

Bentham in Love: Skeptical Philosophy in Arthur Hugh Clough's *Amours de Voyage*

Jeffrey St.Onge

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

English

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Master of Arts (English) at

Concordia University

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

August 2009

© Jeffrey St.Onge, 2009



Library and Archives  
Canada

Published Heritage  
Branch

395 Wellington Street  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada

Bibliothèque et  
Archives Canada

Direction du  
Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada

*Your file* *Votre référence*  
ISBN: 978-0-494-63056-3  
*Our file* *Notre référence*  
ISBN: 978-0-494-63056-3

**NOTICE:**

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

**AVIS:**

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protègent cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

---

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

  
**Canada**

**ABSTRACT**

Bentham in Love

Jeffrey St. Onge

In *Amours de Voyage*, Arthur Hugh Clough responds to his dissatisfactions with his position as an unmarried Lecturer and Head at University College in London by modeling the poem's antihero, Claude, on law reformer and founder of utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham. Drawing primarily from John Stuart Mill's portrayal of Bentham as an epistemological skeptic, Clough, through his poem, investigates the consequences of reliance on particular, as opposed to general, forms of knowledge in relation to language and love, in order to approach irresolvable questions about the grounds of truth and how to enter into a marriage that is corporeally and spiritually satisfying. Thus Claude, a conflicted Benthamite figure, is incapable of communicating his experience of the first War of Italian Independence, and resists abstract love as the sort of vague generality that Mill's Bentham deplored. As part of its largely satirical method, *Amours de Voyage* links its criticisms of Benthamite epistemology to Jeremy Bentham's status as a preserved corpse, referred to in Bentham's writings as his Auto-Icon, which arrived at University College at roughly the same time as Clough. By providing evidence for Clough's interactions with Benthamite philosophy, I aim also to revise our contemporary views of Clough as a primarily autobiographical poet, and to better appreciate his creative method that allows him to handle themes central to mid-nineteenth century intellectual culture in engrossing and compelling ways.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor John Miller, for his knowledge, guidance, and expectations, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for funding my studies and research.

## Table of Contents

Chapter 1	The Questioning Spirit .....	1
Chapter 2	Philosopher-Poet .....	20
Chapter 3	Philosopher-Lover .....	43
Chapter 4	“Farther Uses of the Dead to the Living” .....	70
Works Cited .....		82
Appendix A: Satire of Jeremy Bentham.....		87
Appendix B: Bentham’s Auto-Icon .....		90

## 1. The Questioning Spirit

Arthur Hugh Clough wrote and revised parts of *Amours de Voyage* in 1849-1851, at which time he was Head of University Hall and Lecturer on English Literature at University College London, a position with which he was becoming increasingly dissatisfied. He had many reasons to associate his personal and professional discontent with the University and its secular, radical reputation. After rejecting the Thirty-Nine Articles in 1849 to satisfy the demands of his conscience, Clough resigned from his fellowship at Oriel College, Oxford, and left his friends and familiar intellectual culture. Clough had too little faith for Oxford, but too much for London, and there he faced intolerance for his religious views and the pragmatic demands of a fledgling university struggling to consolidate itself in the educational marketplace. Clough also had been unsuccessful in love thus far in his life, and at the age of thirty remained uncertain about how to enter into a marriage that would satisfy his spiritual and corporeal needs. He wove these dissatisfactions into *Amours de Voyage*, and employed satire in the poem<sup>1</sup> to work out answers for his highly difficult questions by discarding ideas he felt to be false. A.C. Shairp, a fellow undergraduate at Balliol, recognized these satirical aspects of *Amours de Voyage* in a letter to Clough after reading an early draft: “On the whole I regard *Les Amours* as your nature ridding itself of long-gathered bile” (*Corr.* 1: 275). During his University College tenure, Clough in his correspondence disparaged his employing institution, and Shairp may be responding to Clough’s frustrations with the University when he admonishes him to concentrate on other things: “you were not made, my dear Clough, to make sport before the Philistines in this way, but for something else”

---

<sup>1</sup> I use the term poem to describe the genre of *Amours de Voyage*, but I acknowledge that there is debate about whether *Amours de Voyage* should be considered a poem or, as it is for Anthony Kenny (129), a fragmented epistolary novel.

(*Corr.* 1: 275).

Clough accepts most of Shairp's criticisms, but insists that Shairp goes too far when he identifies the poem's satire with his own beliefs: "Gott und Teufel, my friend, you don't suppose all that comes from myself! – I assure you it is extremely *not* so" (*Corr.* 1: 275). This retort inaugurates a long-running debate among literary critics about the source for the poem's anti-hero, Claude. Most critics agree with Arthur Symonds that although Claude is characterized by intellectual skepticism in the tradition of Hamlet or Faust (*Critical Heritage* 235), Clough derived this skepticism primarily from his own personality. But while such critics argue that Claude and Clough should not be conflated, the critical literature has been less decisive about what models Clough may have used when he created Claude. One of the consequences of relying on a biographical reading of Claude, after paying lip service to Clough's distinction between poet and persona, is that the poem retains its reputation as a lesser imaginative creation, an interpretation which reinforces Clough's humble position in today's literary canon.

I argue that the poem associates its dissatisfaction with a more specific source for skepticism in the nineteenth century: Jeremy Bentham. Part of the reason for this claim is that University College in the mid-century became closely associated with the law reformer and utilitarian thinker. Among others, James Mill and Henry Brougham, disciples of Bentham's, were involved in the university's foundation as a secular alternative to the dogmatic centers of Oxford and Cambridge. Seeking to redefine the university's reputation as an Enlightened and modern institution, the university council accepted Jeremy Bentham as a founding father, although he was not directly involved with the university's creation. In 1849, the council even acquired Bentham's preserved

corpse, and stored it on university property as a physical reminder of the utilitarian leader's continued influence.

But the strongest evidence that Clough invokes Bentham or Benthamism in *Amours de Voyage* is similarities between the poem's attention to empiricism and John Stuart Mill's depiction, in his essay on Bentham, of Bentham's epistemology. In the poem, Claude represents a Benthamite mode of thinking because he, like Bentham in Mill's essay, prefers language and ideas that may be founded on particular facts or objects.<sup>2</sup> I differentiate between Mill's Bentham and Bentham's writings because Mill to some extent simplifies the elder utilitarian.<sup>3</sup> Clough's dissatisfactions with his life at University College are explored in *Amours de Voyage* in two primary themes: the insufficiency of facts or physical objects to represent complex lived experience, and resistance to conventional ideas of love enacted by reducing the emotion to its physiological bases. The poem expresses both of these themes with attention to language as the means of representing truth, however defined. By presenting Claude as Bentham faced with war or love, Clough satirizes attempts to capture truth in reductive language. In the poem's negative presentation of Benthamite epistemology, however, Clough also gestures towards more satisfactory relations among interlocutors, communities, and lovers, relations which are not entirely obscured by the poem's satire and internal conflict.

---

<sup>2</sup> Nineteenth-century debate about the relative virtues of the particular and general may have begun with William Blake, who denounced the prevailing values of English visual art in a retort to Sir Joshua Reynolds and the Royal Academy, written in the margins of Reynolds' *Discourses*: "To generalize is to be an idiot." Clearly, support for particularity in the nineteenth century is not restricted to utilitarian perspectives. Compare this to an eighteenth-century dissertation on poetry in Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas*, in which a nominally wise man expounds upon the business of the poet "to examine, not the individual, but the species," and therefore never to count the petals of a tulip, but rather to depict the species such that it evokes general properties.

<sup>3</sup> Clough's version of Bentham draws primarily from Mill's account in his essay, and therefore my references to Bentham or Benthamism in this thesis refer to Mill's Bentham unless otherwise specified.

The nature of Clough's dissatisfactions at University Hall, as recorded in his correspondence, may have motivated some of the criticisms of Benthamism in *Amours de Voyage*. Although he was not entirely isolated at University Hall, Clough missed the acquaintances he enjoyed with fellow scholars at Oriel, and worried that at his age "one is not very quick at forming new ones" (*Corr.* 1: 282). Because of University College's professed indifference towards religious dogma, Clough was surprised to find that his reputation as religious apostate created barriers between him and his new colleagues, as he writes in a letter to Tom Arnold: "intolerance, O Tom, is not confined to the cloisters of Oxford or the pews of the establishment, but comes up like the tender herb – partout. And is indeed in manner indigenous in the heart of the family man of the middle classes" (*Corr.* 1: 274). Clough enjoyed teaching the few students he was assigned, but refused to expel one of them, according to a university Council mandate, for the reason that "his bill for malt-liquor is large, and because he occasionally plays at cards" (*Corr.* 1: 288). Clough refused to acquiesce to such moral policing, and neither did he contribute to ideas for increasing recruitment, perhaps because Clough did not believe that University College's methods of education warranted exposure to more students. After over a year, Clough felt that he could no longer stay at University Hall, and he applied for a professorial position in Sydney, Australia. The university council took this opportunity to rid themselves of their freethinking Head by requiring from Clough "an immediate and absolute, not a provisional resignation" so that they could fill his post with a "Gentleman whose connexions might perhaps restore this Institution to some prosperity" (*Corr.* 1: 299).<sup>4</sup> Clough's infamy also denied him the Sydney post, but he was able, through his

---

<sup>4</sup> In a letter to R. Martineau, a member of the university council, on December 12, 1851, Clough includes a detailed account of events concerning the council's ultimatum. He does so to protect himself from false

friendship with Ralph Waldo Emerson, to leave University College for temporary employment in Boston.

Some of these critiques of individualism and mercantile relations appear in *Amours de Voyage*, but the more important source of Benthamism in the poem can be found in Mill's essay on Bentham, and particularly in that essay's description of Benthamite epistemology. Alongside Coleridge, Mill posits Bentham as one of two "concentric circles" which generate the nineteenth century's conflicting sources of intellectual culture:<sup>5</sup> "to Bentham more than to any other source might be traced the questioning spirit, the disposition to demand the *why* of everything, which had gained so much ground and was producing such important consequences in these times" (41).<sup>6</sup> Whereas earlier thinkers relied too much on authorities, Bentham's innovation was to replace older theories with new ones based on more particularized foundations:

Bentham's method may be shortly described as the method of detail; of treating wholes by separating them into their parts, abstractions by resolving them into Things, -- classes and generalities by distinguishing them into the individuals of which they are made up; and breaking every question into pieces before attempting to solve it (48).

---

accusations and to suggest the unfairness of their decision by stating each party's position in a factual manner. But Clough's impersonal specificity in the letter also mocks the necessity for such bureaucratic formalities.

<sup>5</sup> Mill's assertion that Bentham and Coleridge are of fundamental importance to nineteenth century ideas found an authoritative accomplice in F.R. Leavis, whose edition of the essays in the mid-twentieth century reasserted their importance for understanding nineteenth-century literature. More recently, Isobel Armstrong's *Victorian Poetry* builds upon Leavis' rediscovery of the essays' centrality, and even connects Clough with the "post-Benthamite analysis of Browning and the *Monthly Repository* formation" (167), but does not pursue the connection.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the opening poem in Clough's earlier collection of poems, *Ambervalia*, entitled "The Questioning Spirit." Although the collection was published early in 1849, the poem's depiction of the human condition as an endless investigation of unanswerable questions suggests that Clough had doubts about Benthamite modes of knowledge before arriving at University College, where any doubts he may have had were likely intensified.

In Mill's account, Bentham begins by locating "vague generalities" which he cannot abide, and then systematically reduces them to their constituent elements. The epistemology underlining Bentham's method therefore valorizes the particular over the general, and discards the general as grounds for knowledge. By this method, Mill continues, Bentham achieved his overhaul of Blackstone's English common law system and arrived at the principles of pleasure and pain that undergird Utilitarian thought. Mill also lauds Bentham's insights that "error lurks in generalities" (49), and that "the human mind is not capable of embracing a complex whole, until it has surveyed and catalogued the parts of which that whole is made up" (49). As safeguards for these shortcomings in the human mind, Bentham's "exhaustive method" (56) secures knowledge on more rigorous empirical foundations.

Mill's essay on Bentham, like his earlier writings on Wordsworth, is a critique as well as a tribute. After setting out Bentham's contributions to philosophy, Mill grants that "we may reject, as we often must, his practical conclusions" (47), and then identifies in what ways Bentham's method falls short of Mill's lofty goals for philosophy. Mill's most incisive criticism questions the sufficiency of Bentham's reductive epistemology: "it does not make a knowledge of some of the properties of a thing suffice for the whole of it" (57). The Benthamite method therefore is primarily negative, in that its major function is to break down "vague generalities" to challenge their assumptions. Mill's framework grants Coleridge the ability to address such generalities as government and religion through Coleridge's primarily hermeneutic function, which asks: "what is the meaning of it?" Bentham, conversely, is suited less to understanding the worth of institutions than he is to revealing their inconsistencies.

Mill explains Bentham's inability to understand the worth of other ideas as part of his psychological inability to sympathize with other minds. While allowing Bentham's negative philosophical achievements, Mill argues that Bentham was limited to that method because he could not learn from others:

In many of the most natural and strongest feelings of human nature he had no sympathy; from many of its graver experiences he was altogether cut off; and the faculty by which one mind understands a mind different from itself, and throws itself into the feelings of that other mind, was denied him by his deficiency of Imagination (61).

By imagination, Mill clarifies, he does not mean skill with rhetorical and figurative language, which Bentham possessed, particularly in his earlier and more engaging prose style. Rather, the imagination which Mill does not see in Bentham is more closely aligned to the concepts that nineteenth-century literary theorists employed to describe the poet's ability "to conceive the absent as if it were present, the imaginary as if it were real, and to clothe it in the feelings which, if it were indeed real, it would bring along with it" (62).<sup>7</sup> Mill places poetry and its potential for some writers to access the generality of other minds out of Bentham's conceptual reach. Such a limitation does not apply only to philosophy or literature; Mill also depicts Bentham as incapable of comprehending abstract national identity, an idea that was highly important to Mill's ideals of social cohesion: "What could Bentham's opinion be worth on national character? How could

---

<sup>7</sup> The creative imagination has a complex history among nineteenth-century writers who employed the term not always in the same senses in which others had used it previously. Mill's definition owes more to Wordsworth's "faculty which produces impressive effects out of simple elements" ("Note to 'The Thorn,'" 96) than to Coleridge's secondary imagination, which "dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealise and unify" (*Biographia Literaria*, 304).

he, whose mind contained so few and so poor types of individual character, rise to that higher generalization?" (73).<sup>8</sup>

The sum of Mill's descriptions presents Bentham as an extreme individualist who believes that his internal faculties are sufficient for knowledge of the world and a fulfilling life. In his most striking criticism of Bentham's psychological workings, Mill describes the elder utilitarian as permanently immature:

He had neither internal experience nor external; the quiet, even tenor of his life, and his healthiness of mind, conspired to exclude him from both. He never knew prosperity and adversity, passion nor satiety: he never even had the experiences which sickness gives; he lived from childhood to the age of eighty-five in boyish health. He knew no dejection, no heaviness of heart. He never felt life a sore and a weary burden. He was a boy to the last (62).

Quite different from the exacting, yet compassionate, man of Bentham's posthumous biography written by John Bowring, Mill's Bentham appears to be content with a quiet, mostly solitary, existence among a few hand-picked disciples, working at his negative philosophy. While Mill is not explicit about Bentham's love life, the lack of "passion" in Bentham's life implies that Bentham simply was not interested in sexual relations, and thus Mill consigns Bentham to the trope of the asexual workaholic. But for Mill, whose intellectual accomplishments are inextricably associated with the influence of his wife, Harriett Taylor, a more complete thinker requires such arguably human dependences so as to understand and accommodate a wider field of experiences. A large part of

---

<sup>8</sup> Mill's interest in national character interacts with a prominent body of nineteenth-century nationalistic ideas that may be traced to Herder's writings on the *volk*, and Hegel's Eurocentric vision of the world-spirit in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*.

Bentham's immaturity, as Mill sees it, stems from his impression that Bentham did not need sympathy or reinforcement from anyone but himself. The atomism of Benthamite epistemology thus reproduces itself in the fictive Bentham's personality and behaviour, and Mill portrays Benthamite epistemology as promising, but insufficient for understanding the world.<sup>9</sup>

There is no conclusive evidence that Clough read the essay on Bentham, but *Amours de Voyage* and biographical contexts in Clough's life support the argument that Clough was very much aware of Benthamite epistemology. In addition to University College's associations with the philosopher, Clough had other means by which to encounter Benthamism and to find Bentham an interesting poetic subject. Clough's tutor at Balliol, W.G. Ward, was a considerable intellectual presence during Clough's undergraduate degree, though Clough spent much of their relationship resisting his influence. Ward's biographer writes that "the strongest directly intellectual influence exercised on him [Ward] was that of Mill and Bentham" (60), and that, although Ward was a follower of Newman, and therefore he might be assumed to be indifferent or hostile to the work of Bentham and Mill, "alike in method and in *ethos* they were singularly attractive to him, and left evidence traces on his mind" (61). Later in his life, after Clough's death, Ward invoked Bentham in conversation primarily as the butt of elaborate jokes. In doing so, Ward participated in a practice among nineteenth-century writers of ridiculing Jeremy Bentham for his utilitarianism, personality traits, or even, as related by

---

<sup>9</sup> It may be worth noting that Mill's distortions of Bentham's personality reflect an agenda to inherit Bentham's utilitarianism and broaden its scope to include those "vague generalities," such as poetry. But Mill may also have been shaping his argument to compromise with the expectations of a reading public who treated Bentham as an oddity at best, and sometimes as inhuman. Not counting the uncritical presentations of Bentham's disciples, Mill's treatment is comparatively generous about Bentham's accomplishments, and admiring of his influence

Matthew Arnold in his 1865 *Essays in Criticism*, his reputation as preserved corpse.<sup>10</sup>

These satirical attacks usually presented a straw-man Bentham, as Mill did, in opposition to a more holistic perspective on culture.

Yet Clough, unlike many of these less sympathetic critics of Benthamism, also had reasons to sympathize with Bentham's life and method. When he rejected the Thirty-Nine Articles, Clough escaped the theological debates of the Oxford Movement and the university's increasing requirements for religious ceremony.<sup>11</sup> Whereas others followed, or anticipated, Newman's conversion to Catholicism, Clough responded to the Tractarians by retreating from ritual into skeptical deism. In a manner similar to Bentham's method, Clough analyzed the bases of the Articles and rejected them, even though his conscientiousness required disconnecting from his social circles and work at Oriel. One wonders if Claude was sensitive to the irony that his Benthamite apostasy from Oxford brought him into contact with actual Benthamites. Clough's rejection of the Articles relates to his overall preference for empirical reality, as evident throughout his letters, prose writing, early poetry, and even in *Amours de Voyage* to a qualified extent. Bentham and Clough also shared a spirit of reform, Bentham in terms of the law and his support for tyrannized classes, and Clough during his visits to France and Italy in 1848 and his work with Florence Nightingale. But overall a Benthamite approach to life must have seemed insufficient to Clough, whose own proclivities and education by Thomas Arnold at Rugby reinforced his efforts to encompass both deep thought and belief in powers beyond human sensation, an endeavour which could not be carried out at Oxford.

---

<sup>10</sup> The literature of this cultural phenomenon is sufficiently voluminous and interesting that I include a selection of it in Appendix A. For a broader sampling of this practice, see Mary Mack's *Jeremy Bentham: An Odyssey of Ideas*, page two.

<sup>11</sup> "Qui Laborat Orat" suggests that Clough viewed ritual devotion to God as unappealing, and rather preferred silent contemplation or acting on one's spiritual beliefs, so long as the latter are tenable.

Most critics of *Amours de Voyage* agree that the poem corresponds to Clough's spiritual conflicts, while granting that Clough and Claude should not be conflated. The poem's earlier readers, however, tend not to think beyond biographical readings, and focus on abjuring or condoning Claude's skepticism. In 1862, an anonymous critic in the *Church and State Review* calls skepticism in poetry "the worst conceit of the time" (*Critical Heritage* 157), and much prefers the "Homeric" and "original" *Bothie*. Conversely, Walter Bagehot lauds Clough's "truthful skepticism" (*Critical Heritage* 162), and contrasts him to atheist minds such as Voltaire who do not admit an invisible world beyond the senses. John Addington Symonds notes that there are satirical sketches in *Amours de Voyage*, and argues that though Clough is "minutely analytical – as, for instance, in *Dipsychus* and some parts of *Amours de Voyage* – he is never morbidly so" (*Critical Heritage* 229).<sup>12</sup>

Clough's earliest reader, Shairp, may have seen the poem most clearly in that he identified a target for Clough's satire. After reading his draft copy, Shairp wrote: "It strikes me as the most Werterish (not that I ever read Werter) of all you have yet done" (*Corr.* 1: 275). It is difficult to say whether Shairp meant that Claude drew upon the character of Werther in Goethe's novella, or whether he refers more generally to the phenomenon of Wertherism as youthful discontent with God's ordered universe. But Shairp at least suggests the possibility that Claude could be read as based on a nineteenth-century type and not primarily as Clough. Other critics would develop Shairp's insight only in the latter half of the twentieth century, following the revival of Clough

---

<sup>12</sup> The penchant of Victorian critics to read texts as the straightforwardly lyrical statement of the poet may have had detrimental effects on Clough's reception once the aesthetic movement relegated Clough to obscurity for nearly seventy years, barring a few notices that were ineffectual by contrast to the modernist reaction of Lytton Strachey.

scholarship in the 1950s. Christopher Kierstead argues that in writing *Amours de Voyage* and *Dipsychus*, Clough cast aside the Byronic pose of “the bold but melancholy traveler” because it was “an overused, tarnished form of cultural capital” (377) and because Clough was uncomfortable with asserting himself as Carlyle’s Heroic Poet, who represented the voice of the age. Again, however, Kierstead does not propose that Claude is modeled on Byron, but that the poem parodies his ingratiating style of travel.

Eugene August hits very near the mark when he proposes that parts of Claude’s characterization are based on Matthew Arnold’s failed romance with a woman named Mary Claude, exploits which were fictionalized in Arnold’s Switzerland poems. The coincidence between the name of Arnold’s love-attraction and the names of the major love interests in *Amours de Voyage* is interesting, but there are other inflections to these names that may have made them attractive to Clough for different reasons. For example, Claude translates to “lame” in Latin, Mary may be seen as a pun for the possibility of marriage that she stands for, and the poem supplies a homonymic connection between a clod of earth and an insubstantial cloud that reflects Claude’s inner division between the worlds of empirical fact and spirit.<sup>13</sup> Regardless, Matthew Arnold is not a suitable candidate for Claude’s character on any deep level for two reasons. The first is the difference between Arnold’s and Claude’s attitudes towards love. Whereas Claude refuses to acknowledge love attachments because they are factitious, we might consider Arnold’s “Ah, love, let us be true / to one another!” as evidence of his faith that human

---

<sup>13</sup> The pun between Claude and clod would be clearer if pronounced in American, rather than most forms of British, English. It is not clear what sort of accent Clough had, considering that he lived in Charleston, South Carolina from the ages of two to nine, and that his classmates at Rugby called him “Tom Yankee”. In any case, the tri-lingual title of the poem “Epi-Strauss-ium” suggests that Clough played with different languages in his poetry, and it would not be a stretch to imagine that Clough was also interested in dialects or national accents. As well, the controversy over the unintended obscenity in the original title for the *Bothie of Tober-na-Fuosich* suggests that Clough had invented or borrowed the title without knowing its meaning, as though he accepted that he was irremediably a linguistic outsider to the Scottish Highlands.

connection can withstand the ebbing of religious belief and his paradoxical sense that the world lacks love. Second, Arnold's attention to literary tradition conflicts with Claude's reliance on particular objects and facts. Arnold's intellectual career cannot be characterized as epistemologically skeptical, and thus he and Claude are a poor fit.

*Amours de Voyage* hints at Claude's Benthamite qualities throughout the early sections of Canto one. Claude's first letter to Eustace, a friend of similarly high education who corresponds from England, presents the protagonist as a confident satirist of Rome's supposed shortcomings. Claude perceives the architectural history of Rome as disorganized layers of colonization and arbitrary preservation, and, despite Rome's glorification in the poetry of Goethe and Byron,<sup>14</sup> Claude summarizes the scene with reductive distaste: "*Rubbishy* seems the word that most exactly would suit it" (1.20). Whereas other tourists accept Rome's de facto cultural preeminence, Claude reacts almost violently to the chaos of its accumulated architecture. He summarizes Rome in a clever aphorism that reveals how Rome's culture in the generality is in fact a patchwork of particular elements: "'Brickwork I found thee, and marble I left thee!' their Emperor vaunted; / 'Marble I thought thee, and brickwork I find thee! the Tourist may answer'" (1.49-50). Upon arriving at his destination, Claude immediately undertakes his Benthamite project of identifying and picking apart the vague generalities which are so highly evident to him. Yet Rome is not a complete disappointment for Claude because it, as he tells Eustace, allows him to flaunt his self-reliance: "It is a blessing, no doubt, to be rid, at least for a time, of / All one's friends and relations, – yourself (forgive me!) included" (1.28-9).

Claude's assertions of extreme individuality are very soon undercut by a need for

---

<sup>14</sup> For example, in Goethe's *Roman Elegies* (1790) and Byron's *Beppo* (1818).

social interaction which he has denied and which he continues to deny. In the next letter, we learn that Claude has taken up with an English family whose members include three women of marriageable age, and his letters to Eustace reveal his growing interest in them, hidden as dispassionate observations: “These are the facts” (1.202). But given another short time Claude writes that his earlier sense of self-reliance is fading:

But I am in for it now, – *laissez faire*, of a truth, *laissez aller*.

Yes, I am going, – I feel it, I feel and cannot recall it, –

Fusing with this thing and that, entering into all sorts of relations, (1.

227-9).

Once he has fallen in love, Claude’s invocations of Adam Smith cannot subdue his desires for connection with Mary Trevellyn. His self-reliance punctured, Claude throughout much of the poem questions his needs and resists the social bonds that may repair those breaches. This situation represents the germ of Clough’s primary creative idea for *Amours de Voyage*: an attempt to imagine the consequences of a Benthamite who, although committed to the particular, falls in love and must struggle to accommodate slippery concepts such as love in the abstract and relationships as interpenetration of identities. Claude’s supposed search for “the great massy strengths of abstraction” (1.251) is therefore earnest, yet doomed. Despite his professed commitment to ideas, Claude pathologically returns to the particular in the poem’s satiric leitmotif.

The Roman setting provides a satirically romantic backdrop for the encounter between Bentham and his love interest, by playing on the connotations of Rome in the poetic traditions of Goethe and Byron as a locus for sexual freedom and immorality, by contrast to England’s staid ritual of courtship. If Bentham cannot find love in Rome, or

so the joke goes, then he may as well be stuffed and put on display.

But Rome in 1848 also allows Clough to experiment with Claude's reactions to the political upheavals and bloodshed of the Italian Revolutionary wars. When Claude first experiences the war, he associates it with a particular object that cannot represent that experience in its entirety. Claude employs what little Italian he has mustered during his time at the English enclave in Rome to place an order at the café: "*Caffè-latte* ! I call to the waiter, – and *Non c'è latte*, / This is the answer he makes me, and this the sign of a battle" (2.100-1). For Claude, the "milkless *nero*" (2.102-3) comes to stand metonymically for his role in the war as one who is momentarily inconvenienced. Although the loss of milk when supply routes were cut by the French may have resulted in hardships for others in Rome, Claude neither suffers from the lack nor does he imagine that others might be suffering.

Mostly, however, the image of the milkless *nero* functions as a particularized object that is largely disconnected from the significance of the event which it is meant to represent. Unlike a Wordsworth poem, in which any object, such as an unfinished sheepfold, old tree, or pile of stones, may elicit the speaker to recreate a story, in *Amours de Voyage* the physical object, lacking a poet to meditate on it, calls attention to its own inadequacy in relation to the movements of culture and experience.

Having set out some foundations for the influence of Benthamism on Clough and *Amours de Voyage*, I leave more specific connections to be developed in the remaining chapters of this thesis. The second chapter, entitled "Philosopher Poet," discusses Clough's attention to the linguistic, and therefore poetic, consequences of Benthamite epistemology primarily as they appear in Claude's reports of the war. The title's chief

charge derives from Mill's idealization, in his essay "Two Types of Poetry," of the poet who has both natural and trained poetic sensibilities. Mill's framework may have been inspiring to many hopeful writers, but I argue that for Clough poetic and philosophic perspectives are in some ways opposed. I return to Mill's essay on Bentham, which reads Jeremy Bentham's tirade against the rhetorical excesses of poetry in *The Rationale of Reward* to identify a nineteenth-century philosophic tradition that opposes poetic language to truth. However, Bentham's deformations of language in his search for transparent reference trouble this dichotomy. I argue that Claude, modeled on Benthamism, displays many of these overbearingly skeptical and empirical attitudes towards language, knowledge, and art. I focus on Claude's use of what Robindra Kumar Biswas describes as a "syntactical strategy" (318) to report experience in its most particularized and yet unsatisfactory form, and therefore to comment on the shortcomings of Benthamite epistemology and its operations in poetic language.

In the third chapter, "Philosopher Lover," I discuss the attitudes of *Amours de Voyage* towards marriage and love. Whereas Bentham was apparently satisfied during his bachelor life with his disciples and writings, in the late 1840s Clough sought a meaningful relationship with a woman and was engaged to be married in 1851. I argue that Claude acts as a mouthpiece for Clough's questions about what love and marriage should entail. The institution of marriage was criticized by various writers during the 1840s and 50s, with Goethe as a prominent example of a scientific and literary authority offering validation for legal divorce. Within this context, *Amours de Voyage*, I argue, navigates such contrasting impulses to denounce and reclaim marriage, particularly via scientific discourse, by characterizing Claude as though he were Jeremy Bentham faced

with the intellectual and emotional demands of a love-attachment. Though stricken with desire for connection with his lover, Claude resists abstract concepts, such as love, that transcend the individual and particular. His radical skepticism therefore picks apart with ease his incipient emotional connections, while at the same time Claude yearns for that same “factitious” relationship. Claude’s failure to achieve his love occurs in part because of an opposing female force in Miss Roper, another questioning spirit though not a Benthamite, and in defeat Claude retreats from marriage and love into further exile and disconnect.

I take the title of the concluding exploratory chapter, “Farther Uses of the Dead to the Living,” from an unpublished pamphlet of Bentham’s concerning the creation and display of his preserved corpse, which he called his Auto-Icon. Granting that it is highly unlikely that Clough had read that manuscript, this chapter approaches the question of whether Clough may have encountered Jeremy Bentham’s body after it arrived at University College some time during the period 1849-50. I inquire about the possibility that Clough knew about the presence of the body at the College and whether Clough had access to the display. I then return to a passage in *Amours de Voyage* I discuss in chapter two, to consider the epistemological implications of whether Claude had in fact seen “through the legs of the crowd the legs of a body.” Such challenges to particular reference as grounds for empirical knowledge, I argue, are part of the poem’s most powerful critique of Benthamism, and though it is hard to say that Clough acts as more than a negative thinker in this regard, such techniques are characteristic of a creative method in *Amours de Voyage* that deserves reconsideration.

My method in *this* thesis is to assert the influence of a certain formulation of

Benthamism on *Amours de Voyage* on historical and literary grounds. But while I am using intellectual history to support my claims, I aim also to revise Clough's position within it. Clough's position within intellectual history needs to be revised in order to accommodate his interactions with English empirical philosophy. In addition to Clough's letters and other biographical sources, I read some of Clough's other literary works to establish context for his satirical imagination in *Amours de Voyage*. Prior to the relativism of the 1970s and 80s, Clough scholars debated whether or not Clough should be considered a poet. Although that conversation has lapsed, mostly to the benefit of Clough scholarship, the results of my work indicate a hitherto-unappreciated element of Clough's method.

*Amours de Voyage* may be situated within an anti-utilitarian tradition of questioning love's measurability. We might be reminded of the self-parody implicit in Barrett-Browning's perfectly-balanced and syntactically-simplified line: "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways." Or else Tennyson's thin assertion in *In Memoriam*, which is unable to support the weight of the text that follows it, that "'Tis better to have loved and lost / Than never to have loved at all" (27.15-6). If we classify and dissect love as though it were a specimen returned from Darwin's voyages on the *Beagle*, Clough asks, does love as an abstraction still have meaning? Victorian poets ask whether these are useful questions, but they readily admit that the questions are being asked and that there are cultural necessities for asking them. Clough's response, by setting a version of Bentham on these problems, is to dramatize the questioner's descent into the maze of truth, and to seek the answers to the empiricist mode of inquiry at its most rigorous extent. The results of these inquiries are derived largely by satirical methods, but this is

not to say that the poem does not often sympathize with Claude. As Bentham, the English questioning spirit in human form, Claude approaches the limits of what a British, empiricist education can accomplish when analyzing complex, interpersonal problems such as language, community, and love. But at the same time, Claude exposes, in good Benthamite form, the unjust power structures that rely on unanalyzed conceptions of these irresolvable issues.

## II. Philosopher-Poet

Among the experimental long poems of the mid-nineteenth century, *Amours de Voyage* is perhaps the most combative in response to expectations that the poet's aim is to access general truth. Whereas poetry from earlier in the century tended to showcase a lyric persona's synthetic vision, *Amours de Voyage* and its contemporary works often set into motion conflicting discourses and leave the reader to sort out a position among the issues in collision. More thematically and linguistically radical than *In Memoriam* and *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, *Amours de Voyage*, in its skepticism about the poet's role as soothsayer and its use of decidedly unpoetic language, evinces commentary on Benthamite epistemology and utilitarian approaches to art. These philosophical backgrounds are, as I have argued, most evident in Mill's essays on Bentham, but are also rehearsed in Mill's earlier writings on poetry. These contexts may have been still more interesting to Clough as part of his poetic endeavours because, during the 1830s and 40s, Mill was embroiled in his own internecine struggle concerning the direction of utilitarianism and its positions on the central opposition between rationality and emotion. Many of these battles were contested on the fields of poetry, an unfamiliar locale for many utilitarians, and Mill's solutions to these conflicts involved syntheses that may have been unpalatable to some of Mill's fellow radicals as well as Clough's skeptical poetics.<sup>15</sup>

Through its satire of Benthamite epistemology and that idea's linguistic repercussions, *Amours de Voyage* presents Claude's language at critical moments of stress, particularly during the scenes of war in Canto two, as contorting in an effort to

---

<sup>15</sup> Discourse among utilitarians about poetry appears in the radical journal, the *Monthly Repository*. For example, the anonymous writer of a September, 1837 article entitled "Results of the Election, and Defects of the Reformers" attacks Benthamism by referring to Bentham's "want of universality to so puerile an extent" that he undervalues poetry (147).

question or eliminate the vague generalities he cannot accept because of his Benthamite habits. While the primary abstraction that Claude questions is love, this chapter concentrates on Claude's inability to express his observations of the war, his inner turmoil concerning his associations with a merchant class and its language that the poem links with fact, and Clough's use of meter in *Amours de Voyage* to grapple with poetic and intellectual identities. The poem highlights these Benthamite predilections and shortcomings by opposing them to an intercalated lyric voice which offsets the poem's skeptical overtones by uttering the possibility of true knowledge or connection, but not without cultivating the poem's conflicted response to portraying Benthamite language in poetic valences.

In the essay on Bentham, Mill argues that Bentham's philosophy of language exemplifies his empiricist epistemology, and thus aims to make signs equivalent to their referents. Mill states that Bentham derided language that was employed towards conveying more than concrete meaning: "towards poetry in the narrower sense, that which employs the language of words, he entertained no favour. Words, he thought, were perverted from their proper office when they were employed in uttering anything but precise logical truth" (173).<sup>16</sup> If Bentham allows only concepts that may be validated as logically true, then language must communicate only facts, either empirically-derived or *a priori*, and must resist suggesting other meanings that might complicate the ideal of precise communication.

---

<sup>16</sup> In *Gulliver's Travels*, Jonathan Swift explores a similar ideal for a language that lacks deception via the Houyhnhnms, who are incapable of lying and can only communicate the concept as "the thing which is not." But whatever improvements to communication that the Houyhnhnms provide are arguably canceled by the absence of imagination and tolerance in their society. Moreover, Swift ridiculed an ideal for perfect transmission of ideas in Book Three, in which the Academy of Lagado's School of Language schemes to replace words with objects.

Bentham's positivistic theory of language causes him to be hostile towards poetry because figurative language and satirical hyperbole often may not be verified by empirical reality. Despite his intentions, Mill's qualification of Bentham's aversion towards art did not render that trope useless for critics of utilitarianism. Mill discusses Bentham's aphorisms concerning poetry, and interprets them so as to revise Bentham's reputation as an opponent of poetry: "He says, somewhere in his works, that 'quantity of pleasure being equal, push-pin is as good as poetry': but this is only a paradoxical way of stating what he would equally have said of the things which he most valued and admired" (173-4). Mill's claim is that Bentham did not intend to lower poetry's value to that of a game, but rather to suggest that poetry and push-pin are valuable only insofar as each may make people happy, although even this defence would be insufficient for readers who, like Matthew Arnold, turn to poetry for more than pleasure. In any case, those who attempt to place poetry above push-pin on a hierarchical scale merely demonstrate, as far as Bentham is concerned, "idiosyncrasies of taste" (153).

Mill identifies a contradiction in Bentham's work, in which the latter's reaction against the corruption of meaning in poetic language led to Bentham's prose style, which distorts itself in its efforts for transparent reference. Mill asks: "Did Bentham really suppose that it is in poetry only that propositions cannot be exactly true, cannot contain in themselves all the limitations and qualifications with which they require to be taken when applied to practice?" (174). While Mill recognizes the inherent slipperiness of reference, Bentham's prose style strives for a positivist stabilization between word and referent.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> A sample of Bentham's later prose in his *Rationale of Reward* might clarify what Mill criticizes here. The following quotation is also notable for its opposition between art and science, which Bentham modulates into an opposition between performance and knowledge, or, in other words, between the skill and the information required to accomplish an action: "In proportion as that which is seen to be *done*, is

Mill describes Bentham's failure: "We have seen how far his own prose propositions are from realizing this Utopia: and even the attempt to approach it would be incompatible not with poetry merely, but with oratory, and popular writing of every kind" (174). Mill found Bentham's earlier style to be a model of clarity and persuasiveness, but argues that "in his later years and more advanced studies, he fell into a Latin or German structure of sentence, foreign to the genius of the English language" (175).<sup>18</sup> In response to Bentham's "perpetually aiming at impracticable precision" (174), Mill describes Bentham as unintentionally satirizing his own efforts at clarity:

We regard it as a *reductio ad absurdum* of his objection to poetry. In trying to write in a manner against which the same objection should not lie, he could stop nowhere short of utter unreadableness, and after all attained no more accuracy than is compatible with opinions as imperfect and one-sided as those of any poet or sentimentalist breathing. Judge then in what state literature and philosophy would be, and what chance they would have of influencing the multitude, if his objection were allowed, and all styles of writing banished which would not stand his test (175).

Whereas in the 1841 essays Mill proposed a dialectic of Benthamite and Coleridgean thought for a British ideal, in his 1833 writings on poetry he synthesizes rationality and intuition in order to address poetry, a subject that was thought

---

more conspicuous than that which is seen or supposed to be *known*, – that which has place is apt to be considered as the work of *art*: in proportion as that which is seen and supposed to be *known*, is more conspicuous that anything else that is seen to be *done*, – that which has place is apt to be set down to the account of science" (204).

<sup>18</sup> Clough's prose works indicate a shared interest with Bentham in improving the English language. In his "Lecture on Dryden," Clough lauds Dryden's prose as the source of a "democratic movement in the language" (331) that seeks to maximize comprehension, an aim of which Bentham would have approved. However, Clough overlooks Bentham's self-defeating scrupulosity to procure Dryden as father of an English prose lineage.

incompatible with utilitarianism. In these essays as well as in the essay on Bentham, Mill criticizes the Benthamite philosophy of his youth for its exclusive regard of empiricism and logic. In particular, Mill writes to accommodate within utilitarianism intuitive truths, which were becoming increasingly associated with markedly un-British sources, in Kant and German idealism. Appreciation of intuitive truth involves attributing truth values to human emotions and desires, an endeavour that conflicted with the empiricist training of most British philosophers. In his "Thoughts on Poetry," Mill argues that reality does not necessarily require a foundation in observable nature:

The distinction between poetry and what is not poetry, whether explained or not, is felt to be fundamental: and where every one feels a difference, a difference there must be. All other appearances may be fallacious, but the appearance of a difference is a real difference. Appearances too, like other things, must have a cause, and that which can cause anything, even an illusion, must be reality (343).

Unlike Bentham's monolithic, logical standards for reality, Mill broadens his definition to include the effects of appearances on human beings. In doing so, he provides an epistemological justification for art forms such as poetry, which may employ language in figurative ways, and therefore may not faithfully reflect nature. But Mill, who in his *Autobiography* would profess that utilitarian training was inadequate for his well-being, here argues that poetry evinces a different and opposite truth-claim to that of empiricism: "The object of poetry is confessedly to act upon the emotions; and therein is poetry sufficiently distinguished from what Wordsworth affirms to be its logical opposite, namely, not prose, but matter of fact or science. The one addresses itself to the belief, the

other to feelings” (344).<sup>19</sup> Mill recognizes that our sense of reality is mediated, and that the presence of the physical world is at base a matter of faith rather than something we can perceive directly. But at the same time he does not much qualify the point he associates with Wordsworth that the truth-claims of fact and feeling are opposed.

Mill’s famed definition of poetry associates that art form with the intuitive processes that he elsewhere suggests utilitarianism ignores or silences: “Poetry and eloquence are both alike the expression or utterance of feeling. But if we may be excused the antithesis, we should say that eloquence is *heard*, poetry is *overheard*. Eloquence supposes an audience; the peculiarity of poetry appears to us to lie in the poet’s utter unconsciousness of a listener” (348). Mill associates eloquence with rhetoric and melodramatic fiction, in which the writer’s feeling pours out “to other minds, courting their sympathy, or endeavouring to influence their belief, or move them to passion or to action” (349). Poetry, conversely, involves an emotion or sequence of emotions that occur within the writer and which the writer’s deeper self<sup>20</sup> verifies as true. Whereas eloquence may be validated by the external check of an audience’s approval, poetry in Mill’s specialized sense operates on an entirely individualized level, except for the interpersonal validation of a community of readers.

The second section of Mill’s “Thoughts on Poetry” distinguishes between two types of poets. The first, the poet of culture, is the result of training, and the second, the poet of nature, possesses in-born emotional proclivities. Being thus related to an inherent nature and the emotions, the latter doubly cannot be countenanced by the extreme

---

<sup>19</sup> Mill misrepresents Wordsworth’s actual distinction between murderous analysis, as hinted at in “The Tables Turned,” and creative synthesis.

<sup>20</sup> Terms from other disciplines, such as subconscious or being, may help clarify this concept, which arguably lacks an obvious referent, or at least a referent with easily definable limits.

utilitarian. As examples, Mill gives Wordsworth for the first type and Shelley for the second.<sup>21</sup> But while Mill deems that both types are poets in a loose sense, he regards the poet of nature as the basis for a useful definition: “Whom, then, shall we call poets? Those who are so constituted, that emotions are the links of association by which their ideas, both sensuous and spiritual, are connected together” (356). For these writers, then, emotions generate the language that comprises their written work, whereas the poet of culture has been trained, perhaps even by utilitarian methods, to present in language selected emotions according to rhetorical figures or the needs of an idea. For poets of culture, “poetry is something extraneous and superinduced,” and they will even consider their creations as “a phantom-world, a place of *ignes fatui* and spectral illusions” (356), rather than an extension of their inner impulses. Mill’s description of the poet of culture resembles Bentham’s attitude towards art as a rhetorical performance that may distort empirical reality, but more specifically, in Mill’s case, poets of culture hamper truth by ignoring their intuitive wellsprings.

But if in these essays Mill wishes to distance himself from Wordsworth, the mere poet of culture, he also works to carve out space between the poetic mind and Mill’s own Benthamite heritage. Although, Mill argues, the poet of nature may educate himself and attain the expertise of the poet of culture, “a philosopher cannot, by culture, make himself, in the peculiar sense in which we now use the term, a poet” (363). It is strange for Mill to argue that emotional sensitivity cannot be trained, considering his own history,

---

<sup>21</sup> It is noteworthy that Wordsworth and Shelley are two of Clough’s clearest nineteenth-century influences, and are often invoked in his poetry. The centrality of these two poets may be evidence of Mill’s influence on poetic discourse, and perhaps directly on Clough, although Mill agrees with a larger body of readers. As well, critics have yet to study the influence of these early nineteenth-century poets on Clough’s work to any great extent. Shelley’s presence in *Amours de Voyage* and the *Bothie* is interesting particularly in terms of Clough’s ambivalence towards idealism in imaginative writing.

but his overall point is that poets possess a fundamentally different nature in relation to how they process language, a nature that cannot be detected by empirical tests but must be identified by sensitive minds. Yet, Mill insists not only that the rational mind is stuck with its own traits, but that it is a narrow mode of thinking: “The investigation of nature requires no habits or qualities of mind, but such as may always be acquired by industry and mental activity” (363). Later in the essay on Bentham, Mill will grant Bentham, and therefore other philosophers, a variety to their powers that allows them to accomplish different sorts of tasks, but in the 1833 essays he commits those without poetic sensitivities to an educational dead-end.

At least the poet of nature in Mill’s theory may benefit from intellectual training, and Mill describes the resulting philosopher-poet as the superior poetic nature:

Whether the superiority will naturally be on the side of the philosopher poet or of the mere poet – whether the writings of the one ought, as a whole, to be truer, and their influence more beneficent, than those of the other – is too obvious in principle to need statement: it would be absurd to doubt whether two endowments are better than one; whether truth is more certainly arrived at by two processes, verifying and correcting each other, than by one alone (364).

Mill, as did Bentham before him, here links the truth value of poetry and its moral ramifications, but argues that the qualities are complimentary rather than opposed. Mill ameliorates Bentham’s problem with poets who interfere with reality by positing a poet who may curb imaginative zeal through the use of intellectual accuracy. However, Mill admits that his ideal often is impracticable because of flaws in England’s education

systems: “[o]rdinary education and the ordinary course of life are constantly at work counteracting this quality of mind” because they repress mental faculties (361). He looks ahead to a time when education will instead consist of “training up to its proper strength the corrective and antagonist power” (361), and thus pushes for a strain of educational reform with political implications that Clough may have supported, given the discrimination he faced after leaving Oxford.

It may be supposed from “Why should I say I see the things I see not” in *Ambervalia* that Clough’s contemplation of the “two musics unto men” (29) indicates that he believed in something like a Millian duality of truth-claims, or even a more modern multiplicity of truths. However, prior to his University College tenure, Clough also opposed intellectual learning and the poetic spirit in the poem “In a Lecture-Room”:

Away, haunt thou not me,  
 Thou vain Philosophy !  
 Little hast thou bestead,  
 Save to perplex the head,  
 And leave the spirit dead (1-5).

Clough’s thoughts here appeal more to universal than idiosyncratic experience, and join a tradition of anxieties about education. In “Dejection: An Ode,” to name but one nineteenth-century example,<sup>22</sup> Coleridge worries that philosophy has won the battle against poetry as he ponders features of scenic nature, noticing that they engage only his perception, and not his imagination:

Yon crescent Moon as fixed as if it grew

---

<sup>22</sup> See also Wordsworth’s “The Tables Turned” and “Expostulation and Reply,” and George Eliot’s *Brother and Sister Sonnets*.

In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;  
 I see them all so excellently fair,  
 I see, not feel, how beautiful they are! (35-8).

When compared to the written experience of poets, therefore, Mill's synthesis of the philosopher-poet may be less attainable than he theorized. But Mill's more traditionally-utilitarian argument, that such an internal conflict is due to a failing in British pedagogy, may still be valid, and it is possible that Coleridge and Clough in these poems are presenting themselves as interacting with an anti-philosophical cultural and poetic convention, which may have derived in reaction to Bentham, as much as legitimately overhearing a crisis of cross-training.

The reduction of truth to empirical, Benthamite grounds in *Amours de Voyage* occurs partly in the poem's style. Critics of Clough's style in *Amours de Voyage* usually comment on the hexameters, and less often note Claude's peculiar syntax in relation to the truthfulness of his dialogue. With few exceptions, the earliest critics were interested primarily in evaluating his use of dactylic hexameter, an unusual choice of meter in English, although it was known for being used in ancient epics and tragedies, and had been more recently used in Longfellow's *Evangeline* of 1847. J.C. Shairp underlined his uneasiness about *Amours de Voyage* by criticizing the hexameters for their "feeling of parody" (*Corr.* 1: 277). Whereas an anonymous critic for the *Saturday Review* found the hexameters simply "unexplainable" (*Critical Heritage* 109), at least two commentators found that the hexameters enhanced flexibility in the meter, by contrast to *Evangeline's* relentlessly buffeting spondees. Walter Bagehot approved of Clough's innovation of a meter that "changes from grave to gay without desecrating what should be solemn, or

disenchanting that which should be graceful” (173). John Addington Symonds praised “those loose, yet rhythmical lines” that enabled Clough to “express with the exact fidelity required by his artistic conscience all essential realities of fact” (248). Symonds thus connects the hexameter’s functions in *Amours de Voyage* with Claude’s attempts to reach truth.

Following the 1960s and 1970s Clough revival, critics echoed Isobel Armstrong’s call in 1969 for more attention to the language of Victorian poetry (3). In that collection of essays, John Goode argues that *Amours de Voyage* comments on a “disease of language” (296), which leads to Claude in Canto five surpassing doubt and entering into “the honesty of David Hume” (291).<sup>23</sup> Michael Timko refers to “the wave-like moving stasis” of the hexameters (169), and lauds Clough’s ability in *Amours de Voyage* to “integrate the syntactic breaks into a psychological and moral drama of needle-fine distinctness and refinement” (169). Robindra Biswas pays the most specific attention to what he calls Clough’s “syntactical strategy” (319) of qualifying initial statements into truer forms. Biswas notes similar passages as those in the present study, but his reading focuses on the formal achievement of Clough’s style in evoking a “subtle record of ambivalence” (319), rather than giving reasons for why Clough may have found such a style complimentary to his satire of British intellectual habits.

More recent critics of Clough’s style focus primarily on the political implications of the hexameters in *Amours de Voyage* and *The Bothie*. In Armstrong’s *Victorian Poetry*, she argues that for poets in the mid-nineteenth century the “question of representation is more tentatively explored as a gap between sign and meaning; language

---

<sup>23</sup> As a precursor of Bentham, Hume may be seen as an indirect influence on *Amours de Voyage*, as may be other philosophers of empirical or skeptical allegiances, such as John Locke and George Berkeley, respectively, though Hume’s direct influence as a skeptic on Clough seems to be negligible.

becomes that which possesses an independent life-eluding consciousness” and that language therefore “makes communal understanding impossible by its inherent ambiguities and capacity to invite misprision” (168). In her chapter on Clough, Armstrong argues that Arnold and Clough “refuse metaphor” because “metaphor is the ideological form of economic individualism where each man ‘fights for himself’, a form too close to the spiritual individualism of their own presuppositions to be comfortable” (180).<sup>24</sup> However, I contend that Claude’s need of solid fact rather than metaphor reflects his Benthamite preference for the particular. In *Amours de Voyage*, therefore, Clough’s use of figurative language represents his efforts to connect empirical reality with the generalities he desires, such as love. Drummond Bone comments on Claude’s inability to “say anything without qualification,” a trait which he describes as “an almost comic tic” (19). For Bone, the hexameters of *Amours de Voyage* are a labyrinth in which “the next move is radically unpredictable” (26), as well as an “alien framework” (26) by which Clough contrasts cultural practices in England and Rome.

Matthew Reynolds argues that *Amours de Voyage* challenges a mid-nineteenth century interest in the Risorgimento as a metaphor for various types of unity that could expand sympathies among citizens of Britain. In *The Realms of Verse*, Reynolds discusses John Stuart Mill’s definition of nationalism as a product of sympathy and exclusion (72), and argues that “*Amours de Voyage* resists the ideology of national unification, and, in so doing, rejects all the means for the creation of imaginative community and direction ... which Clough himself had canvassed in tongue-and-cheek

---

<sup>24</sup> Keats is an antecedent for such an attempt to “refuse metaphor,” in that the “Autumn Ode” strives to limit its representation to immediate and depersonalized observations of reality, as is the mandate of the chameleon poet. This similar impetus of Keats and Clough may be more than coincidental because, as Phelan notes (110n), Clough was involved in editing Keats’ letters.

fashion in the *Bothie*" (155). I largely concur with his readings that, although it shares with *Aurora Leigh* sufficient elements for a "grand synthesis" (128), Clough's poem leaves those parts unamalgamated, and achieves "no connection aside from simultaneity" (151), that Claude's skepticism allows him to pierce through Mazzini's war-time rhetoric, and that "Claude is a dramatized character who goes through an emotional upheaval which he makes great efforts to conceal" (149). Yet I would add to Reynolds' reading that "the English" is a category that Claude can associate with particular members, and find comfort in, even as he resists it, when the enclave huddles together for protection.

In *Amours de Voyage*, Claude's experience of the war, and its demands on his loyalties, invoke Bentham's attacks on generalities. As we have seen, Claude loses some of his satirical confidence after he falls in love with Mary, and at that point he begins to recognize his desire to escape the bounds of his individual existence. However, Claude continues to safeguard his individuality by refusing to join the Italian cause, though he admits with some irony: "*Dulce* it is, and *decorum*, no doubt, for the country to fall, – to / Offer one's blood an oblation to Freedom, and die for the Cause; yet / Still, individual culture is also something" (2.30-2). Claude's resistance to fighting for either the country or the English women is not evenly distributed, however, as he asserts to Eustace that he would rather fight for a national unity that he cannot perceive or the lower classes he scorns than for the more pressing demands on his masculinity to protect the Trevellyn women. Claude's arch tone obscures a deeper anxiety:

Should I incarnadine ever this inky pacifical finger,  
Sooner far should it be for this vapour of Italy's freedom,  
Sooner far by the side of the d—d and dirty plebeians.

Ah, for a child in the street I could strike; for the full-blown lady –

Somehow, Eustace, alas ! I have not felt the vocation, (2.73-6).

Claude's decision not to fight occurs within a nexus of conflicting epistemological and pragmatic concerns. Claude refuses to accept claims of honour on his actions because such claims seem to him as hardly perceptible "vapour." From Claude's perspective, such a fine mist could not wash away the stains of blood, his or another's, on his unwarlike hands. But protecting the women seems to Clough the more repulsive duty, especially when he considers that the solid but conventional George Vernon will "in radiant arms stand forth for the lovely Georgina" (2.78). In opposition to George's acting on a public expectation, Claude asks whether or not such a feeling of duty may be observed in himself: "Ah, but before it comes, am I to presume it will be so? / What I cannot feel now, am I to suppose that I shall feel? / Am I not free to attend for the ripe and indubious instinct?" (2.82-4). Claude demands the verification of a feeling before he acts on a duty expected by his English coterie. But this feeling never comes, or at least Claude will not admit it. His waiting for the vacant feeling that will not arrive suggests a corollary of Mill's theory of poetry: what happens to those, the supposed non-poets, who are unable, by nature or training, to overhear themselves? Perhaps Mill had Bentham in mind if he had imagined a person who was incapable of self-overhearing, or who resisted the voice because it conflicted with intellectual habits. Both Bentham and Claude strive for types of verification that are not always sufficient, nor possible, without intuitive reinforcement.

Claude cannot remain entirely aloof from the effects of the war, and soon its consequences reach him. He describes the onset of battle as he arrives at a café:

Yes, we are fighting at last, it appears. This morning as usual,  
*Murray*, as usual, in hand, I enter the Caffè Nuovo;  
 Searing myself with a sense as it were of a change in the weather,  
 Not understanding, however, but thinking mostly of Murray (2.95-8).

Thus far, the war has done little to alter Claude's quotidian ennui. Part of his habits includes hauling around *Murray's Guide to Central Italy*. The first travel guide available widely to nineteenth-century England, Murray offered prospective travelers an immense assortment of factual details about their destination. Perhaps overwhelming in number, these details include statistics about topography, demographics, history, government, income, educational institutions, and commerce. As well, Murray contains a history of Italy's architecture, and lists of paintings, art, books, and innumerable churches. Later chapters feature logistical information and prescribed routes for travelers that list, in order, those sights the guide-book author deems worthy of a visit. The tome amounts to some seven-hundred pages, and the poem supplies a small joke when it describes Claude as being able to carry his Murray casually, "in hand." Another suggestion is that Claude bears the weight of fact much more easily than he does that of duty. Claude's affection for the book seems not to have been diminished by what Claude may consider its inaccuracies, such as a relatively uncomplicated narrative of Rome's architectural history. It may seem strange that Claude accepts this sort of factual authority. As a young Englishman embarked on the grand tour, Claude lacks a cicerone to instruct him, and instead relies on his English friends or Murray as repositories for conventional English opinions. But the overall significance of the travel guide suggests that Claude, despite his education, has not entirely transcended his middle-class roots and amenability to facts.

Clough, too, may appreciate such a Jamesian conflict, considering that his father was an American businessman. Claude's deceptive class snobbery is just as often the target for satire as Mrs. Trevellyn's "slightly mercantile accent" (1.212), as it is in the detail of his assertive and common-sense companion, Murray.

Claude's introduction to the Italian War of Independence, as we have seen, is communicated via a particular object, his milkless coffee. The coffee might supply more dense and varied meaning if it were served in Ezra Pound's metro station, but in its mid-nineteenth century context Clough's image chiefly declares its own failure to refer. Claude may assume that his individual experience of the war has been communicated accurately to Eustace, but in this case Claude would make an unsatisfactory war respondent, for the job requires describing wider social repercussions based in part on particular observations. Claude admits to Eustace his ignorance of the conditions leading to the war ("What do the people say, and what does the government do? – you / Ask, and I know not at all" (2.13-4), his knowledge consisting of what he can absorb from the *London Times* and Trevellyn gossip. It is arguable that war – because of its unimaginable extent of fear and suffering, grand scope, organized chaos, and impure motivations based on ethics and power – may not be comprehensible to any individual, Benthamite or otherwise.<sup>25</sup> Certainly, that responsibility should not be heaped on Claude. The significance of the war in *Amours de Voyage* thus is, first, that it looms as an unwieldy generalization that demands interpretation but receives little because of Claude's limitations, and second, that, despite war's ostensible character as a force of large-scale

---

<sup>25</sup> *Amours de Voyage* questions jingoism more overtly than does "The Charge of the Light Brigade." Like the horsemen of the Light Brigade, Claude in relation to the Italian Revolution "is not to reason why," but he also evades the imperative for action provided by Tennyson: "to do or die."

disagreement, the Revolution threatens Claude because of its unified motives for an Italian nation. As Reynolds argues, Claude's ambivalence about national unity may be related to his skepticism. Any type of unity, it seems, falls under the category of a "vague generality" and is thus suspect when subjected to Benthamite scrutiny.

Claude thinks he encounters violence only after the Roman republic claims the first victory. His report of the event to Eustace appears abruptly at the beginning of a letter, suggesting that Claude was shaken by what he may have seen, even to the point at which he must test his judgment against someone else's:

So, I have seen a man killed! An experience that, among others!

Yes, I suppose I have; although I can hardly be certain,

And in a court of justice could never declare I had seen it.

But a man was killed, I am told, in a place where I saw

Something; a man was killed, I am told, and I saw something (1.162-6).

The syntax in this passage contorts as Claude struggles to express the truth of what he witnessed, which he believes was the killing of a priest by the National Guard. The initial certainty and clarity of the first two sentences falter when Claude, perhaps coming to his senses, realizes that he has not been entirely accurate. A link to Bentham, the law reformer and writer of a book on evidence, may be suggested in the detail that Claude would not swear to his testimony before a judge. But another link appears in Claude's qualification of his own statements until they are entirely truthful. From the certainty of a man being killed, Claude reduces his pronouncement to reporting a matter of hearsay that occurred in a certain place, and even then Claude cannot be sure that place and event are linked. In other words, Claude revises his report of a possible killing from a possibly

truthful and impressive statement, to a statement that is undoubtedly true, yet useless. The use of the hexameter in this passage reinforces Claude's distortion of natural speech patterns by hesitating on the spondaic stresses in the words "where I saw" and completing the thought on the next line with the unsatisfactory "something," which is then followed by an unforeseeable caesura. In his Benthamite stuttering, Claude in this letter undercuts his intentions to communicate his experience of a killing and thereby to come to terms with it. Similarly to Mill's critique of Bentham's later prose style, Claude qualifies himself in his letter and in doing so approaches an impracticable ideal in his language. But while Bentham's attempts to make language correspond to its referents lead paradoxically to incoherence, Claude's failure indicates that something like faithfulness to reality is possible in language, but insufficient for Claude's needs and communication in general. Similar to the milkless nero's unsuitability for war reportage, Claude's logically-supportable narration of the events communicates conflict between his British intellectual training and his desire to represent inner states.

Claude continues with his story of the killing, although now his reader must be suspicious of the details. As if to safeguard the credibility of his report to Eustace, Claude mentions that he gleans the identity of the victim from a "Mercantile-seeming bystander" (2.189). Of all the people in the crowd for Claude to approach, he chooses a merchant despite his earlier scorn for those of that class. Again, something closer to Claude's truer nature appears during moments of stress when he cannot overanalyze his motives. In this case, Claude seems to have comforted himself with the belief that this person will give him the facts.<sup>26</sup> Yet Claude's effort to receive information about the

---

<sup>26</sup> I have Dickens' *Hard Times* in mind when I describe the bystander as a man of fact. But it is unlikely for either text to have influenced the other because most of *Amours de Voyage* was written and revised before

killing via hearsay is unrewarded. The bystander informs Claude that the victim was a priest, but Claude's questions reveal that the mediated narration is untrustworthy: "You didn't see the dead man? No; – I began to be doubtful" (2.192). At this critical juncture in the poem, even the factual opinions of a businessman are uncertain. Claude's only evidence for the killing rests on his assertion that, while hiding during the tumult of activity to avoid being incorrectly identified as another black-clad priest, Claude "saw through the legs of the people the legs of a body" (2.197). Moreover, it is unclear whether the killing was a murder or part of the consequences of a military action, and Claude's neglect of these legal and moral distinctions dangles before the reader. This passage of *Amours de Voyage* is itself a labyrinth of questionable truth claims and uncertainties, and lies at the center of the poem like the flawed diamond in Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*.

Afterward, Claude hears that a new Neapolitan army approaches Rome to quash the insurrection. During Cantos three and four, Claude is preoccupied mostly with Mary and working out the meaning of love, though these endeavours meet similar failures as the Republican cause, as Claude reports in Canto five: "Rome is fallen, I hear" (5.113). His passive support for Italian nationalism proves in the end to have a primarily positive outcome, since Claude avoided dying for a cause that he did not entirely believe in. Despite the input of Claude's unofficial guides, at the end of the poem his disillusion is complete, as he admits: "though I talk, I care not for Rome, nor / Italy" (5.5.125-6). Here, Claude relates his language to his failure to identify with cultural entities. His

---

Dickens' 1854 serial publication. In any case, both texts participate in a similar cultural critique of Benthamism, though *Hard Times* grants the creative imagination a potential for diversion whereas *Amours de Voyage* satirizes the factual mind without proposing directly that the creative imagination has a positive role.

inability to induce propositions beyond statements related to particular objects is a chief factor in his resistance to claims on his individual identity, whether rhetorical or communal. Claude is unable to be convinced of abstractions such as community and politics, and thus resists certain ideologies, but also cannot convince himself via language that partial assimilation within a community carries social benefits and certainties.

At the end of the poem, Claude spins confusedly among various modes of abstraction not connected to his physical reality, and concludes that “Faith, I think, does pass, and Love; but Knowledge abideth” (5.198). In his reworking of Corinthians, Claude chooses to cast aside faith and love for a type of knowledge that the poem has largely discredited. Claude’s self-imposed exile thus suggests that his is a pessimistic conclusion, but may yet be instructive to the reader and gratifying for Clough.

Neither does Claude inscribe the last words in the poem. Mary laments her lost chances with Claude, and *Amours de Voyage* concludes with a passage in the poem’s elegiacs. These elegiac sections frame each canto, and establish or modify an atmosphere or set of themes. Generally, the intercalated lyric voice opposes the poem’s dramatization of Benthamite epistemology. In Canto two, for instance, the conflicted voice is of an idealist that asks whether “a spirit from perfecter ages” (2.1) abides within Rome’s ruins, or whether such a spirit of culture or godhood is an illusion. The voice thus provides a counterpart for Claude’s epistemological skepticism in that Canto. This narrator is an impersonal entity that serves as troubled representative of poetic tradition and ambition, inspired in part by Coleridge’s organicism and Shelley’s idealism, but also tempered by Claude’s skepticism, and it therefore delivers a different perspective on Claude’s conflict between doubt and knowledge. In the second canto, the lyric voice

pursues a Claude-like line of doubt concerning a higher meaning, and yet its persistence indicates unflagging hope that the absolute may be attained. The Canto opens with a layered question that, with its repeated demand of “Is it illusion?”, stresses the importance of such a spirit and the difficulty of understanding or accessing it:

Is it illusion? Or does there a spirit from perfecter ages,  
 Here, even yet, amid loss, change, and corruption, abide?  
 Does there a spirit we know not, though seek, though we find,  
                   comprehend not,  
 Here to entice and confuse, tempt and evade us, abide?  
 Lives in the exquisite grace of the column disjointed and single,  
 Haunts the rude masses of brick garlanded gayly with vine,  
 E'en in the turret fantastic surviving that springs from the ruin,  
 E'en in the people itself? Is it illusion or not? (2.1-8).

The agitation of the lyric voice is underscored by the inversion of the meter in the second line: “Here, even yet, amid loss, change, and corruption, abide?” The rolling rhythm of the hexameter’s dactyls throughout the poem, with their initial stresses followed by two unstressed syllables as per Clough’s English adaptation, suggests the pattern of certainty followed by doubt which, for the most part, knits the poem together. The energy of the first syllable is usually followed by two lax beats, which reflects the poem’s pessimistic ratio of hope to disbelief, as though every tentative step towards knowledge is succeeded by two steps backwards in doubt. In this passage however, as the lyric voice yearns for access to the spirit, the syntax and punctuation of the verse inverts dactyls into anapests, another rolling rhythm and yet one that connotes a more

positive vibe in which the valleys of doubt erupt and linger on an emphatic spike:

(/) x x / x x / / x x / x x /

Here, even yet, amid loss, change, and corruption, abide?

Of course, the pessimistic moments far outweigh inspiration in *Amours de Voyage*, but the formal contortion of the poem here reveals a shift in emphasis that positions the strong beat at the culmination of each rhythmic unit rather than at the beginning, in which case the meaning would be overwhelmed by the “loss, change, and corruption” that the lyric voice seeks to transcend.

The final elegiac passage serves as antithesis for Claude’s atomistic thinking by positing a community of the poem’s readers. It beseeches the poem to spread its message, “the good report and the evil” to the world (5.219). The voice in this section is not entirely a satire of Benthamite particularity, though, as it invokes a notion of sympathy in the poem’s creation: “Go, and if curious friends ask of thy rearing and age, / Say, ‘I am flitting about many years from brain unto brain of / Feeble and restless youths born to inglorious days” (5.220-2). One of the goals of the poem, therefore, is to portray the frustration of nineteenth-century readers whose minds are conflicted between their educations and their desires, as Clough’s may have been. The poem attempts to build a community among these readers, imagined at the time of writing, who share Clough’s intellectual trials. The poem’s largely favourable reception after Clough’s death suggests that in fact there was a substantial community of like-minded readers who found Claude’s struggles compelling.

The final lines also counteract Claude's abstracted meanderings in Canto five and the poem's attempt at a sympathetic community with its own inadequate assertion of fact: "But, 'so finish the word, 'I was writ in a Roman chamber, / When from Janiculum heights thundered the cannon of France'" (5.223-4). The lines stand out from the poem because of their oratorical power, but they also fail to provide a satisfactory gloss for the poem's interior dramas. The circumstances of the poem's inscription seemingly have little to do with Claude's misadventures in Rome, but in fact they employ the poem's satirical strategy of revealing that factual information is insufficient. Even the lines' impressive effects are undercut by the probable falsity of its claim that Clough wrote the poem while the city was under bombardment. The poem thus concludes on yet another questionable statement of fact, and directs its readers once more to criticize not only rhetoric, but also assertions of fact that the poem reveals may be themselves rhetorical. The poem casts doubt on facts and objects as sufficient foundations for belief and action, and in so doing leaves the reader to wonder whether faith and love, though they may pass, are more viable alternatives.

### 3. Philosopher-Lover

I am in love, you say; I do not think so exactly (2.263).

Following Claude's letters describing his experience of the war, Eustace responds in Canto two with an accusation that purports to explain some of Claude's earlier behaviour. According to Eustace's hypothesis, Claude is ambivalent towards the Trevellyn family and their bourgeois values because he has fallen in love with one of the Trevellyn daughters, Mary. Claude's response to this accusation, as seen in this chapter's epigraph, is characteristic in some of the ways I have discussed above. He challenges his friend's interpretation in a familiar way by analyzing the basis of the claim and arriving at a skeptical result: "I do not think so exactly." In these words, Claude suggests that he is privy to an alternate conception of love that may be alien to Eustace's more conventional ideas. Throughout the poem, part of the "exactness" of Claude's thought derives from his use of scientific discourse in order to analyze the workings of love at its foundations. Given the literary background in which Clough wrote *Amours de Voyage*, the poem had much laudable work to carry out in challenging the gender roles and sentimentalism reinforced by works such as Coventry Patmore's *The Angel in the House*. Through his use of scientific metaphors, Claude questions a nineteenth-century ideology of love which he finds limiting and inappropriate to describe his feelings towards Mary.

At the same time, however, Claude's radical thinking about love seeks to deny his need for social relations by escaping into an objective stance. Claude's efforts to remain an observer fail because, as he discovers, sustainable individuality requires imaginative links that transcend the individual. His criticism also is not entirely reliable. Claude's words in the epigraph possess an ambiguous double meaning, activated by the lack of a

comma before “exactly,” that undercuts his intellectual rigor and role as critic of love by questioning the “exactness” of his thinking. Certainly, Claude’s description of his relationship with Mary – an inspired but temporary linguistic exercise in a different manner than his ingrained skepticism – appears a lot like love:

No, though she talk, it is music; her fingers desert not the keys; ‘tis  
 Song, though you hear in her song the articulate vocables sounded,  
 Syllabled singly and sweetly the words of melodious meaning (2.260-2).

Rather than uttering some new variety of the emotion, Claude here sounds like a Petrarchan sonneteer who grants to his paramour the sort of unconscious poetic ability that he wishes he possessed as means to woo her. Mary’s conversation is poetic in both the Carlylean sense that the deepest feelings are inherently musical, and in Mill’s idealization of the philosopher-poet who writes according to emotions that are shaped by a guiding intellect. In her “articulate vocables” and “melodious meaning,” Mary here and elsewhere proves to be more than a match for Claude and his search for a specific sort of love that will not frustrate his needs as an intellectual and individual. Her musical orality complements his rational inscription, but these qualities do not fuse. His strategies to make love somehow not change the self – skepticism, objectivity, reduction, and finally denial – not only fail, but fail in interesting ways which reveal the interrelations between selfhood and social ties. *Amours de Voyage* expresses its attitude towards love primarily through satire, and Mary, too, does not exactly provide a model for how love should work, though her views are more promising. In this chapter, I establish two contexts for Clough’s skeptical love poetry. First, I read his earlier love poetry as part of a poetic tradition which is more optimistic about the types of love that *Amours de Voyage*

questions. Second, I read *Amours de Voyage* in relation to the logical disciplines it invokes, such as the physical sciences and sociology, disciplines which challenge love in its ideological forms. By leveling these contexts against one another, *Amours de Voyage* investigates Claude's anxieties about surrendering his individuality in connection to another, even though this resistance to connection results in his denial of self.

Clough may have associated utilitarian and scientific critiques of love because both modes of thought may be interpreted as tending towards objectivity,<sup>27</sup> individualism, reductionism, and relativity. Such an association would have followed more naturally in the mid-nineteenth century than it would today because disciplinary boundaries had not yet solidified as they did in the later nineteenth century. For example, Carlyle's defiance of the "Everlasting Nay" in *Sartor Resartus* also associated the sorts of atomistic, laissez-faire, and reductive thinking that include geological science and empirical philosophy along with the Higher Criticism. Such a connection may have influenced Clough, despite, or because of, his increasing criticism of Carlyle. *Amours de Voyage* thus addresses the sorts of arguments and evidence that a Benthamite in the mid-nineteenth century may have relied on, even if Bentham himself was interested in science in a particular sense.<sup>28</sup>

One may imagine Jeremy Bentham, as he appears in Mill's essay, challenging love through an argument that the emotion is not grounded in the sort of objectified fact that would satisfy his own epistemological conditions. From a skeptical vantage, love is a difficult phenomenon to assert as real. The plots of countless fictions derive conflict

---

<sup>27</sup> In *Objectivity*, Dalston and Galworthy argue that the concept of objectivity originated in the mid-nineteenth century to match conceptions of the self that opposed the willful artist to the controlled scientist. *Amours de Voyage* mediates between those two formulations of the self.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Rationale and Reward*, cited above, in which Bentham defines science as the knowledge required for an action, whereas art is the ability to perform an action.

from the inability to know the feelings of a love interest, and from the ploys of deception and misrecognition that may arise in attempts to bridge that gap between individuals, or to take advantage of its uncertainty.<sup>29</sup> The trope of a leap of faith may have had added interest for Clough, who just prior to writing *Amours de Voyage* had taken a leap of skepticism by refusing to abide by Oxford's Thirty-Nine Articles. Claude, refracting the significance of University College's links to Jeremy Bentham, continues the plummet from Clough's latter leap, until he begins to question the empirical bases of essential social constructs.

But this poses the question of what love could mean in *Amours de Voyage*, or in other words, what it is that Claude grasps for while resisting. The poem's title relates love to travel. If by travel the poem refers to the sort of activity that occurs with a guide-book in hand, then travel is a mode of life that is ephemeral, albeit empirically real. A traveler merely following the authority of a guide-book along a railway track of recommended sites is restricted to being either critical or passive for the journey's duration.<sup>30</sup> Conversely, love in *Amours de Voyage*, and in some of Clough's other poems, implies imaginative or spiritual creation. Like communication or community, love may be considered an act of imaginative sympathy that has no concrete reality aside

---

<sup>29</sup> Shakespeare's *Othello* explores this disconnect by questioning the sufficiency of a handkerchief as proof of Desdemona's love for Othello. Appropriately, *Amours de Voyage* references Iago (1.143), who attributes to the handkerchief the impossible role of love's symbolic verification. More often, a wedding ring holds this function, but the choice of an object does not improve its ability to give proof.

<sup>30</sup> By contrast, Yorick, in Lawrence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*, travels entirely on impulse, without a guide or guide-book, in response to a calling which he labels "besoin de Voyager." In opposition to Yorick, who also remarks that "an Englishman does not travel to see Englishmen," Claude is presented as the less authentic traveler. It is interesting, however, that Claude's travels also lead him to meet Englishwomen, a complication which *Amours de Voyage* contributes to Sterne's parody of travel literature by suggesting, without realizing, the prospects for sexual freedom in meeting an English woman outside of England.

from mutual agreement, but which nonetheless exerts a vital stability.<sup>31</sup> The title thus suggests a diagnosis of the intellectual problems in Clough's mid-nineteenth century culture. A love of travel infers a commitment to ephemeral and real experience, a paradoxical commitment that the poem identifies as perverse and self-defeating. From the perspective of the two cultural contexts, the Benthamite only travels whereas the lofty love poet is divorced from reality. Part of Clough's imaginative accomplishment in *Amours de Voyage* is the poem's connection of the two opposed concepts, and its exploration of the resulting conflicts in part as an aid for his decision whether or not to marry.

Clough's love poetry prior to *Amours de Voyage* suggests that he may have held opinions that love contains the potential for spiritual or imaginative connection.<sup>32</sup> The opening poem in *Ambervalia*, "The Questioning Spirit," offers a number of escapes from the soul's constant searches for truth. One of these escapes from the certainty of mortality is love: "How many days or e'er thou mean'st to move? -- / I know not, let me love my love" (20-1). Yet it is unclear whether the speaker has an object for his affections. The poem may suggest that the speaker loves a particular person, or that what the speaker wishes to be enthralled by his own ability to love, an idealization of love for

---

<sup>31</sup> Thus nineteenth-century English culture emphasizes marriage as the ceremonial proclamation, public and religious, of love unions. But Claude views marriage as akin to military service: "But for that final discharge, would he dare to enlist in that service? / But for that certain release, ever sign to that perilous contract?" (3.119-20). Otherwise, marriage in the poem appears only as the final consequences of Claude's obligatory "intentions." As it is based in part on abstract love, marriage is a generality that Claude may consider only in oblique ways.

<sup>32</sup> By imaginative connection, I refer to a nineteenth-century discourse of sympathy, in which an individual comes to feel an emotion or interior state corresponding to that of another. The concept grew in cultural importance throughout the nineteenth century, from Wordsworth's and Coleridge's poetic applications, to the middle-class practice of sending ornamental gift books, or literary annuals, laden with sentimental poetry, to George Eliot's canvassing for fellow-feeling in *Middlemarch*. An imaginative connection may construct an identity based on a union of individuals, or on a common feature constituting a group. This identity exists as a mental agreement among its members, and in faith that fellow members continue to support that agreement, or in a symbolic material form such as a ring or contract, but cannot be empirically derived and must be sustained by belief or feeling.

its own sake that Percy Shelley offers in the unpublished tract “On Love,” and in the impossible quest of *Alastor*. The speaker’s aloneness in the poem suggests that the latter is the present case and the former is a wish to be fulfilled in the future. Can we, the poem asks, be satisfied with our capacity to forge human and spiritual attachments, or must we always seek an object for our love in order to validate that potential? The speaker of “The Questioning Spirit” is therefore doubly alone and loveless, or at least this latter sense is exacerbated by the sterilizing power of solitude, because he yearns for what may be an impossible connection with the faculty of connection itself, as though the closing of this solipsistic system may quell the self’s demands for sociality.<sup>33</sup>

Other poems are concerned less with love as a philosophical concept, and more so with the tension between love’s ideal and earthly facets. In the poem “Ah, what is love, our love, she said” in *Ambervalia* we find Clough’s first use in his mature poetry of the physical elements to describe love. The poem poses two conceptions of love, opposed to one another as doubtful male and idealistic female conceptions, as the eponymous she of the poem offers a definition of the emotion to its reporting speaker. The woman describes love as “A fire, of earthly fuel fed” (3), and thus grounded in the physiological processes of desire. But at the same time the fire of intense emotions is “Full fain to soar above” (4) this grounding in the spiritual realm of the air and heavens. She sighs for the “high love,” the “Poet’s love” (13-4), and the speaker describes her desire to associate bodily desire with love’s poetic idealization in an image of a “star upon a turbid tide, / Reflected from above” (15-6). But the speaker can only entertain for a moment the miraculous possibility of such a poetic alignment before revealing the temporariness of

---

<sup>33</sup> Quite unlike Wordsworth’s thoughts on solitude in his “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads* as a condition in which to reflect tranquilly on one’s spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions, and thereby to access universal human experience.

her dream, as the nighttime vision inevitably becomes quotidian reality: “A marvel here, a glory there, / But clouds will intervene, / And garish earthly noon outglare / The purity serene” (17-20).

In “Natura Naturans,” Clough meditates on the relationship between the bodily aspects of love and their spiritual correlates. The speaker is affected by some emanation from the woman sitting beside him in a railway car, and asks “From her to me, from me to her, / What passed so subtly stealthily?” (4-5). Is the “power unknown” (14) that was “Inhaling, and inhaled” (15) between them a spiritual or a chemical communion? Can it be both the “Power which e’en in stones and earths ... Vibrated full in me and her” (42... 48) and a “sweet prelude sense of old / Led on in Eden’s sinless place”? (73-4). The middle parts of the poem further contemplate love’s relation to the natural world. Here, the speaker imagines that he and his fellow passenger contain within them “the light gazelle, / The leopard lithe in Indian glade, / And dolphin, brightening tropic seas” (61-3). Yet, in the extravagant alliteration of “Flashed forth fantastic flies, / Big bees their burly bodies swung” (57-8), the poem too emphatically associates this natural world with the higher imaginative processes. There is a hint of synthesis between natural and spiritual worlds in the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary and alliterative form, insofar as Old English implies a primal culture freer from artifice, as it did at times for Gerald Manley Hopkins. As well, the two unrhymed lines in each quatrain allow lively variation in the rhyme sequence. But the poem, even at Clough’s relatively optimistic period, casts doubt on the natural world’s capacity to explain human love without the added help of poetry.

Clough’s first long poem, *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich*, is in many ways a formal and thematic precursor to *Amours de Voyage*. Written in dactylic hexameters, the

*Bothie* narrates an Oxford tutorial group's reading trip to the Scottish Highlands, where the protagonist, Philip Hewson, leaves both the draining reading load and joyous swimming sessions of the group in order to pursue his desires for love. At times, the radical poet Hewson speaks as though he were a younger version of Claude. Hewson shares with Claude some similar radical sentiments, such as revulsion from the artifices of genteel courtship:

Offering unneeded arms, performing dull farces of escort,  
 Seemed like a sort of unnatural up-in-the-air balloon-work,  
 (Or what to me is as hateful, a riding about in a carriage,  
 Utter removal from work, mother earth, and the objects of living (2.58-  
 61).

Unlike Claude's later confusion and self-protective delusions, Hewson's figurative cosmos is largely secure. Both characters prefer the particular to the general, Hewson because it reflects the real business of living and Claude because his search for fundamental grounds leads him to castigate or ignore any concept that cannot be made to agree with those grounds. Part of the reason for this is that Claude's education is complete, and therefore he must navigate the world using the resources with which he has been provided. Hewson, conversely, derives much of his world-view in reaction to his reading party tutor, Adam, whose lessons in skepticism may have been influenced by W.G. Ward's Benthamite methods. The tutor questions Hewson's love for the Scottish country girl whom the latter saw working in a field (2.267):<sup>34</sup> "Are not these perhaps as doubtful as other attractions? / There is a truth in your view, but I think extremely

---

<sup>34</sup> The Scottish country girl's probable roots in Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper" emphasizes the girl's association with a rustic poetical tradition, as well as her fantastical nature, despite being presented as earthy.

distorted; / Still there is truth, I own, I understand you entirely” (2.117-9). Hewson’s love for the girl reflects his valorization of labour as a basic part of human life, and it may have been irresistible for the young poet when he saw the idealization of his affections literally coated in the earth in which she worked. However, through the tutor, the poem is aware that Hewson’s dream derives from nineteenth-century middle-class ideology that valorizes rusticity as emotionally real in opposition to urbanization and utilitarianism. The tutor’s primary role as a kill-joy and distributor of reading lists does not obviate his function as a questioner of ideology. But he, too, admits some truth in Hewson’s vivid descriptions, and Adam’s having “bit his lip to bleeding” (3.240) over worry for his student’s welfare may also be seen as engagement with that compelling vision.

The key feature of Hewson’s character is the force of his belief that allows him to act on his ideals. Though he may be working towards an ideological fulfillment, the poem takes his naiveté seriously enough that the dramatic effect rises when he declares his love for Elspie:

Elspie, why should I speak it ? you cannot believe it, and should not:  
 Why should I say that I love, which I all but said to another?  
 Yet should I dare, should I say, O Elspie, you only I love; you,  
 First and sole in my life that has been and surely that shall be;  
 Could – O, could you believe it, O Elspie, believe it and spurn not!  
 Is it – possible, – possible, Elspie? (7.47-53).

Hewson in this conversation reaches for Elspie’s confirmation of his fantasies in her emotions. His facile questions are not hesitant, but urge her to believe, and thereby to

infuse his love with contextual meaning. At last, he lingers on the word “possible,” and in so doing infuses his speech with more hope than he may have if he had used the word “true.” In the *Bothie*, possible is sufficient. Or at least it will be, for at first Elspie maintains the romantic tension with her delaying “maybe” until she can be reasonably sure that the relationship will be beneficial for her as well.

During the course of her wooing, Elspie communicates her confusion about their relationship using elemental figures. She describes Hewson’s love with a mixture of awe and trepidation: “You are too strong, you see, Mr. Philip ! just like the sea there, / Which *will* come, through the straits and all between the mountains, / Forcing its great strong tide into every nook and inlet” (7.120-2). Her main concern here is that his love, like the tide, will be temporary, as it was with other women: “soon after, / Back it goes off, leaving weeds on the shore, and wrack and uncleanness” (7.125-6). Her fears are well-communicated in her command of figurative language, and the immensity of the geographical imagery lends grandness to the emotions that the poem presents mostly sincerely, even though Elspie humbly deprecates her reverie as “confusion and nonsense” (7.73-4). In response to these fears of male infidelity, Hewson appropriates Elspie’s metaphor and adds what he hopes will be a reassuring twist:

O let us try, he answered, the waters themselves will support us,  
 Yea, very ripples and waves will form to a boat underneath us;  
 There is a boat, he said, and a name is written upon it,  
 Love he said, and kissed her” (8.108-10).

If this is Hewson’s answer to the gap between genders and individuals, then the poem cannot take it entirely seriously. The lines carry a false grandeur in the culmination of its

poetic conceit, suggesting wryness on the part of Clough. Yet, Hewson's rhetoric is notable for its faith in imaginary connections, its success in the action of the kiss, and its correspondence with events in the upcoming plot. These lines also provide some of the scant evidence that Hewson's title as poet has any justification, and Elspie's acquiescence to his advances suggests that, at least, his rhetoric was useful. Clough may not have believed that this figuration of love had any epistemological foundations, but he certainly suggests that love may provide a platform on which lovers may rise above their doubts. In the end, Philip and Elspie voyage to New Zealand where they begin a new life close to the earth, and far from Clough's questioning spirit:

There he hewed, and dug; subdued the earth and his spirit;  
 There he built him a home; there Elspie bare him his children,  
 David and Bella; perhaps ere this too an Elspie or Adam;  
 There hath he farmsteads and land, and fields of corn and flax fields;  
 And the Antipodes too have a Bothie of Tober-na-vuolich (9.196-200).

The ending portrays their pastoral escape with irony by claiming that subduing the earth and the spirit amount to equally desirable ends. Hewson has reached a primal, utopian mode of living, but at the cost of his intellectual and poetic pursuits. There is further irony in the conclusion in that Hewson realized his earthy ideals by resorting to figurative and courtly, though relatively inventive, language. The world of abstractions was a place of "ignes fatui" for Hewson, as Mill might say, and an ad-interim state, rather than his natural realm. For better or worse, Hewson achieves a permanent abode in New Zealand, rather than a more conventional honeymoon spent traveling, as it was for Matthew Arnold, at least as far as the coast. Hewson found the object of his searches during his

travels of the Scottish Highlands, and then immediately abandoned the roving life because, in Clough's poetry, sustained love requires firm grounding in space, if not in logic.

Although Hewson was successful at marriage because he used, however briefly, the poetic language of love, Clough must not have continued to fully believe in that poetic ideal because his letters to Blanche Smith indicate a greater commitment to reality. Near the beginning of his correspondence to Blanche on January 1, 1852, Clough has made his intentions about marriage known and now lays out his reservations about conventional ideas of love: "What was the true apple? do you know? I believe its true name was 'Love is everything.' Women will believe so, and try and make men act as if *they* believed so, and straightway, behold, the Gall, and Paradise at an end etc., etc." (*Corr.* 1: 300). Granting Clough's reductive portrayal of women as idealists and the source of such idealism, we may note his argument that unfulfillable expectations for love, and the resulting hope for domestic arrangements, leads in many cases to a painful crashing back to the realities of everyday human conflict. As a remedy, Clough urges Blanche to consider their future relationship in less sentimental terms: "Love is not everything, Blanche; don't believe it, nor try to make me pretend to believe it. '*Service*' is everything. Let us be fellow-servants. There is no joy nor happiness, nor way nor name by which men may be saved but this" (300). In this austere pronouncement, Clough might have been fortunate that Blanche continued to exchange letters on the subject.<sup>35</sup> Part of her persistence might be explained by Clough's regular admissions that

---

<sup>35</sup> The opinions of critics on Blanche's influence on Clough vary widely. Anthony Kenny finds that she was a comforting presence in Clough's life and served him well as a posthumous editor (264), whereas Janice Keller blames her for "a dialectic between them that resulted in his poetic stasis" (28). The matter seems to depend on whether the critic prefers that Clough remained in the state, arguably an unhappy one,

he could be amenable to renegotiation, or as he says in a slightly later letter in which he questions eternal unions: “even though in my weakness I belie myself” (301). Despite Clough’s misgivings for relationships based on intangible values, he admits the need for more than his current life can provide, and would eventually acquiesce to her assurances, though *Amours de Voyage* remains a record of this uncertain period.

Early critics of Clough note his writings on love more so than do more recent critics. Few of the early critics, however, spend much interpretive energy on their readings of love in *Amours de Voyage*, except to comment on what Henry Sidgwick helpfully summarizes as Clough’s “amatory scepticism” (*Critical Heritage* 281). Sidgwick, a philosopher by profession, characterizes poets as “the recognized preachers of the divinity, eternity, omnipotence of Love” (*Critical Heritage* 282). Against this spiritualizing tradition, Sidgwick places Clough as a poetic innovator, and comments on Clough’s poetry generally before focusing on *Amours de Voyage*: “the notion of scrutinizing the enthusiasm sympathetically, yet scientifically, and estimating the precise value of its claims and assertions, probably never entered into any poetic soul before Clough” (*Critical Heritage* 282). In the early twentieth century, Stopford Brooke describes Clough’s view of love and Claude’s struggles, but does so as though the poem lacks internal conflict: “Clough seems to take a personal delight in the slow, subtle, close drawing, week by week, of the wavering, changeful drifting of the heart of the hero in love, into pursuit, and out of love” (39). Sidgwick’s reading of sympathy and analysis seems to be the closer one, though Brooke calls attention to the different strategies that Claude employs to distance himself from his affections.

---

in which he produced his best writing and which may have improved his literary legacy, or whether the critic assumes that the balance of Clough’s life and career is worthy of appreciation regardless of its literary implications. Like his poetry, Clough’s life complicates either reading.

Since the 1950s Clough revival, critics have viewed with more specificity these strategies and contexts by which *Amours de Voyage* delineates the experience of love and criticisms of marriage. John Goode links the important terms juxtaposition and affinity to Charles Lyell's uniformitarian geology,<sup>36</sup> as markers of the relationship between gradually differentiated species of common stock. As is the case with *In Memoriam*, *Amours de Voyage* predates Darwin's *Origin of Species* but exposit ideas related to emerging theories of natural selection and species evolution.<sup>37</sup> Goethe's uptake of the chemical theory of Elective Affinity, as explored in a novella of that name, seems to have had a more direct influence. Somewhat similar to the processes that Goode links to Lyell, Goethe's *Elective Affinities* draws an analogy between the properties of attraction and repulsion between elements at a chemical level and what we call 'chemistry' between leading roles in a film. For Goethe, elective affinity was a means to explore the workings of desire and to criticize the institution of marriage as it supported or hindered these supposedly inherent forces. Joseph Phelan notes similarities between Goethe's and Clough's uses of affinity (15), but at present there has not been a sustained study of the relationship between these two works.

Another context in which *Amours de Voyage* establishes a perspective on love is the *Wuthering Heights* view, or in other words, the Victorian cultural presentation of love as the height of human existence. Kerry McSweeney argues that "[l]ove relationships had a comparatively important value for Victorians who had accepted that there was no beyond, no providential order, no transcendent dimension to human existence" (6).

---

<sup>36</sup> See Lyell's *Principles of Geology*.

<sup>37</sup> The analogue to Tennyson's "Dragons of the prime" is Clough's "Aqueous ages" (3.59) though of course both lines cannot be explained exhaustively as references to early evolutionary science. Clough's meaning is particularly puzzling. For an interpretation see Joseph Bristow's "'Love, Let Us Be True to One Another': Matthew Arnold, Arthur Hugh Clough, and 'Our Aqueous Ages'."

Clough cannot be easily lumped in with the class of Victorians described here, but the secularized *Amours de Voyage* may have been written in order to agree with this sensibility, and the poem's popularity suggests that it was accepted by a wider body of opinion. McSweeney notes that while in *The Bothie* Clough reconciles in a Lawrencian mode the love relationship between Philip and Elspie in a successful cohesion of affinity, in *Amours de Voyage* Clough decided to "pursue the implications of this chemical analogy for emotional relationships" (86) beyond the intuition that love requires.

*Amours de Voyage* sets into conflict these impersonal and idealizing contexts in its analysis of love. Claude's Benthamite skepticism is an appropriate vehicle for the poem's double satirical attack on love in unquestioned forms and on questioning taken to such extremes that it undermines the imaginative connections that love may build. An early instance of this Swiftian satirizing of the satirizer<sup>38</sup> occurs following Claude's arrival at Rome and his announcement to Eustace that his newfound solitude in Rome will help him rediscover his truer self:

It is a blessing, no doubt, to be rid, at least for a time, of  
 All one's friends and relations, – yourself (forgive me!) included, –  
 All the *assujettissement* of having been what one has been,  
 What one thinks one is, or thinks that others suppose one (1.28-31).

Here we might note Mill's characterization of Bentham as satisfied among his writings in a state of near-solitude. Bentham reinforces an early nineteenth-century convention of the intellectual, sage, or poet arriving at knowledge after escaping social influences. Now that Claude has left England for the freedom of Rome, where he thinks no one has any

---

<sup>38</sup> This description of Swift's method is apparent in Book Four of *Gulliver's Travels*, in which Gulliver's criticisms of Western societies are undercut by his unquestioning acceptance of Houyhnhnm standards for truth and ethics.

expectations of his actions or character, he may hope to find something closer to his truer self. But a new tangle of social expectations and desires, supposedly left in England, takes on an externalized form in the “marvelous mass of broken and castaway wine-pots” (1.40) that he sees in Rome’s cultural and architectural history. The disorder that Claude locates in Rome reflects the complexity of his self and his social needs, which may be less well-described by uniform, enduring marble than by provisional brickwork.

The third letter of Canto one introduces the English enclave that will become Claude’s social circle despite his professed superiority. Having hauled to Italy some “seven-and-seventy boxes” (1.52) conveying the objects of their bourgeois consciousness, the Trevellyn family establishes a small English colony and begins to seek out other English travelers. The letter also introduces Georgina, an assertive and conventional young woman who offers only the least hope of a love interest for Claude. She is chemically affined most closely to George, whom Claude “has taken to be with” as his entrance into the Trevellyn circle (1.63). George and Georgina’s relationship in the poem is a comical extension of the principle of affinity, and the near identity between their personalities and opinions reinforces the poem’s playful interpretation of the theory. Their opinions on Claude, seemingly opposed, may in fact be considered commensurate: “Very stupid, I think, but George says so *very* clever” (1.64). The poem’s satire of English intellectuals equates stupidity with cleverness, insofar as cleverness comes to connote Claude’s rationalizations for and evasions of love.

Claude is able to ignore the Trevellyn women by denouncing them as bourgeois for only a short time. He associates them and George Vernon with a broader culture of domesticity, “Which have their perfect delight in the general tender-domestic” (1.117),

but Claude eventually feels guilty for his Iago-like constant criticism of what he considers their uncultured ways. After some unknown period of interactions with the Trevellyns, Claude's letters imply his growing affections by launching into the most figuratively-rich passage of *Amours de Voyage*, which begins with a partial admission of his feelings:

Yet it is pleasant, I own it, to be in their company; pleasant,  
 Whatever else it may be, to abide in the feminine presence.  
 Pleasant, but wrong, will you say? But this happy, serene coexistence  
 Is to some poor soft souls, I fear, a necessity simple,  
 Meat and drink and life, and music, filling with sweetness,  
 Thrilling with melody sweet, with harmonies strange overwhelming,  
 All the long-silent strings of an awkward meaningless fabric (1.168-174).

Claude imagines that Eustace might disapprove of his relations with the women, perhaps because part of Claude wishes to find comfort in their social approval without taking the expected step of proposing marriage to one of them. Another part of Claude denies that need as suitable only for those who cannot endure the objective stance that he prizes. He means to retain his radical position on love by resorting to a reductive appraisal of the desires of the human body, which, according to psychological associationists,<sup>39</sup> is laced with a "fabric" of nerve networks that carry sensations, pleasurable or otherwise, from the sense organs to the brain. Again, however, Claude's language reveals the flights of being that occur when he thinks about companionship, and his "awkward meaningless fabric" thrills with musical delight. Claude continues his near-rhapsody, and his search

---

<sup>39</sup> See Martin Kallich's *The Association of Ideas and Critical Theory in Eighteenth-Century England* for discussion of psychological associationism and its influence on eighteenth and early-nineteenth century literature and criticism.

for a relationship that could bring him both comfort and autonomy:

Yet as for that, I could live, I believe, with children; to have those  
 Pure and delicate forms encompassing, moving about you,  
 This were enough, I could think; and truly with glad resignation  
 Could from the dream of romance, from the fever of flushed adolescence,  
 Look to escape and subside into peaceful avuncular functions (1.175-9).

Having cut out the apparently superfluous step of sex, Claude posits a place in a family that does not require suffering marriage's inherent conflicts. His ethical justification is more utilitarian and self-serving rather than a Kantian self-abnegating universality. But it is a strange detail in a number of ways that in Claude's proposed family the children are ghosts. The attention to neo-platonic forms suggests the unreality of Claude's ideal. Viewed from a logical rather than a philosophical perspective, the notion of children without a sexual relationship requires the breakdown of cause and effect. Children may not necessarily be proof of love, although they are taken as such at the end of some Victorian narratives, but prior to the twentieth century they are almost certainly proof of sex, immaculate conception aside.

In this impossible family, Claude deigns to be a patriarch without being pater, whose radical individuality remains intact despite participation in the generation of life. *Amours de Voyage* thereby criticizes a formulation of radically-individual intellectuals, whether utilitarian or scientific, but only after letting Claude have his word on certain forms of injustice. Bentham, as mentioned, was the father only of a theory, and a father-figure to a sect of followers. Such avuncular figures, Claude notes, manage to escape the jealousy of mothers and the father's preference for his own children, perhaps with a hint

of nepotism's injustice in a laissez-faire economy. Claude laments that "by the law of the land, in despite of Malthusian doctrine, / No proper provision is made for that most patriotic, / Most meritorious subject, the childless and bachelor uncle" (1.183-5). Part of Claude's complaint is that there is no place for a man who does not fit into a social structure that includes marriage. His defence of the bachelor uncle may have seemed more absurd and self-pitying to some contemporary readers than it might today, considering the state of women's rights and expectations in the mid-nineteenth century. Another aspect of Claude's critique is that the state takes the side of conventional domesticity rather than scientific authorities such as Malthus, who warned that, without checks, the population will grow faster than the food supply. This is not to say that Claude here identifies with the interests of a scientific or individualistic community, but rather that anxiety related to love and marriage causes Claude to consider the well-being of the generality in abstract terms only because those considerations allow him to delay action.

After Eustace's coy accusation that Claude is in love, Claude's strategy for avoiding impingements on his individuality shifts from skepticism to reductionism. By reductionism, I mean the practice of explaining complex phenomena by reference to their constituent parts. Claude's first theoretical model distinguishes between two types of human attraction: "One which simply disturbs, unsettles, and makes you uneasy, / And another that poises, retains, and fixes and holds you" (2.265-6). He does not provide examples for each, but we may assume that the first type is closer to the *Wuthering Heights* version of love, though described here without its heightened joys, and that the second refers to a companionable mutual respect and distance. Claude lists his

preference without qualification for the latter, primarily for negative reasons: “I do not like being moved: for the will is excited; and action / Is a most dangerous thing” (2.270-1). Action is dangerous for Claude in part because, as we have seen, *Amours de Voyage* destabilizes the knowledge he requires to be utterly stable before he can trust it. More so even than physical objects or nominal facts, love offers shaky grounds for action because of uncertainties at the root of the emotion. Claude’s fears are in part an earnest complaint in the poem about the fears and pains of love. He recognizes that a solution requires changes to common human interaction: “I tremble for something factitious, / Some malpractice of heart and illegitimate process” (2.271-2).<sup>40</sup> Claude’s preference for a calm relationship finally becomes a plea for an objective stance: “Ah, let me look, let me watch, let me wait, unhurried, unprompted!” (2.274). As critic and analyst, Claude’s identity is strongly tied to his powers of observation and thus detachment from his subject of study. This ideal of objectivity also reflects Claude’s training to silence the intuitive voice, which Mill describes as self-overhearing, and which may, if heard, “Let love be its own inspiration” (2.278).

Claude and Eustace develop these theories of attraction to expand on the poem’s social criticism and self-satire. In Canto three, Claude responds to his increasing desire to act on his feelings by retreating further into reductionism. He begins to wonder why he fell in love with this particular woman and concludes that it is a matter of “Juxtaposition, in fine” (3.107). Claude relates his meaning in a highly disillusioned

---

<sup>40</sup> Love in the poem is heteronormative, not surprisingly given its mid-nineteenth century provenance, although Claude’s yearning for “illegitimate process” may hint at the possibility of a sufficing homosocial relationship with Eustace rather than the unease of sexual desire for Mary. The poem’s commentary on Benthamism may also be viewed as a perceived problem in masculinity, in that both Mill’s Bentham and Claude prefer male-fellowship in their few social engagements. There seems to be a relation between nineteenth-century masculinity and valorization of the particular over the general.

mood:

Look you, we travel along in the railway-carriage, or steamer,  
 And, *pour passer le temps*, till the tedious journey be ended,  
 Lay aside paper or book, to talk with the girl that is next one;  
 And, *pour passer le temps*, with the terminus all but in prospect,  
 Talk of eternal ties and marriages made in heaven (3.108-12).

The poem attacks a feminized ideal of spiritualized marriage. Claude cannot countenance such an abstraction or poetic convention, and retorts that what many call love is simply a matter of convenience with a person who occupies a space near you. Playing on Teufelsdröck's call to do the duty which is nearest you, Claude with heavy irony gives praise to Juxtaposition for being the actual process by which such supposedly God-given love matches are made: "Allah is great, no doubt, and Juxtaposition his prophet" (3.137). Thereafter, Claude returns to his materialistic assertion that a man's wife "is but for a space, an *ad-interim* solace and pleasure, – / That in the end she shall yield to a perfect and absolute something" (3.143-4) in either death or the afterlife.

Eustace's absent response argues, as Claude reports, that the principle of affinity has greater force than that of juxtaposition. Though he is largely stripped of personality in the published versions of *Amours de Voyage*, Eustace represents an optimistic figure concerning love who provides a counter-part to Claude's doubts and reduction. In this case, Eustace debates with Claude on the grounds of natural science by suggesting more vital connotations of physical affinity. When Eustace invokes affinity, he does so as if to say that even on a chemical level the person one loves is a stabilizing force. Likewise, the characters in *Elective Affinities* playfully note that elements seem to combine on the

basis of a higher executive power (55). However, these flirtations obscure the novella's suggestion that it is more likely that affinity occurs according to determined processes rather than anthropomorphic volition. By venturing into scientific discourse, Eustace's defenses of love become flimsy. Claude counters Eustace's claim that certain people afford better love matches by arming himself with a relativity that finds all women, "from the peasant girl to the princess," (3.157) equally worthy of a love relationship. Claude then expands his relativism to include identity with other species:

All that is Nature's is I, and I all things that are Nature's.  
 Yes, as I walk, I behold, in a luminous, large intuition,  
 That I can be and become anything that I meet with or look at:  
 I am the ox in the dray, the ass with the garden-stuff panniers;  
 I am the dog in the doorway, the kitten that plays in the window,  
 On sunny slab of the ruin the furtive and fugitive lizard, (3.160-166).

Claude goes too far in his "luminous intuition" as he identifies equally well with the female gender and animal species. As did Bentham in *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (283n), Claude advocates the worth of animals as common beings, albeit more indirectly, and possibly through a bestialization of Keats' negative capability. The weight of Claude's reverie derives primarily from mid-nineteenth century anxieties that humanity may not be the center of God's creation. But if Claude arrives at an insight about humanity's forebears via his scientific discourse, he also reveals himself to be ignorant about the vital potential of human sympathy. The poem suggests that these identifications are interesting imaginative connections and may represent an evolutionary kinship, but Claude's sudden animal empathy does not diminish his need for Mary's

human attentions. Claude takes his relativism further until he claims to be able to sympathize with plant life and inorganic nature: “Yea, and detect, as I go, by a faint but a faithful assurance, / E’en from the stones of the street, as from rocks or trees of the forest, / Something of kindred, a common, though latent vitality, greet me” (3.167-9). Whereas the Wordsworthian imagination begins with non-human nature but ends with a narrative of human emotions, Claude considers nature an “escape from our strivings, mistakings, misgrowths, and perversions” (3.170). By the course of his reductive thinking, Claude travels from the theory of love as juxtaposition to a state in which he claims to look with yearning at the objects of scenic nature and “Fain could demand to return to that perfect and primitive silence, / Fain be enfolded and fixed, as of old, in their rigid embraces” (3.171-2).

All of these rationalizations and circumlocutions fall aside in Canto four, in which Claude finally decides that he must pursue Mary, and does so throughout Italy and central Europe. By the conventions of a sentimental romance plot, Claude may be expected to encounter Mary, in Venice perhaps, with the intention of declaring love fresh in his mind. But readers with such expectations, Emerson for example, were disappointed by Claude’s failure to track down Mary. The primary reason for their miscommunication is a letter that Mary sent to Claude that he did not receive because a waiter had lost it (4.20). In such a slight detail of human error, the poem reveals how love can be established or lost because of trivial circumstances, rather than the determinations of the stars. But the lost letter also points to the poem’s own fragmented epistolary form. The letters that comprise the poem suggest a physical basis for the story, a narrative strategy that agrees with the poem’s Benthamite preference for material objects. At the same time, the letters

preclude direct communication among individuals, and sometimes leave space for doubt about whether a letter was received or read. Thus the form becomes a barrier to the plot's resolution, for Eustace's letters do not help Claude make up his mind, and Mary and Claude do not connect. As Clough insists in his letter to Shairp, the ending was an important part of the poem which he had planned from the beginning. The epistolary structure, then, reinforces Clough's critical and satirical aims for the poem.

Hindered by his self-contradictions and the poem's formal complicity, Claude gives up his chase and wills himself to forget Mary. He returns to his prior objective stance and the atomistic individuality it sustains as a remedy for Mary's delusive effect on him. He asserts soon after his surrender that he cannot recall her face, and that such an elision from his memory is preferable: "the old image would only delude me" (5.57). Rather than "cling to her falsely" (5.51), Claude opts to "cling now to the hard, naked rock that is left me" (5.67), as though this choice of dependence shores up a more authentic individuality. He then writes a letter to Eustace in which he imagines himself on his death-bed, still repelling his friend, but thankfully does not send it. Claude's interior well-being has degenerated to the point at which further communication may become disastrous, and Claude's best course of action for connecting with others, ironically, may be to remain silent until time restores his faint yearning for love.

The poem's epistolary form until this point has also neglected Mary. She appears for the first time in a postscript to one of Georgina's letters, in which she claims that she finds Claude repulsive. The poem comments humorously on conventional marriage plots in the detail that Mary has been learning the meaning of repulsion from her tutor, Miss Roper (3.28). Moreover, the poem suggests ominously that miseducation for women

may erase their love ideals. Both Claude and Mary have been trained to be at odds with each other and their desires, even to the point at which it is not clear whether the two are a suitable pair. Mary still offers some hope, however, because she seems resistant to her education and seeks Claude's attentions even while she claims to be repulsed.

Miss Roper's active role in Claude and Mary's relationship also may be viewed with suspicion. In the aftermath of Canto four's mad rush, Mary recapitulates Miss Roper's last letter: "Mr. C. got you out with very considerable trouble; / And he was useful and kind, and seemed very happy to serve you" (5.40-1). This plot element reinforces the poem's, and Clough's, suspicion of educators. As is characteristic of her depth, Mary recognizes the danger of believing fully in the message of her tutor: "O my dear Miss Roper, I dare not trust what you tell me!" (5.54). In the suggestion of a love triangle including the tutor, the poem also comments on Goethe's play on partner swapping in *Elective Affinities*. The captain discusses a symmetrical foursome within which the couples may swap to form new and possibly more affined relations. *Amours de Voyage*, however, adds Miss Roper as an asymmetrical element without an affine, who in her jealousy works to disrupt the connections of others.

At the end of the poem, Mary gives up on waiting for Claude, and consoles herself by trying to understand why he does not arrive. This last letter is addressed to Miss Roper, and begins with a near-accusation: "You have heard nothing; of course, I know you can have heard nothing" (5.206). Mary suspects Miss Roper's manipulations, and seems aware of the atomistic fate that the poem inflicts on its characters. But Mary disturbs the poem's atomism in the final letter through her generous explanation for Claude's inaction. In an unheralded act of imaginative sympathy, Mary enters into

Claude's mind in order to imagine why he would not meet her:

Oh, and you see I know so exactly how he would take it:

Finding the chances prevail against meeting again, he would banish

Forthwith every thought of the poor little possible hope, which

I myself could not help perhaps, thinking only too much of;

He would resign himself, and go. I see it exactly (5.210-14).

Mary isolates the essence of Claude's motivations, and cuts away the layers of rationalizations to present him as a reasonable person who flees a great risk of pain. The exactness of Mary's vision is of a different quality than Claude's depth-seeking, and may be epistemologically less secure, but it is the surest positive connection between characters in the poem. Whereas Eustace undermines his own well-meaning assistance by participating in reductive accounts of love, Mary avoids the impersonalizing tendency of scientific discourse by focusing on the connection itself.

Clough finishes *Amours de Voyage* on a note of submission, but also with the defiant blast of the "cannon of France" (5.224) that evokes the bracing bombast of "Say not the Struggle Nought Availeth." This implicit commitment to love would be borne out in Clough's later life and poetry. As mentioned above, Clough's correspondence with Blanche describes his eventual acceptance of her love as a means to make his life, in Blanche's words, "happier and more real" (*Corr.* 1: 307). In *Dipsychus*, Clough would return to the possibility of love as the "large repose / restorative" (10.31-2) even if it is "A thing not possibly to be conceived / An item in the reckonings of the wise" (10.36-7), and the target of the boisterous Spirit's wit. But in *Amours de Voyage*, as a precedent to those future developments, Clough leaves Mary's faint and belated connection as a

measure of hope that abstract love can somehow overcome its many challenges and endure in a more secure form.

#### 4. "Farther Uses of the Dead to the Living"

Arthur Hugh Clough and Jeremy Bentham's Auto-Icon, a display case containing the utilitarian founder's preserved corpse, arrived at University College London at roughly the same time. From the university council's perspective, these acquisitions may have bolstered the fledgling institution's standing as a non-sectarian alternative to Oxford and Cambridge. Clough assumed the posts of Principal of University Hall and Lecturer on English Literature and Languages, but became frustrated with the university board's expectations and constant surveillance. During his tenure at University College, Clough wrote and revised *Amours de Voyage*, a poem that criticized the shortcomings of a utilitarian education. I have argued that the poem's criticism of utilitarian epistemology employs an imaginative recreation of Jeremy Bentham, or a similar Benthamite figure, who struggles to reconcile his limiting standards for truth with the complications of war and love that transcend factual reality and the individual. In this chapter, I propose that Clough was aware of Bentham's Auto-Icon and its metaphoric potential for satirizing Benthamite training. Following a brief history of the Auto-Icon that tracks its movements and availability, I investigate the possibility that, when or prior to considering his imaginative creation, Clough had encountered the Auto-Icon at University College. Finally, I embark on readings of certain passages in *Amours de Voyage* that consider motifs of permanence and uncertainty to suggest that Bentham's Auto-Icon might have been a haunting presence in Clough's poem, and remark on how these relations to Benthamism might influence Clough's current reputation as a thinker and writer.

The impetus for the Auto-Icon originated in Bentham's will and his support for

the work of Unitarian minister and medical doctor Southwood Smith.<sup>41</sup> In the ultimate application of his principle of utility, Bentham's will donated his body to improve anatomical knowledge and surgical practices. In the June 1824 edition of the *Westminster Review*, Smith published "On the Use of the Living for the Dead" to promote legalizing the granting of one's body after death for use in medical dissections. After the pamphlet's publication, Bentham began corresponding with Smith and entered a codicil into his will that bequeathed his corpse to the doctor. Thereafter, Smith planned a public lecture and dissection for an audience of public figures to advertise the purpose and medical benefits of anatomy. Bentham died in 1832, days after the passing of the Reform Bill, and while the Anatomy Bill was between its first and second readings in the House of Lords. Smith's lecture over Bentham's remains occurred on June 9, and was reported by Albany Fonblanque, editor of *The Examiner*, who wrote that the theatre was full with a widely-selected audience, and among those present "were many of [Bentham's] personal friends, several distinguished philanthropists, two or three members of the legislature, and a number of the junior members of the bar. Besides the pupils of that School of Anatomy, several eminent members of the medical profession were present, and the theatre was filled" (qtd. in Crimmins xxxix). The lecture and dissection received notice in eulogies written by Bentham's disciples in *The Examiner*, obituaries printed in *The Times*, and in a pamphlet written by Smith to disseminate the movement.<sup>42</sup> The Anatomy Bill, the relatively less-memorable 1832 legislation, passed

---

<sup>41</sup> The most recent study is James E. Crimmins' 2002 *Bentham's Auto-Icon and Related Writings*, which agrees in most details with C.F.A. Marmoy's 1958 article.

<sup>42</sup> Many of these expositions include the detail that the dissection occurred during a lightning storm. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, having appeared in a one-volume edition in 1831, may have contributed to public interest in that meteorological coincidence, and undoubtedly hinted at associations between Frankenstein's monster and Bentham's own bid for immortality.

in the wake of this publicity.

Bentham's will also requested that following the anatomical dissection his body be preserved and put on display in a wooden cabinet that he designated his Auto-Icon. He lists the purposes of this artifact in an unpublished pamphlet entitled "Auto-Icon, or Farther Uses of the Dead to the Living." In a playful and irreverent tone, Bentham explains the Auto-Icon as an endeavour to make death as beneficial as possible for the public good. His more serious points include increasing research for medicine and phrenology, reducing funeral costs for the lower classes, and reminding viewers of the Auto-Icon of his principle of utility. But often Bentham drifts into fantasies about the permanence of his fame and body,<sup>43</sup> or the Auto-Icon's presence as chairman at meetings.<sup>44</sup> The Auto-Icon, therefore, is in some ways a shrine to Bentham's insuperable individuality, and expresses a self-sufficient and authoritative placidity in the display's face.<sup>45</sup>

Southwood Smith delegated the labour necessary for the preservation, and kept the Auto-Icon at his rooms from 1832 until 1849. Marmoy argues that "Bentham must have been seen by many visitors, including Charles Dickens" (83), who was a friend of Smith's. In 1849, Smith left his consulting rooms at Finsbury Square, and offered the Auto-Icon to University College. In the College Council minutes for March 23, 1850, University President Henry Brougham urges the Council to accept the display as soon as

---

<sup>43</sup> Bentham's materialist program for death as an instructive monument may be contrasted to Wordsworth's description of the body as the sacred house of the rational and immortal souls (124) and the ideal epitaph as representative of general truth (127) in his *Essays on Epitaphs*.

<sup>44</sup> Considering Bentham's reputation as an epistemological skeptic, it is ironic that the Auto-Icon has accrued myths concerning its participation in meetings of certain University bodies. Both Marmoy and Crimmins expose such myths as largely baseless, except for two ceremonial occasions on which Bentham was said to be "present but not voting" (Crimmins liii), and Bentham's fantasy of permanent chairmanship.

<sup>45</sup> It is noteworthy that the expression on Bentham's face distorted during the preservation process, and thus the satisfied stolidity appears on an artificial wax face while the original head was concealed in a sack (Marmoy 81). A photograph of the Auto-Icon appears in Appendix B.

it became available: “I see the absolute necessity of our receiving it on the morning of that day” (83). Brougham’s excitement at procuring the Auto-Icon may stem from its associations with University College and the Council’s mandate to establish a viable place of learning. Although University College was initially a medical school, in 1849 admissions for arts and law students began equaling those in medical fields (Marmoy 77). Bentham’s Auto-Icon would have provided a link among the sciences, humanities, and the law because of his philosophical standing and support for medical research. Bentham’s connections to utilitarianism and therefore middle-class welfare might also have reinforced his potential as unofficial university mascot. Lastly, it is possible that the Auto-Icon’s value as a curiosity might have encouraged Brougham to place it on university premises. Though macabre, the Auto-Icon may have given the university a notoriety that was not altogether harmful to its reputation.

There is some debate about the availability of the Auto-Icon to the public at University College, but Marmoy and Crimmins agree that Bentham was probably accessible. The primary evidence for this is a letter written by Southwood Smith in which he complains that the display does not attract the level of attention he sought: “Any one may see it who enquires there for it, but no publicity is given to the fact that Bentham reposes there in some back room. The authorities seem to be afraid or ashamed to own their own possession” (qtd. in Crimmins xlvi). The Auto-Icon spent nearly fifty years as a mysterious backroom object until University officials acknowledged the Auto-Icon in its passing into the anatomical museum in 1906.<sup>46</sup>

Given the Auto-Icon’s role in public legislation and its exposure in the

---

<sup>46</sup> In the twentieth century, the Auto-Icon arrived at the library for the 1926 College centenary, and claimed its present place in the South Cloisters after World War Two, where the Auto-Icon may be viewed by the public today.

newspapers, it is highly likely that Clough was aware of the display even before he arrived at University College. It is less likely that he was aware that it was in the university's possession, although Lord Brougham received one of the twenty or thirty copies of the written text of "Auto-Icon" in 1842 and he may have broached the subject with Clough as part of the University's recruitment efforts that Clough refused to contribute to (see Kenny 206-7). Even if Clough was aware that the Auto-Icon was stored somewhere on the grounds, there is little in his personality which suggests that he would have sought it, however much such an encounter tantalizes the imagination.

The possible influence of Jeremy Bentham's Auto-Icon has implications for at least two themes in *Amours de Voyage*: ambivalence about cultural and human permanence, and the poem's uses of uncertainty to criticize the underpinnings of Bentham's positivist epistemology. Whereas some literary works may be seen as self-conscious bids for cultural immortality by their writers,<sup>47</sup> *Amours de Voyage* presents Rome's cultural history, "All the incongruous things of past incompatible ages" (1.22), as a stifling narrative of complexity. If Clough had conceived of his poem as a permanent contribution to English literature, he must also have been aware of the glut of texts to which he was contributing, and understood that others may wish to see this accumulation simplified, as Claude thought of Roman architecture: "Would to Heaven the old Goths had made a cleaner sweep of it! / Would to Heaven some new ones would come and destroy these churches!" (1.23-4). In this sense of the past as obsolete and an obstacle to be surmounted or absorbed in a totalizing narrative of the present, *Amours de Voyage*

---

<sup>47</sup> I.e. Horace's *Odes* 3.30 ("I have erected a monument more lasting than bronze"), Shakespeare's sonnet 55 "Not marble, nor the gilded monuments", or Milton's response to that sonnet in "On Shakespeare." As opposed to a "gilded monument" and the sonnet's intricate structure, however, Clough in *Amours de Voyage* interacts with a nineteenth-century tradition of ancient ruins. The poem's fragmented structure and sometimes irregular meter supports its questioning of poetry as a permanent medium.

shows affinities with a twentieth-century impulse evident in T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, though Claude's appreciation for some features of Roman architecture is at least somewhat earnest, as Claude allows in his description of the "great Coliseum, / Which at the full of the moon is an object worthy a visit" (2.7.215-6). Even so, the Roman marbles which Claude studies do not totally enthrall him. Monuments may be impressive, but they also make claims on one's beliefs and actions, and are liable to be employed in rhetoric. Claude's attitude towards monuments resembles Shelley's in "Ozymandias," as the sonnet's speaker derives some measure of superior individuality by rebelling against assertions of permanence, and Claude must leave his study of the marbles to seek comfort in mortal, and therefore temporary, relations. Although the characters in *Amours de Voyage* do not exactly achieve love, Claude's dissatisfactions with the marbles signal a preference in the poem for the lesser permanence of human love as opposed to joining the accumulating profusion of cultural and literary texts.<sup>48</sup>

When Claude fails to verify his knowledge by using only the grounds of sense perception, the poem challenges the foundations of empirical philosophy. Claude believes, or desires the ability to state, that he has seen a man killed in the streets of Rome, and after deliberations with himself is able to communicate this to Eustace. However, Claude's evidence is only as reliable as his perception, which he relates to Eustace in a tableau vivant of obstructive movement: "Passing away from the place with Murray under my arm, and / Stooping, I saw through the legs of the people the legs of a body" (2.195-6). To the best of his ability, Claude has constructed an account of his experience that meets extreme conditions for truth. But, given the aforementioned

---

<sup>48</sup> However, Clough seems to have made no special provisions for the disposal of his body, but rather delivered specifications for his literary remains to his posthumous publisher, C.E. Norton, who collaborated with Blanche Clough.

qualifications, the reader may ask whether Claude did in fact see a body, and the answer is decidedly uncertain. Since Claude therefore cannot assert with certainty that he had seen a body, his earlier rigorous efforts to arrive at a truthful report of the apparent killing were in vain. Claude gives the final statement in his report (“and I saw something” (2.166)) in desperation because he cannot allow his epistemological skepticism to penetrate his own ability to decide what is or is not truth. Claude will not admit that he sees but through a glass darkly because such an admission surrenders his individual power to decide what is real. The alternative, the poem suggests, is that truth, like community and love, is arrived at through human agreement.<sup>49</sup> Although the poem does not foresee the developments of scientific communities that design repeatable experiments, it attacks what Clough may have believed were the pretensions of empirical philosophers whose arguments require faultless perception in observers. In its assertion of radical uncertainty, *Amours de Voyage* once more directs its readers to mistrust claims that individual perception results in fundamental truth claims, and rather to seek out their intuitive voices and to depend more on the beliefs and needs of others.

*Amours de Voyage* turns its uncertainty to positive ends by pointing readers towards finding comfort in social relations, striving for imaginative connections, and challenging ideology. By placing a preserved corpse at the center of his critique of utilitarian self-sufficiency, Clough implies a morbid terminal point for that education which may deter the prospective student of this extreme variant of Benthamism.<sup>50</sup> The uncertainty surrounding whether Clough had seen Bentham’s body is thus a fascinating

---

<sup>49</sup> Clough died before Mill’s publication of *On Liberty*, but I suspect that Clough would have agreed with many of Mill’s arguments for freedom of speech, even if he would have been skeptical about Mill’s assumption that an empirical truth exists and some day may be found.

<sup>50</sup> It might be said that in *Amours de Voyage* Bentham’s corpse exists in an underworld generated by logic, similar to Casaubon’s descents into his scholarly labyrinth in *Middlemarch*.

extra-literary layer at the core of the poem and its critique. Though one might say with relative certainty that Clough did not intend to include this element, the Auto-Icon's questionable presence in *Amours de Voyage* adds a retrospective historical reinforcement to the poem's themes of dealing with uncertainty and criticizing atomistic philosophy. Clough may have sympathized with Jeremy Bentham on a number of levels, but the possibility of the Auto-Icon's presence in *Amours de Voyage* suggests yet another wry joke at the expense of those in search of impracticable truth.

We may recall that Mill invented the skeptical Bentham which fuels Clough's criticisms of British epistemology in *Amours de Voyage*. But Mill also continued to think and write in ways that defied his limited Benthamite beginnings, in part to expand the range of English thought and his contributions to it. Mill's *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive*<sup>51</sup> engages to systematize rules for drawing propositions from less general inferences and propositions from similarly general propositions, processes which Mill calls inductive and ratiocinative, respectively. By developing these processes, Mill hoped to stretch the capabilities of logic so that it could explain so-called common-sense truths, such as a person's belief that the day's lunch will be nourishing based on the consequences of breakfast. Both of these methods would be abhorrent to Mill's Bentham, and also to at least some of Mill's contemporary philosophers, for Mill notes "the contempt entertained by many modern philosophers for the syllogistic art" (cxii). Mill defines induction as "the operation of discovering and proving general propositions" (284) and in so doing he mounts a defense of everyday knowledge that cannot always be grounded in particular fact:

---

<sup>51</sup> In a letter sent in 1843, Clough reveals that he had read this text, and found it "very well written at any rate, and 'stringent' if not sound" (*Corr.* 1: 126). In Clough's question to his interlocutor about whether the latter teaches logic to his students, Clough continues to distance himself from inductive methods.

In every induction we proceed from truths which we knew, to truths which we did not know; from facts certified by observation, to facts which we have not observed, and even to facts not capable of being now observed; future facts, for example, but which we do not hesitate to believe on the sole evidence of the induction itself (285).

Nineteenth-century British thinkers, still rooted in eighteenth-century empirical traditions of Locke and Bentham, may have, like Clough, found such statements to be more contentious than they are today. In response to his readership, Mill insists that induction is “a real process of Reasoning or Inference” (285) and writes to convince them that responsible thought, even if British, may involve forays into generalization.

Matthew Arnold’s “Thyrsis,” a complicated eulogy for his old friend and rival, Clough, is in part a rebuke for Clough’s apparent dependence on particular proofs. Written a few years after Arnold abandoned poetry to concentrate on literary and cultural criticism, “Thyrsis” develops around its central image of “the signal elm” (14). The tree links Corydon and Thyrsis, classical pseudonyms for Arnold and Clough, to their bucolic Oxford heritage, and stands as proof that poetry functions as a sustaining fantasy. The elm does so for Arnold by reminding him of “The Scholar Gypsy,” a poem of Arnold’s, for which Clough expressed appreciation, about a legendary Oxford figure’s escape from his unsatisfying education: “while [the tree] stood, we said, / Our friend, the Gipsy-Scholar, was not dead; / While the tree lived, he in these fields lived on” (28-30). Despite this agreement, Thyrsis betrays Corydon by associating with “some men of life unblest” (46) “which made him droop and fill’d his head” (47) with dangerous knowledge, perhaps taking such forms as the High Criticism, Newmanism, and

Benthamite epistemology. “He went,” the speaker relates of Thyrsis’ betrayal, and “his piping took a troubled sound / Of storms that rage outside our happy ground” (48-9).

Corydon as well may have entertained such dark ideas previously, but his strength is in waiting for the right frame of mind to return, like the yearly renewal of spring and summer. After becoming contaminated by these ideas, Thyrsis, conversely, “could not wait their passing,” and died, leaving the signal elm as a record of their earlier poetic fraternity.

Corydon’s reliance on the signal elm to support his memories and the significance of his friendship with Thyrsis is interesting because Corydon is unable to observe the tree using sense perception. When first reminded of the elm, the speaker gazes into the forest for a glimpse of it, but cries out “I miss it! is it gone?” (27). But rather than abruptly end his contemplative repose to search the forest for that one tree’s calming presence, as Thyrsis might have done, Corydon remains fulfilled by his memory of the symbol, and it emanates presence in his imagination: “I cannot reach the signal-tree to-night, / Yet, happy omen, hail!” (165-6). Corydon’s hailing of a memory invites questions: what if the tree is in fact gone? Would Thyrsis’ point of view be rectified if the tree had died, and, therefore, the symbol of the signal elm needed revision? But Corydon does not address these concerns. To him, the tree is evident within the forest, and the certainty of his vision attempts to override doubts about the state of the factual tree:

Despair I will not, while I yet descry  
 Neath the mild canopy of English air  
 That lonely tree against the western sky.

Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear,

Our Gipsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee! (193-7).

Corydon's willful obliviousness to factual reality, therefore, allows him to proclaim victory over Thyrsis' temporary empirical existence. Forgetting the transparent allegory (this transparency suggesting the close relation between Arnold's creative imagination and the reality it treats), we see that "Thyrsis" represents Arnold's response to what he sees is Clough's stringent epistemology. Arnold seems aware that his use of metaphor does not have ontological implications, as he means to place the signal elm in a liminal space that strengthens the tenuousness of his reliance on metaphor. In empirical terms, and Paul de Man would agree, Arnold intentionally deploys a fallacy to buffer himself from Clough's empirical abyss. Like Odysseus lashed to his ship's mast to restrain himself from following siren song, Arnold courts and then drives past intellectual pitfalls even though it means restricting some of his faculties.

But Arnold did not see *Amours de Voyage* as in itself it really was, or at least did not account for it in "Thyrsis," because he apparently did not recognize its satirical distance from the Benthamite epistemology it investigates and deplores.<sup>52</sup> Unlike Arnold, Clough's proclivities drove him to plumb the empirical abyss, and, though the results may not have been surprising for his fellow poets, to reveal a corpse in its depths. Despite his qualified admiration for Mill's writings, Clough was inspired to track the spirit of British empiricism to its furthest extent, and in doing so to demonstrate the strongest proof he could to enjoin readers to reject or qualify it. To some extent, the

---

<sup>52</sup> In fact, Arnold seems to have had very little to say about *Amours de Voyage*, aside from a reference to the "Italian poem" (132) in his letters to Clough. One suspects that Arnold was wary about paying attention to a poem that was so antithetical to some of his ideals, and worried about Clough's attention to the poem's themes.

endeavour was necessarily self-defeating. As seen in Eustace's scientific discourse, *Amours de Voyage*, like "Thyrsis," hints that certain problems are best approached not by enmeshing oneself in them directly, but rather by acting or thinking towards the positive ends that one imagines.<sup>53</sup>

Clough and Arnold arrive at similar responses to the problem of skepticism, but take widely diverging routes, and retain different reservations about those solutions. Both advocate imaginative connections, but whereas "Thyrsis" performs willed sight of the unseen, *Amours de Voyage* remains more uncertain about the averse consequences that agreement has for individual thought. The poem's fate for Claude, a continuation of his travels from Rome to Egypt (5.205), implies that Claude's impossible knowledge may yet be sought in a locale nearer to the beginnings of written history. But Egypt's Biblical resonances also suggest relations opposite to the alienated observer, those of slavery, and therefore in concluding the poem challenges sociality by linking it with the limitations to freedom explicit in a Carlylean neo-feudalism. To the end, Claude clings to the ideals of individual truth and fulfillment that *Amours de Voyage* associates with Jeremy Bentham and utilitarianism. Thus the poem, by contrast to Arnold's views, stubbornly resists the rhetoric of unity, even as that resistance requires, for Claude and Clough, a social and emotional sacrifice, an act that restores to this secularized poem a Christian impetus. Although it has been less regarded by literary history, Clough's method may be more effectively discomfiting to readers who cannot simply agree that Corydon's tree exists, but rather must dig down in search of living roots.

---

<sup>53</sup> In this regard, *Amours de Voyage* conveys a similarly paradoxical message as Wittgenstein, a twentieth-century critic of empiricism and positivism, in the concluding maxim of his *Tractatus*: "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence."

### Works Cited

- Armstrong, Isobel. *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics, and Politics*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- Arnold, Matthew. *Complete Prose Works*. Vol. 3. Lectures and Essays in Criticism. Ed. R.H. Super. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1962.
- . *The letters of Matthew Arnold to Arthur Hugh Clough*. Ed. Howard Lowry. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1968.
- . *Poetical Works*. Ed. C.B. Tinker and H.F. Lowry. London: Oxford UP, 1950.
- August, Eugene R. "Amours de Voyage and Matthew Arnold in Love: An Inquiry." *Victorian Newsletter*. 60 (Fall, 1981): 15-20.
- Bentham, Jeremy. *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*. Ed. J.H. Burns and H.L.A. Hart. Oxford, Clarendon P, 1996.
- . *The Rationale of Reward*. London: Robert Heward, 1830.
- Biswas, Robindra Kumar. *Arthur Hugh Clough: Towards a Reconsideration*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1972.
- Blewett, Octavian. *A Hand-Book for Travellers in Central Italy: Including the Papal States and Cities of Etruria*. London: Murray, 1850.
- Bone, Drummond. "Tourists and Lovers: Beppo and Amours de Voyage." *Byron Journal*. 28 (2000): 13-28.
- Bristow, Joseph. "'Love, Let Us Be True to One Another': Matthew Arnold, Arthur Hugh Clough, and 'Our Aqueous Ages'." *Literature and History*. 4:1 (Spring 1995): 27-49.
- Brönte, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. Ed. Richard J. Dunn. New York: Norton, 2003.

- Brooke, Stopford A. *Four Victorian Poets: A Study of Clough, Arnold, Rossetti, Morris*.  
New York: Russel and Russel, 1964.
- Browning, Elizabeth Barrett. *The Complete Works*. Ed. Charlotte Porter and Helen A.  
Clarke. New York: AMS P, 1973.
- Byron, Lord George Gordon. *Poetical Works*. Ed. Frederick Page. London: Oxford UP,  
1970.
- Carlyle, Thomas. *The Complete Works*. New York: P.F. Collier, 1987.
- Clough, Arthur Hugh. *Correspondence*. Ed. F.L. Mulhauser. Oxford: Clarendon P: 1957.
- . *The poems and prose remains*. Ed. Blanche Clough. St. Clair Shores.: Scholarly P,  
1969.
- . *The Poems*. Ed. F.L. Mulhauser. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1974.
- . *Selected Poems*. Ed. Joseph Phelan. London: Longman, 1995.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Biographia Literaria*. Ed. James Engell and W. Jackson  
Bate. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1983.
- . *Poetical Works*. Ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge. London: Oxford UP, 1967.
- Collins, Wilkie. *The Moonstone*. Ed. Steve Farmer. Peterborough: Broadview, 1999.
- Crimmins, James E, ed. *Bentham's Auto-Icon and Related Writings*. Bristol: Thoemmes  
P, 2002.
- Darwin, Charles. *Origin of Species*. Ed. Joseph Carroll. Peterborough: Broadview P,  
2003.
- Daston, Lorraine and Galison, Peter. *Objectivity*. New York: Zone, 2007.
- Dickens, Charles. *Hard Times*. Ed. George Ford and Sylvere Monod. New York:  
Norton, 1966.

- Eliot, T. S. *The Waste Land*. Ed. Lawrence Rainey. New Haven: Yale UP, 2005.
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Elective Affinities*. Trans. James Anthony Froude and R. Dillon Boylan. New York: F. Ungar, 1962.
- . *Roman Elegies*. Trans. David Luke. London: Chatto & Windus, 1977.
- Goode, John. "Amours de Voyage: The Aqueous Poem." *The Major Victorian Poets: Reconsiderations*. Ed. Isobel Armstrong. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969: 275-98.
- Hardy, Barbara. "Clough's Self-Consciousness." *The Major Victorian Poets: Reconsiderations*. Ed. Isobel Armstrong. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969: 253-74.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. Trans. T.M. Knox and A.V. Miller. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1985.
- Horace. *The Odes*. Ed. Kenneth Quinn. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1980.
- Johnson, Samuel. *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia*. Ed. Geoffrey Tillotson and Brian Jenkins. London: Oxford UP, 1971.
- Kallich, Martin. *The Association of Ideas and Critical Theory in Eighteenth-Century England: A History of a Psychological Method in English Criticism*. The Hague: Mouton, 1970.
- Keller, Janice E. "New Light on Arthur Hugh Clough's Eight-Year Poetic Silence." *Victorian Newsletter*. 81 (Spring 1992): 23-9.
- Kenny, Anthony. *Arthur Hugh Clough: A Poet's Life*. London: Continuum, 2005.
- Kierstead, Christopher M. "Where "Byron Used to Ride": Locating the Victorian Travel

- Poet in Clough's *Amours de Voyage* and *Dipsychus*." *Philological Quarterly*. 77 (Fall 1998): 377-95.
- Lyell, Sir Charles. *Principles of Geology*. 1830-33. Chicago, U of Chicago P: 1990-1991.
- Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth. *The Poetical Works*. Ed. H.E. Scudder. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1975.
- Patmore, Coventry Kersey Dighton. *The Poems*. Ed. Frederick Page. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1949.
- Marmoy, C.F.A. "The 'Auto-Icon' of Jeremy Bentham at University College, London." *Medical History*. 2 (April 1958): 77-86.
- McSweeney, Kerry. *Supreme Attachments: Studies in Victorian Love Poetry*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1998.
- Mill, John Stuart. *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*. Ed. John M. Robson and Jack Stillinger. Vol. 1. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1981.
- . *Mill on Bentham and Coleridge*. Intro. F.R. Leavis. London: Chatto & Windus, 1950.
- Reeve, Michael. *Jeremy Bentham's "Auto-Icon" at University College London*. 2003. *Wikimedia Commons*. 27 July, 2009. <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Jeremy\\_Bentham\\_Auto-Icon.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Jeremy_Bentham_Auto-Icon.jpg)>.
- "Results of the Election, and Defects of the Reformers." *Monthly Repository*. 129 (September 1837): 145-52.
- Reynolds, Matthew. *The Realms of Verse, 1830-1870: English Poetry in a Time of Nation-Building*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001.

- Shakespeare, William. *The Complete Works*. Ed. David Bevington. New York: Pearson, 2004.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe. *Complete Works*. Ed. Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck. New York: Gordian P, 1965.
- Sterne, Laurence. *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*. Ed. Ian Jack. London: Oxford UP, 1998.
- Strachey, Lytton. *Eminent Victorians: Cardinal Manning, Florence Nightingale, Dr. Arnold, General Gordon*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1934.
- Swift, Jonathan. *The Prose Works*. Ed. Herbert Davis. London: Oxford, 1968.
- Tennyson, Lord Arthur. *The Poems*. Ed. Christopher Ricks. Harlow: Longmans, 1969.
- Timko, Michael. "Arthur Hugh Clough: Palpable Things and Celestial Fact." *The Victorian Experience: The Poets*. Ed. Richard A. Levine. Ohio UP, 1982: 47-66.
- Thorpe, Michael, ed. *Clough: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972.
- Ward, Wilfred. *William George Ward and the Catholic Revival*. London: Macmillan, 1893.
- . *William George Ward and the Oxford Movement*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Macmillan, 1890.
- Wordsworth, William. *Lyrical Ballads*. Ed. James Butler and Karen Green. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1992.
- . *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism*. Ed. W.J.B. Owen. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974.

### Appendix A: Satire of Jeremy Bentham

[The following two selections from the nineteenth-century cultural practice of ridiculing Jeremy Bentham derive dark humour from his state of life-in-death, to borrow from Coleridge, and his associations with utilitarian philosophy and the British middle classes.]

i. Wilfred Ward, from *William George Ward and the Catholic Revival* (1893)

After some interesting discussions on the principles involved in the monastic system, which were illustrated by observations made at the Dominican convent at Stoke, where [my father, William George] Ward had been visiting his eldest daughter, he remarked, "On my way to Stoke I spent a couple days at Trentham." Then, with a seriousness which led us to expect some illustration of the opinions he had been expressing, he continued, "the most remarkable thing about the village of Trentham is that it is *not* the birthplace of Jeremy Bentham." Everyone began to protest against such nonsense; but he proceeded, "You don't believe me? I assure you it is so. I made inquiries, and there is no doubt whatever about it." Further protests, which were again useless. "I found out more about this," he continued. "I was staying in the pretty old-fashioned inn of the place with a dear old landlady, a Mrs. Bright, who must have been some eighty years old, and knew all the history of the neighbourhood. She told me that her inn had originally been a private house, and there seems not the least doubt that it was the identical house in which Jeremy Bentham wasn't born. I believe that my room was

the very room, but that is only a vague tradition. About the house there seems to be no doubt." And so he would go on for half an hour.

The particular joke we were not safe from for years, and it came up when least expected in some new form. Once it disappeared for nearly a year, and we thought it was forgotten. "Where do you think I went last week?" he asked one day; and I expected to hear of a new opera of interest. "To see our old friend Mrs. Bright." I had forgotten the name. "Don't you remember? At Trentham." We tried to burke the story, but in vain. "Yes, but you don't know what a curious visit it was. By a most singular coincidence I went there on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January. Now the 26<sup>th</sup> of January is the anniversary of the very day on which Jeremy Bentham wasn't born." Further vain remonstrances. "The world doesn't forget as easily as one is apt to think." This was said with a touch of sad seriousness. "Jeremy Bentham was a great man. You have no idea of the number of people – and the *kind* of people who didn't come in honour of the occasion. The Prince of Wales, the Archbishop of York, the Bishop of London, the Dean of Westminster, and a considerable number of minor clergy – I daresay upwards of a hundred – didn't come. It was very remarkable (391-2).

ii. Matthew Arnold, from *Lectures and Essays in Criticism* (1865)

Suppose the worst to happen," I said, addressing a portly jeweler from Cheapside; "suppose even yourself to be the victim; *il n'y a pas d'homme nécessaire*. We should miss you for a day or two upon the Woodford Branch; but the great mundane movement would still go on, the gravel walks of your villa would still be rolled, dividends would

still be paid at the Bank, omnibuses would still run, there would still be the old crush at the corner of Fenchurch Street.” All was of no avail. Nothing could moderate, in the bosom of the great English middle-class, their passionate, absorbing, almost blood-thirsty clinging to life. At the moment I thought this over-concern a little unworthy; but the *Saturday Review* suggests a touching explanation of it. What I took for the ignoble clinging to life of a comfortable worlding, was, perhaps only the ardent longing of a faithful Benthamite, traversing an age still dimmed by the last mists of transcendentalism, to be spared long enough to see his religion in the full and final blaze of its triumph. This respectable man, whom I imagined to be going up to London to serve his shop, or to buy shares, or to attend an Exeter Hall meeting, or to assist at the deliberations of the Marylebone Vestry, was even, perhaps, in real truth, on a pious pilgrimage, to obtain from Mr. Bentham’s executors a sacred bone of his great, dissected master (289).

## Appendix B: Jeremy Bentham's Auto-Icon

Michael Reeve, *Jeremy Bentham's "Auto-Icon" at University College London (2003)*

