of Thomas Carlyle' – also calling for a consideration of the philosophical and historical works without reference to the character (or the autobiographical writings) – struck a more plaintive note:

> I would say to any one who would wish to know Carlyle, Go to his books; his true and enduring monument is there. Do not listen to what any one says about him, even to what in his sad lonely old age he says about himself [i.e. *Reminiscences*]; read with an open mind: if the seeing eye and the understanding heart are the reader's, he will discern, behind all the painstaking research and scrupulous fidelity to truth, the large loving heart of the writer.[58]

Such a plea discloses the perceived unlikelihood of such a reading at that time. Personal reflections on Carlyle were now central to overviews of his philosophy, but it remained for them to be incorporated into the notions of imperialism in which he was implicated. Carlyle was, of course, part of the canon of great English writing, with specific race-conscious emphasis on 'English'. H.G. Wells, recalling his youth in the 1870s, summed up a pervading structure of feeling of the time:

> England was consciously Teutonic in those days, the monarchy and Thomas Carlyle were strong influences in that direction; we talked of our 'Keltic fringe' and ignored our Keltic infiltration; and the defeat of France in 1870-71 seemed to be the final defeat of the decadent Latin peoples. This blended very well with the anti-Roman Catholic influence of the eighteenth-century Protestant

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[57] Anon, 'The Tomb', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 164 (1898), p. 595. https://archive.org/stream/blackwoodsmagazi159edinuoft#page/594/mode/2up/search/carlyle
[58] Anon, 'Recollections of Thomas Carlyle', *Blackwoods' Edinburgh Magazine*, 164 (1898), p. 37.

training, a distrust and hostility that remained quite vivid when much else of that teaching had

faded. We English, by sheer native superiority, practically without trying, had possessed ourselves

of an Empire on which the sun never set, and through the errors and infirmities of other races

were being forced slowly but steadily—and quite modestly—towards world dominion.[59]

The mood of the latter part of the 19th century in England became increasingly jingoistic and

imperialistic, and part of the canon of Great Literature which naturalized and idealized this mood were

Carlyle's works. These works could no longer be read, however, as in complete consonance with the

character of their author, as a natural expression of a certain consciousness. It remained, then, to

incorporate the contradictions of Carlyle's persona into his ideology of imperialism.

Debate about Carlyle's position as a national figure should be factored into late 19th-century unease

about the imperialist program. Given Conrad's familiarity with Carlyle, his internalization of the

Carlylean symbolic image of the Writer as Heroic Worker, and his apparent reference to Carlyle in *Heart

of Darkness* and other works, he provides a suitable focus for such study. This study will be undertaken

in the following section.

Heart of Darkness

In reading *Heart of Darkness* as incorporating a response to Carlyle, perhaps an unconscious one

(Hopwood suggests that 'his use of materials is very little, if at all, the result of deliberation or conscious

intention'[60]), it is necessary to focus on the character of Kurtz, for Kurtz is both a driver of imperialism

and a product of it. Symbolically, he exists to validate certain ideals, though he is found by Marlow not

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[59] H.G. Wells, *Experiment in Autobiography*, vol. 1 (London: Faber, 1984), p. 99.
[60] Hopwood (p. 171) suggests that Conrad's 'use of materials is very little, if at all, the result of deliberation or conscious intention'.

to embody them. In his later phase, his 'mad' phase,[61] having 'kicked himself loose of the earth',[62] he is a product of his own imperialist experience, and of the collision between sincerely held imperialist ideals and the practice that follows from them. We can know little of Kurtz the idealist: both because the idealistic phase of his personal development is proleptic with regard to the action of the narrative; and because the narrative is never focalized on or through Kurtz, so his interiority is not presented. Indeed, even his dialogue in the story is limited. We know only of what Kurtz calls his 'pamphlet', a work 'vibrating with eloquence', albeit without 'practical hints' of any kind.[63] Emmet remarks of his unseen pamphlet:

> Among the ironies here is perhaps a suggestion that Kurtz's pamphlet read somewhat as though it had been written by Carlyle, capital letter personifications and all. The postscript ('Exterminate all the brutes!') was written much later. It might have been suggested by Teufelsdröckh's Swiftian inscription on Heuschrecke's pamphlet (surplus peasants should be killed and eaten) in Chapter IV of *Sartor Resartus*.[64]

Only two lines are quoted from the pamphlet, the first of which is: '[we] must necessarily appear to them [savages] in the nature of supernatural beings – we approach them with the might as of a deity.'[65] This certainly, as Emmet notes, accords with *On Heroes*, wherein Carlyle conjectures that primitive societies worshipped Heroic men as Gods, later as prophets, and so on in gradually decreasing order of importance. Superfluous capitalization was undoubtedly a noted feature of Carlyle's style, usually

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[61] Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, ed. by Owen Knowles (London: Penguin, 2007), p. 83.
[62] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 82.
[63] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 61.
[64] Emmett, p. 150. The inscription mentioned is actually in Book III, Chapter IV of *Sartor Resartus*.
[65] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 61.

reproduced in parodies to signify 'Carlylism'.[66] This capitalization was applied to key nouns, particularly

abstractions, similar to Marlow's characterization of Kurtz's writing: 'an exotic Immensity ruled by an

august Benevolence.'[67] But in the 'postscriptum' is found Conrad's problematization of such eloquence,

and this can be more profitably interpreted as incorporating a response not to the writings of

Teufelsdröckh as presented in *Sartor* – in which a 'distancing irony' is generally maintained, as John

Rosenberg argues,[68] and particularly in the passage quoted, whose fictionality is doubly signaled by its

being unmistakably indebted to and derivative of Swift's famous 'Modest Proposal', which

recommended eating the children of the poor on economic grounds – than to Carlyle's temporal

progression, just as the temporal distance is stressed in the case of Kurtz's writing. Kurtz has travelled

geographically and experientially in the time between his pamphlet and his postscriptum: it is only

through direct acquaintance with the 'Abomination of desolation' – the locus of pure misery and

degradation – that such a position can be arrived at.

The Voice: Illumination or Moonshine?

This problematizing of Heroic eloquence, then, was part of a larger cultural discourse around Carlyle just

as it was part of Conrad's project in *Heart of Darkness*, and to consider both together proves doubly

illuminating. The problem is one of the Voice, which both Conrad and Carlyle seem to have held as the

most powerful instrument available to the individual and the human collective. Carlyle elucidates in the

final lines of *French Revolution*, a direct address to the reader/listener:

> To thee I was but as a Voice. Yet was our relation a kind of sacred one; doubt not that! For
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> whatsoever once sacred things become hollow jargons, yet while the Voice of Man speaks with

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[66] January 1850 parody in Punch, reproduced in Seigel, p. 318; see also Patrick Proctor Alexander's lengthy parody in *Mill and Carlyle: An Examination of Mr John Stuart Mill's Doctrine of Causation in Relation to Moral Freedom with An Occasional Discourse on Sauerteig, by Smelfungus* (Edinburgh: Nimmo, 1866)
[67] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 61.
[68] John Rosenberg, p. 152.

Man, hast thou not there the living fountain out of which all sacredness sprang, and will yet

spring? Man, by the nature of him, is definable as 'an incarnated Word.' Ill stands it with me if I

have spoken falsely: thine also it was to hear truly. Farewell.[69]

Significantly, Carlyle conceives the Voice to be the central element of his work, rather than the historical

content, or the substantive philosophical lessons. This standpoint was also reflected in the style of his

works, as noted by Henry David Thoreau: 'Think of Carlyle reading his *French Revolution* to any

audience. One might say it was never written, but spoken; and thereafter reported and printed, that

those not within sound of his voice might know something about it.'[70] And, to recall again Froude's

tribute: 'Carlyle's *voice* was to the young generation of Englishmen like the sound of 'ten thousand

trumpets' in their ears' (my italics).[71] This somewhat resolves the contradiction present in Carlyle's

extraordinarily diffuse influence among his contemporaries even while very few professed to agree with

him in substance. He is ultimately perhaps neither a philosopher nor a historian, but a Voice. And

Carlyle's propagation of this discourse of his work tallied conveniently with his notion of a Hero, who

was definable as 'a Voice direct from Nature's own heart.'[72] In defining himself as a Voice in his own

work, Carlyle is once again tacitly equating himself with the Hero-figure, making central to the Heroic

enterprise the act of communication and of persuasion.

David Simpson has discussed the importance of voice with regard to Raymond Williams, a somewhat

different character to Carlyle, but, as has been noted earlier in this thesis, an admirer:

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[69] *French Revolution*, p. 775. *Sartor Resartus* could equally be adduced to make this point. Teufelsdröckh is introduced early in the work as 'a Voice publishing tidings of the Philosophy of Clothes; undoubtedly a Spirit addressing Spirits: whoso hath ears let him hear.' (p. 10).
[70] Seigel, p. 282.
[71] Froude, *London*, v 1. p. 292.
[72] *On Heroes*, p. 60 (see also variation on p. 98).

Williams' work, his *voice*, can function as an urgent blast of the trumpet, the louder for being so softly spoken. But because such reminders are dependent upon the very evolution of events in historical time and place, because they have to remain occasional, they cannot themselves be theorized. His voice is thus the voice of a conscience, of our conscience.[73]

The Voice, then, is a metonymy of the individual. It is, perhaps most centrally, that aspect of a writer's content that which resists theorization, and can only be reduced by any theorizing operations. On its own terms, however, it can have the stirring power of a trumpet blast (Froude's and Simpson's shared metaphor), a power Simpson links to its being an expression of a communal conscience. The affectivity of a voice is, according to Simpson's account, largely determined by its historical context and loses its power if transplanted in time or space – Carlyle's reputational trajectory would suggest that this is accurate. But to consider it as an expression of *conscience* is reductive, if not wholly misguided. The metaphor of the trumpet is a better indication of the type of effect a literary voice like Carlyle (or Williams) produces, for a trumpet blast is not an invitation to reflect, but a summons to action. Thus did Henry Stanley read Carlyle's words, as a summons to conquer the unexploited lands of the Earth, and that as instruments of the Lord, as Stanley put it, or, as Carlyle might have put it, of the Eternal Powers. Carlyle certainly believed the word came before the action, man being 'an incarnated word' in the first place. And what he articulated throughout his writings was this urge to action: '*The end of Man is an Action, and not a Thought*', as he insisted.[74] But the means to action – to the appropriate action – is through the Voice, ineluctably individual, but, in the person of the writer, capable of communal affect. Without the stirring effect of the Voice, concerted action barely begins.

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[73] David Simpson, 'Feeling for Structures, Voicing "History"', in *Cultural Materialism: On Raymond Williams*, ed. by Christopher Prendergast (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), p. 44.
[74] *Sartor*, p. 120.

One might, then, see the portrait of Kurtz as Conrad's meditation on the power of the Voice. The emphasis on Kurtz' voice by Marlow throughout the novella is quite marked. Marlow and Kurtz are identified with each other by each being at times metonymically represented by their voice, by becoming *only* a voice. The frame narrator of *Heart of Darkness* interpolates midway through Marlow's narrative:

> It had become so pitch dark that we listeners could hardly see one another. For a long time already he, sitting apart, had been no more to us than a voice […]. I listened on the watch for the sentence, for the word, that would give me the clue to the faint uneasiness inspired by this narrative that seemed to shape itself without human lips in the heavy night-air of the river.[75]

It is in this precise situation, as an apparently disembodied voice, that Marlow is most compelling. He is a voice that pierces the darkness and seems to promise some clarity or meaning. Whether it ever fulfils this promise is debatable. Some critics have considered this failure to ever fulfil his promises and hints of meanings to be among Conrad's most notable characteristics. A stylistic feature of *Heart of Darkness* noted by F.R. Leavis is the 'adjectival insistence upon inexpressible and incomprehensible mystery', such an insistence that Leavis concludes that Conrad is 'intent on making a virtue out of not knowing what he means'.[76] As such, Marlow never makes the grand central statement that would sum up the meaning of his tale, and the frame narrator notes of Marlow that 'to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that, sometimes, are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine'[77]. This is a passage of the type that Leavis condemns, amounting to a certain mystification

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[75] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 33.
[76] F.R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition* (New York: Doubleday, 1954), pp. 217, 219. Several of Conrad's contemporary reviewers had similar complaints: see Cedric Watts, *Joseph Conrad: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), p. 129.
[77] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 6.

of mystification; but at the same time it finally hints at its own inadequacies. It may be that this description and the Marlovian narratives it describes are no more than 'moonshine' in the figurative sense of that word: 'Appearance without substance. Something unsubstantial or unreal'.[78] This content-related consideration is not wholly relevant, however, for in the treatment of Kurtz it is clear that of thematic importance in *Heart of Darkness* is the primacy of form over content, of the manner of saying over what is said – of the affective power of Kurtz's pamphlet over its 'practical hints', of which there are none.

Marlow echoes the narrator in his own reflection on Kurtz. With regard to Kurtz, it is in the act of speaking that he attains most perfectly to his Great Man status:

> I had never imagined him as doing, you know, but as discoursing […].The man presented himself as a voice […]. The point was in his being a gifted creature, and that of all his gifts the one that stood out pre-eminently, that carried with it a sense of real presence, was his ability to talk, his words – the gift of expression, the bewildering, the illuminating, the most exalted and the most contemptible, the pulsating streams of light, or the deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness.[79]

This is Marlow in the earlier part of the narrative, imagining Kurtz before he has ever met him. Even in Marlow's imaginings, Kurtz is already inscribed as beyond good and evil, not finally identified with light or darkness. Identified, rather, with the gift of the Voice, and with the notion that it is such a Voice that lies behind all possibility of meaningful action.

What this chapter wishes to suggest is that such a meditation on the power of the Voice can be profitably related to the controversy surrounding Carlyle, whose voice had been accepted as the most

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[78] *OED.*
[79] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 58.

powerful of its time, but was rendered increasingly problematical post-Froude. The great problem was how to separate the affectivity of the Voice from the substance of the message, especially within the context of growing awareness of Carlyle's apparent insincerity with regard to his own tenets. This was not only a problem of biography, and not even confined to the particularities of Carlyle's personal philosophy, and whether it should stand or fall, but also of imperialism, unease about the ethics of which, as registered in the *Blackwood's* article discussed above, was beginning to be registered in print, and which could only be increased by a more searching account of the imperialistic personality.

Conrad and the Imperialistic Personality

Conrad's vision of the imperialistic personality is doubly faceted. First there is the bureaucrat-type exemplified by the manager of the central station, merely a 'common trader', with no apparent 'genius' in any field. His physical appearance also serves as an indice of his unpleasant character: his eyes are 'remarkably cold' and 'his glance heavy as an axe'. Marlow examines the manager for some trace of the Clivean heroism, but none is apparent. Marlow finally concludes: 'He was great by this little thing that it was impossible to tell what could control such a man. Perhaps there was nothing within him.'[80] In assessing the station-manager, Marlow necessarily speaks of greatness and genius because this is the preconceptual baggage, derived from Carlyle and other ideologues of colonialism, with which a person in such a position must be approached. Ultimately, the only possibility of associating the manager with greatness is, paradoxically, by virtue of his pure emptiness – the moral emptiness that fitted him for existence in the cash-nexus. Marlow had been expecting genius of some kind in the bearer of official power, in line with a Carlylean view of imperialism, whereby simple book-keepers developed into military titans in the imperialist milieu. The station-manager has not developed in any such manner, remaining a trader, without genius and without apparent principles. Marlow's distaste for the man of

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[80] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, pp. 25-26.

business tends to reinforce Conrad's identification with the 'reactionary Carlylean imperatives' described by Eagleton. Imperialism, according to these imperatives, is heroic precisely insofar as it is an escape from the cash-nexus, wherein the constitutive activity of trading is replaced by that of creating from the bare earth produce of direct use to humankind. Conrad has a different take on this, finding that these imperatives are not, in fact, well met in the imperialist enterprise. Unlike Carlyle, he has seen imperialism in action, and, contrary to the Carlylean idealism, *Heart of Darkness* represents the imperialistic functionary as being in no way superior to his counterpart in industrialized society. In this way the Congo of the novella represents a failure in the practice of theories related to producing heroism through colonization.

But the other notable representative of the imperialist mindset is Kurtz, the 'universal genius'[81] who has himself been an eloquent ideologue for the cause of imperialism and authored a pamphlet on the subject. Kurtz is the mirror-image of the station-manager. Together they form within the ideological context of the narrative a binary beyond which there is no alternative. A recurring phrase in the latter part of Marlow's narrative is that of the 'choice of nightmares', with Kurtz finally selected as the 'nightmare of [Marlow's] choice'.[82] The choice, then, is one which is embodied within two characters: Kurtz as the heroic-dynamic, and the station-manager as the bureaucratic-mercantilist.

Marlow, then, makes the cynical choice: he opts for the symbolically powerful figure of Kurtz, regardless of the fact that the Kurtzian symbolism hides not only an inhumane social structure, but that even Kurtz himself is not entirely at one with his symbolic image. Thus the ideological thrust of *Heart of Darkness* is rather similar to that of *The Dark Knight* discussed in a previous chapter (until *The Dark Knight Rises* provided a belated re-reading of its predecessor). Here, too, we have 'a resigned coming to terms with

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[81] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 90.
[82] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 80 (see also pp. 77, 85).

lying as a social principle',[83] as is intimated in Marlow's admiration for Kurtz even as a 'hollow sham',[84]

and formally confirmed in the final gesture of lying to Kurtz's intended on behalf of 'that great and

saving illusion'.[85] Kurtz functions almost as Harvey Dent in *The Dark Knight*: the ideologue gone mad

with the realization that his visions cannot be realized. Both eventually degenerate into murderous

amorality (though Kurtz's abominations are not specified, the heads impaled on stakes are an

indication). Both characters serve as demonstrations of Žižek's position that pure ideology is cynical:

'[I]n contemporary societies, democratic or totalitarian, that cynical distance, laughter, irony, are, so to

speak, part of the game. The ruling ideology is not meant to be taken seriously or literally.'[86] The reason

why Kurtz and Dent went mad, then, was because they were not cynical enough – they actually believed

what they were saying, and took the dominant ideology seriously, and were thus traumatized by

exposure to the true workings of their society. Marlow, on the other hand, models the cynical but

compliant response to ideology that Žižek sees as being a defining trait of 'contemporary societies'.[87]

Meanwhile, in *The Dark Knight Rises*, no accommodation with the existing structures is found to be

possible, with a descent into anarchy and consequent bankruptcy of imposture the only solution. In

other words, that film has no character corresponding in ideological functionality to Marlow.

In this, then, as I have suggested, Nolan's film is Carlylean, and Conrad's novella is, in one sense, not – it

does not accept the Carlylean notion of the bankruptcy of imposture, advocating instead a cynical

coming to terms with lying. However, a knowledge of Carlyle is essential to an understanding of *Heart of*

Darkness. At issue is the power of the Voice, its ideological effect, even when placed in the context of a

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[83] Žižek, *Living in the End Times*, pp. 59-61. It is worth noting also that Nathan Waddell has written of the parallels between *The Dark Knight* and Conrad's *The Secret Agent*, focusing mainly on the comparison between the Joker and Conrad's Professor: 'Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight*: An Unacknowledged Adaptation of Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*', *Adaptation*, 6 (2013), pp. 43-59
[84] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 85.
[85] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 94.
[86] Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 2008), p. 24.
[87] Žižek, *Sublime Object*, p. 24.

personal failure on the part of its owner. Conrad sees a disconnect between the Voice itself, and the bearer of it. The Hero, then, contrary to Carlyle's conception, *can* be demystified, but this is an operation likely to create more problems than it solves. *Heart of Darkness* is thus a key text in the progression of the Hero meme in western literature. Notwithstanding Conrad's formal endorsement of the Heroic Voice as socially necessary in the terms of the narrative (as confirmed by Marlow's lie to the intended), Marlow's reflections on Kurtz retain a sufficient core of demystification for an experiential reading of the novella as anti-Heroic: a deliberate disconnect is introduced between consciousness and action. One cannot quite believe in the Heroic, but one can act *as if* one does. This 'as if' is identified by Žižek as the ideological formula par excellence in contemporary societies,[88] rendering Conrad in ideological terms a decidedly modern writer, more so than any of the others discussed in this thesis. Conrad gives full and explicit expression to a skepticism that was expressed in Carlyle's own writing for the most part only indirectly by the very force of his emphasis and his rhetorical excesses. Carlyle's passion for faith expresses itself as a certainty, but an underlying doubt is evident. This recalls Nietzsche's judgement of Carlyle: 'A constant passionate dishonesty against himself – that is his proprium; in this respect he is and remains interesting.'[89] It is from this very aporia in his thought that the affectivity of Carlyle's work may have derived. Such an ideological blind spot as Carlyle's was evidently reproduced within the general structure of feeling of the time. Certain negative attitudes towards not only practices but the ideological structures underlying them were articulable, but not acceptable to many of Carlyle's readers at a conscious level. Conrad can be seen to represent a development of sorts from this position in his articulate cynicism regarding dominant ideals; but that, even so, nothing had changed politically (in terms of political *practice*) was a position *Heart of Darkness* found it possible to take up. Conrad finally articulates the disconnect that was implied in Carlyle's work,

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[88] Žižek, *Sublime Object*, p. 34.
[89] Quoted in Harold Bloom, 'Introduction', in Bloom, ed., p. 8.

implied by his anxious exaggeration, and that one can place as central to the identification with Carlyle among his contemporary readers.

An analogous instance of this kind of identification is delineated by Žižek in *Sublime Object of Ideology*, wherein he argues that the basis on which identification with a public figure takes place is not usually an admirable trait. Rather, citing the example of Kurt Waldheim's presidential campaign in Austria in 1986, Žižek argues that it was precisely Waldheim's dubious wartime past and, even more so, his refusal to work through it, his denials and misdirection, that were the source of the electorate's identification, and thus the accumulation of revelations about his past not only did not derail his campaign, but was pivotal in getting him elected. Many of the electorate had, similar to Waldheim, a disturbing wartime past that they wished to avoid, rather than to be forced to 'work through': 'by pointing out the failure, we can unwittingly reinforce the identification.'[90] This kind of symbolic identification, then, has a perverse kernel. But the properly ideological element enters only when the true source of the identification is misplaced, and a subsidiary feature latched onto, and presented as the defining element.

The identification of Marlow with Kurtz is also partially of this sort: it is with the madness of a soul which has thought too much, seen too much, and has felt in the wilderness 'gratified and monstrous passions'.[91] Marlow's disillusionment comes from his familiarity with the methods of imperialism, and he feels Kurtz's greater disillusionment, a disillusionment unto madness, as being a response, a greater, more heroic response to the same conditions. To identify with madness rather than productive work is truly a nightmare choice. It is a negative identification based on a shared rejection of the dominant as much as or more than it is a positive one. But it is made consciously and justified through the notion of the 'choice of nightmares'. Thus, Conrad envisions a different type of identification from Carlyle with

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[90] Žižek, *Sublime Object*, p. 117.
[91] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 82.

regard to the leader-follower dynamic. The Voice of Truth is the Voice of Madness, but is yet the Voice with which identification must be made. The possibility of withholding identification temporarily or finally does not find expression in *Heart of Darkness*.

Through Conrad's work we meditate the death of the Hero, which is both announced and elided in *Heart of Darkness*. It belongs to a specific moment in history, the moment in which the imperialist enterprise was being publicly unmasked in England, though most often not with specific reference to England's own imperialism, which remained almost above suspicion – even to Conrad, who, through Marlow, specifically excludes it from reference in the critique in *Heart of Darkness*.[92] Similarly, Arthur Conan Doyle denounced Belgian imperialism in the Congo with great fervour, but this served for him not to taint English imperialism, but rather to place its superiority in greater relief.[93] Suspicions about the enterprise had first to enter consciousness and to enter mainstream journalistic and literary discourse in the context of the rivals and enemies of the Empire. Coterminous with this was the unmasking of the fake-Hero Carlyle – just as '[t]he shade of the original Kurtz frequented the bedside of the hollow sham',[94] so the monument to Carlyle that was Froude's biography was frequented by shades of the national prophet, with the voice of ten thousands trumpets. The notion of Voice, then, is deeply implicated in imperialism and in human socio-cultural dynamics generally, and the importance of the concept with relation to a certain theoretico-philosophical concept is illustrated by study of Carlyle's reception, and by considering how this reception may be read into a crucial text of imperialist ideology, *Heart of Darkness*.

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[92] The reference is to Marlow's assertion that the areas coloured red on the map (i.e. part of the British Empire) are where 'real work is done' (Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 11).
[93] Arthur Conan Doyle, 'From *The Crime of the Congo*', in Moore, ed., pp. 89-109.
[94] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 85.

Apocalypse Now

Apocalypse Now – directed by Francis Ford Coppola, written by John Milius and Coppola and released in 1979 – registers and stands as an aesthetic testament to another period of questioning of reigning power structures and Western politics. The immediate stimulus for this adaptation of *Heart of Darkness* in a transposed setting was the Vietnam War. This war provides the new setting within which a similar story of a captain (now Willard rather than Marlow) being given command of a boat to go up river in search of Captain Kurtz, a mysterious figure who has incurred the displeasure of the bureaucrats running the imperial (Conrad)/military (Coppola) operation. In the case of the film, this displeasure is such that Willard is told, effectively, to kill Kurtz, or 'terminate his command with extreme prejudice'.[95] And this, in the end, he does, though, like Marlow, as he observes the workings of the bureaucracy that runs the war effort, he begins to increasingly identify with Kurtz and condemn the official powers.

Given the altered setting of the adaptation, what is being posited as an ideological function in *Apocalypse Now* is the political or moral equivalence of the Vietnam War with imperialism. This was a familiar view: several years earlier, Noam Chomsky had attacked pro-Vietnam War ideologues for demonstrating 'the mentality of the colonial civil servant, persuaded of the benevolence of the mother country and the correctness of its vision of world order, and convinced that he understands the true interests of the backward peoples whose welfare he is to administer.'[96] Both Chomsky and Coppola presented an analogy of Vietnam and imperialism. Chomsky used the symbolic figure of the civil servant as the target for his anger; a figure who can be roughly mapped onto *Heart of Darkness* in the form of the station-manager – that 'common trader' inextricably implicated in the cash-nexus. The station-manager, as discussed above, is an ideological embodiment, his function to represent certain elements

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[95] See Karl French, *Karl French on Apocalypse Now* (London: Bloomsbury, 1998), pp. 221-222.
[96] Noam Chomsky, *American Power and the New Mandarins* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), p. 37.

of imperialism in the Congo, a characterized epitome and intensification of the darkness of the situation. He is cold, nondescript, hollow and a bearer of great official power.

The final script for *Apocalypse Now* does not avail of any such embodiment. The scenes involving Colonel Kilgore and his Air Cavalry are identified by Linda Costanzo Cahir in her comprehensive narratological study as being where Coppola 'compresses' into one setting Conrad's scenes in the government seat and the central station. [97] Conrad's primary polemical target, though, the station-manager does not make any appearance in any avatar: it is Kilgore himself who represents the American military leadership in the film. He is violently erratic and careless, but, diametrically opposed to the station-manager, possessing somewhat of a Kurtzian charisma, such that Willard concludes: 'He was one of those guys that had that weird light around him. You just knew he wasn't going to get so much as a scratch here'.[98] The nature of the critique of US involvement in Vietnam is therefore established as being quite different from Conrad's critique: Conrad's hollow man becomes Coppola's charismatically unhinged warlord. Indeed, the lack of equivalence between source and adaptation may go further than that, in that even the very obvious element of critique in Conrad's account of imperialism in the Congo is not wholly replicated in the film. From the point of view of Willard, Kilgore is a somewhat admirable figure, as the station-manager is not to Marlow. Thus the criticism of the US military implicit in the film is not directed against the troops on the ground, even those in command, but against the policy being set by the background authorities. But this is secondary to the film, for as Coppola himself said: 'It's not an anti-war movie. It's an anti-lie movie.'[99] This is notable as the critique of imperialism has usually been

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[97] Linda Costanzo Cahir, 'Narratological Parallels in *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*', *Heart of Darkness: A Casebook*, ed. Moore, p. 189.

[98] *Apocalypse Now: Collector's Edition*, dir. by Francis Ford Coppola, scr. by John Milius, Francis Ford Coppola, 4 discs (American Zoetrope, OPTD2333, 2011). Quotes from *Apocalypse Now* taken from disc 1 of the set, comprising the original theatrical release of the film.

[99] French, p. 147.

taken to be a central factor of Conrad's novella, with the debate centering on whether that critique applies only to certain instances of imperialist practice, or to the concept itself at a basic level.

The authorial genesis of the film's script probably accounts for the ambiguity. The first draft, in which almost all of the Kilgore dialogue was already present (though the character was called Kharnage), was written by John Milius, an avidly pro-American militarist and critic of hippies and other opponents of the Vietnam War.[100] Milius' specialty was scenes of stirring military or other violence in a righteous cause, and the depiction of strong and violent leaders, and this finds itself into the portrayal of Kilgore. For Milius, what critique there was was directed away from the troops on the ground and onto the hierarchy in the office.

But if, then, *Apocalypse Now* is a reading of *Heart of Darkness* that only just acknowledges the parallel between the practice of imperialism and that of the Vietnam war, thus relegating a theme that has hitherto been considered crucial to Conrad's novella, the question arises as to what exactly was the thematic or narrative element that rendered this particular work so important for Coppola's film. The answer would appear to lie again in the iconicity of the Kurtz character, for this, above all else, has been fully transplanted into the film, and was present and central to Milius' script as well – although his presentation of the character was very different from that eventually filmed in *Apocalypse Now*. And, further, both are quite different from Conrad's novella. It is only at the formal, Jungian archetypal level that the similarity exists. The Kurtzian archetype as it exists in these texts is distinguished above all not by its personal characteristics, but by an ability to operate as a source of dynamic energy for those around him, and a status as a natural leader and embodied alternative to the bureaucratic structures

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[100] John Milius' first draft of *Apocalypse Now*, dated 12 May, 1969, is available from http://cinearchive.org/post/77585943463/heres-a-rarity-john-milius-first-draft [22 July 2015]. For Milius' opposition to hippies and peaceniks, see the anecdote presented as the 'Author's Note' at the beginning. Hear also his comments on the subject in 'An Interview with John MIlius' (conducted by Francis Ford Coppola) on Disc 4 of *Apocalypse Now: Collector's Edition*.

whose stultifying and melancholic power necessitates the provision of a safety valve. The content filling out this function in a given narrative context is open to considerable change.

In *Heart of Darkness*, Kurtz's power resides in his voice, but it is barely represented in the novella. Rather, it is described. The relationship the reader has with it is a symbolic one: it is, for the most part, presented at a remove, with Marlow's rhapsodic descriptions dictating the readers' response to Kurtz. Indeed, if Kurtz is really to be experienced as the God-like Hero, it is necessary that the text not approach him directly – for the Divine Idea for Carlyle can only be symbolized, not articulated. Thus. rather than an excursus into the mind of Kurtz, we get only a glimpse, accompanied by insight into Marlow's subjective experience of Kurtz. Kurtz exists more as an effect, in Marlow and in his followers, than as a direct presence.

The Content of the Voice

Thus one of the classic difficulties of adaptation arises: the 'automatic difference' that emerges in a film adaptation of a literary work.[101] In trying to render the idea of Kurtz as a Voice of transcendental power and eloquence, the stylistic option of simply describing that Voice in the words of Marlow is not available – the most obvious method of direct transfer would be voice-over, but at a climactic point in a film this is rarely resorted to and, though Coppola uses voice-over in *Apocalypse Now*, it cannot by itself bear the weight of a climactic scene. But the importance of Kurtz's voice remains. Marlow's disclosure that he had imagined Kurtz as a voice before meeting him becomes in the film a tape of Kurtz's voice which Marlow and the audience hear. Kurtz delivers an 'exterminate the brutes'-type address, as well as a diatribe against lies and liars. Later in the film he recounts a reminiscence about a riverside gardenia plantation, recites T.S. Eliot's poem 'The Hollow Men', philosophizes on horror and moral terror, describes the importance of will in a war situation, argues against the notion of 'judgement', tells

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[101] Stam, 'Beyond Fidelity', *Film Adaptation*, ed. Naremore, p. 55.

Marlow to visit his son after he (Kurtz) is dead, and reiterates his hatred of lies. One might, in this case, see the creative movement from novel to film conforming to the 'incarnational concept of adaptation' posited by Kamilla Elliott, for direct substance is being given to Conrad's indirect presentation of the Voice. The suggestive becomes explicit. In searching for a suitable content to fill out the formal presence of Kurtz's Voice, Coppola had recourse to certain politico-philosophical concepts befitting the gargantuan presence suggested in Conrad.

Kurtz's voice operates in Conrad not as a sign but as a symbol. The distinction made by Jung is that a sign is semiotic, and has a specific signified. A symbol, however, is not fixed, but is rather an expression 'of a content not yet consciously recognized or conceptually formulated', and 'never quite determinable'.[102] It exists as an effect. To render a signified of this indeterminate symbol involves the difficult task of writing actual words that have the power that matches the effect specified by Marlow. But insofar as the Voice is a symbol, this is an impossible task. As both Carlyle and Conrad agreed, a symbol is more powerful than anything explicitly articulable.[103] To retreat from the symbolic sphere, then, is a dangerous manoeuvre, creating a vulnerability in the text. It is therefore unsurprising that the Kurtz scenes in the latter part of the movie have been received more critically than the rest of the film, with a representative complaint being that '[a]s we approach Kurtz, things begin to go awry'.[104]

The Ending

But Kurtz is fundamentally in this film not a renegade army officer; rather, his centrality to the film is an expression of certain strands in Conrad's depiction, according to which Kurtz is, in fact, an artist, or,

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[102] Carl Gustav Jung, *The Essential Jung*, ed. Anthony Storr (London: Fontana, 1988), pp. 184-185.
[103] Joseph Conrad, '[The Symbolic Character of Fiction]', in Kimbrough, ed., pp. 231-232.
[104] Robert LaBrasca, 'Two Visions of 'The horror!', in Kimbrough, ed., p. 291. See also William M. Hagen, '*Heart of Darkness* and the Process of *Apocalypse Now*', in Kimbrough, ed., pp. 293-295, 301; French, p. 110; Vincent Canby, 'Movie Review: *Apocalypse Now*', *The New York Times* (15 Aug 1979) http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=EE05E7DF173CE562BC4D52DFBE668382669EDE [11 September 2015]

more specifically, the Hero as Man of Letters. In Conrad, this is signaled by Kurtz's written output, his eloquent treatise on the imperial project, and by his 'gift of expression, the bewildering, the illuminating, the most exalted and the most contemptible, the pulsating streams of light, or the deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness.'[105] This gift of expression is the province of the Hero as Man of Letters, and makes Kurtz, as Hopwood suggests, sound somewhat like Carlyle. Without wanting to get too specific about who Kurtz is, it can be said that the ultimate manifestation of his genius is not military, but expressive. Milius, in his script for *Apocalypse Now*, did, as was his wont, accentuate the military, but Coppola rowed back from this approach, and, as he makes clear in the documentary on the making of the film, *Hearts of Darkness*, he rejected the idea of Milius' ending from the beginning: 'I never cared for the ending so much. I always thought the ending was weak. The ending didn't top what had happened with the helicopters and had no… didn't answer any of the kind of moral issues. It got into a real gung-ho, macho kind of comic book ending. And my choice was to make it much more back to *Heart of Darkness* than really John [Milius] and George [Lucas, originally slated to direct] were intending.'[106] The ending Coppola provided, in which Willard kills Kurtz and then leaves the compound rather than assume his position, is a rejection of the militaristic view of Heroism. It is the rejection, perhaps, of any kind of Heroism in the Carlylean sense of the dynamic social force and the gifted individual at the center of all social activity and morale. Thus, it is unsurprising that Coppola does not choose to adapt Conrad's coda, in which Marlow visits Kurtz's intended, and reinforces that 'great and saving illusion' which she harbours concerning her husband.[107] This visit realizes Marlow's 'choice of nightmares' – opting for the (semi-)illusion of the Great Man and the sincere idealist over the actuality of imperialist mercantilism. But the term 'choice of nightmares', so important in Conrad's story, does

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[105] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 58.
[106] 'Hearts of Darkness' is included in *Apocalypse Now*: *Collector's Edition,* disc 3. It is based on Eleanor Coppola's (Francis Ford Coppola's wife) footage and written notes of the production of the film.
[107] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 94.

not appear in *Apocalypse Now*, and the figure of the intended does not appear, either. When Kurtz dies

in *Apocalypse Now*, he really dies, and Willard returns to the bureaucratic world of the American

military: he gets back on the boat, finally realizing the wisdom of Chief's injunction to 'Never get outta

the boat'.[108] Formally, then, this closing sequence is an unsurprising rejection of Carlylean Great Man

ideology, but also, and perhaps more surprisingly (given the early critique of the US military), an

endorsement of the Vietnam status quo: Willard's final action is reporting for duty, becoming once again

complicit in the situation that Kurtz had rebelled against.[109]

The Artist as Hero

Though ultimately Willard has made the opposite choice to Marlow, the film still dramatizes the lure of

the Heroic personality. If this is not ultimately formally reflected in the film's ending, it is at its clearest in

Coppola's own pronouncements about the film and its production, which clarifies that the primary

creative stimulus for Coppola in making this movie was his own identification with the figure of Kurtz.

Kurtz is explicitly identified as a 'poet-warrior' by Dennis Hopper's photojournalist character,[110] while at

an unspoken but powerfully felt level, Kurtz is simply Coppola himself inscribed into the text of the film.

But the relation is more reciprocal than that: just as Coppola appears as a constituent part in the film, so

the actual making of the film itself constituted this Heroic Coppola – it was only through the making of

the film that he became the Kurtzian Coppola he came to see himself as. This mythic self Coppola

textualizes in *Apocalypse Now* can be seen coming to the fore in the writer-director's discussions of the

film. The documentary *Hearts of Darkness* opens at a press conference where he announces: 'My film is

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[108] *Apocalypse Now: Collector's Edition*, disc 1.

[109] Milius' 'gung-ho' ending is probably more consistent with the content of the film as a whole: the manner in which the war is conducted is critiqued and rejected for a commitment to pure fanaticism and Hero-worship, manifested in aggression towards both the Communist Viet Cong forces *and* the US army. In Coppola's version, the ideological relation to US militarism indexed as critique early on finds its final resolution in the rather inadequate gesture of 'reporting for duty'. It is reported that Coppola himself initially considered the ending as shot a 'lie' (LaBrasca in Kimbrough, ed., p. 292).

[110] *Apocalypse Now: Collector's Edition*, disc 1.

not a movie. My film is not about Vietnam. It *is* Vietnam […] We were in the jungle, there were too many of us, we had access to too much money, too much equipment, and little by little we went insane.' He is evoking both the Vietnam War and the plot of *Heart of Darkness*: in the tradition of the Kurtzian archetype, he went insane in the jungle. Both the Vietnam War and Conrad's novella are valued by Coppola for their provision of a mythic framework within which he can view his own experiences, and according to which he can shape these experiences. Thus Coppola is not trying to comment on the Vietnam War, he is trying to appropriate the grim grandeur of war to his own life, which now appears as mythically gigantic.

This aim to experience one's self and experience mythically may be a wellspring for much creative endeavor. Above perhaps all writers, however, it is characteristic of Carlyle, for whom all great moments in history are metaphors of his own struggle. On completion of *French Revolution*, he noted: 'It is a wild savage book, itself a kind of French Revolution'.[111] This is a formulation which is closely but unconsciously echoed in Coppola's reflection on his own work quoted above. Carlyle's conception, then, of the relation between writer and subject is very close to Coppola's, with the historical event gaining resonance as it is experienced metaphorically. But Carlyle's megalomania goes even beyond seeing history in its entirety as a metaphor for his own personal struggles. A great deal of Carlyle's work is narrated in a voice that is, implicitly, that of God. Albert LaValley in his examination of *Past and Present* shows how sections of the book find its author 'manifest[ing] an attitude of exultation closely approaching divine consciousness itself', becoming, ultimately 'the God of his new religious world, the author of the new Bible, issuing the new and ultimate evangel of work.'[112] This exalted notion remained implicit, for, expressly made, it would have struck a 19th-century readership as unacceptably impious, or at best absurd. In its implicit form, as found most importantly in the transcribed lecture on 'The Hero as

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[111]Froude, *London*, v. 1, p. 85.
[112] LaValley, pp. 216-218.

Man of Letters', it proved influential. Throughout *On Heroes* and elsewhere he refrains from declaring the Hero to be quite a god, but often applies the adjective 'godlike': 'Ever, to the true instincts of men, here is something godlike in him.'[113] Insofar as there is an implicit but unmistakable identification, then, between Carlyle as author and his Hero, and between both and God Himself, Carlyle is putting forward a hyper-Romantic vision, going beyond any previous conceptions of the importance of the author figure. The case he is making is one that is evidently impossible and unarguable, and thus he does not argue it. He simply implies it, and lets its affective power work on whoever is receptive to it. Such an exalted notion of the artistic Voice did create a new conception of the writer, as signaled by William Makepeace Thackeray: 'Pray God we shall begin ere long to love art for art's sake. It is Carlyle who has worked more than any man to give it its independence.'[114] The Hero-writer had very serious work to do at this point, though it is described in the most abstract terms. He was to function as 'the light of the world; the world's priest; - guiding it, like a sacred Pillar of Fire, in its dark pilgrimage through the waste of time.'[115] The 'spark from the sacred fire' that Conrad's conquerors bore, in the semi-ironic account of Marlow,[116] is the rhetorical offspring of Carlylean Hero-worship. It is not necessary to decide whether Conrad himself was wholly seduced by the Hero and his Voice, or whether he maintained his characteristic ironic stance. For, whatever he was doing at a psychological level, at a formal level he did indeed replicate the meme of the Great Man with the Voice whose power transcended all rationality, and under whose sway the reality principle and its compromises were swept aside.

There remained in Conrad's take on the archetype enough of the Carlylean grandiosity and megalomania for a later writer to use it as a starting-point for his own journey into self-mythologization:

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[113] *On Heroes*, p. 51. See also, for example, *Past and Present*, in a passage on 'the Gifted': 'He is above thee, like a God.' (p. 287)

[114] Gross, *Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters*, p. 39.

[115] *On Heroes*, p. 134.

[116] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 4.

in a recollection on the making of *Apocalypse Now*, John Milius compared Coppola to Napoleon, one of Carlyle's Heroes; he also compared him to Hitler, another figure who read and who was in the early days of Nazism sometimes read as a Carlylean figure.[117] *Hearts of Darkness* and Eleanor Coppola's *Notes on the Making of* Apocalypse Now make repeated use of the figure of Kurtz to explain Francis Ford Coppola's difficulties:

> More and more it seems like there are parallels between Kurtz and Francis. There is the exhilaration of power in the face of losing everything, like the excitement of war when one kills and takes the chance of being killed. Francis has taken the biggest risk possible in the way he is making this film. He is feeling the power of being the creator/director and the fear of completely failing.[118]

Karl French similarly notes that, 'consciously or unconsciously', Coppola in interviews came to sound more and more like his own depiction of Kurtz.[119] Thus Coppola, in search of the perfect plot and the perfect character that would express, not a certain stance towards the Vietnam War, but a certain sense of self as Artist. He did not replicate the cool distance of the Conradian implied author, rather the manically engaged figure of the Carlylean author, which peered through the figure of Kurtz.

Coppola's Kurtzian self-image is also somewhat of an extension of the notion of the *auteur*. This is 'A film director whose personal influence and artistic control over his or her films are so great that he or she may be regarded as their author, and whose films may be regarded collectively as a body of work sharing common themes or techniques and expressing an individual style or vision.'[120] Even before

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[117] Milius: Peter Biskind, *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How the Sex 'n' Drugs 'n' Rock 'n' Roll Generation Saved Hollywood* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007) p. 322; French, p. 163. Carlyle and Hitler: see Chapter 2 above.
[118] Eleanor Coppola, *Notes on the Making of* Apocalypse Now (London: Faber and Faber, 1995).
[119] French, p. 147.
[120] *OED*.

Apocalypse Now, Coppola was accepted as an auteur figure,[121] but Milius suggests that the making of this particular film was particularly significant:

> [Y]ou redefined the whole heroic image of the director because the heroic image of the director prior to that was this guy in patise, you know, strutting around the set with his hat, you know, and his vision. Well, that was the original image, and then it became, you know, the French new wave director, Fellini or something with his vision and seeing things a certain way. Now, to be a real director, you had to put all of your money, everything you owned on the line, go off to some horrible place, where there was a very strong possibility that you would not come back, you know, and it had to be malarial. It had to be, you know, this horrible situation, and you had to be knee-deep in a swamp[…]. You had to be at some point in it convinced that you had lost your sanity; otherwise you weren't really directing.[122]

Milius attributes the movement from the French auteurism model to the heroic model to *Apocalypse Now*. The movement is one from a more evidently cultured and artistic individual to one who returns to nature, melding reigning auteurist concepts with 19th-century notions of the Heroism of creative madness, and, ultimately, the Godlike creator.

What we could say is that *Heart of Darkness* is a recessive carrier of the meme of the Godlike creator found in *On Heroes* and also implicitly through much of Carlyle's work. It is recessive in the sense that while the content of the meme is formally present, ideological commitment to it is absent (or, in true Conradian fashion, is ambivalent). The meme is transmitted into *Apocalypse Now* where it intersects with the authorial ideology of Francis Ford Coppola, and we see from *Hearts of Darkness* and other documents of that very well-documented production that *the meme began to write Coppola*. This

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[121] See Jeffrey Chown, *Hollywood Auteur: Francis Coppola* (New York: Praeger, 1988).
[122] *Apocalypse Now: Collector's Edition*, 'A Conversation with John Milius', disc 4.

illustrates, then, a further point of interest and affect in Carlyle's writing for the 21st-century reader. It facilitates the feelings of self-importance that are central to the creative personality, and that can only be actualized in the treatment of great historical themes. Carlyle, more than any other writer, has dramatized the confluence of the megalomaniacal and ambitious creative personality and the world-historical event. A superficial formal analysis of Carlyle's works would be able to ignore these implicit elements, but they are essential to Carlyle's appeal on an implicit level. This dangerous appeal, this underlying, all-encompassing self-interest, is rendered explicit, or more so, in Conrad's novella, both revealing an unspoken aspect of the Carlylean vision of the Heroic Voice and psychologizing its appeal in the inner monologues of Marlow, who chooses the Heroic over the bureaucratic, but makes the choice while simultaneously communicating the cynical admission that it is a 'choice of nightmares'. Yet, despite the warning, the availability of the meme of the Heroic Voice lends itself to the directorial megalomania of a Coppola, just as that very megalomania lends itself to the production of an ambitious artwork that is created with the hyperbolic intention that it operate 'on about forty-seven different levels.'[123] For, to extend Žižek's analysis of social relations, wherein a certain misidentification is an inevitable constituent, we can here posit that the ontogeny of the creative artist is based on a misidentification of the self – a self which may become, in some manner, that for which it has mistaken itself. But it is not a matter of holding that the misidentification which remains apparent in the artist is a flaw or imperfection, or that it can in any way be seen in abstraction from the totality of the artistic achievement; rather, just as truth for Žižek is constituted through illusion, so the truth of great artistry is constituted through misidentification of the self as containing a measure of Heroic insight.[124] Through such a misidentification, the creator becomes as one with history: every crucial hinge-point in history is a drama bearing metaphorical relation to the biography and the consciousness of the Hero-Artist. And it

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[123] French, p. 82.
[124] Žižek, *Sublime Object*, pp. 57-61.

is through such a megalomaniacal identification that the great events of history may find their principal

and definitive reflections, to be differentially reproduced in the meme-pool of culture,[125] forever bearing

certain traces of the authorial persona who chronicled them, traces which may migrate to historical

representations of completely unconnected events when a certain metonymical relation is identified,

allowing the writer to interpret historical events through other historical events, perhaps on the

Hegelian principle that history always repeats itself;[126] but as what is really being repeated is the

representation of history filtered through a certain consciousness, the later event, too (in this case we

are referring to the Vietnam War [as a subject of discourse, not empirically] as, loosely, a 'repetition' of

19th-century imperialism), becomes inflected with that very same consciousness. This consciousness

exists only among a myriad of other influences within the representation of this later event, any one of

which may be extricated and isolated for the purpose of analysis, in an artificial process which does not,

of course, correspond to any available experience of the (in this case) film. But such a process does

provide us with some answers as to the affectivity of the Carlylean voice, both in the specificity of its

historical situation, and in its ahistorical features, which are implied by its similarities in tone, feature

and psychological underpinnings to the voice of Coppola. Both voices can tell us something about

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[125] The use of the term 'meme', deriving from the work of biologist Richard Dawkins, inevitably invites questions as to the particular *fitness* of a given cultural unit (see Hutcheon, pp. 31-32). If such a unit is found to have survived or reproduced, it is, by definition, fit, but this is a relatively banal point, based on the most crude empirical methods, and offering no explanation as to why this is so. In Darwin's usage, however, fitness was never declared except in conjunction with an explanation of the specific trait that contributed to it. To try to systematically identify *traits* that lead to longevity or reproduction in cultural production is more difficult, if not impossible in any rigorous sense; thus, for the language of memes to be as productive as Hutcheon suggests it could be, a return to Darwinian approaches, rather than those of modern biology, may be in order. That is, more induction and careful study of individual cases, less top-down theorizing.

On modern biology and fitness (this fitness is "Darwinian", in the sense defined by modern biology itself, but is very different from Darwin's inductionist approach): Coel Hellier, 'Yes of course "survival of the fittest" is tautological', *coelsblog* (7 December 2015) https://coelsblog.wordpress.com/2015/12/07/yes-of-course-survival-of-the-fittest-is-tautological/ [19 Dec 2015].

[126] See Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*, in *Surveys from Exile,* ed. by David Fernbach (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p. 146.

history, and the personal stories and persons to which it, as a subject of reflective consciousness, gives

rise.

Conclusion

In a thesis that has embodied a rejection of the notion of purely disciplinary knowledge and of knowledge as a series of theories that converge towards a singular view of truth, it is difficult to furnish a conclusion which will outline exactly why the foregoing is a 'contribution to knowledge'. The last instance in which knowledge is so exactly defined that contributions to it can be definitively isolated and categorized never comes. But in the Feyerabendian sense of the 'ocean of mutually incompatible alternatives', contemporary humanistic knowledge can always be widened by the introduction and attempt at substantial engagement with an ideology that diverges from the dominant. For the purpose of this thesis, the weaker (Carlylean) case has, at times, been made the stronger so that the motion of the whole may be sustained,[1] an approach to be contrasted to that which involves the elaboration and consolidation of an existing viewpoint which is endorsed monologically and with commitment to establishing proof of a given proposition.

In elaborating the Carlylean viewpoint, this thesis has not sought to endorse it, but rather to keep options open as to the possibility that such a viewpoint (or, theoretically speaking, *any* oppositional viewpoint) may at some point bring into relief the inevitable *lack* in contemporary ideologies. That there was something *wrong* with contemporary ideologies was Carlyle's contention in his own time, and the intensity with which his writing registered this was a strong element of his popularity, and that there is something wrong with contemporary ideologies, and contemporary political and social structures is central to at least one of the four adaptations studied (*The Dark Knight Rises*). Indeed, it is central to all cultural criticism – from Bill Hicks to Slavoj Žižek, popular or academic – but it is when that lack comes to be symbolized, and theorized that disagreement comes in. There is always a lack; each account is necessarily partial – but each attempt to account for this lack is similarly partial. To try and state this

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[1] See Feyerabend, p. 14.

more specifically – to positively theorize on the subject, as for example Jacques Lacan did[2] – would defeat the purpose by implying a possibility of methodological completeness in the pursuit of knowledge.

Thus, rather than attempting to theorize the lack in general terms, we can identify it in specific instances, outside of which instances it cannot exist in the same form. In showing how *The Dark Knight Rises* went back to Dickens and, at second-hand, Carlyle in the search for historical meaning, it became apparent that there was something missing in contemporary thought on revolution. This could be placed, most simply, as the concept of lying, the same concept on which Carlyle could be said to have based his entire philosophy. The important fact from a contemporary point of view is not that Carlyle and Nolan both theorize lying and the related concept of the bankruptcy of imposture, but that Nolan's use of 19th-century sources points to a lack in contemporary thought. 'Lying', simple as it is as a concept in layperson's terms, is a near impossibility in academic terms. The genealogy of this can be traced to Nietzsche, who posited that the Will to Truth of philosophers arose from error, and went on to insist, 'The falseness of an opinion is not for us any objection to it [...]. The question is, how far the opinion is life-furthering, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps species-rearing[...].'[3] Foucault used elements of this position for his influential discourse analysis, which rendered truth, lies, dishonesty and related concepts in themselves theoretically obsolete.[4] Their obsolescence, though, is only apparent or only theoretical, for in popular culture we find a return of the repressed of intellectual culture, an insistence on truth as a possibility and a necessity. These concepts can be inserted back into popular thought with ease, but only a paradigm shift can return them to philosophy and other disciplines of thought – which demonstrates that such disciplines consider themselves to be dealing in metaphysical essentials rather

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[2]   *Lacanonline.com*,   'What   Does   Lacan   Say   About…   Desire?'   (9   May   2010) http://www.lacanonline.com/index/2010/05/what-does-lacan-say-about-desire/ [21 Oct 2015]
[3] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human All Too Human* and *Beyond Good and Evil* (Ware: Wordsworth, 2008), p. 517.
[4] Barrett, p. 143.

than historical conditions of human life, allowing them to simply ignore popular discourse for its evident lack of theoretical sophistication.

Such a challenge to intellectual discourse arises from a bout of 'arguing with the past', as Gillian Beer called it, of juxtaposing the otherness of past ideologies with the dominant ideologies of the moment. A mutually critical dialectic is established and both ideologies are challenged and individually devalued, but knowledge itself is thereby enriched, as long as both ideologies remain in consciousness, without attempts to unify them in perfect synthesis. Such an approach to knowledge differs from that in more theoretically minded disciplines, and is consistent with the type of 'creative wandering' that Eugene Eoyang saw as being central to comparative literature, whilst also being more open to engagement with other fields of knowledge and enquiry than Eoyang.[5]

Carlyle continues to provide various avenues for research: Ralph Jessop believes Carlyle's prescience as a thinker has yet to be fully acknowledged.[6] Such prescience could perhaps be measured by inserting Carlyle into contemporary culture products, analyzing how his work corresponds to the structures of feeling within such texts. In the current project, two of the chosen adaptations are characterized on the whole by the minimization of Carlylean strands: *North & South*, which foregrounds romantic love, minimizes class tensions, democratizes certain relationships (Margaret and Dixon, Thornton and Nicholas Higgins), and so on – all accomplished within the context of relative fidelity to the plot functions of the novel; and *Sherlock*, which strains against the depiction of Carlyle's Celibate Heroism. What both of these adaptations point to, especially *Sherlock*, when read in the light of Carlylean ideology, is that forms of narrativizing the social, sexual and experiential progress of the individual that

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[5] Eoyang plays Eastern modes of thought off against Western, invariably to the discredit of the latter. Thus his hostility to empiricism and quantitative study (p. 43), and his philosophical objection to the figure of Sherlock Holmes (pp. 53-54). Sherlock Holmes is, as demonstrated in Chapter 5, considerably less empirical than he may appear; but in any case, I, following Feyerabend, suggest that empiricism should no more be dismissed *a priori* than it should be approved *a priori*.

[6] Jessop, 'Resisting the Enlightenment', p. 649.

were available to the Victorian (and not only available, but extremely important to the coming-of-age process of many, as the relevant section of Chapter 2 showed) are now so alien to structures of feeling as to be almost unrepresentable using conventional narrative development. The Feyerabendian approach advocated in this thesis suggests the need for all such narratives to be made available on a wider scale, incorporated into a new whole, providing new possibilities for self-actualization and self-definition, and that this may be accomplished through the use of the analysis of transtemporal adaptations, providing a comparison between narratives of being across time periods. This need not be presaged by any commitment to finding or theorizing relevance for obsolescent narratives of individual and social ontology, for it is only in the process of creative wandering that such a relevance or lack thereof begins to become clear. For example, the knowledge-celibacy nexus found in Carlyle and Doyle may reward further investigation beyond the predominantly narrative comparison in this thesis, especially bearing in mind Žižek's Lacan-influenced position that 'Ordinary individuals can only desire insofar as they become victims of an illusion'.[7] If Žižek's is a tenable position, then Carlyle's contribution to the development of the character of the undesiring celibate hero remains philosophically and culturally relevant, and perhaps ripe for rediscovery and incorporation into currently available narratives of selfhood.

A further case study, *The Dark Knight Rises*, is characterized by a marked *intensification* of the Carlylean content, indicating a certain (and hitherto, as Jessop notes, quite under-documented) prescience in Carlyle's historical analysis. It is possible that Carlyle's notion of the Bankruptcy of Imposture which has been found to be dramatized in the narrative of the film, would prove a useful conceptual tool for the cultural critic, the historiographer, and perhaps even the historian. This concept has, until the present thesis, never been employed (or even noted, to my knowledge) in any field. Even Carlyle studies has not

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[7] Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (London: Verso, 2008), p. xviii.

entered in depth into this central concept of Carlylean thought. While the usage this thesis has made of it has necessarily been limited in scope, it is possibly a concept of wider applicability and capable of greater depth of theorization. That it is one with relevance to popular culture narrativizations of contemporary history has been shown in this thesis' analysis of *The Dark Knight Rises*.

The fourth case study, *Apocalypse Now*, not only presents a charismatic-iconoclastic Carlylean Hero, but its production saw the narrative of such a Hero being reflexively re-enacted by the director, who creates his own Heroism through the commission of his art, and whose megalomaniacal self-misidentification (recalling Carlyle's self-identification with God) implies a creative lineage worthy of further investigation and elucidation. This chapter has shown that, if the scope were widened, a biographico-literary emphasis on Carlyle would provide the basis for a novel interpretation of the use of historical events in narrative art. In short, evidence has been produced that some degree of engagement with Carlyle can elucidate present concerns and complement dominant discourses – though it is as complementary to and in dialogue with other discourses rather than as constitutive of knowledge in itself that Carlyle's work yields results. This thesis stops short of claiming any definite political or philosophical merit in Carlyle's work, seeing it rather as a corpus demanding some degree of re-visitation in light of its great influence and the possibility of its having sown a forest and thus creating for itself an afterlife in which it is partially read at second hand. The present study may serve to facilitate engagement with Carlyle's ideas and approaches by placing them in contemporary narrative contexts. This is a simple but necessary first step in the potential rehabilitation of Carlyle.

As an intended addition to the field of Carlyle studies, this thesis has performed an analysis unlike any previous efforts. Rather than studying Carlyle's direct influence on his contemporaries, which is not in doubt, this thesis has aimed to examine the afterlife of Carlyle's thought. One tool that has been used to do this is the meme, which has the analytic benefit of abstracting the structural unit of narrative from

the consciousness of the author. Meme-studies are as yet in their infancy and while the term's general usefulness is unquestionable, whether it can be adequately theorized to the degree Dawkins imagined is less so.[8] If so, it would obviously be very applicable to Carlyle's posthumous influence, which has not been transferred through direct reading of his works, but may be more widely experienced through memes. A fuller focus on memes might be a way of continuing to investigate Carlyle's second-hand influence. Because of the term's scientific implications, it was not wholly compatible with the Feyerabendian epistemological-anarchism approach of the present thesis, and it does not lend itself to a humanistic approach. Nevertheless, it is one of the possible way in which the work which has been provisionally attempted in this thesis could be continued and perhaps sharpened (though at the same time narrowed, it is worth emphasizing).

With regard to adaptation studies, the kind of 'arguing with the past' that reading Carlyle entails is an activity that could profitably be brought into the mainstream of that field. It has been shown that any transtemporal adaptation must, to a greater or lesser degree, involve elements of the ideological tensions central to Gillian Beer's concept. Focus on these tensions, these points of difference, and interpretation and contextualization thereof is potentially productive of new insights into the adaptation process and cultural production and articulation generally. Adaptation study is already moving in a somewhat Feyerabendian direction, trying to incorporate multiple strands and departing from the notion of a single master-method with which to approach its objects of study. Robert Ray's complaint, cited in Chapter 1, that all adaptation scholars were transfixed by a single question – How does the film compare to the book? – is no longer accurate. Currently operative strands include close textual analysis,

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[8] A recent effort in the field of adaptation studies is Thomas Leitch, 'What Movies Want', in Jörgen Bruhn, Anne Gjelsvik and Erik Frisvold, eds., *Adaptation Studies: New Challenges, New Directions* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 155-175. His title highlights the problem of agency that occurs when we speak of memes (or at least when we try to theorize them according to Dawkins' analogy with 'the selfish gene' – popular use of the term involves no implication of agency). The idea of the agency of cultural artefacts is problematic, and thus renders the notion of the meme equally so.

cultural and historical context, reception, intertextuality, all of which are consistent with Beer's approach, and all of which are interwoven to varying extents in this thesis.[9] Therefore it is suggested that to complement those approaches already in use, Gillian Beer's work provides a tool with particular efficacy for analyzing transtemporal adaptations, and this thesis has aimed to provide some signposts in that direction. Transtemporal adaptations are, of course, already studied in the field (though that term is not yet in use), but Beer's approach may guard against the possibility of reverence towards the canonical source, by emphasizing the struggle against the text in adaptation.

This thesis has also attempted to demonstrate that the notion of ideology remains of importance to critical analysis. Though no direct attempt has been made to re-instate the term at the theoretical level at which it has been attacked, its practical value, connotational richness and accessibility have been central to the project. The point is thereby made that theoretical precision does not have precedence over analytical applicability and practical utility. The corresponding approach, in line with Feyerabend's position that '[n]o view is ever given all the chances it deserves',[10] would allow for the rehabilitation of many concepts which may be otherwise considered debunked. The use of such concepts can only add to the riches available to intellectual inquiry, and to the variety of research that is undertaken in fields of the humanities, uncovering and articulating forms of consciousness unknown to the dominant discourses of the age. Here, again and finally, we might return to Carlyle's proto-Feyerabendian epistemological dictum: 'Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.'

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[9] See the Venn diagram illustrating a variety of possibilities, including the strands mentioned above, in Deborah Cartmell, Imelda Whelehan, eds., *Screen Adaptation: Impure Cinema* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 15. See also the arguments in Hermansson.
[10] Feyerabend, p. 29.

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