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## **“Maternity must forth”: The Poetics and Politics of Gender in Carlyle’s *French Revolution***

In *The French Revolution: A History* (1837), Thomas Carlyle made a remarkable contribution to the history of discourse and to the legitimation and dissemination of the idea of history *qua* discourse.<sup>1</sup> This work, born from the ashes of his own earlier manuscript, an irrecoverable Ur-text leading us back to its equally irrecoverable ‘origins’ in French society at the end of the eighteenth century, represents a radical departure from the traditions of historical narrative.<sup>2</sup> The enigmas of continuity/discontinuity conveyed so powerfully by the events of the Revolution and its aftermath are explored by Carlyle in ways that re-constitute political convulsion as the rending and repair of language as cultural fabric, or, to use terms more post-structuralist than Carlylean, as the process of rupture/suture in the rhetoric of temporality.<sup>3</sup> *The French Revolution*, at once parodic and poetic, provisional and peremptory, announces itself as intertextual, epigraphic play, before paying tribute to the dialogic imagination in a series of dramatic and reflective periods which resonate throughout the poetry and prose of the Victorian period. In writing what Francis Jeffrey considered “undoubtedly the most *poetical* history the world has ever seen — and the most moral also,”<sup>4</sup> Carlyle created an incurably reflexive idiom of astonishing modernity. And an important feature of this modernity — indeed, a feature that provides a salutary reminder of the inevitably relative, historically mediated modernity of the discourse of periods earlier than our own — is the employment of countless versions of human gender to characterize and to contain the phenomenon of revolution.

Focussing in the first instance on the work’s title-page and on “The Insurrection of Women” in Book VII of *The French Revolution*, I will examine the interplay of mythic and historical constructions of gender whereby Carlyle communicates the reality of political convulsion and the need for its containment. The results of this close textual analysis

will then be placed more discursively in the context of the Carlyle canon, before being compared with the textual detritus of a life half-lived, by which I mean the correspondence of Jane Welsh Carlyle. This contextual consideration and comparison is designed to bring home to the reader in a challenging and provocative way the fact that the limits to Carlyle's radicalism, the relations in his prose between stylistic and political liberty and authority, are reliably marked by his attitude towards gender. His relations with his wife (and with his female acquaintances more generally) are as firmly and informatively grounded in patriarchy as is his reading and writing of history. In the concluding section of this paper I will review the feminist elements in the foregoing analysis and commentary, and clarify some of the more important implications of this review for current feminist theory and criticism.

## I

First, a few samples of feminist reading, beginning with a title-page, a matter so often treated as a transparent preliminary of interest only to bibliographers and bibliophiles. However, title-pages tend to be treated summarily only by those who are comfortable with the codes and values revealed or concealed therein. In the instance that concerns us here, the work announces itself as *The French Revolution: A History*, social and political upheaval finding a traditional place for itself in print.<sup>5</sup> But there is a suggestion of unorthodoxy as well as modesty in the use of the indefinite article in connection with history, the hint perhaps of a less traditional narrative, one more in keeping with the revolutionary displacement and re-appropriation of tradition. And so it will prove, with the generic term "History" thoroughly deconstructed in the course of three persistently idiosyncratic volumes far removed in tone and strategy from Rankean dispassion and the documentary imperative. However, the traditional flavour of the title-page does not derive exclusively from the (false) promise of a relatively orthodox history. Tradition is accommodated also in two quotations given in Greek (and left untranslated): the first from Arrian's collection of the *Discourses* of Epictetus, and the second from the *Meditation* of Marcus Aurelius. These two quotations are usually understood, if they are understood at all, as a civilized authorial display of cultural patrimony, early reassurance of erudition and of the wisdom that awaits beyond the ephemeral. But these quotations function both as ironic reflections on the historian's craft and as gestures which suggest the limits of Carlyle's radicalism in his treatment of history, discourse and gender.

For those of his readers who knew classical Greek, Carlyle offered a further challenge, namely, to apprehend the ironic aptness of his chosen epigraphs. The first is rendered thus in the Loeb translation:

Great is the struggle, divine the task; the prize is a kingdom, freedom, serenity, peace. (I.356)<sup>6</sup>

This exhortation is introduced by Epictetus as a warning to unhappy men, in order that they not be “swept along by their impressions.” Epictetus’s emphasis on labour, strenuousness, the *agon* of resisting the powerful and treacherous currents of the quotidian, helps define Carlyle’s task. The words of a Stoic slave characterize the historian’s difficult but compelling project of eliciting narrative coherence out of the chaos of impressions summoned by the words, “The French Revolution.” Here is work fit for heroes, and a Stoic authority seems understandably attractive to a historian whose manuscript was burned by a friend’s female servant.

The second citation, from Book IX of the *Meditations*, also has a Stoic flavour, and it too addresses the idea of the flux of experience and those acts of entrenchment that counter mutability:

For who will change men’s convictions? And without a change of conviction what else is there save a bondage of men who groan and pretend to obey. (I.183)

These sentiments are expressed by Marcus Aurelius in a segment that begins with an assertion in the tradition of Heraclitus (“The matter of the Whole is a torrent; it carries all in its stream”) before calling into question the suasive force of discourse and the limits to enforced obedience. From the writings of a slave, Epictetus, we have progressed to the realities of enslavement as perceived by an emperor who values “power-knowledge” above military conquest, even as he witnesses the displacement of learning by arbitrary domination and covert dissent (cf. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, esp. 146 ff.). We, if we so choose, may also witness the appeal of a male author to male authorities. The engaging aspect of this appeal is its ironic, dialogic insistence on the problematic nature of Carlyle’s will-to-power over his materials and over an audience who inevitably bring their personal convictions to the reading of this (or any other) work. The author feels the need to be stoical in face of the resistance of both materials and audience, but his is a stoicism initiated and rehearsed by men in a world defined by them in all its authoritative and authoritarian continuity and completeness.

Carlyle, for all his irony and audacious dialogic play, remains in important if not essential respects *one of the boys*. His sensitivity to gender marks the limits to his radicalism, for he is unembarrassed by

the fact that historiography is as much a male domain as is stoicism, or by the fact that the printing and publishing of his work are directed by a man (in this case James Fraser) for the benefit of a public historically situated in a man's world. A less radical historian such as Archibald Alison may go to Livy for a seemly epigraph for his *History of Europe*.<sup>7</sup> Carlyle, in contrast, places an overwhelmingly public historical topic by citing private forms of philosophical reflection, followed by two couplets in German from Goethe's *Venetian Epigrams*:

Diesem Amboss vergleich' ich das Land, den Hammer dem Herrscher;  
 Und dem Volke das Blech, das in der Mitte sich krümmt.  
 Wehe dem armen Blech! wenn nur willkürliche Schläge  
 Ungewiss treffen und nie fertig der Kessel erscheint.

I compare the land to this anvil, the lord to the hammer,  
 And the folk to the sheet of metal that's crumpled between.  
 Woe to the poor metal if only despotic blows  
 Fall at random and it never seems complete enough for a kettle. (88-9)

Goethe's caustic comments on the European political process give an accurate indication of what lies in store in Carlyle's sardonic but poetical history, where imagery, irony, allegory, epigram will all be deployed in the interests of a revisionary reading of revolution. But, at the same time, Carlyle recognizes contemporary poetic discourse as masculine in its most quotable, authoritative expressions of the truth that women are a passive and implicit presence in the smithy of history.

To conserve traditional gender categories while de-stabilizing literary-intellectual genre is a remarkable disjunction everywhere apparent in the structure and texture of Carlyle's *French Revolution*. This work proves to be an unorthodox history that nonetheless feels the lack of an orthodox hero, and constantly betrays its anxiety on this account before structurally foregrounding Mirabeau as the man best fitted to fill the bill, the man whose death should provide the narrative with the customary masculinist climax. (cf. Farrell 222ff.). It is to Mirabeau's credit, perhaps, that he insisted, "Tant que les femmes ne s'en mêlent, il n'y pas de révolution véritable" (quoted by Trochard 193). But what kind of revolutionary *mêlée* are women supposed to join? Is it always already going on before women become agents? And when it comes to mixing it, are not women in another class than men? We can find answers to these and related questions in the seventh book of the first volume of the *French Revolution*, the book entitled "The Insurrection of Women," a book that Buckle may have had particularly in mind a little later in the nineteenth century when, in his *History of Civilization*, he affirmed that "Insurrections are generally wrong, revolutions are always right (II.593).

In “The Insurrection of Women” Carlyle manipulates mythic and historical constructions of gender in order to convey what he takes to be the reality of convulsion and the need for its containment. The foregrounding of women at this stage of the narrative can be read as a temporary, “Menadic” interlude, bringing with it both comic and menacing sexual metamorphoses, and alarming effacements of sexual difference. But this interlude inscribes within itself the larger plot of patriarchy; in other words, it ‘bears’ within itself the ‘seeds’ of restoration, the promise of a return to male dominance, clear and confident determination of sexual difference, and less problematic fulfilment of expectations ‘implanted’ along with the culturally authored and authorized ‘facts’ of gender. The situation is especially clear in “The Menads,” chapter four of Book VII, whose title immediately alerts us to the ratification of masculinist continuity and consensus commonly known as history and culture. The naming of the Maenads — from the Greek *mainomai*, to rage — defines women collectively, generically, on the basis of one feature of the emotional repertoire of humanity. The mythic provenance of the Maenads insists that they have no identity independent of the male god, Dionysus, and that their unsavoury but deserved reputation is the consequence of their scandalous capacity for abandoning home and housework for homophagy, a cannibalistic, ritual internalization of their god as flesh (see McNally 107 ff.; Zeitlin 195-201). Is this classical allusion further evidence, then, of an erudite masculine wit at work, or of something more, or of something else? Are we being prepared for repetition of the notion that there is a universal quality possessed by (or in possession of) women that has survived virtually unchanged the transition from myth to history?

Carlyle begins the chapter with quotations from male authorities: Voltaire, Lafayette, Goethe, followed by an apparently innocent use of the generic term, “man,” before concluding the first section with a reference to “Homer’s time,” an epoch in history now synonymous with and therefore in important respects the property of the male poet who composed the Homeric poems.<sup>8</sup> This allusion is followed by the first shift in gender in this chapter:

How many wearisome bloody Battles does History strive to represent; or even, in a husky way, to sing: and she would omit or carelessly slur-over this one Insurrection of Women? (I.251)

Here, it would seem, is the radical, egalitarian, early Carlyle re-writing history to avoid a slight by Clio (muse of history) to her own sex. The overwhelmingly male enterprise of writing (and making) history characterizes one of its most serious deficiencies — namely, the failure to give women their due — as insensitivity by a mythic “she” to the occa-

sionally noteworthy actions of her sex. The interests of both vividness and veracity will be well served by Carlyle's supplementing of the hitherto deficient historical records. However, he enlists the aid of a patriarchal notation to help him remedy an oversight in what *he* characterizes as discourse directed if not dictated by a female muse. There is selective invocation of mythic femininity via Hesiod's *Theogony*, just as there was selective definition of that femininity by means of the Maenadic. Carlyle identifies the muse of history by the pronoun "she," but he ignores the fact that she is one of the nine daughters of Zeus whose whole existence turns on the fact of their paternity: they are born of a father it is their duty to please and divert, and the harmonious nature of their sisterhood is further encouraged by their being "like-minded" (*homophronas*).<sup>9</sup> Instead of women characterized by a shared capacity for the irrational, we have the Greek version of the primal scene of diverting femininity. However, beneath the negative and positive features of Maenads and muses (the maniacal and the musical) lies the strategy of patriarchal domination that will become explicit once the Greek word for daughter (*thugater*) comes to signify also slave and servant.<sup>10</sup> Carlyle, at an intensely reflexive moment in his own text, confronts the problem of representation and the adequacy of language to the writing of history, and defines his own radical unease with history's traditionally "husky" song. Yet his self-consciousness is very much that of a masculine self preparing his audience for a descriptive *tour de force* where gender dominates in a number of important respects. Carlyle proceeds as follows:

A thought, or dim raw-material of a thought, was fermenting all night, universally in the female head, and might explode. In squalid garret, on Monday morning, Maternity awakes, to hear children weeping for bread. Maternity must forth to the streets, to the herb-markets and Bakers'-queues; meets there with hunger-stricken Maternity, sympathetic, exasperative. O we unhappy women! But, instead of Bakers'-queues, why not to Aristocrats' palaces, the root of the matter? *Allons!* Let us assemble. To the Hôtel-de-Ville; to Versailles; to the Lanterne!

In one of the Guardhouses of the Quartier Saint-Eustache, 'a young woman' seizes a drum — for how shall National Guards give fire on women, on a young woman? The young woman seizes the drum; sets forth, beating it, 'uttering cries relative to the dearth of grains.' Descend, O mothers; descend, ye Judiths, to food and revenge! — All women gather and go; crowds storm all stairs, force out all women: the female Insurrectionary Force, according to Camille, resembles the English Naval one; there is a universal 'Press of women.' Robust Dames of the Halle, slim Mantua-makers, assiduous, risen with the dawn; ancient Virginity tripping to matins; the Housemaid, with early broom; all must go. Rouse ye, O women; the laggard men will not act; they say, we ourselves may act!

And so, like snowbreak from the mountains, for every staircase is a melted brook, it storms; tumultuous, wild-shrilling, towards the Hôtel-de-Ville. Tumultuous; with or without drum-music: for the Faubourg Saint-Antoine also has tucked up its gown; and with besom-staves, fire-irons, and even rusty pistols (void of ammunition), is flowing on. Sound of it flies, with a velocity of sound, to the utmost barriers. By seven o'clock on this raw October morning, fifth of the month, the Townhall will see wonders. Nay, as chance would have it, a male party are already there; clustering tumultuously round some National Patrol, and a Baker who has been seized with short weights. They are there; and have even lowered the rope of the Lanterne. So that the official persons have to smuggle forth the short-weighing Baker by back-doors, and even send 'to all the Districts' for more force.

Grand it was, says Camille, to see so many Judiths, from eight to ten thousand of them in all, rushing out to search into the root of the matter! Not unfrightful it must have been; ludicrous-terrific, and most unmanageable. At such hour the overwatched Three Hundred are not yet stirring: none but some Clerks, a company of the National Guards; and M. de Gouvion, the Major-General. Gouvion has fought in America for the cause of civil Liberty; a man of no inconsiderable heart, but deficient in head. He is, for the moment, in his back apartment; assuaging Usher Maillard, the Bastille-Sergeant, who has come, as too many do, with 'representations.' The assuagement is still incomplete when our Judiths arrive.

The National Guards form on the outer stairs with levelled bayonets; the ten thousand Judiths press up, resistless; with obstinations, with outspread hands, — merely to speak to the Mayor. The rear forces them; nay from male hands in the rear, stones already fly: the National Guard must do one of two things; sweep the Place de Grève with cannon, or else open to right and left. They open; the living deluge rushes in. Through all rooms and cabinets, upwards to the topmost belfry: ravenous; seeking arms, seeking Mayors, seeking justice; — while, again, the better-dressed speak kindly to the Clerks; point out the misery of these poor women; also their ailments, some even of an interesting sort. (I.251-3)

In every version of female activity in this passage Carlyle's language is both vivid and patronizing. The image of fermentation, for instance, picks up on the connection of the Maenadic with the Bacchic, while insisting also on the unanimous irrationality of women's mental life. The brewing going on in "the female head" — more vessel than intellect, and "weaker vessel" at that — is an unstable process soon to result in the spilling forth of a spirited human tide. The simile of "snowbreak from the mountains," a natural process occurring out of season this "raw October morning," attests to the epic (or is it mock heroic?) quality of this *unnatural* commotion: the typology of political discourse and the domestic architecture of pre-revolutionary Paris converge as Madame de Pompadour's "Après nous le déluge" finds its antetype in the garrets of the poor. Famine deconstructs the feminine, at least to the extent that gender codes are violated here by the women

and not the men. The latter remain for the most part chivalrous in their restraint, first on the scene of action as usual ("As chance would have it, a male party are already there"), the givers of permission for the women to act ("they say"), less squeamish about physical violence, and indeed, the only gender worthy of the name of *National Guard*. Carlyle's irony, elsewhere so subversive, is here more literally virulent and condescending: he speaks *for* the women ("O we unhappy women! . . .") but also *down to* them, reworking Maenadic frenzy and belligerence, transforming the phallus-bearers of Dionysiac procession into the bearers of "besom-staves, fire-irons, and even rusty pistols (void of ammunition)."<sup>11</sup>

As if one patriarchal tradition were not enough — and for our historian without an adequate hero it was not — Carlyle moves from the Greek to the Judaic with the appearance of Judith and the consequent promise of female heroism and a foreshadowing (via Holofernes) of male decapitation by *La Guillotine*. The allusion is appropriate here in so far as there are similarities between the starvation in Bethulia recorded in the Apocrypha and the famine afflicting Paris, although the one is the consequence of a besieging army of Assyrians while the other is the result of successive bad harvests and entrenched inequity. There is also a connection between Judith and the Maenads in the description of her leading her people in a dance of triumph after the defeat of the Assyrians, and in the details of the hymn of praise which concludes the book that bears Judith's name (see esp. Judith 7:21-32; 15:12-16; 17). However, this musical celebration comes *after* the attainment of a heroic objective, suggesting that Carlyle is not intending a detailed parallel between the women of Paris and the Jewish heroine: Judith accomplished her task alone, except for a maid-servant, whereas Carlyle is describing collective action of a kind that reveals general qualities of courage and enterprise rather than a point-for-point correspondence between events in Judaic legend and in recent French history. Judith seems for Carlyle synonymous with female courage and effective action in the interests of freedom, and hence more a symbol than a person (see, e.g., Nickelsburg 97 ff.). Just as he avoids detailed consideration of Judith's narrative situation, so also he fails to reflect on the means whereby she attained her place in legend and in art. She transformed herself from grieving widow into 'ravishingly' beautiful emissary because of the promptings of her own piety, and could behead Holofernes only because his lust for her made him drink himself into an untypical stupor. She transforms her physical appearance while shifting her attention from a dead man to a living one, and she changes her social identity from one patriarchal formulation ("Judith, daughter of Merari, son of Ox, son of Joseph, son of



Oziel, son of Helkias, son of Elias, son of Chelkias, son of Eliab, son of Nathanael, son of Samaliel, son of Sarasadae, son of Israel”) to another which is not so much a patrilineal regress to a patriarchal ‘origin’ as it is a tribute to wily but chaste female beauty, a gift and blessing to a grateful nation from God the Father.

For the characterization of revolutionary women as Judiths, Carlyle looks (as he had done in related connections earlier in *The French Revolution*) to Camille Desmoulins, eye-witness, self-styled “procureur général de la lanterne,” the *Montagnard* whose radicalism became gradually more moderate in the pages of *Le Vieux Cordelier* and caused him to be guillotined with Danton.<sup>12</sup> This Frenchman’s authoritative discourse is regularly punctuated with striking analogies which draw on the Bible and Classical Literature (cf., e.g., *Oeuvres*, I. 298-9; II.580; III.24, 474-5, 565), and he has a well developed sense of the spectacular, as is evident in Carlyle’s source in number forty-seven of Desmoulins’ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*: “C’est un table intéressant à peindre, et des plus grands qu’offre la révolution, que cette armée de 10,000 *Judith*, allant couper la tête à *Holoferne*, forçant l’hôtel-de-ville et s’y armant de tout ce qu’elles rencontraient (*Oeuvres*, V.377. For other evocations of the figure of Judith, cf. III.3, 25). Carlyle shares Camille’s sense of obligation to be vivid at this stage in his narrative, and he has a prose style even more graphic and dramatic than Camille’s, but he goes beyond his source in respect of style rather than sentiment. Whereas Camille reduces the women to an italicized, singular “*Judith*,” Carlyle favours an unitalicized plural while suppressing direct reference to Holofernes. But this difference is not determined by a resistance to the legendary reification of women. Carlyle is as clear as Camille (V. 352-3) in his alignment of women with the limited possibilities of “insurrection,” sharing also with his source the perception that this particular example of female fervour is ‘ultimately’ orchestrated by male intelligence. Where Camille sardonically portrays the women as headed for Versailles “pour rendre ses *hommages* à l’auguste assemblée” (V. 365; my italics), Carlyle describes them as embarked upon a commendably radical inquiry in a markedly irrational way: “rushing out to search into the root of the matter.” Neither of these radical male historians, despite the intensity of his engagement with his topic, is inclined to more than a modest excursus beyond the traditional boundaries of thinking about gender. Carlyle chooses in this instance to be faithful to his source in what he takes to be *essential* respects. Carlyle is an incorrigibly allusive writer who can, when he feels so disposed, achieve a fairly precise and comprehensive fit between the parts of his analogies.<sup>13</sup> However, in the Judith instance his is a generalized appeal to a patriarchal tradition where female

heroism is so rare as to limit significantly the options of the analogist, and where the subjects of the comparison may therefore be reduced without too much *obvious* violence or disruption to stereotypes or stylized simplifications.

To be sure, Carlyle achieves some measure of particularity in his depiction of the women of Paris, but, as in Camille's account, it is the particularity of place ("the Halle . . . the Faubourg Saint-Antoine"), of marital status, physical type, and kind of employment. This accommodation of identity to anonymity is appropriate to the characterization of a socially and historically marginalised group, as is made clear in the remark (unique to Carlyle) that "the Faubourg Saint-Antoine also has tucked-up its gown." Carlyle's interest in the sartorial as a key to his times — pre-eminent of course in *Sartor Resartus*, but crucial also to a historical work provisionally conceived as *A History of Sans-Culottism* — often brings out the best in him as radical ironist. However, he has not yet worked through, nor will he ever work through, the gender assumptions apparent in a letter to his brother of September 1834:

The best news is that I have actually *begun* that French Revolution; and after two weeks of blotching and bloring [blurring] have produced —two clean pages: *Ach Gott!* But my hand is out; and I am altering my style too, and troubled about many things; bilious too in these smothering windless days. It shall be such a Book! Quite an Epic Poem of the Revolution: an Apotheosis of Sansculottism! Seriously, when in good spirits, I feel as if there were the matter of a very considerable Work within me; but the task of shaping and uttering it will be frightful. Here, as in so many other respects, I am alone: without models, without *limits* (this is a great want); and must — just do the best I can. (*Collected Letters*, 7.306)

This passage offers an intimate glimpse of Carlyle as an unstable amalgam of ambition and anxiety. He seems to displace heroism from the realm of action to the scene of writing, and to conceive of it as a quality of the author revealed in the unique audacity of his style and architectonic sense. In an epic without a 'real' hero, the hero-as-narrator may seem like an inevitable development, a clear implication of that dauntingly verbless sentence: "Quite an Epic Poem of the Revolution: an Apotheosis of Sansculottism!" With a truly titanic, "frightful" effort, Carlyle will strive to re-define an already protean poetic genre (epic) and an already fiercely disputed concept (divinity). Faced with such a task, it is little wonder that he sees himself as "without models, without limits," yet he is perhaps recalling at the very moment of this denial another odyssey (Homer's) across *apeirona ponton*, the limitless ocean. Of course, Carlyle exaggerates the isola-

tion of his narrative situation. In fact, he has Homer very much in mind as a model at this time (see Clubbe 122); and there are models, too, for his projected treatment of the clothes of the revolutionaries, though these are overwhelmingly patriarchal indicators that “the word *sans-culotte* cannot be employed in the feminine” (see Robiquet 54). Despite his radical redefinition of his literary and socio-historical inheritance, Carlyle does permit some versions of continuity to inform, more or less explicitly, his analyses of discontinuity and convulsion; and the traditional determinations of gender, with their very definite models and limits, are among the most serviceable and instructive of these. In attempting to deify an abstraction, “Sansculottism,” Carlyle endorses the patriarchal grounds of both canonization and apotheosis, and the gender bias of his own creativity.

The book explicitly devoted to “The Insurrection of Women” had begun with a chapter entitled “Patrollotism,” a paean to process and displacement in “this miraculous Complex of Forces, named Universe” (I.239). Carlyle rehearsed the many versions of change and dangerous inertia, before concluding:

O much-suffering People, our glorious Revolution is evaporating in tricolour ceremonies, and complimentary harangues! Of which latter, as Loustalot acridly calculates, ‘upwards of two thousand have been delivered within the last month, at the Townhall alone.’ And our mouths, unfilled with bread, are to be shut, under penalties? The Caricaturist promulgates his emblematic Tablature: *Le Patrouillotisme chassant le Patriotisme*, Patriotism driven out by Patrollotism. Ruthless Patrols; long superfine harangues; and scanty ill-baked loaves, more like baked Bath bricks, — which produce an effect on the intestines! Where will this end? In consolidation? (I.234)

A taste for the mordant — in this instance the bitter accounting by the radical barrister, Elysée Loustalot, and the equally bitter depictions by the “Caricaturist” — is indulged in order to emphasize solidarity (“our glorious Revolution . . . our mouths”) with a starving people and their champions in the press. This populist solidarity leads in turn to the possibility of “consolidation,” a term which focuses the physical and non-physical elements of the passage in the image of personal and social nourishment and stability. The passage rings the changes on substance and the insubstantial on behalf of inevitable and radical action by a desperate populace, while the play on hunger and harangue, delivery of speeches and delivery from evil, is licensed by the brilliant French quibble on *Patrouillotisme* and *Patriotisme*. Carlyle was no doubt attracted to this word play as an example of the ironic etymologizing he had already made a distinctive feature of his own style in *Sartor*.<sup>14</sup> Here was more evidence of the appropriateness of

Carlylese to the matter at hand. But it is interesting to note that in introducing (according to the *OED* at any rate) "Patrolotism" into English Carlyle does not stop to consider, even while registering the importance of linguistic roots to radical thinking and action, the conservative, specifically patriarchal implications of the term. The "much-suffering People" are victims of a process of displacement in which one patriarchal term pursues another. The dialogic aggressor here, *Patrouillotisme*, is itself a highly informative example of the social construction and legitimation of patriarchy. The term derives from Old French *patoeuil* (a puddle or mire), emended in soldiers' slang to *patroeuil* in the Renaissance to denote going the rounds of a camp or garrison. The manly military calling seems to have required a *pater* where there was none, *constructing* a term compatible with traditional gender stereotypes and variations on the theme of fatherland, rather than *discovering* some necessary link between a particular activity and the 'natural' scheme of things. And the *patrie/patroeuil* nexus seemed so self-evidently 'right' that it spread rapidly to most western languages. Later in *The French Revolution* we find another neologism, "Patriotess" (II.191), which suggests that Carlyle was aware of the masculinist exclusiveness of common usages such as "Patriot." Here, however, he prepares us for concerted female participation in the revolutionary process with the aid of language whose radical force does not necessitate or even encourage a fundamental review or whole-scale re-writing of the plot of gender. The result is, to be sure, a descriptive *tour de force*, but its appeal is reassuringly (if often covertly) masculinist as well as undeniably graphic. Composing from memory (see Young 140 ff.; Rosenberg 15-19), Carlyle transforms in the crucible of *poiesis* all the knowledge he had so painstakingly acquired into haunting cadences that are themselves haunted by the fear of women becoming equal partners in the human enterprise. Carlyle commemorates as best he can a famous episode in the history of the Revolution, but memory, that shaper and sustainer of tradition, permits the epic historian to nod conveniently when his theme is gender.

Throughout *The French Revolution* Carlyle demonstrates an extraordinary capacity for making history come to life in unsettling or consoling but consistently vivid ways, but the *tour de force* is traditionally the *tour de l'homme*, and from our historical vantage we should be able to see beneath the disruption and disturbance of this text to the relatively undisturbed assumptions of patriarchy which create the necessary, though not the sufficient, conditions of Carlyle's articulation of his poetics and politics of gender. Femininity, from its specific manifestations in Marie Antoinette, the Princesse de Lam-

balle, Mlle. Theroigne, Charlotte Corday, Mme. Roland, Bishop Lamourette and “Man-midwives” like Levasseur, to its incarnation in “Jacobin Mother-Society,” the “She-Republic,” Diana, Pallas Athena and Mother Nature, affords Carlyle regular opportunities for radical activity within a patriarchal narrative economy.<sup>15</sup> However, that narrative economy never abandons patriarchy, its own equivalent of money-of-account or the gold standard.<sup>16</sup> And so Carlyle ‘concludes’ his deconstructive tale with an appeal to patriarchal origins and the Johannine Logos, after the following detour into the transhistorical:

Homer’s Epos, it is remarked, is like a Bas-relief sculpture: it does not conclude, but merely ceases. Such, indeed, is the Epos of Universal History itself. Directorates, Consulates, Emperorships, Restorations, Citizen-Kingships succeed this Business in due series, in due genesis one out of the other. Nevertheless the First-parent of all these [i.e., Revolution] may be said to have gone to air in the way we see. (III.321)

As in art, so in life: closure mediates between existence and teleology in a highly problematic way. The plot of revolution runs its course in a manner that defies dogmatic inference or confident summation. It is *sui generis*, even as it generates in turn the wry fecundity of “Directorates, Consulates, Emperorships . . . .” Revolution has a beginning, middle and end, at least in Carlyle’s appropriation of it, yet how can this be so without denying or distorting the open-ended nature of experience?

While reflecting on how best to end his history, Carlyle recalls (“it is remarked”) from his reading in German two distinctive and related responses to the problem of closure. His distinction between concluding and ceasing looks in one sense very much like a re-working of Kant’s claim in *The Critique of Judgement* that art is characterised by “purposiveness without purpose” (*Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck*, 64 ff.). According to this line of reasoning, the internal coherence of the work of art, whether epic poem or bas relief or something else, is achieved beyond the simplifying plot and purposes of any single creed, but not beyond our capacity to participate in and experience its unfolding sense of wholeness. Furthermore, the Kantian version of the distinctiveness and autonomy of art gains support from German hellenism and aesthetic historiography as initiated by Winckelmann and sustained by Goethe, Schiller, the Schlegels, and many others.<sup>17</sup> By virtue of the inter-art analogy between poetry and sculpture, Carlyle places himself in a tradition where individual works can best be appreciated from *within* the aesthetic sphere. Works in different media share common properties, and have more in common with each other than with potential analogues in the non-aesthetic domain. But Car-

lyle, always wary of aesthetic exclusiveness, proceeds directly to a second, emphatically more inclusive analogy: as in art, so in "Universal History itself." The narratability of history enhances our understanding of "due genesis" and sequence, but never allows us access to the whole story. Universal History, as had been made clear in "On History Again" (1833), whether practised by Bossuet or Muller, Montesquieu or Niebuhr, is always a historically situated re-writing which results more often in "a miserable defective 'shred'" than in a "magic web" (XXVIII.171). Carlyle has tried valiantly to make of the French Revolution an "Epos" instead of a fardel of unrelated episodes. However, as he takes stock of his achievement and considers how to make an end to it and of it, he has recourse once again to models of process grounded in gender: a traditional version of the feminine thus underlies his appeal to the idea of the *Sister Arts* as authority for inter-art analogies and aesthetic reflexivity; and Revolution as parthenogenetic "First-parent" eventually going "to air" is clearly an epigonous version of the patriarchally authorised parthenogenesis of *The French Revolution's* final paragraph, where gender, life and language prove themselves "definable" in the image of "Man [as], by the nature of him . . . an incarnate Word." The gender biases evident in his early essays hold firm throughout Carlyle's finest work as a historian, foreshadowing in subtle as well as more blatant poetico-political ways the remorseless androcentrism of *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1841) and his later works.

## II

It has not been my purpose so far in this essay to *blame* Carlyle for the cultural values that find expression in his work. However, his predicament as author and human agent, and his culpability, will now be considered in the context of his relations with one of the most important women 'in' his life, his wife.

In casting around for some fitting pendant to the preceding analysis, I hoped to find a discussion of the Maenadic by Jane Welsh Carlyle. This meant, of course, going to the correspondence to discover what views, if any, she had expressed on this subject; which is to say that Jane was not available in such a form of hegemonic discourse as historical narrative represents, though in her letters she thought she could be more than merely a "*Lion's wife*":

"Applications from young Ladies for autographs, passionate invitations to dine, announcements of inexpressible longings to drink tea with me — all that sort of thing which as a provincial girl I should have regarded perhaps as high promotion, but which at this time of day I

regard as very silly and tiresome work, fritters away my time in fractionary writing, against the grain." (61)

But private letters are themselves a kind of "fractionary writing" where Jane remained, as we shall see, very much the "*Lion's* wife."

In a letter to Jeannie Welsh in 1843 Jane describes Nina Macready's birthday party in London which she recently attended. Jane the correspondent is apparently at the centre of things while poor Jeannie is marginalised in Liverpool. Jane goes to the party, despite Carlyle's admonition about her physical condition ("My dear . . . your face is *green* and your eyes all *blood-shot*"), and she is very glad that she did so because it turned out to be "the *very* most agreeable party that ever I was at in London." However, Jane is not so much at the centre of things as a surrogate for an absent male, one of a hearty band of consolors (including Dickens and Forster) to make up to Mrs. Macready and her children for the absence of the "Tragic Actor" who, in making Richard III and Lear his 'own,' sustained the tradition of the dramatic *hero*:

Then the dancing — old Major Burns with his own eye — old Jerdan of the Literary Gazette (escaped out of the Rules of the Queen's Bench for the great occasion!), the gigantic Thackeray &c. &c. all capering like *Maenades!!* Dickens did all but go down on his knees to make *me* — waltz with him! But I thought I did my part well enough in talking the maddest nonsense with *him*, Forster, Thackeray and Maclise — without attempting the Impossible — however *after supper* when we were all madder than ever with the pulling of crackers, the drinking of champagne, and the making of speeches, a universal country Dance was proposed — and Forster *seizing me round the waist*, whirled me into the thick of it, and *made me dance!!* like a person in the tread-mill who must move forward or be crushed to death! Once I cried out 'oh for the love of Heaven let me go! You are going to dash my brains out against the folding doors!' to which he answered — (you can fancy the tone) — 'your brains!' who cares about their brains *here? Let them go!*

In fact the thing was rising into something not unlike the *rape of the Sabines!* (*Mrs. Reid* was happily gone some time) when somebody looked [at] her watch and exclaimed 'twelve o'clock!' Whereupon we all rushed to the cloak-room — and *there* in the lobby and up to the last moment in the mirth raged on — . . . After all — the pleasantest company, as Burns thought, *are* the *blackguards!* — that is; those who have just sufficient dash of blackguardism in them to make them snap their fingers at *ceremony* and 'all that sort of thing.' I question if there was as much witty speech uttered, in all the aristocratic, conventional drawing rooms thro'out London that night as among us little knot of blackguardist literary people who felt ourselves above all rules, and independent of the universe! Well, and the result? Why the result my dear was, that I went to bed on my return and — slept like a top!!! plainly proving that *excitement is my rest!* . . . See what a letter I have written! — and such writing! — but I must stop now for the post hour is at hand . . . <sup>18</sup>

Woman to woman, Jane cannot conceal in her calligraphy or her prose how “agreeable” she found all the attention from distinguished men, and how much she savoured the spectacle of their reduction to Maenadic brainlessness by champagne, gallantry and dancing. Once she has reassured Jeannie that no real impropriety occurred, she is able to resolve the tension between male abandon and female containment in the notion of asexual literary camaraderie, something that joins all the remaining revellers in a “little knot” of witty iconoclasm. However, this resolution does not seem to satisfy Jane completely, for something akin to guilt or residual anxiety appears to be seeking appeasement in the rhetorical bravado of the personalized paradox, “*excitement is my rest!*” The overdetermined quality of this trope may alert us to a similar quality in the two preceding allusions — to the rape of the Sabines, and to the Burns of “The Jolly Beggars” — when she defends liberties taken with social convention as, in the one case, analogous to *coitus interruptus* (an epistolary deferral of ejaculation in a text replete with such indicators of “excitement”), and, in the other, as harmlessly non-conformist conviviality. However, despite Jane’s claims to the contrary, she is no more “above all rules, and independent of the universe” than was her husband when he contemplated writing his epic history “without models, without limits.”

To be sure, she limits the audacity of the company to a “dash of black-guardism” and the resultant euphoria to something they only fleetingly “felt,” just as she had earlier limited to this “great occasion” Jerdan’s emancipation from the “rules of the Queen’s Bench.” But the “witty speech,” which seems alone and harmlessly to set the group for a time above their social betters, has already been seen as a verbal supplement to Forster’s physical abduction of Jane, while a less confidently sexual wit has informed Jane’s description of the one-eyed Major Burns and Dickens on his knees. Difference grounded in gender is not so easily effaced or transformed as Jane would have Jeannie believe. Indeed, the union of men and women in socially marginalised literary “blackguardism” may strike us as slightly implausible, especially when we consider that the only *names* present or absent, the only theatrical or literary lions, are men: Macready, Carlyle, Dickens, Forster, Thackeray, “&c. &c.” And the allusion to the rape of the Sabines as a climax towards which the occasion was “rising,” reveals a comparable, equally unintentional gender bias. The women involved in that legendary event were anonymous sexual commodities whose acquisition was ‘master-minded’ by a man with a truly resonant name, Romulus.<sup>19</sup> Despite their innocence, those women were afflicted by sterility after their abduction, and ‘cured’ only by the intervention of Juno Lucina so that they could bear a new generation of Romans.



Jane's treatment of legendary materials — the Maenads and the Sabine women — is inescapably masculinist despite her irony: the men act *like* women for a time; then the men revert to type, filling the place of absent husbands in a way that underscores feminine passivity and vulnerability. In order to appeal to Jeannie's womanhood while also exonerating herself in her confidante's eyes, Jane moves from mocking superiority to increasingly alarmed passivity, but this movement is as revealingly "conventional" as anything to be encountered in "aristocratic . . . drawing rooms."

After realizing (with some dismay) the degree to which Jane remains a prisoner of patriarchy in this letter, I felt the need to find evidence of greater assertiveness and autonomy. Memory suggested a passage which occurs in a communication to John Sterling of 4 June 1835:

You did kindly to send me the little separate note: the least bit "all to myself" (as the children say) was sure to give me a livelier pleasure, than any number of sheets in which I had but a secondary interest. For in spite of the honestest efforts to annihilate my *I-ity*, or merge it in what the world doubtless considers my better half; I still find myself as self-subsisting and alas! selfseeking *Me*. Little Felix, in the *Wanderjahre*, when, in the midst of an animated scene between Wilhelm [sic] and Theresa, he pulls Theresa's gown, and calls out "*Mama Theresa I too am here!*" only speaks out with the charming trustfulness of a child, what I am perpetually feeling, tho too sophisticated to pull peoples skirts, or exclaim in so many words; Mr. Sterling, "*I too am here.*" (8.138)

Textual politics affords Jane an important insight into her personal situation. Usually, when male friends correspond with the Carlyles, Jane's identity is submerged in the spousal relation, her dislike for "fractionary writing" aggravated by the fractionary reading of herself as sub-text or marginalium in her husband's correspondence. Sterling has at least conferred on her something of the status of autonomous addressee by virtue of his "little separate note" included with a letter sent to Carlyle, and Jane is not entirely mocking in her expression of gratitude for small epistolary mercies. However, the ensuing affirmation of self reveals the extent to which, despite herself, she continues to ground her own discourse in her husband's. "*I-ity*," for example, is not the coinage of a rebellious woman simmering in "her proper sphere" but a neologism introduced by her husband as a piece of sardonic play with the Fichtean notion of the primordial self or *Ur-Ich*;<sup>20</sup> and the example of little Felix is taken from Goethe, and from Goethe as made available in Carlyle's translation of *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*. Lexis and literary allusion alike attest to the complex transactions of self-assertion and self-suppression.

Jane can count on Sterling appreciating the full enormity of the 'heresy' she commits in clinging to her "I-ity" despite the call to self-annihilation (*Selbst-Tödtung*) whereby Carlyle fulfils at least one of his authorial selves in *Sartor*. Nor is Sterling likely to miss the ironic charge to the Goethe allusion, which occurs as part of a more physically passionate than simply "animated" reunion in Carlyle's rendering:

[Wilhelm] made a step towards her: she sprang to him, and hung upon his neck. "O my Theresa!" cried he.

"My friend, my love, my husband! Yes, forever thine!" cried she, amid the warmest kisses.

Felix pulled her by the gown, and cried: "Mamma Theresa, I am here too." (XXIV.123)

Once again there is a sense of overdetermination, of inadvertent self-disclosure beyond even the confession that Jane feels doomed to neglect and marginality. She was obviously more discreet earlier, refusing to tell Sterling plainly *who* made "the honestest efforts to annihilate [her] *I-ity*," and blaming "the world" generally for the attempt to effect a merger in which she forever remains a lesser partner. Even as she warms to her topic, Carlyle remains the unnameable, hidden behind the literally unspeakable reality of his tyrannical insistence that she remain for him a "secondary interest." Yet the implications of the quotation from Goethe are anything but discreet. One cannot help thinking that Jane was drawn to this episode in the *Wanderjahre* by the unresolved conflict between passionate attentiveness and wounding inattentiveness. She appears to have her husband still very much in mind at this stage in her letter and will, indeed, go on in the next paragraph to defend *Sartor* against its critics. But she does seem to be suggesting via transposed gender that Carlyle's absorption with his work relegates her "perpetually" to the status of a neglected little boy. Open displays of passion — and private ones too — are an absence in her life which she feels only too keenly. Nor can she find solace in the fact that the exchange of possessives between Wilhelm and Theresa, because of their reciprocal fervour, suggests mutuality rather than subordination and self-effacement. Although she maintains her facade of generalized resentment in the detail of "peoples skirts," and lowers it only to specify "Mr. Sterling," when she does become specific we, who have only just been apprised of *Sterling's* considerateness, may well expect to find "Mr. Carlyle" named as the particular focus of her irritation. The point of little Felix's complaint is that he does not feel neglected by "people" but by his mother specifically. Jane's attempt to exculpate (or directly implicate) her husband

founders because maternity in the Goethe instance is not stereotypical but highly individual, bringing close to the surface of Jane's letter the fact that, for her, a similarly close tie constitutes the principal source of pain and threat to self-hood. Her allusion to Felix is as unconvincing — or unintentionally convincing — as her appeal to *sophistication* as the proper agent of self-suppression. To be "sophisticated" in Jane's sense — the sense imposed on her here — was, after all, profoundly alien to her husband and manifestly at variance with the philosophical primitivism espoused in his published works. And for Jane to be writing in these terms while Carlyle was considering the costs to France of aristocratic allegiance to a false, corrupt sophistication, is bitterly ironic.

The poetics and politics of gender were as important to Jane as to her husband. Like him, however, she was insufficiently appreciative of the patriarchal undertow of language, and expressed — at least in the early years of their relationship — a somewhat naïve belief in her ability to safeguard her self-hood in a language of her own making: "If you [Carlyle] think me more *prudent* or rather more *rational* than formerly resolve the difficulty thus. *Now I am using the language of my own heart Then I was learning that of yours Here I am Jane Welsh — In Edinbr I was Mr. Carlyle's Pupil*" (2.21). She remained throughout her married life more of his "*Pupil*" than she understood or desired, a situation aided and abetted by the patriarchal predisposition of language, but enforced most uncompromisingly by a male chauvinist who could write to her the month before their marriage:

*Dearest Weibchen —*

. . . . in all this royal project, I had taken no distinct account of your Mother. I merely remembered the text of Scripture: 'Thou shalt leave father and mother, and cleave unto thy husband, and thy desire shall be towards him all the days of thy life.' I imagined perhaps she might go to Dumfries-shire, and gratify her heart by increasing the accommodations of her father, which she would then have ample means to do; perhaps that she might even — in short, that she might arrange her destiny in many ways, to which my presence must be a hindrance rather than a furtherance. Here I was selfish and thoughtless: I might have known that the love of a Mother to her only child is indestructible and irreplaceable; that forcibly to cut asunder such ties was cruel and unjust.

Perhaps, as I have told you, Love, I may not yet have got to the bottom of this new plan so completely as I wished: but there is one thing that strikes me more and more, the longer I think of it. This is the grand objection of all objections, the head and front of offence, the soul of all my counter-pleading; an objection which is too likely to upset the whole project. It may be stated in a word: *The Man should bear rule in the house and not the Woman*. This is an eternal axiom, the Law of Nature herself which no mortal departs from unpunished. I have meditated on this ma[n]y long] years, and every day it grows plainer to me; I

must not and I cannot live in a house of which I am not head. I should be miserable myself, and make all about me miserable. Think not, Darling, that this comes of an imperious temper; that I shall be a harsh and tyrannical husband to thee. God Forbid! But it is the nature of a man that if he be controlled by anything but his own reason, he feels himself degraded; and incited, be it justly or not, to rebellion and discord. It is the nature of a woman again (for she is essentially *passive* and not *active*) to cling to the man for support and direction, to comply with his humours, and feel pleasure in doing so, simply because they are his; to reverence while she loves him, to conquer him not by her force but by her weakness, and perhaps (the cunning gypsy!) after all to command him by obeying him. (IV.66-69)

Jane continuously sensed the need to deconstruct or deny the Genesis account of Adam unparadised, but she could not accomplish this on her own, and found herself too often unable to resist Carlyle's arguments, as when, invoking Scripture, he appeals devoutly to its authority rather than subjecting it to the kind of ludic scrutiny that more generally distinguishes his hermeneutic activity. He is as lenient towards Biblical patriarchy as he is towards his own self-serving recall ("I merely remembered"), deploying the concepts of motherhood, manhood, womanhood, nature and rebellion in support of an unabashedly authoritarian contention: "*The man should bear the rule of the house and not the woman.*" Carlyle draws on his knowledge of Musaeus as shrewdly as on his knowledge of the Bible to play down the fact that he has not "got to the bottom of this new plan" concocted by Jane's mother. His allusive powers create a self-explanatory supplement to incomplete interpretation. The result is a rhetorical (and practical) removal of women from the sphere of activity to that of passivity, where they may look for comfort to the example of Antony's "Egyptian dish," Cleopatra, or to a group still socially marginalised, dispossessed and reviled in nineteenth-century Europe, the gypsies themselves. In the correspondence of Thomas and Jane, masculine reason holds sway over feminine cunning in a version of gender politics that will remain unmodified throughout *The French Revolution*.

### III

As a male writer intent on assessing the methodological implications of the foregoing analysis, I may well invite the accusation of "patriarchal methodolatry" (see Showalter 11). However, it is worth risking such a charge in order to avoid, so far as is possible, the dangers of unself-conscious or excessively self-satisfied discourse which would efface, as far as it could, political accountability. My interest in feminist criticism and the literary life of gender was encouraged by an

encounter with *feminisme* in Fourier's *Théorie des Quatre Mouvements* (1808);<sup>21</sup> and the experience of trying to trace the history of this term and its cognates in the *Oxford English Dictionary* persuaded me more firmly than ever before of the ties that bind language and patriarchy, the power of imagination and the imaging of power. Above all, it appears to me that feminist and post-structuralist criticism can arrive at mutually acceptable accommodation on such matters as, for example, authorial gender and the history of the subject. Both these matters should be included (not submerged) in the question of the author, of the author understood not as "the principle of thrift in the text"<sup>22</sup> but as a preliminary notation of intentionality and teleology, a social construction of literary personhood bringing with it the promise of purpose and coherence which elicits hermeneutic activity. This hermeneutic activity will rapidly reconstitute itself as another text (this time more performative than grounded in personhood) to be experienced by the reader as more or less purposive, both discursive and climactic, reflexive and referential, closed and disclosed. If the idea of the author is as much a social text as is the text the author traditionally lays claim to creating, or has ascribed to her or him by another, then to consider carefully the gender of the author (so far as it is known or knowable) seems a proper kind of critical attentiveness even in the context of post-structuralism. However, to *privilege* authorial gender is more problematic in that the textualized author will tend to give credence to a stable, reliable referent, and to reify and hypostatize interpretation in ways that improperly resist the processes of dissolution and re-constitution which generate successive interpretations of intentionality in the authored text. To understand authorial gender as a social construction within or antecedent to another social construction must continue to alert us to the dangers of simplifying the relations between the liminal fiction of the author and the linear fictiveness of her or his work.

Authorship is, of course, very important both for canon formation and for the creation of a counter-canon, even if counter-canonical works attempt to eschew such formal properties as linearity because of their masculinist implications.<sup>23</sup> The question, "Who wrote this?" retains relevance and utility, neither as a reductive ploy nor as a matter for treacherous dismissal on the part of those "literary critics interested in 'applying' deconstruction as a form of conventional literary criticism for the sake of rejuvenating a jaded elitist canon of great, male, Western books" (Ryan 103). The question of the canon is a matter for continuous dispute, not a matter to be resolved by an oppressive economy of reference to the usual, great (male) authors. The interpretation of that masculinist canon may pretend to privilege the hidden

(including the female) as the mysterious or as the rarely and memorably disruptive, and this according to the most resourceful traditions of androcentric hermeneutics, but the hidden is too chronically subversive a category for even the mythopoetic and mocking capacities of language to deal with unproblematically. Woman as other, as hidden, as the marginal or liminal or revolutionary supplement, will continue to occasion and direct the deconstruction of all kinds of texts from "fractionary writing" to canonical works, so long as such writing attempts to naturalize patriarchal desire for primacy and privilege. The reproduction of gender as, for instance, mothering — in Carlyle's case the historico-poetic reification of "Maternity" — may share with the reproduction of textual meaning a common desire to represent immutable truth, but neither is grounded in "an unchanging transcultural universal" (cf. Chodorov 32).

In problematizing language as a powerful participant in the construction of gender, feminist criticism shows common cause with Carlyle at his most trenchant and with deconstructive criticism at its most searching and provocative. None of these forms of discourse is free from insensitivity and the arbitrary. However, they have helped contemporary students of literature to recognize the necessary and complicated commerce between poetics and politics, and to applaud the openness and insight of works bearing unashamedly interdisciplinary titles such as *A Poetic For Sociology*. The interest in difference located at the boundary that 'separates' intellectual disciplines from each other is helping to transform all study based in 'natural' language and active in "the privileged zone of contemporary intellectual and aesthetic concern: writing."<sup>24</sup> Instead of denouncing or renouncing language, or enfeebling it in some relentlessly self-regarding or self-deluding idiolect, we need more than ever to put its transgressive and commemorative powers to work in the interests of all human beings, irrespective of gender-typing and its often lethal etcetera. As scholars and teachers we "must forth" in more humanly accountable ways, extending and explaining the play of linguistic difference to help create the conditions in which we may continue to enjoy our intellectual, aesthetic and political difference.

## NOTES

1. Cf. Barthes, 3 ff.; Furet, 46 ff.; White, 1-26.
2. See, e.g., Young, *Thomas Carlyle and the Art of History* Jann, 33 ff.; Ben-Israel, 127 ff.; Brooks, 14 ff.; and the opening chapters of Rosenberg, *Carlyle and the Burden of History*.
3. Cf. De Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality," and Gaillard, "An Unspeakable (Hi)story."

4. See Jeffrey's letter to Carlyle of 18 May 1837, *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, 9.214.
5. The principal details of the title-page remain constant throughout the many editions and re-issues of the work. See Dyer, 85 ff. I have used the edition of *The French Revolution in the Centenary Edition of The Works of Thomas Carlyle*, ed. H.D. Traill.
6. I am grateful to Professor Barry Baldwin, Department of Classics at the University of Calgary, for identifying this quotation for me.
7. The epigraph from the opening of book 21 of Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* introduces "bellum maximum omnium memorabile" of the Second Punic War.
8. For "the overwhelming impact of Homer on Carlyle," see Clubbe, 120 ff.
9. Hesiod, *Theogony*, l. 60. For interesting background to this and similar passages, see West, 124 ff.
10. For the "later" denoting of "maidservant, slave" by *thugater* Liddell and Scott in their *Greek-English Lexicon* cite Phalaris, *Epistulae* 142.3, a collection of letters purporting to be written by the notorious tyrant of Agragas (570-554 B.C.) but composed by a Sophist of perhaps the second century A.D. For a recent re-appropriation of the term, see Gilbert, "Life's Empty Pack: Notes toward a Literary Daughteronomy," *Critical Inquiry* 11 (1985), 355-384.
11. See McNally, "The Maenad in Early Greek Art," and Carlyle's fragment on "Phallus Worship," described by Fred Kaplan, *Carlyle Newsletter* 2 (1980), 19-23.
12. See, e.g., Albert Soboul's Preface to *Camille Desmoulin: Oeuvres*.
13. For an assessment of such analogies in *Sartor*, see L.M. Findlay, "Paul de Man, Thomas Carlyle and 'The Rhetoric of Temporality,'" *Dalhousie Review* 65 (1985), 159-181.
14. See, e.g., the play with costume and custom in "The World in Clothes," the fifth chapter of Book One of *Sartor*.
15. See respectively, I.32, II.227, I.254, III.166 ff., II.77, II.210, III.49, II.244-5, III.223, III.18, II.185-6, III.182.
16. Silver, the original validating presence in Charlemagne's *liber argenti* remained a feature of money of account until 28 Thermidor An III (15 August 1795) when the distinction between currency in circulation and money of account was removed for good. Cf. Carlyle in "The Paper Age" in Book Two of *The French Revolution*.
17. The best introduction to this subject remains Humphrey Trevelyan's *Goethe and the Greeks*.
18. *I Too Am Here: Selections from the Letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle*, 60-62.
19. See, e.g., *New Larousse Encyclopaedia of Mythology*, 203, 205, 215.
20. See also *Collected Letters* 4.282 and 6.88 for "I-ity" as Carlyle's neologism for "a blend of egotism and self-consciousness."
21. See especially the section entitled "Avilissement des femmes en Civilization," *Oeuvres* I.130 ff. Cf. Stephens, 236 ff.
22. For Foucault's fullest development of this view, see "What is an Author?" in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, 113-38.
23. For the range of recent thinking about canon-formation, see, e.g., *Critical Inquiry* 10 no. 1 (September, 1983). For the displacing of linearity by "the tactile, the simultaneous, the fluid" by Luce Irigaray, see Mary Jacobus, "The Question of Language," 39 ff.
24. See Mary Jacobus, "The Difference of View," 12.

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