Harriet Martineau’s Early Fiction and Hartleian Psychology

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Leicester

by

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2020
Abstract

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Harriet Martineau’s (1802-1876) most famous work of fiction, Deerbrook (1839) has attracted critical attention as the novel which initiated the trend towards domestic realism in the nineteenth-century novel. One feature of domestic realism was its psychological insight into the hidden motives and feelings of the characters.

This thesis focuses on the influence of the associationist psychology of David Hartley (1705-1757) on Martineau’s early fiction. Although associationism is known today as an archaic psychological theory characterized by its mechanistic views of the mind, the young Martineau was inspired by Hartley’s prophetic vision of the progress of humanity developed in the second part of his Observations on Man (1749), which contributed to a religious superstructure for his whole theory. Hartley’s influence is traceable in her lesser known works of fiction and essays written in her formative years from the mid 1820s to the early 1830s. These consist of short didactic tales for young readers and essays for the Monthly Repository, a sectarian periodical supported by the Unitarians within whose intellectual networks Martineau was brought up. By examining these tales and essays, one can discern not only the process of her development as a writer of fiction but also the centrality of Hartleian theory in formulating her fundamental views on human mind, which prepared the way for the major success of her Illustrations of Political Economy (1832-34). Whereas the interiority of her characters was presented much more skillfully in the Illustrations and Deerbrook than in the earlier fiction, her basic tenets concerning human mind and its proper management were unchanged. In its bold representation of the characters’ hidden passions and conflicts Deerbrook represents the culmination of Martineau’s exploration of the mind guided by Hartleian psychology.
Acknowledgements

This thesis is greatly indebted to Professor Joanne Shattock, who guided me throughout these long years with unfailing enthusiasm. I would never have been able to complete this work without such conscientious support and warm encouragement from her. I learned from her so many invaluable things not only as a scholar but also as a human, which will continue to be some of the greatest assets for my life. I am also grateful to Dr. Julian North and Dr. Felicity James, who gave me a lot of insights and useful information with their expertise.

I am indebted to J. F. Oberlin University, Tokyo, whose research fund and leave for the year 2011/12 enabled me to initiate this study. I am thankful to Professor Yoshiko Furuki and Professor Mariko Matsuda for their support in enabling me to start the doctoral course at the University of Leicester. I thank the Martineau Society for giving me the opportunity to present and publish a part of my study at their conferences and journal. My thanks are also due to the Kanto Branch of the English Literary Society of Japan and the University of Nagoya who let me present papers based on this study at their conference and seminar. I wish to thank the librarians, particularly Sue Killoran, at Harris Manchester College, Oxford, for their help and permission to consult the manuscript material they hold.

During the extended period of my study in Leicester, I was fortunate in meeting many fellow researchers and friends who gave me support and encouragement. I wish to thank Dr. Rachel Anchor and Dr. Jon Potter, who began the course in the same year with myself; Professor Tomoko Kanda, Professor Miyuki Kamezawa, and Professor Yukio Kaneko, who also came from Japan as visiting scholars. My special thanks are due to Mark and Alison Simpson, who were my hosts when I first came to Leicester as a Rotary Foundation Scholar to do my MA course in 1996/97. Since I resumed my study and started to pay annual visits to Leicester, I have been supported by their warm friendship.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family. I thank my parents and my parents-in-law for their support, particularly for looking after our home during my yearly absence for research. Finally, I wish to thank my daughter Kotori and my husband
Masashi. The year 2011/2012 we spent in Leicester together as a family is one of the most memorable years of my life. During the many years that followed, which were full of challenges and struggles not only for myself but also for us as a family, I was always saved by their unlimited love and generosity. I would like to thank them with equally unlimited love and gratitude.
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Introduction

Few people today remember Harriet Martineau as a novelist and even fewer consider her a novelist who had an impact on the development of the novel as a genre. One obvious reason for this is that she wrote only one full length novel in her career; namely Deerbrook in 1839.\(^1\) However, when one considers the range of her fiction in general, which includes not only novels but also tales, children’s stories, a historical romance and so-called historiettes\(^2\), she had, in fact, a considerable output of fiction. The Illustrations of Political Economy (1832-34), with which she made a sensational debut as a writer, was a work of fiction though its primary purpose was the popularization of the science of political economy. It was immediately followed by two similar but smaller series of tales, Poor Laws and Paupers Illustrated (1833-34) and Illustrations of Taxation (1834).

Deborah Logan points out that Martineau was quick to give up writing fiction even though it was a form that was both popular and considered to be appropriate for female writers, and that she sought to establish her ground in nonfiction, which was regarded as a more masculine form of writing.\(^3\) This view is consistent with her contemporaries’ view of her career. For example, in his poem ‘Haworth Churchyard, April, 1855,’ written as an elegy for Charlotte Brontë, Matthew Arnold presented Martineau as her equally talented and celebrated friend, describing her as ‘mature in fame,/Earning, she too, her praise/First in Fiction, had since/Widen’d her sweep, and survey’d/History, Politics, Mind.’\(^4\) Obviously, the ‘fiction’ mentioned here as contributing to her fame was not Deerbrook, her first and last novel, but those early tales in the Illustrations of Political Economy and the series that followed it. By the time she wrote Deerbrook,

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1. She wrote another three-volume fiction, *The Hour and the Man: An Historical Romance* in 1840. However, as its subtitle shows, it was ‘a historical romance’ rather than a novel, a fictional representation of the life of Toussaint L’Ouverture who led the slave rebellion in Haiti from 1791.
2. The short stories Martineau contributed to *Once a Week* in the 1860s were called ‘historiettes.’ According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a historiette is ‘a short history or story; an anecdote.’
4. The poem was quoted by Vineta Colby in *Yesterday’s Woman: Domestic Realism in the English Novel* (Princeton UP, 1974) 210-211. Colby points out that in spite of Arnold’s personal dislike for Martineau, he admitted her talent and influence. The poem was first published in *Fraser’s Magazine* 51. 305 (May 1855): 527-530.
Martineau’s fame had been firmly established not only as a fiction writer but also as a writer of such works as *Society in America* (1837) and *Retrospect of Western Travel* (1838). *Deerbrook* was in fact quite different from any of her preceding works because of its purely imaginative nature. In a sense, Martineau wrote it to explore a new horizon for herself, risking her already established reputation. The result was that the novel ended with moderate commercial success but was far from establishing her as a major novelist.⁵

Martineau’s reputation as a fiction writer among her contemporaries complicates modern readers’ understanding and evaluation of her fiction. In order to measure her achievement dispassionately, it is important to reflect on the state of fiction in the 1830s, when most of Martineau’s early fiction, including *Deerbrook*, was written. Critics of an earlier generation tended to regard the period between the late 1810s and the late 1840s as a sort of gap or ‘grey area’⁶ in the history of the English novel. The late 1810s was the period when Austen died and Scott’s last widely-read novels were being published, and the late 1840s was the period which saw the emergence of such major Victorian novelists as Dickens, Thackeray, the Brontës, and Gaskell.⁷ One should also note that the 1830s was a decade of stormy social and political changes surrounding the Reform Bill crisis of 1831 to 1832, so that, it has been argued, people scarcely paid much attention to literature.⁸

On the other hand, there were also some genres of fiction that flourished in the period such as the so-called ‘Newgate novels’ which portrayed the lives of criminals, and ‘silver fork novels’ that depicted the lives of the upper classes. Until recently, works belonging to these sub-genres were not taken seriously but regarded merely as popular

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⁶ Colby 3. Colby regards the first half of the nineteenth century as ‘the artistic vacuum of this almost half-century’ that preceded ‘that flowering decade of the 1840s’ when many major Victorian novelists emerged.

⁷ Eva Figes notes the ‘gap of almost thirty years’ between the death of Austen and ‘the sudden eruption... of the Brontë sisters’ and calls it ‘a curiously disappointing period’ as far as female fiction was concerned. *Sex and Subterfuge: Women Novelist to 1850* (London: Macmillan, 1982) 113.

⁸ Kathleen Tillotson points out that in the early 1830s had ‘a slump in the market for novels (and still more for poetry) because no one could think of anything except public events.’ *Novels of Eighteen-Forties* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1954) 124. Sanders calls 1839, the year *Deerbrook* was published ‘the end of a decade preoccupied with political and social reform, and at the beginning of the English novel’s Victorian resurgence.’ Sanders (2004) xi.
and ephemeral. However, recent criticism has illuminated aspects of the Newgate novels such as their critique of penal reform or their psychological exploration of the social and personal circumstances of the criminal.\footnote{Heather Worthington, ‘The Newgate Novel,’ \textit{The Nineteenth-Century Novel 1820-1880}, eds. John Kucich and Jenny Bourne Taylor (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012) 124, 128.} Silver fork novels similarly have become the focus of serious attention as a record of manners and morals set against the social and political landscape of the reform era and as helping to shape the mid-nineteenth-century novel.\footnote{Dianne F. Sadoff, ‘The Silver Fork Novel,’ \textit{The Nineteenth-Century Novel 1820-1880}, eds. John Kucich and Jenny Bourne Taylor (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012) 121. See also Edward Copeland, \textit{The Silver Fork Novel: Fashionable Fiction in the Age of Reform} (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012).} In addition, recent criticism has also revealed that the ‘novel’ was not necessarily a dominant form of fiction in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Shorter pieces of fiction, particularly ‘tales’ were as popular as, or even more popular than novels during this period.\footnote{Anthony Jarrells, ‘Short Fictional Forms and the Rise of the Tale,’ \textit{English and British Fiction 1750-1820}, eds. Peter Garside and Kate O’Brien (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2015) 488.} Jenny Bourne Taylor points out a significant role they played in the period between 1820 and 1880:

Often blurring the boundary between fiction, journalism, and essay, they flourished alongside novels as a practice ground for literary technique. . . . They were crucibles for generic experimentation. . . .\footnote{Jenny Bourne Taylor, ‘Short Fiction and the Novel,’ \textit{The Nineteenth-Century Novel 1820-1880}, eds. John Kucich and Jenny Bourne Taylor (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012) 239.}

Although the period Taylor explores goes beyond the time frame of this thesis, it is notable that these characteristics of the tales were well suited to the purpose of the young Martineau, who wrote many tales along with essays in her apprenticeship in the 1820s. To sum up, the period which was once regarded as one of stagnation for fiction is now regarded as one filled with many new experiments and innovations. It was in the midst of this rapidly shifting social and literary scene that Martineau introduced her \textit{Illustrations} and \textit{Deerbrook}.

It is not difficult to imagine that readers’ expectations and the criteria of evaluation of works of fiction might have been different to those in the later periods. Although at the end of the nineteenth century Leslie Stephen judged the tales in the \textit{Illustrations} ‘unreadable’ as fiction and only ‘remarkable as illustrations of the contemporary state of mind,’\footnote{Leslie Stephen, ‘Harriet Martineau,’ \textit{Dictionary of National Biography}, ed. Sidney Lee, vol. 36} there were many readers and critics in the 1830s who read and appreciated the
work as a series of imaginative stories rather than for its teaching of political economy. Mary Russell Mitford, who was herself a prolific writer in the early-to-mid nineteenth century and who wrote exclusively imaginative works, claimed that the only works of Martineau she ever liked were ‘her political economy stories,’ and that she read them ‘skipping the political economy.’  14 It would appear that ‘skipping’ the political economy was a common practice among ordinary readers, for we find contemporary reviews expressing concern that the work was being read only for its entertainment value with its instruction missed out.  15 Thus, at least for the readers in the 1830s, the tales in the *Illustrations* were not considered unreadable.  On the contrary, their readability was such as to make some people worry that it might defeat the work’s whole scheme.

On the other hand, there were some of Martineau’s contemporaries who regarded the instructive purpose of the *Illustrations* as a burden which prevented her from following her artistic impulse freely. Florence Fenwick Miller argued that the tales in the *Illustrations* were ‘inevitably damaged, as works of art, by the fact that they were written to convey definite lessons.’  16 As a result, *Deerbrook*, which was written without any specific didactic purpose, excited high expectation among contemporary readers. A review in the *Edinburgh Review* commented:

> The announcement of a Novel from the pen of Miss Martineau, could not fail to create more than ordinary expectation. In her ‘Tales Illustrative of Political Economy’. . . there was such beauty and vividness in the descriptive passages, and such deep sound knowledge of human character exhibited in many parts, that an expectation naturally arose, that one who thus incidentally had given such evidence of imaginative power, and who, almost unintentionally, had attained to such success in those departments of her art which are the chief aim of

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15 According to Webb, Charles Knight said in his *Popular History of England* that ‘thousands read the tales for the stories and left the principles quite aside.’ He also points out that like Mitford, Herbert Spencer recorded in his autobiography that he read the *Illustrations* largely for the stories. Webb 119, 122.
other novelists, would, when emancipated from the uncongenial trammels of science, be far more successful than before.17

Although the reviewer expressed a high regard for Martineau’s talent and skill as a fiction writer, the overall judgment of Deerbrook was that its success would be limited and not immediate because of the restrictions Martineau put on herself. One of these was that she did not choose to appeal to the taste of the contemporary novel-reading public. In spite of the current craze for stories which were set either in the highest or the lowest social sphere, Martineau set her story within the ‘most unromantic and unpicturesque, portion of the community—the middle class.’18 Another restriction which was suggested by the reviewer was that she addressed only ‘thoughtful and patient readers.’19

As if to endorse such an evaluation, Deerbrook enjoyed only moderate success in the literary market but left a strong impression on some of the future novelists who read it, such as Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot. Brontë was particularly enthusiastic in her praise and admitted its influence upon her. Sending a copy of Shirley to Martineau under the pseudonym of Currer Bell in 1849, she wrote in a note, ‘When C. B. first read “Deerbrook” he tasted a new and keen pleasure, and experienced a genuine benefit. In his mind “Deerbrook” ranks with the writings that have really done him good, added to his stock of ideas, and rectified his views of life.’20

Thus, in spite of the general unenthusiastic reception, Deerbrook had something that touched the sensitivity of the future novelist, and planted a seed of something that was to be developed and matured in her novels.

It was not until the reevaluation of Martineau by twentieth-century critics that a proper assessment was made of the aspects of Deerbrook those later novelists responded to. Kathleen Tillotson was among the earliest critics who discussed Martineau in terms of her contribution to the development of the novel as a genre. In her Novels of the Eighteen-Forties (1954), she argues that during the decades of slackness in the literary market in the early nineteenth century, novels gradually began to assume a new kind of

17 ‘Deerbrook; A Novel,’ The Edinburgh Review 69 (Jul 1839), 494.
18 ‘Deerbrook; A Novel,’ 495.
19 ‘Deerbrook; A Novel,’ 495.
thoughtfulness, a trend which eventually reached its apex in the novels of George Eliot. Tillotson points out that the period between the 1830s and 1840s saw a growing tendency for introspection particularly in religious novels. According to her, it was the scenes of family life that were presented as the main site of psychological dilemma and personal development for the characters in these novels. She also points out that a new trend of psychological studies set against the background of domestic life was initiated in children’s stories. Tillotson’s argument makes it clear that the earliest years of Martineau’s development as a writer coincided with a gradual trend in fiction toward introspection and domesticity. She refers to Deerbrook as a novel that made a decisive step in this trend by focusing on middle-class family life as its main subject against the predominant taste of contemporary readers who were used to fashionable novels set in genteel society.

Vineta Colby discusses the significance of Deerbrook more fully in Yesterday’s Woman: Domestic Realism in the English Novel (1974). Although she shares the view of the 1830s as a low water mark in literature, she also views it positively as a decade which prepared for the rebirth of the novel as a genre from the late 1840s. Colby argues that the biggest contribution of this period was the development of domestic realism and regards Deerbrook as the earliest manifestation of all its features. Namely, it is a story of love and marriage, set within bourgeois family life, narrated with a sober realism which precludes any romantic incredibility. More importantly, Colby pays special attention to the point that Deerbrook presents a microcosm of a village community combined with the examination of various social and psychological issues which affect the lives of its inhabitants. Considering this an essential characteristic of domestic realism, she argues that Deerbrook is the novel which determined the course of development for the nineteenth-century realist novels that followed.

The significance of Martineau’s works in general in this transitional period was explored by Valerie Sanders in her Reason over Passion: Harriet Martineau and Victorian Novel (1986), where she examined not only Deerbrook but also Martineau’s other works such as the Illustrations and her Autobiography. Among her various arguments, the most pertinent to the theme of this thesis is one concerning Martineau’s attitude in presenting the emotional experience of her characters. Sanders points out that Martineau had a view later shared by George Eliot that literature was a means to expand the readers’ experience through sympathy. On the other hand, she also makes the point that unlike later Victorian novelists such as Charlotte Brontë, Martineau was
critical of the growing tendency to emphasize the subjective experience of the characters. In addition, in her introduction to the 2004 edition of Deerbrook, Sanders argues that Martineau had to depend on a philosophical perspective in exploring her characters’ psychology because she was not yet provided with the range of scientific vocabulary that informed the work of later novelists. These insights into Martineau’s difference from later novelists in dealing with psychological issues provided me with important preliminary assumptions for this thesis.

Recent criticism by Susan Fraiman which illuminates the characteristics of domestic fiction as a predominant subgenre of the Victorian novel also regards Deerbrook as a pioneering work. Fraiman argues that just as domestic realism is by definition a mode that examines the private lives of the characters, it is also characterized by its readiness to peer into their inner lives. She considers that Deerbrook goes further than most domestic novels in the sense that it depicts the inner lives of its characters including those of even secondary characters such as servants and children.

**Literature and Nineteenth-Century Theories of the Mind**

Throughout the nineteenth century, there was a vast range of arguments on the human mind from those based on traditional Christian theology to those inspired by the emergent natural sciences. These arguments were shared with the broad reading public and considered to have significant religious and political implications since they were concerned with the essence of humanity, the soul and the body. The early Victorian era saw the emergence of various physiologically inspired theories of the mind which stressed its physical basis. On the other hand, it was also the period in which traditional ideas and theories of the mind based on theology or philosophy still had great influence. Therefore, not only the relationship between the mind and the body but also the location or the workings of the soul or spirit constituted one of the chief problems of contemporary psychology.

From the late 1990s onward, there has been a surge of critical studies which illuminate the relationship between the nineteenth-century literary representations of

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human interiority and the multiple strands of contemporary psychological theories. Michael S. Kearns’s *Metaphors of Mind in Fiction and Psychology* (1987) can be seen as a precursor to this trend. The purpose of his study is to clarify how the actual language employed to talk about the mind altered during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and how the changes were related to changes in the concept of the mind. What makes his study pioneering is that its scope is not limited to the language used in literature but also encompasses those in philosophy and the physical sciences. At the beginning of his study, Kearns introduces a major dilemma faced by the philosophers in this period. In order to explain the workings of the mind they had to depend on physical metaphors such as those deriving from the workings of the human body. This was problematic because there was a predominant inhibition based on the traditional belief in the immateriality of the mind, an equivalent to the soul or spirit. Kearns points out that from the seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century many philosophers who discussed the nature of the mind slipped into ‘the mind-as-entity metaphor’ in spite of their resolution to avoid it. He also points out that this metaphor implied a concept of the mind as a passive entity which was capable of receiving or being inscribed with impressions from the external world. According to Kearns, literary works since the eighteenth century also depended on the same metaphor and concept of the mind until well into the second third of the nineteenth century although there were some attempts to modify them by writers such as Dickens and Charlotte Brontë.

Sally Shuttleworth’s *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (1996) marks the beginning of successive critical studies which have revealed the close relationship between fictional representations of subjectivity and contemporary psychological theories in the Victorian era. Shuttleworth points out that previous studies of Brontë’s representation of her characters’ inner lives were conducted exclusively through ahistorical perspectives and thus isolated her works from the cultural and social contexts that produced them. In order to locate Brontë’s works firmly within the context of Victorian psychological discourse, Shuttleworth examines them in relation to the multiple strands of contemporary discourse on the mind and subjectivity, ranging from the texts of medical psychiatry to domestic manuals, newspapers, and popular self-help books. Her awareness of this historical context enabled Shuttleworth to expand the

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discussion of the influence of phrenology on Brontë’s work. While earlier studies tended to concentrate on its influence on the description of the outer appearance of characters, Shuttleworth in both an article published in 1989 and her book focuses on the impact of the model of the mind provided by phrenology, which assumes the existence of multiple, often conflicting mental traits having their own physiological energy and competing with each other.\(^{23}\)

Several works published from the late 1990s onward provided an overview of the complex relationship between multiple strands of psychological theories in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Edward S. Reed illustrates the development of nineteenth-century psychology in terms of the conflict between the theories oriented towards traditional views of humanity based on theology or philosophy and those oriented towards scientific and materialistic views based on neurology or physiology. He demonstrates how the discussions in this field were inseparable from religious and political concerns.\(^{24}\) Rick Rylance sketches the configuration of various strands of mental theories in relation to their impact on Victorian literature. He categorizes the diverse discourse on the human mind in the Victorian era into four groups, namely, the discourse of the soul, the discourse of philosophy, the discourse of physiology in general biology, and the discourse of medicine. He argues that although the last two categories became increasingly prominent later in the century, all four lines continued to exist throughout the period and there was no progressive sequence among them.

What is particularly notable in relation to my thesis is Rylance’s illustration of the cultural implication of associationism. It is introduced as one of the two major schools of philosophical psychology that remained influential throughout the century. According to Rylance, because of its mechanical view of the mind and its explicit set of principles that appeared dogmatic, associationism posed problems for the general public. However, by the mid-century, as he states, it ‘gained credence and, virtually unconsciously, a place in the psychological vocabulary.’\(^{25}\) Giving examples from Dickens’ novels, Rylance shows that even though its mechanical principles were harshly


caricaturized in *Hard Times* (1854), its general terms and concepts, such as the significance of early impressions and the associations they evoke were used without irony in *David Copperfield* (1849-50). He gives examples of a similar use of associationist language by Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot. On the other hand, he also mentions the young Martineau’s adherence to the associationist theory in the early nineteenth century in spite of her subtle attraction to its rival school philosophy, now generally known as faculty psychology. Rylance argues that ‘[it] is one virtue of literature, in relation to psychological debates, that it can explore the ground from diverse perspectives, sometimes relatively untroubled by doctrinal affiliation in the war of the psychological schools.’

Thus, vocabularies of associationism were, in the words of Nicholas Dames, ‘filtered into general usage’ for novelists and other writers in the mid-century along with those of faculty psychology. Dames illustrates the symbiotic relationship between fiction and psychology during the Victorian era. He argues that novelists ‘from Charlotte Brontë to Thomas Hardy worked toward the ends of psychology—that is, in the precise depiction of emotion, sensations, and moods, of a whole host of mental operations.’ Dames also points out many Victorian novelists’ deep interest in contemporary discussions about the nature and function of the mind, such as Dickens’ serious interest in mesmerism, Charlotte Brontë’s deep understanding of phrenology, Wilkie Collins’ up-to-date knowledge of physiology, and George Eliot’s anatomical knowledge of the brain and nerves. Dames’ research is focused on the mid-to-late nineteenth century, when the traditional idea of the mind based on philosophical thought was gradually overshadowed by various new ideas which emphasized the physical basis of mental functions. Dames suggests that this change is connected to a shift in the major interest of nineteenth-century fiction. He argues that in the early stage of development, the psychological insights of novels focused on revealing the motives of characters, which led to the growth of the omniscient narrator. Later fiction, on the other hand,

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27 Rylance (2000) 67. Tyson Stolte argues that one can trace the influence of faculty psychology in Dickens’s *David Copperfield* although it is often discussed exclusively in terms of its connection to associationist idea of the mind. “‘What is Natural in Me’ *David Copperfield*, Faculty psychology, and the Association of Ideas.” *Victorian Review* 36-1 (2010): 56-71.
29 Dames (2005) 92.
tended to portray characters’ motives more allusively, implying that they cannot be given a logical explanation and linking them to ideas of the unconscious or hereditary traits which were proposed by various emerging theories of the mind from 1860s. His study was followed by critical studies by Michael Davies and Jenny Bourne Taylor among others, which also attempt to reveal the underlying connections between mid-to-late Victorian novels and psychological theories.30

Martineau and Psychological Theory

Born in 1802, Martineau belonged to a generation whose perspective on the mind was generally based upon the older tradition of philosophy or theology rather than newly emerging medical or physiological theories. In addition, most of Martineau’s fiction was written in the 1820s and 1830s, and does not belong to the Victorian period. As a result, her works of fiction have remained outside the scope of the modern critical studies which analysed Victorian novels in terms of their relationship to various contemporary theories of the mind.31 However, considering Martineau’s well-known avowal that in

30 Michael Davis presents a deliberate analysis of George Eliot’s novels in relation to the various contemporary physiological theories of the mind such as those of T. H. Huxley, G. H. Lewes, Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, William Carpenter, E. S. Dallas, and William James. He claims that George Eliot made an active contribution to the formation of contemporary psychology through her works rather than being a passive recipient. George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Psychology (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006). Jenny Bourne Taylor introduces a scene from a short story by Elizabeth Gaskell as an example of mid and late nineteenth century psychological description which conveys the interconnections between mental and physical responses. She also mentions the friendship between Gaskell and William Carpenter. ‘Body and Mind,’ in The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1830-1914, ed. Joanne Shattock (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010) 184-205.

31 It is not only the Victorian literary works but also those in the Romantic period which preceded it that have been studied in terms of their relationship with the contemporary theories of the mind. Janis McLaren points out that the interpenetration of the literary imagination and medical thinking in the first half of the nineteenth century developed what she calls “romantic materialism,” a double vision in which the romantic preoccupation with the supernatural coexisted with materialistic views on nature informed by natural science. She discusses several texts which share this vision, including those of Charlotte Brontë, as the texts situated somewhere between the Romantic and the Victorian. Literature and Medicine in Nineteenth-Century Britain: From Mary Shelley to George Eliot (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004). Alan Richardson points out that the neurology in 1790s-1830s established the brain as the organ of the mind and that it had a decisive influence over the Romantic concept of subjectivity. He also points out that those models of the mind presented by various hypotheses on the brain and the nerves were considered a challenge to the traditional ideas of the mind or the soul and thus a threat toward the social order. British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001). Critical attention has also been paid to Martineau’s interest in mesmerism in the 1840s. See Alison Winter, Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
her youth she received a life-changing inspiration from David Hartley (1705-1757), a key figure in the development of the associationist psychology descending from Locke, it is most probable that his influence was consolidated in her early works of fiction.

As we have seen so far, associationism was one of the two major schools of philosophical thought in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the direct origin of which could be traced back to John Locke, who elaborated the theory in the 1690s. It was often juxtaposed with the opposing school, the so-called ‘faculty psychology,’ which was derived from the Common Sense School of the Scottish Enlightenment, led by such figures as Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart. What created the sharp opposition between the two schools was that associationism denied any innate faculties of the mind which could know the world and formulate ideas, whereas faculty psychology proposed a set of innate God-given faculties. Locke argued that the mind was blank at birth and not only ideas but also the structures of the mind were derived from experience. Associationism proposed a mechanistic linear model of cognition. External stimuli caused sensations, which became simple ideas in the mind. These simple ideas were compounded to formulate complex ideas through the process of association. The fundamental structures of the mind themselves were thought to be established through the repetition of innumerable stimuli and associations in childhood and these structures regulated the flow of sensations in later life. Since the development of the mind was solely dependent on experience, environment was thought very important.32

According to her Autobiography, Martineau encountered associationist ideas for the first time in 1818, when she was sixteen, through Lant Carpenter, a Unitarian pastor and teacher who introduced her to the associationist school of philosophy. Hence she became an enthusiastic reader of the works of John Locke, David Hartley, and Joseph Priestley. Martineau was particularly influenced by Hartley’s Observations on Man (1749) in which he elaborated the doctrine of association derived from Locke. She wrote about its extraordinary impact on her:

That book I studied with a fervour and perseverance which made it perhaps the most important book in the world to me, except the bible; and there really is in it, amidst its monstrous deficiencies and

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absurdities, so much that is philosophically true, as well as holy, elevating and charming . . . . I am confident at this moment that the spirit of the men, Locke and Hartley, redeems much of the fault of their doctrine in its operation on young minds; and moreover, that the conscientious accuracy with which they apply their doctrine to the moral conduct of the smallest particulars of human life (Hartley particularly) forms a far better discipline . . . than the vague metaphysical imaginations . . . .

The first thing to notice in this passage is her emphatic claim that it was ‘the most important book in the world to [her], except the bible.’ The significance of this claim can be understood more properly by paying attention to the importance of religion for the young Martineau. As she relates in her Autobiography, she was afflicted with intense nervousness and emotional difficulties from her childhood to early adolescence. Religion was one of the most important sources that she could derive comfort from or take refuge in, along with her intellectual pursuits. She recollected that in her early childhood, she had become ‘intensely religious’ just to get through her ‘utter deficiency of self-respect’ and ‘incessant remorse’ and that religion became ‘a great comfort and pleasure’ when she started to study the bible at the age of seven.

Another notable point is that even though she wrote her Autobiography in 1855 when she had already given up not only the belief in associationism as a valid scientific theory but also her faith in Christianity, she still gave credit to Hartley’s work for being ‘philosophically true.’ Although she considered the associationist doctrine to be filled with ‘monstrous deficiencies and absurdities,’ Martineau still endorsed the spirit of Locke and Hartley because of its moral benefit to the reader. In addition, she considered that particular merit lay in the application of their doctrine to the ‘moral conduct of the smallest particulars of human life.’ It is clear that Martineau embraced associationism as a moral philosophy to guide one’s conduct, in other words, a theory which reveals the system that governs and directs human nature to perfection as the ultimate goal both for the individual and the human race as a whole.

There are two things that make it difficult for modern readers to understand the precise impact of associationism, or rather, Hartleian psychology, on Martineau. One is the significance of the fundamental principles to her. Another is the meaning and role which Hartley gave to the doctrine of association in the system of his philosophy as a whole. R. K. Webb provides an effective perspective on the first point. In his biography of Martineau, which remains the standard one, he argues that she considered the fundamental principles indispensable, whether for public or private matters, and that her general principles had already been fixed by the time she became known to the public in the 1830s. According to Webb, when Martineau wrote her autobiography in the mid-1850s, she believed that her general outlook ‘grew from the spirit of the times or from the incontrovertible facts.’ He then argues that in fact the ‘spirit and incontrovertible facts came to her through Unitarianism.’ There is no doubt that Hartleian psychology was a central system of belief which was introduced to Martineau in her youth through Unitarianism. Thus, in order to understand the lasting appeal of Hartleian psychology to her, it is essential to explore how and why this particular strand of psychological thought was adopted by and became influential among Unitarians by the early nineteenth century. In fact, it is closely related to the second point that is often overlooked by modern readers, namely the meaning and role of the doctrine of association within the whole structure of Hartleian psychology.

Barbara Bowen Oberg succinctly expresses the prevailing fallacy about Hartley that ‘he has too often been considered only as a spokesman of the mechanical philosophy.’ This can be partly ascribed to the linear mechanical model of his doctrine of association whose basis is man’s physical constitution. Oberg suggests that this misunderstanding is caused by a tendency to regard his theory only in terms of its contribution to the history of British empiricist philosophy. Although she considers such a trait natural enough because of the primary influence of associationism on eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century thought, she argues that ‘his thought also stands on its own, and the key to it is his associationism and the way in which the association of ideas functions in his total system.’

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Webb explains the background of the two versions as follows:

In 1775, Joseph Priestley, an early and enthusiastic advocate, brought out Hartley’s theory of the human mind, on the principle of the association of ideas, to secure a wider circle of readers than he thought the original edition had obtained. This was a drastic abridgment, omitting most of the system of moral and religious knowledge in the second volume, which Priestly thought ‘clogged’ the work, and also leaving out (except for a brief introductory essay) the entire exposition of the theory of vibrations—which he said he agreed with but which he thought (surely rightly) would put off most readers.  

Webb points out that it is often difficult to confirm which edition was used by later readers and whether the neglect of certain elements was caused by the reader’s rejection of them or by simple ignorance of the whole structure of the original. He, on the other hand, also argues that it is likely that ‘Priestley’s version had a wider influence over the next generation or two than the original edition had had in its own time.’ This could be the reason why, in modern critical studies, Hartley is often discussed exclusively as a proponent of a mechanical or materialistic theory of the mind. Most critical works that discuss the influence of Hartleian psychology upon Victorian fiction focus on how each novelist made use of its mechanistic model in representations of their characters’ inner lives whether or not they agree with his whole theory.

In a passage preceding the one quoted above from her autobiography, Martineau states, ‘I must clear myself from all charge of having ever entertained his doctrine of

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41 Webb (1998) 30. Allen mentions that it was Priestley’s edition that was used by John Stuart Mill and his friends when they formed a reading group to study the work in the late 1820s and the book was ‘raised . . . to an extravagant price’ in the secondhand bookshops. Allen (1999) 10.
Vibrations. . . . The edition of Hartley that I used was Dr. Priestley’s,—that which gives
the philosophy of Association, cleared from the incumbrance of the Vibration theory.” Her emphatic claim that she used Priestley’s edition rather than Hartley’s original edition complicates our understanding of Hartley’s influence on her writing. For Priestley’s edition, which as Webb emphasizes omitted most of the system of moral and religious knowledge in the second volume, may have left its readers either unaware of or indifferent to the significance of the religious aspect of Hartley’s whole theory. However, it is obvious from the autobiography that Martineau found Hartleian psychology inspiring both morally and religiously. This seeming disparity can be explained by the fact that Priestley’s edition also contained a religious argument in its final chapter although it occupies only one tenth of its whole length. Even if Martineau had read only Priestley’s edition, which was not the case, she would have known and appreciated the underlying religious perspective behind the seemingly materialistic model of the mind. Priestley’s edition is even considered to have strengthened a certain aspect of Hartley’s theological argument.

In the final chapter of Priestley’s edition, he quotes the conclusion to Hartley’s first volume. Here, Hartley discusses a major theological question whether a man has what is called ‘free-will’ or not:

\.\. each action results from the previous circumstances of body and mind\.\. so a person cannot do indifferently either of the actions A, and its contrary a, while the previous circumstances are the same; but is under an absolute necessity of doing one of them, and that only.\.\. If by free-will be meant a power of beginning motion, this will come to the same thing; since according to the opinion of mechanism, as here explained, man has no such power; but every action, or bodily motions, arises from previous circumstances, or bodily motions, already existing in the brain.\.\. 

Hartley denies free-will as a logical conclusion to his doctrine of association. But he specifies it as ‘philosophical free-will’ and distinguishes it from the ordinary sense of will or volition which people exercise in their daily lives. To sum up, man does not have ‘philosophical free will’ and all his motives and actions are generated mechanically and necessarily from previous circumstances. This, according to Hartley, means that a man cannot be the real cause of anything and that ‘God is the cause of causes, the one only source of all power.’ On the other hand, he also denies ‘the notion of a particular providence altering the course of nature so as to suit it to the actions of men’ because ‘if man’s actions, and the course of nature, be both fixed, they may be suited to each other in the best possible manner; which is all that can be required in order to vindicate God’s attributes.’ Thus, Hartley presents his doctrine of necessity as one closely related to his doctrine of association.

R. B. Hatch argues that Hartley assumed this position reluctantly as following from his doctrine of association and that in his original edition a ‘quasi-mystical side of his determinism’ was presented ‘in a rather haphazard and diffident manner’ whereas Priestley’s edition made it ‘seem the culmination of his theories.’ It is true that there are several points in this section which can be taken as signs of Hartley’s lack of structure or hesitation. For instance, in this section, Hartley’s argument does not seem to stand on its own but takes an apologetic form, in which he defends his views against a series of predictable criticisms. Hartley concludes this section by suggesting several positive consequences which can be drawn from his theory. One of them reads as follows:

I come now to hint some consequences of the doctrine of mechanism. . . . it has a tendency to beget the most profound humility and self annihilation; since, according to this, we are entirely [sic] destitute of all power and perfection in ourselves, and are what we are entirely [sic] by the grace and goodness of God.

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44 Priestley 335.
45 Priestley 342.
46 Priestley 342.
47 Priestley 342.
49 Priestley 344.
Hartley’s tentativeness can be felt in such expressions as ‘it may be said’ or ‘to hint’ when he introduces his argument. Such a diffident tone is left unchanged in Priestley’s edition, which was taken directly from Hartley’s original.

However, whereas in the original edition Hartley leaves this topic without developing it further and starts the second volume with a new topic, Priestley adds three more sections immediately after this by selecting three related propositions from the second volume of the original edition. Then, he writes the last section which connects and develops the preceding sections to make one cohesive concluding chapter. Hatch argues that Priestley made this change in order to give special prominence to Hartley’s doctrine of necessity which has a quasi-mystical aspect. The difference between them becomes obvious when one compares the tone in which they illustrate the relationship between man’s lack of free will and self-annihilation as its most desirable effect. Priestley discusses this in a most unequivocal tone:

. . . the frequent recollection, that all our actions proceed from God; that we have nothing which we did not receive from him. . . must greatly accelerate our progress to humility and self-annihilation. And, when men are far advanced in this state, they may enjoy quiet and comfort, notwithstanding their past sins and frailties; for they approach to the paradisiacal state, in which our first parents, though naked, were not ashamed.

The reason why Priestley shifted the emphasis of Hartley’s original edition seems that he found the problem of ‘free will’ and ‘necessity’ crucial to one’s faith and Hartley’s argument on this issue most enlightening. According to Webb, the young Priestley entered a dissenting academy, Daventry Academy, in 1752 and had a life-changing encounter with Hartley there:

50 Hatch 549.
51 Priestley 367. Written by Priestley himself emphasizing the justness of the doctrine of necessity in terms of promoting piety.
The question of liberty and necessity was intensively canvassed at Daventry. . . . Thus an epoch in Priestley’s life: introduced to the subject first in lectures and pursued through close reading. . . he became a necessarian, increasing both his ‘disposition to piety’ and his sense of liberation from ancestral Calvinism. ‘Indeed, I do not know whether the consideration of Dr. Hartley’s theory contributes more to enlighten the mind, or improve the heart; it affects both in so supereminent a degree.’

There is a striking resemblance between Priestley and Martineau in their reactions to Hartley’s theory.

Martineau recorded her initial encounter with necessarianism through her brother James around 1822, prior to her intensive reading of Priestley and Hartley a few years later. James was then studying at a dissenting academy just as Priestley had done more than half a century before:

The time I am now speaking of was, of course, prior to my study of Priestley and of Hartley. . . . One summer afternoon, when my brother James. . . was sitting with my mother and me, telling us some of his experiences after his first session at the York College. . . I seized upon some intimation that he dropped about this same doctrine of Necessity. . . . From the time when I became convinced of the certainty of the action of laws, of the true importance of good influences and good habits, of the firmness, in short, of the ground I was treading, and of the security of the results which I should take the right means to attain, a new vigour pervaded my whole life, a new light spread through my mind, and I began to experience a steady growth in self-command, courage, and consequent integrity and disinterestedness.

It is clear that among the many influences of Unitarianism on Martineau, ‘necessarianism’

was the one that had the most fundamental and lasting effect upon her. In addition, its mystic millennial vision of each individual’s ‘self-annihilation’ in order to become a part of God’s perfect goodness, which was asserted even more strongly by Priestley than by Hartley, must have had a strong appeal to the young Martineau when she first encountered Hartleian philosophy.

However, the religious and moral inspiration which Martineau received from Hartleian philosophy was not limited to the doctrine of necessity. Although the second part of the original edition of Observations on Man contains ninety-five propositions in total, Priestley removed almost all of them except the three propositions which he picked up and inserted into the final chapter of his edition. The rest of Hartley’s second volume discusses other religious and moral issues such as the truth of Christianity or a system of moral precepts. This thesis also focuses on the influence of these lesser known aspects of Hartleian philosophy on Martineau, namely, his religious and philosophical argument in the second part of the Observations on Man. Its strong influence can be traced in her works written the 1820s and 1830s. Although it is not stated in the autobiography, her private letters in the early 1820s indicate that as well as Priestley’s edition, she also read Hartley’s original edition. James Martineau’s shorthand summary of her letters confirms that she was particularly impressed with Hartley’s moral and religious argument in the second part of his book.54

Theodore L. Huguelet summarizes what Hartley states as the purpose of the second part of Observations on Man: 

. . . Hartley makes it clear that his guiding purpose throughout the Observations on Man has been to strengthen the proofs of natural and revealed religion and to reassure mankind of their ‘duty of piety, benevolence, and self-government.’55

This corresponds exactly with what Martineau in her autobiography admired as the feature of Hartleian psychology that made it much better than other philosophies of the

54 They are included in Deborah A. Logan ed., Harriet Martineau Further Letters (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 2012) 407.
mind. The religious and moral aspect of Hartleian psychology has been little discussed in terms of its influence on literature. Although it continued to be the primary source of inspiration for Martineau well into the 1850s, it was not the case with most Victorian novelists, who were either unaware of or uninspired by religious and moral teaching of Hartleian psychology. As a result, this aspect has been almost completely forgotten by modern critics who study the relationship between nineteenth-century novels and psychology. In this sense, this thesis provides a new perspective on the influence of Hartleian psychology on literature by focusing on its religious and moral aspects, which are contained mainly in the second part of Observations on Man.

In this thesis, I will trace the process of Martineau’s development as a fiction writer by looking into her less well known fiction published in the 1820s along with several of her non-fictional works written in the same period. This will reveal the foundation of her deep insight into the human mind, an insight which surprised the readers of the Illustrations of Political Economy. On the other hand, however successful the Illustrations or Deerbrook were in their realistic representation of the inner lives of their characters, there are some points which are not quite convincing to a modern reader due to the different assumptions or the framework which underlies Martineau’s understanding of the human mind. This thesis tries to explain why certain aspects of Martineau’s psychological portrayals seem unconvincing or unrealistic and how these bear an important authorial message. Martineau’s detailed portrayal of her characters’ psychology is in fact quite different to that of later Victorian novelists. Yet it is undeniable that her subtle and unflinching depiction of the complexity of the human mind inspired the novelists of the next generation. In this study, I will explore the literary representation of the human mind in Martineau’s fiction and its relationship to Hartleian psychology in the period preceding the emergence of the major Victorian novelists.

The first chapter will trace the development of Martineau’s interest in the human mind from her intense emotional issues in childhood to the ardent intellectual aspiration of her youth. In the second chapter, I will examine the narrative-like features in Devotional Exercises (1823), her first book of religious instruction for young people in relation to her Unitarian perspective and the influence of Hannah More on her, in spite of their denominational difference. Chapter three and four will respectively examine
her two didactic stories for youth, *Christmas-Day* (1825) and *Principle and Practice* (1827), in relation to the influence of Anna Barbauld, who also belonged to the Unitarian intellectual tradition and who was strongly influenced by Hartley’s associationism. In chapter five, I will analyse her *Five Years of Youth* (1831), a story for young readers, as an illustration of Hartleian psychology in the form of fiction. Chapter six will discuss Martineau’s development as a fiction writer, particularly in terms of her representation of emotions, by comparing *The Manchester Strike* (1832), one of her tales in the *Illustrations of Political Economy* with *The Turn-Out* (1829), her earlier tale of political economy which shares the same topic. In the final chapter, I will discuss the characteristics of the representation of subjectivity in *Deerbrook* (1839) in relation to the influence of Hartleian psychology.
It is well-known that the young Martineau was interested in the mental science of the associationist school, an historic theory of the mind which had its prime in the first half of the nineteenth century. The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*’s entry on Martineau records her encounter with *Observations on Man* by David Hartley who established the fundamental doctrines of this school. The significance of this encounter is indicated by her words from the autobiography in which she described it as ‘the most important book in the world to me, except the bible.’\(^1\) It is also well-known that Martineau had an emotionally strained childhood and adolescence, which made her conscious of her own troubled mind and feel a pressing need to find some means of securing her peace of mind. These two facts are generally regarded as isolated particulars about her life and insufficient attention has been paid to their connection. One of my aims in this chapter is to connect them and to present a coherent account of her early life in terms of her deep-rooted personal interest in the human mind. Another aim is to foreground the role Hartleian psychology played in formulating Martineau’s career as an author in the very early stages. Unlike the theories of political economy which prompted her to write an epoch-making bestselling series, *Illustrations of Political Economy*, the doctrines of Hartleian psychology tend to be placed in the background of her personal history without being given proper attention.

In this chapter, firstly I would like to trace the origin of Martineau’s interest in the inner life during the period from her childhood to adolescence, when she suffered from emotional insecurities connected with guilt and remorse and sought refuge in religion and intellectual engagement. This personal experience seems to have determined her attitude toward the issues related to the human mind in later years. A second point to be discussed is how and why Martineau adopted the ‘mental philosophy’ of David Hartley in her youth. As I discussed in the introduction, recent criticism has tended to discuss Hartleian psychology exclusively as an associationist theory which explains the

function of the mind with a mechanistic model of stimulus and association. On the other hand, it is well-known that Martineau encountered necessarianism, a major aspect of Hartleian philosophy, and became necessarian herself in her youth. This chapter pays attention to yet another lesser known aspect of Hartleian philosophy, namely, his defence of Christianity and a precise system of moral precepts in the second volume of *Observations on Man*. Both of them attracted and influenced the young Martineau in the 1820s.

To locate Martineau’s interest in the human mind in a proper cultural context of the early-nineteenth century will help to understand its significance in her career as an author. It provided a lasting foundation for her progressive views of the world and humanity that are reflected in her writing throughout her career. I will examine her initial attempts at authorship in the 1820s in relation to her attraction to Hartleian psychology. Martineau presented her views of Hartleian psychology in the essays she wrote in the 1820s for the *Monthly Repository*, a Unitarian magazine for which she was a regular reviewer and contributor from the late 1820s to the mid 1830s. These essays on the doctrine of ‘mental philosophy’ effectively paved her way to a professional writing career just as the doctrine of ‘political economy’ was to do a couple of years later on a much larger scale.

‘Moral relief through intellectual resource’

In the *Autobiography* Martineau records an incident when she was eight as something that had a lasting effect on her life. She accidentally came across a volume of *Paradise Lost* that was left on the table and was immediately drawn to it. She explains the significance of this encounter as follows:

My mental destiny was fixed for the next seven years. . . . In a few months, I believe there was hardly a line in Paradise Lost that I could not have instantly turned to. I sent myself to sleep by repeating it: and when my curtains were drawn back in the morning, descriptions of heavenly light rushed into my memory. I think this must have been my first experience of moral relief through intellectual resource. I am sure I must have been
somewhat happier from that time forward . . . 2

Even though her intention here appears simply to show how much joy and satisfaction she got from the book, the passage conveys more about the emotional deprivation the young Martineau may have been suffering from. In fact, there have been analyses that ascribe the unstable physical and emotional conditions in her childhood to her relationship with her mother and the general state of her family life.3

There is another noticeable point in this passage in terms of its use of specific words and phrases. Martineau calls this encounter with Milton ‘my first experience of moral relief through intellectual resource.’ Though it is reasonable to regard Paradise Lost as an intellectual resource, it is not clear what she means by ‘moral relief.’ From a modern perspective, it would be much more straightforward if Martineau described it as ‘emotional’ rather than ‘moral’ relief, as she explicitly describes its positive effect upon her feelings in the sentences that follow. This makes us aware of our historical distance from the text which makes it difficult to grasp the precise meaning and implication of the words. One definition of the word ‘moral’ in the Oxford English Dictionary reads: ‘Of a feeling: arising from an apprehension or sense of the goodness or badness of an action, character, etc.’ Among a few quotations given as examples, the one from Laurence Sterne’s Sentimental Journey (1768)—‘With what a moral delight will it crown my journey’—is closest to Martineau’s meaning. When she uses the word ‘moral,’ it sometimes refers to a state of feeling or emotion, but it is also conceived of as something inseparable from the sense of right or wrong.

There are numerous instances of a similar usage of the word ‘moral’ in the Autobiography. Just as in the case above, it is often coupled with the word ‘intellectual.’ For instance, Martineau explains the benefit she gained after joining Mr. Perry’s school, a local private school for young children, as follows:

That was the season of my entrance upon an intellectual life. In an intellectual life I found then, as I have found since, refuge from moral suffering, and an always unexhausted spring of moral strength and

3 Valerie Kossew Pichanick, for example, writes that ‘[h]er mother had never invited Harriet’s confidences and had never known the intensity of her child’s need to love and to be loved.’ Harriet Martineau: The Woman and Her Work, 1802-76 (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1978) 2.
enjoyment.  

The two notions are coupled again when she looks back on the beneficial effect of the year she spent with her aunt and cousins in Bristol when she was fifteen, saying it helped her ‘to improve [her] morally and intellectually.’  

Such repetition of the two concepts—moral and intellect—in a way closely related to each other in her text indicates her idea of an inner life. She divides her mental life into two representative fields, ‘moral’ and ‘intellectual,’ in which ‘moral’ refers to an emotional aspect that is virtually inseparable from the sense of right or wrong.

One cannot tell whether such an attitude to emotion and intellect is characteristic only of Martineau or a common feature of the early nineteenth-century cultural consciousness. Shelagh Hunter’s insight about the problem of the vocabulary when reading Martineau’s writing is illuminating:

Her life and work are not understandable if we stray far from the vocabulary in which she addressed her public or came to terms with herself. . . . Martineau’s writing, much of it ephemeral and being without precedent necessarily personal, offers a remarkable glimpse of a struggle to express the new in an inherited vocabulary. . . .

This makes one aware that Martineau had to make use of the common vocabulary and expressions that were available at the time of her writing even if she actually wished to express something new.

What Martineau regards as the ‘moral’ problem that plagued her childhood and early adolescence can be regarded from a modern perspective as an emotional or psychological one. What we learn from her numerous testimonies and descriptions of the difficulties of her early years is her extreme sense of insecurity. They also reveal that she developed a defence mechanism that made her even more miserable and insecure. Martineau testifies that she ‘had no self-respect, and an unbounded need of approbation and affection’ and that in spite of all this, she had ‘the assumed doggedness and

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wilfulness which made [her] desperately disagreeable.'

On the other hand, the autobiography also contains dispassionate retrospective insights on her past self and the social ambiance of her childhood, which sheds light on the multiple interacting factors that constituted her psychological problems. For example, she writes, ‘I am sure that a little more of the cheerful tenderness which was in those days thought bad for children, would have saved me from my worst faults, and from a world of suffering.’ By the time she wrote her autobiography in the mid-1850s, Martineau had gained a more detached perspective on her past psychological issues. Nevertheless, even at this point she was still largely dependent on the vocabulary of morality to articulate them.

Hunter writes, ‘[i]n considering nineteenth-century texts, the modern reader must adjust to a value system which defined the moral as it related to the spiritual.’ This is suggestive when one considers Martineau’s agonized childhood. The fact that her moral sense was almost solely informed by religion made her psychological problems more complicated. According to the Autobiography, Martineau’s intensely religious habit of mind was manifested as early as the age of two. She ascribes it to the nurse and her husband who took care of her for a while, whose religious outlook she described as ‘Methodist or melancholy Calvinist.’ On the other hand, Valerie Kossew Pichanick provides a more persuasive explanation for her premature religiosity. She writes, ‘Deprived of faith and trust in her relationship with her mother, and perhaps without being able to clearly articulate these needs, Harriet . . . at an early age unselconsciously sought and found a substitute faith in religion.’ Martineau’s own testimony about the role of religion for her—‘the only support and pleasure I remember having from a very early age was from that source.’—adds to the validity of Pichanick’s analysis.

However, Martineau’s unconscious substitution of religion as her primary attachment and trust ended in a failure, for it deepened her inner conflict. Her account of what she thought of the teachings at her local Unitarian chapel provides a clue to the nature of her conflict:

10 Hunter, 2.
11 Martineau was sent to a farmhouse in Carleton for her health. She records that she amused her family when ‘[she] came home [as] the absurdest little preacher of [her] years (between two and three) that even was.’ Autobiography (2010) vol.1, 12.
12 Pichanick, 7.
I was certainly fond of going to chapel. . . but my besetting troubles followed me even there. . . . I used to thirst to hear some notice of the oppression which servants and children had. . . to endure, in regard to their feelings. . . but nothing of the sort ever came; but instead, a doctrine of passive obedience which only made me remorseful and miserable. I was abundantly obedient in act; for I never dreamed of being otherwise; but the interior rebellion kept my conscience in a state of perpetual torture.  

Here we see how her innocent faith in conventional religious teaching worked against her. She was conscious of her own suppressed resentment of the general oppression or neglect of subordinates, ‘servants and children,’ in society. She was forced to believe it was she who was in the wrong and could not but become ‘remorseful and miserable.’ Martineau felt guilty not so much for her actual conduct as for her ‘interior rebellion’ that she was made to believe was monstrous. This explains why her sense of remorse was so persistent as to make her feel guilty and unworthy all the time.

In describing her first encounter with *Paradise Lost*, Martineau explains its significance as her ‘first experience of moral relief through intellectual resource.’ The essential meaning of these words becomes apparent only when one understands what she meant by ‘moral relief’ and what resources she had had before this incident. Now that we are aware of both, we can appreciate how crucial this incident was for her. Intellectual engagement became a new resource to relieve her troubled mind, a resource that was free from a counterproductive sense of guilt or remorse arising from religious anxiety. She expanded her intellectual horizon and accordingly increased what she calls her ‘moral strength and enjoyment’ in the second half of her childhood and in her adolescence. As she testifies that she never passed a single day without crying until about fourteen in her *Autobiography*, the years of her early adolescence are still dominated by accounts of her troubled emotional life. We need to wait until her late adolescence before her emotional issues and persistent anxiety about her moral state disappear from the text. They were to be replaced by her ardent wish to learn and the great satisfaction gained from intellectual engagement.

The Influence of Locke and Hartley

The year Martineau spent in Bristol at the age of sixteen proved a turning point in her life. It was there she met her aunt Kentish, whom she describes ‘a human being whom [she] was not afraid of’ for the first time in her life.\textsuperscript{15} There is no doubt that her intimate relationship with her aunt enabled her to gain control over her emotional life, as she testifies, ‘My heart warmed and opened, and my habitual fear began to melt away.’\textsuperscript{16} Another important event at the time was her encounter with the doctrine of mental philosophy or ‘psychology’ to use the modern term, as developed by Locke and Hartley. She was introduced to both by Dr. Lant Carpenter, a Unitarian minister whom she met there and immediately adored.\textsuperscript{17} The Bristol experience also seems to have had a great impact on her ‘moral and intellectual’ development, giving her a solid ground on which to come to terms with her moral or emotional issues.

Martineau’s account of this year concludes the ‘Second Period’\textsuperscript{18} of her Autobiography that covers her life from eight to seventeen. What she recounts as ‘[t]he results of the Bristol experiment’ serves both as a summary of the effects of this particular event on her and as a significant milestone that marks the end of a stage in her mental life. She indicates that she had at last obtained peace after a long troubled period, stating that she returned home with regenerated ‘domestic affections’ and ‘some improvement in temper . . . and not a little in courage, hope and conscientiousness.’ In addition, she announces the beginning of a new stage of her mental life that was to unfold:

I had learned a good deal, and had got into a good way of learning more. . . . I had become sincerely and heartily religious. . . . The fanaticism was a stage which I should probably have had to pass through at any rate, —and by the same phase of pastor-worship, —whoever the pastor might have been.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{15} Martineau, Autobiography (2010) vol.1, 90.
\textsuperscript{16} Martineau, Autobiography (2010) vol.1, 94.
\textsuperscript{17} Martineau, Autobiography (2010) vol.1, 95,103-104.
\textsuperscript{18} Martineau divides her Autobiography into six chapters under the headings called ‘periods,’ each of which is subdivided into several ‘sections.’
Due to the narrative perspective that belongs to her later years, Martineau uses such expressions as ‘fanaticism’ and ‘pastor-worship’ that have a flavour of self-mockery. Yet, as far as the ardour and intensity of her religious aspiration at this stage is concerned, these words are not an exaggeration.

Martineau makes it clear that the primary object of her study in these years was the Bible. She writes, ‘I studied the Bible incessantly and immensely; both by daily reading of chapters. . . and by getting hold of all commentaries and works of elucidation that I could lay my hands on.’ However, it was not only the study of the Bible but also the study of the human mind in the form of ‘mental and moral philosophy’ that characterized the new stage of her intellectual life. One should note that the stability and vigour that characterize this period, which make a marked contrast to the earlier period, are actually derived from the same two old resources—religion and intellectual engagement. Furthermore, it is in this period, namely, from her late adolescence to early adulthood that the two resources worked most cooperatively. Martineau was both intensely religious and most vigorous in pursuit of philosophical truth.

The self-mocking ‘pastor-worship’ used to describe her mental habit in this period seems chiefly directed to her idolization of Carpenter. In retrospect, she describes him as ‘superficial in his knowledge, scanty in ability, narrow in his conceptions, and thoroughly priestly in his temper.’ Her criticism of him in spite of her past devotion is striking and emphasizes the gulf that lies between the mental framework of her formative and later years. On the other hand, she does not direct a severe criticism like this to her other ‘pastors’ or spiritual gurus in this period, whose thought she ardently imbibed through their books. As well as Locke and Hartley, they included Joseph Priestley, the influential scientist and Unitarian who popularized Hartley’s theory of the mind by publishing Hartley’s Theory of the Human Mind (1775), a condensed edition of Observations on Man (1749). These figures represent a major line of thought about the nature and mechanism of man’s mind, associationism, which became most influential in Britain from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century.

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23 The original edition by Hartley was published in 1749 but attracted little attention probably because it was too lengthy and esoteric for general readership. Its subsequent fame and popularity owe much to Priestley’s edition published in 1775.
Martineau is unequivocal in her rejection of some parts of Hartley’s theory in terms of its scientific validity, such as ‘the doctrine of vibration’ by which he explains the mechanism of cognition. On the other hand, she is emphatic in giving endorsement to the moral and philosophical inspiration it has given to her. She expresses her enduring reverence for Hartley as follows:

. . . its [Hartley’s book’s] influence might very well spread into all the events and experience of life, and chasten the habits and feelings, as it did in my case during a long series of years. . . . I cannot at this hour look at the portrait of Hartley prefixed to his work. . . without a strong revival of the old mood of earnest desire of self-discipline, and devotion to duty which I derived from them in my youth.24

It can be argued that Martineau’s devotion to Hartley in her youth helped to establish her fundamental views on humanity and duty. R. K. Webb writes that Martineau was provided with the ‘bedrock of her attitude to life’25 by Hartleian philosophy. The passages above show how solid this ‘bedrock’ was to remain even after the long course of her life that included a dramatic change of religious outlook. In other words, Hartley’s teaching, or at least some parts of it, outlasted what Martineau called the stage of fanaticism. Hartleian philosophy was given a renewed endorsement at what she thought to be the last stage of her life when she wrote her autobiography under the supposition of imminent death.

The Second Part of the Observations on Man

Today, Hartleian doctrine, or associationism is known primarily as an outdated ‘scientific’ theory of the mind that explained its working as a mechanical process. It is remembered mainly for its historical significance in introducing such physical concepts as ‘brain’ and ‘nerves’ as a basis of the process of cognition. It was natural in the nineteenth century to detect its materialistic implications and as a result to become cautious, for it could threaten the traditional idea of the human mind or ‘soul’ that was

closely related to Christian belief. In this sense, it appears somewhat contradictory that Martineau embraced Hartleian philosophy so thoroughly at the time of her life when she was extremely religious.

In fact, what is generally known as Hartleian psychology or associationism refers to only half of his whole system. The first edition of his Observations on Man published in 1749 consisted of two volumes, containing the first and second parts respectively. It is only the first part, ‘Part One’ of his book that is still widely known today. Theodore L. Huguelet points out that Hartley makes an explicit statement in the introduction to Part Two that his consistent aim throughout his book was ‘to strengthen the proofs of natural and revealed religion’ and ‘to reassure mankind of their “duty of piety, benevolence, and self-government.”’ He then suggests that the fundamental assumption that sustains Hartleian theory is that ‘if a man understands the process of sensation and association,’ he can control his mental habit by avoiding ‘sensual and imaginary self-indulgence’ and ‘cultivate the higher emotions of benevolence and piety.’

Based on such an assumption, Hartley envisioned a realization of the world permeated with sympathy and benevolence, as an ultimate goal for the future of the mankind. He argued that such a blissful future is programmed to be achieved automatically through the function of the God-given faculty of intelligence based on the mechanism of association. Thus, although Hartley’s associationist doctrine is known only for its mechanical aspect today, the real purpose of Hartley, or the whole system of his philosophy, becomes apparent only when the mechanism of association is placed within his illustration of the providential grand design for the progress of humanity. In a sense, for Hartley, the explication of the doctrine of association in Part One is a necessary groundwork for his prophetic argument about the destiny of mankind in Part Two.

This prophetic vision by Hartley had a lasting moral influence on Martineau. She read Hartley’s work most intensively in the early months of 1824. The progress of her reading can be traced through the accounts in her letters to her brother James. Having been her closest sibling since childhood and having become a sort of intellectual mentor, James was undoubtedly Martineau’s primary confidant in discussing her intellectual

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pursuits. Even though what remain today are not the original letters but James’s shorthand summaries of them, they still provide significant clues about her reception of Hartleian philosophy. Her letter on 6 January tells him about her ‘lively’ and ‘argumentative’ talk about Hartley and other writers with their guests at their house in Norwich. A subsequent letter presumably written on 12 March reports that she was ‘still deep in Hartley’ and particularly impressed with his ‘corollaries of a religious kind.’ Following the letter on 12 April that informs him of her intention of reading ‘Hartley’s second volume,’ the letter on 8 May reveals her reaction to ‘his [Hartley’s] views of divine government and of the place of man,’ which she found ‘sublime.’ Thus, it is obvious that Martineau’s attraction to Hartley was deeply embedded in her religious faith and that the primary significance of his theory was that it provided her with the idea of ‘the divine government’ of the world where mankind was given their particular ‘place,’ namely, their duties and ultimate destination.

After such intensive reading and absorption of Hartley’s philosophy, Martineau published ‘Defence of Metaphysical Studies,’ an essay on Hartleian metaphysics in the *Monthly Repository* in May 1824. It was one of her earliest publications in the 1820s, when she wrote a series of essays and books intended as religious instruction or inspiration for the reader. In fact, these early months of 1824, when she was deeply absorbed in Hartleian philosophy, overlapped with the period when she was actively seeking a path to a professional writing life. Hartleian psychology had a particular

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27 The manuscript of the shorthand summaries of Martineau’s letters to James Martineau are kept in Manchester College, Oxford. A large part of them is transcribed into longhand and kept as typed documents together with the manuscripts. The references to the letters here are all based on the transcription. Due to the particular nature of the documents, one can spot occasional inaccuracies in dates and pronouns and there are also ambiguities in terms of the narrative perspectives. Although the letters I quote in this chapter are all taken from the typed documents kept in Manchester College, they are now published as a chapter in a book of Martineau’s correspondence. Harriet Martineau, *Further Letters*, ed. Deborah A. Logan (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 2012). According to Logan’s introduction, James’s shorthand was idiosyncratic, and the letters were summarized and recorded by him decades later, which resulted in many inaccuracies and misinformation. She also explains that the letters were not deciphered until 1958 when they were decoded and transcribed by W. S. Coloe for Professor R. K. Webb. In this published version, some of the inaccuracies or misinformation have been corrected by Logan. *Further Letters*, 383.

28 According to the footnote by James, the original letter is wrongly dated as ‘January 6, 1823’ but must have been written on ‘January 6, 1824.’ One can see that James’ correction is right by cross-referencing with her other letters. In *Further Letters*, the letter is shown as written on January 6, 1824, too. *Further Letters*, 402.

29 The date of the letter is indicated as ‘November 12th, 1824’ in the transcription, but the letter is oddly placed between the letters dated February and April. From some overlapping contents with another letter (a letter to her brother Tom on 17 March, 1824), I infer the probable date of this letter as 12 March.
significance for Martineau in the sense it opened up a new direction for her career as an author. In the next section, I will demonstrate how her faith in Christianity and her interest in mental philosophy worked together as powerful undercurrents to direct her literary pursuits both prior to and at the early stage of her professional authorship.

**The Beginning of a Professional Writing Life**

Two letters written by Martineau to her eldest brother Thomas and his wife Helen within a relatively short period of time in the early 1824 contain three common topics. Although they are interwoven into other miscellaneous details of her daily life, they stand out as constituting her chief concerns at that time; namely, literary pursuits, religious or philosophical studies, and the human mind. The letter of 3 January 1824 was written just two months after the publication of Martineau’s first book, *Devotional Exercises for the Use of Young Persons*:

I am likely to be rich too for my little book is selling at a great rate. Nearly half the edition is gone already I believe. . . . I find that writers are much wanted for the Tract Society and I have a mind to try what I can do in that way, so for a beginning I am writing a little story for Darnton and Harvey, about £ 5 worth, just for practice. [Martineau’s emphasis]

Given the fact that she had her two essays, ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity’ and ‘On Female Education’ published in the *Monthly Repository* from 1822 to 1823, by this time she had already undertaken two different modes of publication. This was a period when Martineau was actively searching for a path to a literary career through

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30 This period corresponds to the one when Martineau was reading Hartley’s work intensively as we have seen above.
32 *The Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau*, vol. 1, 11.
33 The first essay, ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity’ was published in two installments in October and December 1822. The second essay, ‘On Female Education’ was published in February 1823. Both essays were published under the pseudonym Discipulus.
successive attempts at publication.\textsuperscript{34} Her cheerful, half-joking tone about the sales of her book exhibits her growing confidence about the prospects for her career. The profits she gained from the book may have given her additional momentum in thinking of authorship as a profession rather than an amateur pursuit. As her next publishing venture, Martineau mentions ‘a little story’ of ‘about £ 5 worth’ for the ‘Tract Society.’ In a sense, she was trying out every possible means of publication.

However, another letter in this period indicates her uncertainty about how to develop her career in a way that best suited her:

I have been reading a great deal this winter, but have written nothing but a little story in the way of Emily Taylor’s, and some Poetry, and loads of letters: I have many ideas in my head though, and should like to send you something soon.\textsuperscript{35}

Clearly, Martineau considered tract writing neither appropriate nor satisfactory to her talent and taste. She did not regard it as serious literary engagement. On the other hand, her claim that she had been ‘reading a great deal’ and had ‘many ideas in [her] head’ suggests her ambition for future work.

As we have seen above, Martineau recounts in her \textit{Autobiography} that she immersed herself in the study of the Bible. It shows how she had become able to combine her spiritual zeal with her intellectual ardour in theological studies. Webb explains that theology was ‘a natural interest for anyone with an intellectual bent in the early nineteenth century.’\textsuperscript{36} Placed within the milieu of the Unitarians, who allowed women relatively broader education and greater opportunities to participate in its intellectual culture compared to those of other denominations, Martineau was able to develop her ‘natural interest’ without being hampered too much by conventional ideas of suitable feminine pursuits.\textsuperscript{37} It was presumed, however, that certain topics of

\textsuperscript{34} Linda H. Peterson names three major modes of publication in the early nineteenth century literary market. One is ‘anonymous submission to and acceptance by a periodical,’ and another is to publish a self-financed book by paying booksellers for the cost of printing and binding and then receive profits in cash and books. A third is to sell the copyrights of one’s works, such as ‘tract stories’ to publishing firms. Peterson (2009) 61, 64.

\textsuperscript{35} From a letter on 17 March 1824. \textit{The Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau}, vol. 1, 17.

\textsuperscript{36} Webb (1960) 65.

\textsuperscript{37} Rebecca Styler points out that because of their belief in equal capacity for improvement as rational beings, the Unitarians tended to give their daughters a broader education than was usual among the middle classes of other denominations, including subjects that were “typically reserved for male-
theological dispute were considered inappropriate or unsuitable to discuss openly, partially for women.

Martineau’s two chief concerns early in 1824—the search for a literary career and religious or philosophical studies—led to her central dilemma at the time, the essential incompatibility of the two pursuits. She was making positive efforts to find a path to a literary career following the examples of ‘female writers on practical divinity’ such as Hannah More and Anna Letitia Barbauld, in whose tradition she herself had written her debut essay in the Monthly Repository.38 ‘Practical divinity’ meant applied theology, in other words, ‘the application of biblical principles to everyday life and morality.’39 Considering Martineau’s reliance on religion as the only source of guidance and emotional satisfaction in her early adolescence, it was only natural for her to begin her career as a writer in this area. Hunter points out that ‘the anxiety of her early piety’ recorded in her Autobiography left no trace in her early works and that ‘they are invaluable in showing that the function of the writing in practice was to purge the anxiety.’40 Martineau’s first book, Devotional Exercises, can be regarded as a product of a combination of her long-term personal issues and youthful ambition for a literary career. However, as the letters examined above show, even though she was complacent about the book’s success she was not enthusiastic enough to pursue her career in this direction any further. In a sense, she had come to a temporal impasse, caught between her practical efforts towards a literary career and her genuine intellectual ardour.

Martineau’s third concern in this period, which is also recorded in her letters, seems to have brought about a breakthrough in this temporary gridlock. It is her interest in the human mind. She could not but sometimes become self-conscious when she wrote about it. For instance, she playfully wrote, ‘Tush! I hear you say, Tom,’ in her letter to her eldest brother when she mentioned her ‘Metaphysical controversies’ with her friend.41

38 Peterson argues that Martineau was considering the gender role in authorship ‘more cannily than did the Brontës’ and ‘consciously seeking to insert herself into the nineteenth-century “communications circuit,”’ namely, the power dynamics connecting the author with other parties—editors, publishers, reviewers, and readers—in literary marketplace. Peterson (2009), 66.
40 Hunter, 59.
According to Richard C. Allen, in the early nineteenth century, ‘metaphysics’ was the common term for psychology.  

Considering the fact that Martineau used the expression ‘metaphysical controversies’ here along with her analysis of her friend’s mental characteristics, it is arguable that she meant that they had a debate concerning theories about the mind. However, her interest in the mind was not limited to arcane theories of ‘metaphysics’ whose issues were often related to religious or philosophical controversies. It was also connected to her own longstanding personal interest in the nature and working of the mind. In these instances, she was able to express her interest in the nature of human mind without becoming self-conscious.

Martineau switches her tone and the main addressee of her letter according to the nature of the topic. There is a letter Martineau addressed chiefly to Helen, her sister-in-law, rather than to her brother Tom:

There is another little passage which I quote for you Helen. “On Sunday we had two of the most delightful sermons I ever heard from Mr Robberds on the Government of the thoughts; they were characterized by a knowledge of the human mind, a power of appeal, an eloquence of style, and an earnestness of heart, which made them striking. . .”

Martineau is quoting a passage from a letter from James, where he writes about the sermons he heard at the college that were particularly inspiring to him. They were ‘on the Government of the thoughts’ based on ‘a knowledge of the human mind.’ The reason why Martineau introduced this topic particularly to Helen is not clear. However, it is probable that she introduced it because she considered it useful and free of pedantry and thus appropriate to share with her sister-in-law. Discussions about the human mind become an uncontentious practical topic once it is connected to the day-to-day concerns about the proper management of one’s mental life.

According to the *Autobiography*, upon the arrival of her little sister Ellen, nine-year-old Martineau surprised a neighbour by saying, ‘I should now see the growth of a

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42 Richard C. Allen, *David Hartley on Human Nature* (Albany: State University of New York, 1999) 2. See also his note about the definition of the word ‘Metaphysics’ in the eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century. He quotes Percy Shelley who wrote: ‘Metaphysics is a word which has so long applied to denote an inquiry into the phenomena of mind that it would justly be presumptuous to employ another.’ Allen (1999) 407.


44 James Martineau was at Manchester College in York to train for ministry then.
human mind from the very beginning.” As if confirming the genuineness of her precocious statement, Martineau’s letters contain abundant comments on Ellen in terms of her mental development. In one letter, she mentions a book she has recommended to her:

I have met with an admirable little book, which will be of particular use to Ellen, called “elements of Thought” by one of the Taylors of Ongar [sic]. It is an excellent help in forming good habits of Thought, and every position is so well illustrated, sometimes so drolly, that it is extremely entertaining. Ellen is beginning, and likes it much; my mother and I are both conscious of being improved by it.”

Isaac Taylor’s *Elements of Thought* was written as an introduction to the study of mental philosophy for young people, and first published in 1822. The book’s aim and target, namely, to explain basic concepts and theories about the structure and working of the mind for young readers suggest that an interest in mental philosophy was shared among a considerable proportion of the reading public. Presumably, the book appealed to readers like Martineau and her mother who considered the knowledge of mental philosophy useful for the ‘improvement’ of one’s mental life. Thus, just as there was ‘practical divinity’ beside theology, there also was a field that can be called ‘practical mental philosophy’ as well as mental philosophy.

In the same letter quoted above, Martineau writes about her delight in rereading Hartley: ‘I have been reading Hartley again with more delight than ever; but if I begin to write about this great man or his works, I shall never have done.’ In these words, one can see not only her extraordinary attachment to Hartley but also her confidence in discussing his work. She seems to have had an inspiration that she had infinite resources for her writing in Hartley and that she could work on it as a worthy literary pursuit. In fact, Martineau published her essay on Hartley in the *Monthly Repository* in

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46 It seems Martineau misspelt ‘Ongar.’
48 Isaac Taylor (1787–1865), known as Isaac Taylor of Stanford Rivers was the fourth child of Isaac Taylor of Ongar (1759-1829), who was an engraver, educationist, and pastor of an independent congregation at Ongar. The Taylors was famous for their literary production as a family. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* Online.
49 *The Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau*, vol. 1, 18.
May 1824, just two months after this letter. The essay, ‘Defence of Metaphysical Studies’ was signed only with her initials as ‘H. M.’ and can be considered one of the earliest instances of her repeated attempts to expand the boundaries of conventional female writing. In this essay, one can observe various subtle strategies to make her essay fit well within the boundaries of ‘feminine literary usefulness.’ But in doing so, she also pushes out the boundaries of the proper sphere for her writing. Just as she chose the framework of ‘practical divinity’ to give expressions to her religious zeal, she chose the framework of ‘practical mental philosophy,’ if one can call it that, in order to express the profound moral influence she received from Hartleian mental philosophy.

‘Defence of Metaphysical Studies’ in 1824

As mentioned in the earlier section, Martineau’s ‘Defence of Metaphysical Studies’ was published in the *Monthly Repository* in May 1824. She wrote and contributed it as an amateur writer. Although she was to become a regular reviewer and contributor to the new series of the *Monthly Repository* under the editorship of W. J. Fox some years later, this essay along with several others appeared in the first series under R. B. Aspland’s editorship. The approaches and terminology for the exploration of the nature and working of the mind were not established until much later in the nineteenth century. As a result, various expressions such as ‘mental philosophy’, ‘moral science’, ‘pneumatology’ or psychology itself were used indiscriminately. However, from what Martineau argues in her essay, it is clear that the ‘Metaphysical studies’ of the title meant ‘psychology’ in its modern definition. In fact, it refers particularly to the study of the mind according to associationism or Hartleian psychology.

Martineau’s primary aim in this essay is to argue against the scepticism and criticism of Hartleian psychology, which was not uncommon even among Unitarians. In the opening section, she first introduces the typical distrust of Hartleian theory that one might come across among religious people:

I HAVE for some time past been much interested in the study of Metaphysics, as far, at least, as Hartley’s inquiries have led me. . . . I am

aware of having derived some improvement and much pleasure from the study . . . when I was warned that, in the opinion of many wise and good persons, it was dangerous to pay too much regard to Hartley’s Theory, partly because “there is no safety in mixing metaphysical arguments with religion,” and partly because “the Hartleians are apt to disregard the plain, simple evidence of revelation, and to puzzle out a system to which scripture must be afterwards reconciled.” I have given much attention to these representations, and the more my thoughts dwell on them, the more am I convinced that they are mistaken: that the tendency of Hartley’s system is to confirm the Christian’s faith, by affording additional evidence of the truth of the gospel. . . . I wish to offer my remarks with the diffidence of a learner, and not with the authority of a philosopher.51

Contrary to the common criticism of Hartleian doctrines, that they slight the plain truth of Christianity, Martineau claims that they help to confirm and promote Christian faith by providing additional proof of the gospel’s teaching. The first thing to notice from this is that both Martineau and her assumed opponents were familiar with the argument in the Observations on Man as something that elaborated the religious and moral implications of the mechanism of the mind, which is quite different from what is now considered the chief argument concerning Hartley and his theory.

Martineau’s argument in this essay deals exclusively with the point that Hartleian theories are in accordance with Christian faith:

The gospel system of morals, also, appears to have a close connexion with Hartley’s Theory. On no other system is the necessity of forming virtuous habits so apparent: no other theory makes us so aware of the importance of avoiding temptation, of exercising strict government over the thoughts. . . . What can be more consistent with the Christian code of morals, than the conclusion of Hartley, that our ultimate happiness will be found in self-annihilation, that this is to be attained by the diligent cultivation of the benevolent affections, and, in short, by implicit obedience to what is known

Martineau emphasizes the corresponding characteristics of Christian belief and the Hartleian system. In short, her defence of Hartleian psychology is given within the framework of moral and religious teaching. Contrary to modern expectation, Martineau has no intention of arguing for the new ‘scientific’ horizon in the study of the mind that was opened by Hartleian psychology. This essay makes it clear that her attraction to Hartleian theory resided primarily in its moral and religious teaching, bound up with its prophetic vision of the realization of a Christian ideal in the future world.

Martineau’s defence of Hartleian psychology quoted above is not based on her original analysis or interpretation but faithfully traces his own argument. This becomes clear by comparing her argument with Hartley’s in the introduction to the second volume of his *Observations on Man* (1749):

> The Christian Revelation is attested by such Evidences historical, prophetical, and moral, as will give abundant Comfort and Satisfaction. . . . Yet still there are Difficulties both in the Words of God, and in his Works; and these Difficulties are sometimes so magnified, as to lead to Scepticism, Infidelity, or Atheism. Now, the Contemplation of our own Frame and Constitution appears to me to have a peculiar Tendency to lessen these Difficulties attending Natural and Revealed Religion, and to improve their Evidences. . . .

From this passage, one can understand why Hartleian psychology was criticized as ‘mixing metaphysical arguments with religion,’ which Martineau presented as a common disapproval of his theory in the opening section of her essay quoted above. Such an objection would arise only from those who were familiar with Hartley’s argument in his second volume. Considering that Martineau wrote her essay for the *Monthly Repository*, a Unitarian periodical, it implies that most Unitarians were familiar with Hartley’s theory including the part which is less well known today and that even among them there was a considerable division of opinion about its religious implication.

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52 ‘Defence of Metaphysical Studies,’ 269.
Another thing to be noticed about this essay is its narrative perspective. Martineau declares that she presents her opinion ‘with the diffidence of a learner, and not with the authority of a philosopher.’ Instead of assuming the authority of an expert, she places herself on an equal or even subordinate position to the reader. Such an attitude is also visible in the way she calls those who warned against Hartleian psychology ‘many wise and good persons’ and shows due respect for their advice. These humble statements should be considered not so much as expressions of her uncertainty about her expertise on the subject as a gesture adopted for strategic purposes. It appears that what she is going to present is different from the conventional arguments presented by those who deem themselves authorities and thus of a wholly new kind. It also suggests that she is not dogmatic and has considered the opposing views sufficiently before assuming her present position. The most significant characteristic of this essay, which bears the stamp of a future best-selling author and great populariser, is her testimony that she derived ‘some improvement and much pleasure’ from the study of Hartleian metaphysics. This establishes her authorial attitude that it is not for the sake of argument but for the sake of practical application that she presents her narrative to share with the reader.

Martineau’s attitude in aiming at a practical use for the reader is more obvious in the passage below:

I have seen the beneficial effects of the study of Hartley’s system, in guiding the reason, strengthening the faith, and cherishing the piety of the wisest and best men whom I have the privilege of knowing: I begin to understand how these effects are produced: I desire them to be produced in myself and others: therefore I intend to pursue the study, and therefore I venture to offer these brief remarks.54

An emphasis upon practicality represents Martineau’s consistent attitude throughout her career. In a sense, she calls for the participation of her readers in her programme of social improvement. One can see here the same attitude that made Martineau write *Illustrations of Political Economy* ten years later. She wrote it from a conviction that if working people act according to the principles of political economy, it would be beneficial not only to the people themselves but also helpful for society in general to

54 ‘Defence of Metaphysical Studies,’ 270.
regain its stability and to develop further.

‘The indissoluble union between physiology, metaphysics, and Christianity’

It is arguable when Martineau’s professional career began. It depends on how one defines professional authorship. Conditions of the literary marketplace in the 1820s make it more difficult to provide a clear-cut definition of authorship as a profession than in the later periods. Yet, one possibility is to mark the beginning of her professional career in 1829, when she became a regular reviewer and contributor to the Monthly Repository under the editorship of W. J. Fox and received a fixed sum of fifteen pounds per year for her contributions along with helpful advice. It is mainly through this affiliation that Martineau underwent what Linda Peterson describes as a complex ‘process of professional acculturation’ or an apprenticeship that ultimately paved her way to becoming a major Victorian writer.

Nearly five years after ‘Defence of Metaphysical Studies,’ Martineau responded to W. J. Fox’s call for writers for the newly launched second series of the Monthly Repository under his editorship. Martineau introduces herself as an author who had contributed a considerable number of articles and poems anonymously to the Monthly Repository. The relationship with Fox and its significance will be examined in more detail in a later chapter, but at this point I will introduce one essay Martineau contributed to the Monthly Repository in the late 1820s as an indication of the significance of Hartleian psychology in the early years of her career as professional writer.

Martineau regarded Hartleian psychology primarily as a theory for the improvement of human society, and it is precisely for this reason that she found the theory so attractive. One can see her attitude more obviously in a series of ‘Essays on the Art of Thinking,’ which she published in the new series of the Monthly Repository in 1829. In the opening passage of this essay, Martineau makes an explicit statement about her

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55 Peterson points out that in the 1830s the idea of professional authorship concerned the ‘prestige’ or ‘respectable social status’ the writer acquired from his or her works and had little to do with the financial profit they gained from them. She also suggests that the idea of an ‘occupational profession’ became prevalent only after the mid-Victorian period. Martineau’s ‘professional career’ here is closer to the latter sense. To use the word ‘professional’ in this new sense seems appropriate because according to Peterson Martineau forged a new model of professional authorship for women writers in the Victorian era. Peterson (2009) 30-34.

So much has been written and said on the importance of habits of accurate thought, that scholars and wise men have had enough of the subject. But it is not for them that we write. . . . Of all the multitudes who have never been taught to think, or who have learned the art but imperfectly, there may be some who, labouring under a fellow-feeling of infirmity with ourselves, may turn to these pages with a hope of assistance and consolation. To such we address ourselves. . . .

She declares that her topic is ‘the importance of habits of accurate thought’ and that it is not for the ‘scholars and wise men’ who ‘have had enough of the subject’ she writes. It is for ‘some who, labouring under a fellow-feeling of infirmity with [herself].’ One can observe the same attitude that Martineau adopted in the essay on Hartleian metaphysics that we have already examined: namely, she wishes to share the useful knowledge she gained from her own experience with others.

Martineau’s intention in this essay is revealed more extensively in the argument that follows, which may seem rather contrary to the expectations of the modern reader. Her intention is not to provide readers with advantageous knowledge. In discussing the importance of the ‘habits of accurate thought,’ she invites them to a kind of thought-experiment of looking at the world’s history and the future of the mankind through the eyes of a ‘philosophical observer.’

Every one allows that habits of accurate thought are of great importance; but the philosophical observer alone is aware of how much. Whether he looks back upon the history of the world, or watches the events which pass before his eyes, or anticipates the results of causes now in operation, and speculates on the future condition of the human race, he is more and more impressed with the importance of employing the intellectual powers on legitimate objects, and directing them diligently to attainable ends. If all men could see with his eyes, and follow the convictions of his understanding,

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there would be an end at once to half the evils that afflict humanity.\textsuperscript{58}

Martineau’s discussion is directed solely by her aim of informing the reader that the right way of thinking would maximize the benefit for society as a whole. If each person adopts it and improves him or herself, it will bring about the collective improvement of mankind. Her address assumes the nature of an invitation to a programme of social improvement just as her earlier essay on Hartleian metaphysics did. Thus, her attitude is in accordance with a Hartleian vision that the ultimate goal of the improvement of each individual’s mind is the realization of a perfect world. Although Martineau’s essay is not meant to convey a religious message, its basic concept—if each individual can develop the right way of thinking, which is inherent to one’s nature, the whole world will become a much better place—is similar to Hartley’s millennial vision of an ideal Christian world filled with piety and love of God unhampered by selfish desires:

When Men have entered sufficiently into the Ways of Piety, God appears more and more to them in the whole Course and Tenor of their Lives. . . . Every thing sweet, beautiful, or glorious, brings in the Idea of God, mixes with it, and vanishes into it. . . . Let the Mind be once duly seasoned with this Truth, and its practical Applications. . . . We may see also, that the Frame of our Nature, and particularly its Subjection to the Power of Association, has an obvious and necessary Tendency to make the Love of God, in fact, superior to our other Affections.\textsuperscript{59}

Hartleian psychology taught Martineau that to know the mechanism of the mind is to become aware of a God-given grand design of improvement programmed in each person’s faculty of intelligence. According to her theory everyone should be hopeful and aware of their responsibility as a member of the human race which is in the process of realizing a perfect world. Such a view of the human mind or of humanity was an aspect of the study of the mind that has been lost in the historical development of psychology as an academic discipline. In 1811, Benjamin Rush, who was one of the Founding Fathers of the United States, wrote to Thomas Jefferson after he had retired

\textsuperscript{58} ‘Essays on the Art of Thinking: I,’ 521-522.

from his presidency:

Have you found leisure to look into Dr. Hartley’s *Observations upon the Frame, Duties, and Expectations of Man* since your retirement to Monticello? I envy the age in which that book will be relished and believed, for it has unfortunately appeared a century or two before the world is prepared for it. . . . Its illustrious author has established an indissoluble union between physiology, metaphysics, and Christianity. He has so disposed them that they mutually afford not only support but beauty and splendor to each other.\(^{60}\)

In this letter, Rush expresses his admiration for Hartley’s *Observations on Man*. Obviously, he was one of the most enthusiastic advocates of Hartleian theory, who saw its particular significance in its system’s grand design that became visible only when one had traced the whole argument of this voluminous work. The depth and extent of Rush’s appreciation of the Hartleian system are effectively shown in his point that Hartley had ‘established an indissoluble union between physiology, metaphysics, and Christianity.’ It was precisely in this rare union that he saw the theory’s great potential for the benefit of the future of mankind.

The ‘moral’ inspiration that Martineau received from Hartleian psychology in her youth and preserved until much later must have been of a similar kind to what we see in the words of Rush. At least, Martineau saw in the Hartleian system ‘the indissoluble union between metaphysics and Christianity’ and also its immense possibilities for contributing to the development of human society. The mental stability Martineau gained from Hartleian psychology was the result of her conviction about the ideal state of human society that was envisioned in his system and her sense of fulfilment through her daily practice for the realization of its ideals.

Rush’s statement that Hartleian psychology ‘appeared a century or two before the world is prepared for it’ is ironic when we hear of it almost exactly two centuries later. Such an orientation toward the synthesis of three chief aspects of man’s existence—physical, mental and religious—which one could see in Hartleian psychology in the early

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nineteenth century—has been lost almost completely. The meanings and the roles of psychology that was envisioned by Hartley and sympathized with by people like Martineau and Rush were only possible in the framework of moral philosophy, which explored the mind in relation to religion and morality.
As we have seen in the previous chapter, although Martineau was trying hard to develop some form of literary career in the early 1820s, she was not keen to follow the well-trodden path of the multitude of nameless tract writers. Whereas her wish to be useful to the world through her writing was sincere enough, and expressed in various ways in her private letters and notes during this period, she was also eager to engage in serious intellectual pursuits such as the study of theology and philosophy. In a sense, the *Illustrations of Political Economy*, her first major work which appeared in 1832 and made her a national celebrity, can be considered the first successful instance of combining these two compelling wishes, namely, to serve society and to exert her intellectual power to its full capacity.

However, it took some time to realize this ideal combination of usefulness and serious intellectual endeavour. The purpose of the present chapter and the three that follow is to show how she developed a new type of fiction which was different from the traditional form of useful literature, the religious tract, in the decade before she wrote the *Illustrations*. Or rather, I would like to show how she had already tried out this idea of combining her narratives with serious intellectual argument in the 1820s, though without conspicuous success. I suggest that while Martineau incorporated the doctrines of political economy in the *Illustrations*, she had already tried to do the same with the doctrines of moral philosophy, or Hartleian psychology in the writing that preceded it.

This chapter takes up Martineau’s very first book *Devotional Exercises* (1823), which was a book of religious instruction for the young, along with her earliest essay, ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity’ (1822) published in a Unitarian periodical, the *Monthly Repository*. With these as the main texts for analysis, I will discuss what the young Martineau learned from Hannah More when she was searching for a new direction as a novice writer. As I discuss later, Martineau gained many insights from More, particularly from her religious treatises, in spite of their sectarian differences. I would like to argue that this was because she found in More’s writings an essential idea that she could graft on to another system of ideas, which had been even deeper source of inspiration then and after, namely, Hartleian moral philosophy.
Conflicting Views of Hannah More: ‘Vulgar’ Tracts and ‘Practical Divinity’

In her discussion of the origins of the *Illustrations of Political Economy*, Linda H. Peterson points out the importance of Hannah More’s influence, which, according to her argument, Martineau deliberately erased in the *Autobiography*:

... this chapter... analyzes the professional and political significance of the *Illustrations*, seeks the motives for Martineau’s erasure of their humble literary roots, and charts her radical departure from the emulation of Hannah More so clearly expressed in her debut essay, “Female Writers on Practical Divinity” (1822). In the *Autobiography* we can find traces of this erasure in Martineau’s comments on the tracts and tales she wrote for the Shropshire publisher, Houlston; in her silence about the influence of More’s seminal *Cheap Repository Tracts* on her didactic fiction; and in her emphasis on her innovation. ... That she did innovate is unquestionable, but that innovation had its roots in the literary past and her early career.¹

As Peterson points out, in spite of her silence about More’s tracts in the *Autobiography*, her influence over Martineau is clearly expressed in the latter’s earliest essay, ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity’ published in the *Monthly Repository* in 1822. One suspects that Martineau distanced herself from More’s work or the tradition of religious tracts when she presented a revised account of her early career in the *Autobiography*.

However, Martineau’s somewhat contradictory attitude toward More’s writings was already in evidence in the 1820s. As we have seen in the previous chapter, she expressed her reluctance to commit herself exclusively to tract writing in her letter to her eldest brother Thomas and his wife in 1824.² In it, she mentioned More’s name half-jokingly as an author of typical tract stories which she sardonically summed up as ‘vulgar.’ On the other hand, her essay on ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity,’ published in 1822, reveals some of her fundamental views and principles as a writer. It also reveals that Martineau’s idea about the advantages of narrative may have originated

¹ Peterson (2009) 76.
² ‘To Thomas and Helen Martineau,’ *The Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau*, vol. 1, 11.
in what she identified as the particular strength of More’s essays. Martineau owed a considerable amount to the literary heritage of More, and her debt is felt more in her religious treatises or essays than in her popular tracts.3

Martineau identified three important features of More’s religious writings. The first was her ability to connect her teaching with everyday situations. The second was her belief in the importance of evoking emotion in people’s minds in order to stir them into action. The third was the way she depicted a personality as multi-faceted and evolving, composed of various conflicting and interrelated characteristics. The last two features in particular corresponded to Martineau’s interest in the human mind and Hartleian associationist psychology in her youth. In order to show how Martineau extracted these features from More’s writings and adapted them to her own work, it would be useful to compare the following five texts; Martineau’s two part essay, ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity’ (1822), More’s Practical Piety (1811) and Essay on St. Paul (1815), both of which are discussed in Martineau’s essay, and Devotional Exercises Consisting of Reflections and Prayers, for the Use of Young Persons (1823), the first book by Martineau written immediately after the 1822 essay. Her Devotional Exercises was modelled on a work with the same title by Charles Wellbeloved,4 Devotional Exercises for the Use of Young Persons (1801).

‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity’ (1822) and More’s Practical Piety (1811)

‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity’ was published in two installments in the October and December issues of the Monthly Repository in 1822. It discusses the excellence of English female writers in the field of religious instruction. In the first installment, Martineau acknowledges the significance of More’s religious treatise,

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3 It has been pointed out that ‘Hannah More adopted two contrasted prose styles, according to the class which her work was intended to reach’ and that More herself was ashamed of the ‘vulgar’ style she had to adopt for working class readership. In her letter to Mrs. Boscawen she wrote, ‘It is as vulgar as heart can wish; but it is only designed for the most vulgar class of readers. I heartily hope I shall not be discovered; as it is a sort of writing repugnant to my nature . . .’ Andrew Kerr, ‘The Literary Contribution of Hannah More to the Evangelical Movement,’ B. Litt. thesis, Glasgow, 1967, p. 281. Quoted in Elisabeth Jay, The Religion of the Heart: Anglican Evangelicalism and the Nineteenth-Century Novel (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1979) 152.

4 Charles Wellbeloved (1769-1858) is a Unitarian Minister and tutor at Manchester College in York, who later becomes the principal of the college. See Hunter, 72 and her note in 229.
Practical Piety. She expresses her wholehearted consent to her claim that the true spirit of religion resides in the small acts of goodness among ordinary people and that the improvement of society depends on the improvement of each individual’s conduct. The essay contains extensive direct quotations from More’s treatise, as follows:

“But we are humble just in the wrong place . . . . When a little self-denial is to be exercised, when a little good might be effected by our example, by our discreet management in company, by giving a better turn to conversation, then at once we grow wickedly modest—‘Such an insignificant creature as I am can do no good . . . .’ Thus under the mask of diffidence we justify our indolence, and let slip those lesser occasions of promoting religion which if we all improved, how much might the condition of society be raised!”

“Talking about religion is not being religious. But we may bring the spirit of religion into company, and keep it in perpetual operation, when we do not professedly make it our subject. We may be giving an example of candour, of moderation, of humility, or forbearance.”

More’s key instruction to the reader is that the best way to promote religion in the world is to ‘give an example’ of moral behaviour to others however trivial the act may seem on each occasion. She enlists several specific virtues that one can exercise in everyday situations, such as ‘self-denial,’ ‘candour,’ ‘moderation,’ ‘humility,’ and ‘forbearance,’ which are familiar and applicable enough to guide one’s conduct. However, what stands out in the passage is the concreteness of the situations she envisions for the reader, what she calls ‘those lesser occasions of promoting religion.’ She instances ‘discreet management in company’ and ‘giving a better turn to conversation’ as examples of virtuous conduct which should ‘bring the spirit of religion’ among people. Another remarkable line is her straightforward assertion that ‘[t]alking about religion is not being religious.’ This also epitomizes More’s belief in the importance of practical application

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5 Martineau refers to the book with this title in her essay. The formal title of the work is Practical Piety; or, the Influence of the Religion of the Heart on the Conduct of the Life, of which the first edition was published in 1811.

6 Quoted from More’s Practical Divinity by Martineau. Discipulus [Harriet Martineau], ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity,’ Monthly Repository 17 (Oct 1822) 595. British Periodicals Online.
of one’s faith or moral sentiment to conduct in ordinary situations, rather than articulating one’s views or knowledge.\(^7\)

More’s voice resonates most tellingly in Martineau’s ‘Private Memorandum,’ which was written in 1829, several years after the essay, when she was still seeking a path for a meaningful career:

> My aim is to become a forcible and elegant writer on religious and moral subjects, so as to be \textit{useful} to refined as well as unenlightened minds. But, as I see how much remains to be done before this aim can be attained, I wish to be content with a much lower degree of \textit{usefulness}, should the Father of my spirit see fit to set narrow bounds to my exertions. Of posthumous fame I have not the slightest expectation or desire. To be \textit{useful} in my day and generation is enough for me.\(^8\) [emphases mine]

Martineau’s wish to be ‘useful’ to the world through her writing, even if it takes a form of ‘the humblest literary task,’ had its direct source in More’s teaching. In her 1822 essay on More and other female writers, she assumes a masculine voice under the pseudonym of ‘Discipulus,’ to stress that her essay should be useful to ‘[excite] the emulation of those of their sex who are capable of imitating such bright examples.’\(^9\) It is natural to think that Martineau herself was the first of her sex to emulate More’s example.

There is also a striking resemblance between More and Martineau in their almost apologetic gestures with regard to their authorship, which they both exhibit in the introductory remarks to their works. In the ‘Preface’ to her \textit{Practical Piety}, More writes:

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\(^7\) This is related to the reason why Martineau can give her hearty endorsement to More’s teaching in spite of their doctrinal difference. They share the attitude that gives precedence to practical piety over doctrinal elaboration. Martineau explicitly states their doctrinal differences: ‘I do not entirely approve the whole work . . . some doctrines are inculcated which are repugnant to my reason . . . but the way in which holy truths are made evident, and carried home to every one’s bosom, renders the work truly valuable.’ ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity’ (Oct 1822) 594.


\(^9\) ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity’ (Oct 1822) 593.
This slight sketch, for it pretends to no higher name, aims only at being plain and practical . . . . She writes not with the assumption of superiority, but with a deep practical sense of the infirmities against which she has presumed to caution others . . . .

More highlights her feminine authorial voice, referring to herself as ‘she’ repeatedly. At the same time, she assumes a self-effacing posture by calling her work ‘this slight sketch’ which claims ‘no higher name’ or denying her ‘assumption of superiority’ as a basis of her authorship. On the other hand, More also takes advantage of the seeming low status female voice in order to make it serve her proclaimed purpose of disseminating ‘plain and practical’ knowledge more effectively. According to her rhetoric, her words are more authentic and credible because she as an author is addressing her readers as one of them. She succeeds in assuming a different kind of authority without quite subverting the traditional authority, which is associated with a superior masculine voice.

Martineau employs exactly the same rhetoric in the ‘Preface’ to Devotional Exercises:

I long feared to enter upon an undertaking . . . but the conviction that simplicity was the chief requisite in this work, dispelled my doubts. Being yet young, I have a vivid remembrance of the ideas and feelings on devotional subjects, which in early youth, I found to be the most impressive, and to excite the most powerful emotions . . . . I have written down the thoughts which used to present themselves in a natural train of reflection . . . . This explanation will account for the extreme plainness and simplicity, both of sentiment and language, which will be observed in this little work.

What Martineau did at the beginning of this book, which was published anonymously by ‘a lady,’ was to establish the legitimacy and authority of her authorial voice. Just as we have seen in More’s ‘Preface’ to the Practical Piety, she deliberately foregrounds her supposedly unqualified profile as an author of religious teaching. She diffidently

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10 Hannah More, Practical Piety; or, the Influence of the Religion of the Heart on the Conduct of the Life (1811; New York: Richard Scott, 1812) iv-vi. Google Books Online.

11 A Lady [Harriet Martineau], Devotional Exercises Consisting of Reflections and Prayers, for the Use of Young Persons; to Which is Added a Treatise on the Lord's Supper (London: Rowland Hunter, 1823) i-ii.
confesses her ‘long fear’ of this literary undertaking because of being ‘yet young.’ In a sense, she is doubly disqualified as an author both by her gender and her age. However, she boldly claims that as a book of instruction for the young, ‘simplicity [is] the chief requisite’ and promptly goes on to give a special authority to her voice precisely because of her youth and inexperience. What she calls the extreme simplicity of her voice, which would otherwise reduce the authority of its instruction, is adroitly changed into a particular strength in its authenticity and effectiveness for her young readers.

In her discussion of the religious and literary contexts of the *Devotional Exercises*, Shelagh Hunter points out that even though ‘the book lies well within the conventions of feminine literary usefulness’ without ‘breaking any social or religious codes,’ one can retrospectively perceive Martineau’s exploitation of the conventional religious outlook ‘by exploring its limits and pushing out its boundaries.’

I would like to argue that it was from More that Martineau learned how to expand the limits and boundaries of authorship. She learned two things from More. One was to give precedence to ‘usefulness’ over doctrinal elaboration in writing on religious subjects; the other was how to establish the legitimacy and authority of one’s voice as a female writer.

It is obvious that Martineau gave unreserved endorsement to More as a writer on practical piety in spite of their doctrinal differences: More’s views were based on her evangelical belief whereas Martineau’s were Unitarian. It is also clear that when it came to More’s religious treatises and essays, Martineau exhibited no trace of the mockery evidenced in her jesting comment that hinted she considered More’s tracts ‘vulgar.’ However, this does not mean that More’s influence on Martineau can be observed only in her nonfictional, religiously oriented writings. The unique strength that Martineau found in More’s writing, notably her emphasis upon the practicality that is connected to day-to-day experiences informed not only Martineau's nonfictional works but also her fiction.

*Devotional Exercises* as ‘Rhetorical Fiction’: Charles Wellbeloved and Martineau

The effectiveness of fiction as a means of inculcating religious teaching was demonstrated by More’s seminal series of *Cheap Repository Tracts* (1795-1810).

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12 Hunter, 71.
However, what made Martineau aware of the power of narrative form were More’s religious treatises. Looking again at More’s *Practical Piety*, there are lines in which she pictures specific situations as examples of practical benevolence. Her concrete examples of everyday situations, as Martineau deduced, could easily be adapted to fiction. What she considered a particular merit of fiction was not its easy-to-understand nature but its effectiveness in teaching people the importance of objectifying their faith through daily conduct.

More’s argument that speaking explicitly about religion is not necessarily being religious also informed Martineau’s idea of effective religious fiction. Her distaste for ordinary tract stories was owing their difference from what she envisioned as an ideal form of religious fiction. Her ideal was a form that did not explicitly talk about religion but that ‘bring[s] the spirit of religion’ and ‘keep[s] it in perpetual operation.’ Realistic representations of ordinary life combined with an emphasis on actual conduct are the features that recur in Martineau’s early fiction.

*Devotional Exercises* (1823) exhibits this principle of realistic representation of common life as an effective method of teaching. Even though it was a book of religious instruction rather than a narrative, its fictional nature is obvious. As she deferentially explained in the ‘Preface,’ Martineau decided to write a sequel to the original *Devotional Exercises* by Charles Wellbeloved because even though many years had passed since its publication, the long awaited sequel promised by the author had not yet appeared. Martineau composed her own sequel following the same formula as its predecessor. They both divided their books into fourteen chapters, each of which is composed of a reflection and a prayer coupled together under a specific subject of the chapter, such as ‘on benevolence,’ ‘on death,’ or ‘on the goodness of God.’ Each chapter is designated for the morning and evening of each day of the week to be read and reflect upon as a spiritual ‘exercise.’

What makes their books ‘fictional’ is that both Wellbeloved and Martineau present their reflections and prayers as originating from a young person who speaks in the first person. Hunter calls their style ‘rhetorical fiction’ and describes Martineau’s execution of it as ‘a brief and assured performance by the young author in the persona of an even younger reader.’ She discerns a crucial difference in Wellbeloved’s and

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13 Hunter, 74.
14 Hunter, 70.
Martineau’s usage of ‘personas.’ Wellbeloved’s persona speaks as if he is a mere mouthpiece of his teaching, having internalized it completely and recites it without betraying any naive sentiment natural to a real ‘young person,’ which Hunter argues makes him ‘a most unconvincing youth.’ On the other hand, she regards Martineau’s persona as ‘more credibly personal’ because it ‘does not step beyond the rigorously held point of view of the “young person.”’ Hunter’s analysis reveals that Martineau was more aware of the advantage of fiction as a method of instruction and more determined to make use of it than Wellbeloved. For Martineau, the fictional framework of the Devotional Exercises was not a mere ‘rhetorical’ device to present her own view under the guise of a different voice.

In Practical Piety, More pictured particular situations and behaviour as specimens of small acts of benevolence, which are, though brief, concrete and graphic enough to be readily turned into scenes of realistic fiction. It was this reality supported by particularity that Martineau aimed for in her Devotional Exercises. In order to make it familiar and palpable to her young readers, she brought in scenes from middle-class domestic life. In the ‘reflection’ titled ‘On the government of the temper,’ she writes:

I frequently perceive that families who are exempted from misfortune, who possess a competent share of this world’s goods, and who practise no vices, yet are not at ease. Surely this must arise from the want of amiable dispositions . . . . I, like everyone else, sometimes meet with crosses and disappointments. Is my temper always proof against provocation? If offended, do I never resent? . . . . Can I bear to have my intentions thwarted, my motives misunderstood, my benevolent designs frustrated, or even my

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15 Hunter, 74.
16 Hunter, 75.
17 Hunter, 75. In her discussion about the difference of the first-person personas of ‘a young person’ between Wellbeloved and Martineau, Hunter compares the passages from each of their ‘reflections’ which discuss similar subjects related to the importance of ‘habit.’ She ascribes their difference chiefly to their different attitudes toward piety. While Wellbeloved’s view is based on the orthodox Unitarian position descending from Priestley, that faith should be informed by ‘enlightened and philosophical theology,’ Martineau’s view is inclined to the emerging revisionist trend that evaluates the working of emotion and imagination as a source of religious sentiment, which can be traced to the writings of Anna Letitia Barbauld, another female writer of practical piety discussed in Martineau’s 1822 essay. Hunter suggests that Wellbeloved and Martineau differ on the point that the former’s ‘young person’s’ reflection is rather too rationalistic and the latter’s ‘much less mechanistic.’ Hunter, 66-76. My argument ascribes their difference more to their different views about fiction, or fictional form.
failings rebuked, and my faults censured, with meekness and good humour? Is there no pertinacity in retaining my opinions, no obstinacy in my own will, no peevishness and irritability under vexatious circumstances, no sullenness under reproof? . . . I cannot now form an idea how much the peace of future years may depend on the temper I now encourage, but that they are very intimately connected, the examples I daily see, assure me.18

Obviously, what Martineau tries to sketch is a picture of middle-class families, who enjoy a certain degree of affluence and take pride in their industry and moral integrity that sustain their prosperity. It is the young generation of such a well-to-do class that she imagines as her readers. In order to instruct them in the importance of governing their temper, she gives concrete examples of situations in which they need to control them. The self-examining questions she poses through the voice of a fictional ‘young person’ are closely related to familiar situations in daily life. It is notable that these situations are not those associated with a life fraught with want and misery nor a life characterised by pious disregard for worldly cares, but a life endowed with material comfort and sophistication tied up with various secular concerns.

The particularity and worldliness of the situations evoked by the reflection of Martineau’s ‘young person’ become more conspicuous when comparing her questions with those posed by Wellbeloved’s ‘young person’ in a similar passage of self-interrogation. In a chapter titled ‘on self-examination,’ Wellbeloved poses the following questions through the persona of a ‘young person’:

What then, let me now carefully inquire, has been my conduct this day? What is the habitual temper of my mind? What is the distinguishing character of my life? Do I remember my Creator, my governor, and my judge? . . . . Do I fear to do what he has forbidden; and am I desirous of doing all that he has commanded? . . . . Can I resist the temptations which daily surround me, resolutely avoid what I know to be evil, and steadily pursue what is right and good? Do I indulge a cheerful heart, without giving way to folly? . . . . Am I uniformly obedient and respectful to those to whom obedience and respect are due? and to those with whom I associate am I kind

18 [Martineau], *Devotional Exercises*, 29-32
and courteous, attentive to their wants, considerate of their feelings, desirous of promoting their happiness? Am I free from guile and insincerity, from peevishness, obstinacy, perverseness, self-conceit, vanity, pride, envy, and every other evil disposition?\footnote{Charles Wellbeloved, \textit{Devotional Exercises, for the Use of Young Persons}, 7th ed. (1801; Thomas York: Wilson and Sons, 1826) 146-147. \textit{Google Books Online}.}

At a glance, one is struck by the biblical phraseology in the passage. It is obvious that when Wellbeloved’s ‘young person’ reflects on his daily conduct, his concerns are directed more to the heavenly world above than to any specific positive effect he can produce in each situation. Such difference of orientation in the examination of daily conduct is clearly exhibited by the nature of the questions Wellbeloved’s ‘young person’ put to himself. The questions are more like a checklist of behaviour that has been composed according to a general principle of conduct based on Christian tenets, rather than what is formulated on each occasion by reflecting on actual behaviour. In addition, it is notable that when Wellbeloved’s ‘young person’ tries to be specific about the propensity to be avoided, he enumerates familiar Christian vices, unconnected to particular situations. Obviously, his emphasis is placed more on establishing general principles than promoting actual practice in each situation. In fact, he states in the ‘Preface’ to his \textit{Devotional Exercises} that the chief aim of the book is to ‘inculcate religious principles’ and ‘lay the foundation of rational piety’ in the minds of young people.\footnote{Wellbeloved, \textit{Devotional Exercises}, iv. Hunter points out that ‘Wellbeloved’s exercises are of exemplary piety, but the route between his reader’s pious aspirations and the higher piety Wellbeloved points to is not suggested in any detail.’ Hunter, 77.}

On the other hand, the voice of Martineau’s ‘young person’ has a realistic ring of a personal voice uttered inwardly while she is envisioning situations she may come across in daily life, either by remembering her actual experience in the past or by visualizing a plausible one in her imagination. It is possible that these self-examining questions were ones that the young Martineau actually posed to herself. It is not difficult for the reader of her \textit{Autobiography} to detect a close resemblance between the image of a young person presented in \textit{Devotional Exercises} as a peace-breaker in a family and her portrayal of her childhood self, who was ‘an insufferable child for gloom, obstinacy and crossness.’\footnote{Harriet Martineau, \textit{Autobiography}, ed. Linda H. Peterson (1877; Toronto: Broadview, 2007) 62. Hunter also points out the similarity between the picture of the ‘young person’ in the \textit{Devotional Exercises} and ‘the highly-educated, emotionally hard-done-to girl of the first section of the
Martineau was aware that the domestic sphere, which is normally regarded as a territory where peace and security are guaranteed, was in fact a precarious site of emotional tension and entanglement for its inhabitants, and that the emotional wounds they could inflict upon each other could have the intensity and magnitude to amount to truly tragic situations:

How grievous is it, that beings who might make each other’s happiness, and be a mutual support under unavoidable sorrows, should thus render themselves and each other miserable, from want of self-command!22

The fact that Martineau focuses upon domestic and private experience is continuous with her fundamental authorial principle, namely, to be useful to the world. It is natural for her to address a subject that she finds most imperative for the benefit of her intended readers. At this period of her life, namely, her early twenties, what she found most urgent were the psychological problems which could erode the hearts and minds of people within a seemingly peaceful domestic sphere.

Hunter points out that the different perspectives between Martineau and Wellbeloved in their books can be partly explained from the difference in their narrative personas’ genders. While both books outwardly address readers of both sexes, Wellbeloved’s ‘young person’ and his assumed readers are masculine, as they are expected to lead a public life later. She quotes a line from Wellbeloved, where his ‘young person’ reflects that he needs to improve his mind while he is still young in order to make it useful when he comes to ‘be engaged in more active scenes . . . [and preoccupied with] the necessary concerns of life.’ On the other hand, Martineau's ‘young person’ can be assumed to be feminine through the ‘exclusively domestic range of the examples.’ Her narrative perspective shows that she ‘envisages the continuity and confinement of domestic life’23 in the future.

If one envisions a domestic life as a lasting confinement, where its inhabitants need to cope with continual tensions and conflicts that may threaten their peace of mind, it is reasonable to think it imperative to teach them how to protect themselves from its snares. Martineau, who had long been afflicted by the emotional turmoil within a

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22 [Martineau], Devotional Exercises, 30.
23 Hunter, 77.
seemingly comfortable middle-class household, imagined a multitude of similarly conditioned fellow sufferers, particularly among women. This would have been a strong enough incentive for her to aim at a rhetorical fiction that conveyed advice on how to solve one’s moral or emotional problems, informed with ideas she learned from her intensive study of theology and moral philosophy from her late adolescence.

Thus, it becomes clear that Martineau owed more to More’s religious treatises than to her tract stories in establishing her fundamental principle as an author on religious and moral themes. In the next section, I will examine other two features of More’s writing that Martineau emulated in her own writing. This will reveal how she connected her longstanding interest in the human mind and her enthusiasm for theology and moral philosophy to the authorial principles and perspectives she learned from More’s writing.

More’s *Essay on St. Paul* (1815)—‘appeals to the heart’ and ‘attentive study of character’

Hunter points out that the chief strength of Martineau's *Devotional Exercises* is its ‘firm grasp on the actualities of the felt life.’

It is the authenticity of feelings and sentiments attached to various situations represented in the text that build up and support their reality. This is related to another feature that Martineau identified as a unique strength of More and other female writers on practical piety. In her 1822 essay on ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity,’ she wrote:

It is a proof . . . of the value of our religion . . . that England has produced in one age so many female writers on morals and divinity, whose works are conspicuous for their force of argument, for their simplicity, and for that earnestness which can be expressed only because it is felt, and which can be felt only because the truths which it declares are as evident to the understanding as they are interesting to the heart.

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24 Hunter, 76.
25 ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity’ (Oct 1822) 593.
Here Martineau argues that in order to make one’s teaching truly effective, one should appeal not only to people’s understanding but also to their hearts. One of the chief sources that had inspired Martineau was More’s writing.

One can find a similar expression of the parallel importance of reason and feeling in inculcating religious teaching in More’s Essay on St. Paul (1815). In it she writes that St. Paul’s Epistles contains truth that is made all the more evident by ‘the skillfulness of his addresses to the understanding’ and ‘the aptitude of his appeals to the heart.’26 The Essay on St. Paul is another religious treatise by More, in which she discusses the various aspects of the Apostle’s character and conduct so that people can emulate him as an embodiment of Christian ideals. Martineau discusses this treatise in the second installment of her ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity,’ explaining that she has found distinct merits in it and, as in the earlier installment, quoting extensively from More’s text:27

Saint Paul’s zeal for the spiritual welfare of whole communities did not swallow up his ardent attachment to individuals; nor did his regard to their higher interests lead him to overlook their personal sufferings . . . . In his grief for the sickness of another, and his joy at his recovery, he does not pretend to a feeling purely disinterested, but gratefully acknowledges that his joy was partly for his own sake . . . . These soft touches of sympathy for individuals particularly dear to him, in a man so like-minded with Christ . . . are a sufficient refutation of the whimsical assertion . . . that particular friendships are hostile to the spirit of Christianity.28

More considers St. Paul’s natural affection for people around him a primary source of his divinity and denounces a dogmatic teaching that discriminates natural human feeling from philanthropic benevolence based on religious faith. Her valorisation of personal feeling may have been derived from her evangelical conviction. Elisabeth Jay explains

27 Discipulus [Harriet Martineau], ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity,’ Monthly Repository 17 (Dec 1822) 746. British Periodicals Online.
its characteristic as an assertion of ‘the unique importance of the individual’ and an ‘emphasis on a personal relationship with God.’ 29

On the other hand, Martineau’s evaluation of feeling also has much to do with her idea of the mind informed by Hartleian moral philosophy. According to Hartleian psychology, the framework of the human mind that enables one to have intellectual thoughts and moral judgment is shaped by feeling or emotion through the effect of association. Hartley argues that the moral sense or the idea of happiness as a goal to pursue is not innate to the human mind. Such a framework of intellectual and moral judgment is formed through the process of mental development from infancy. The only elements that are innate are the simple sense of pleasure and pain and the mechanism of association. When one receives a certain sensation, it is impressed upon the mind and forms a simple idea. Through the mechanism of association, this idea is connected to the sense of pleasure or pain that accompanied the original sensation. In addition, such a feeling of pleasure or pain is transferred onto the word that stands for the idea. This mechanism of association operates in two directions. Joseph Priestley’s Hartley’s Theory of the Mind (1775), or the condensed version of Observations on Man, which first introduced Martineau to Hartleian psychology states that ‘the ideas do in some cases suggest the words, whilst in others the words suggest the ideas.’ 30 Richard C. Allen sums up such mechanism of association focusing on the role of emotion as follows:

In addition, the emotion now adhering to words can also be transferred back onto things or actions; our evaluations of our experiences and our own conduct are largely determined by the emotions attached to the words we use to describe them . . . . according to Hartley, “We think in words . . . and invent chiefly by means of their analogies” . . . . 31

A key to Hartley’s theory of the mind is that it is not the innate sense but the accumulation of feeling or emotion that is excited in each specific incident that makes up a foundation of moral and intellectual judgment and forms the idea of happiness as a goal to pursue. Hartley emphasizes the artificial nature of man’s moral and intellectual orientation. He writes:

29 Jay, 10.
The most general of our desires and aversions are factitious; i.e. generated by association. And, whoever will be sufficiently attentive to the workings of his own mind, and the actions resulting therefrom, or to the actions of others, and the affections which may be supposed to occasion them, will find such differences and singularities in different persons, and in the same person at different times, as no way agree to the notion of an essential, original, perpetual desire of happiness, and endeavour to attain it.  

What Hartley here calls ‘affection’ is an eighteenth-century equivalent for ‘emotion’ or ‘feeling’ today. Thus, in his theory of the mind, emotion plays an indispensable role in constituting the framework of one’s thought and guiding one’s moral and intellectual development. In fact, Hartley makes an assertion that might be taken as an endorsement of More’s and Martineau’s point about giving parallel importance to emotion and reason. He writes that ‘the understanding and affections are not really distinct things, but only different names, which we give to the same kind of motion in the nervous system.’

In the Essay on St Paul, More evaluates St Paul’s natural feeling for people around him as something continuous with his philanthropic benevolence. It is probable that Martineau found this particularly appealing and persuasive because of her Hartleian view of the mind that gives importance to feeling as a basis of man’s understanding and moral sense. In the preface to Devotional Exercises, which was written immediately after her essay on female writers, she gives special importance to feeling following the example of both More and Hartley:

Being yet young, I have a vivid remembrance of the ideas and feelings on devotional subjects, which in early youth, I found to be the most impressive, and to excite the most powerful emotions, and which are by no means the same ideas and feelings which produce these effects at a more advanced age. Possessing these remembrances, I must believe that the young are best fitted to write for the young, in most cases where the feelings and affections are concerned.  

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32 Priestley, 204.
33 Priestley, 178.
34 [Martineau], Devotional Exercises, ii-iii.
It is noticeable that the two words ‘ideas’ and ‘feelings’ are coupled together to make a fixed phrase and used repeatedly, which indicates Martineau’s attitude that gives equal importance to these two notions and also her view that they are inseparable from each other. Another point to note is that Martineau gives special importance to the ‘feelings and affections’ in ‘early youth,’ which is thought to be a crucial period of mental development according to Hartleian psychology. Thus, one can see how Martineau grafted associationist ideas of mental development to the discussion of practical divinity.

There is another feature that Martineau identified as something particularly appealing in More’s *Essay on St. Paul*. It was More’s ‘attentive study’\(^\text{35}\) of St. Paul’s personality as a whole, made up of multiple traits and tendencies. She writes how she appreciates More’s illustration of St Paul’s mental characteristics:

> Many of the reflections presented to us in this work on the different characteristics of the Apostle’s mind . . . are . . . highly useful; for instead of our impressions being weak and transitory, as they sometimes would be, they are made permanent and tangible by the manner in which they are connected together, and one virtue made to lead on to the consideration of others.\(^\text{36}\)

Martineau points out that morality or virtues become something ‘permanent and tangible’ and gain power to inspire people to action when they are embodied in a living personality. This is exactly what makes up More’s primary purpose in the *Essay on St Paul*. She clearly states that her aim is ‘to bring forward Saint Paul’s character as a model for our general imitation.’\(^\text{37}\)

More explains why it is important to have a model to emulate in cultivating moral and religious sentiments by comparing Christianity to ancient philosophy and religion. She states that although ‘many of the heathen writers’ do present morality in ‘noble sentences and beautiful aphorisms,’ their ideals are ‘not flowing from any perennial source’ and thus fail to have a ‘powerful effect on conduct.’\(^\text{38}\) Considering their great

\(^{35}\) ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity’ (Dec 1822) 746

\(^{36}\) ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity’ (Dec 1822) 747.


men and deities, who often betray flaws and weaknesses that are contradictory to their virtues, she argues that ‘their idea of a perfect character wanted consistency, wanted completeness.’ She then compares it to the Christian idea of God or ‘Divine perfections,’ which is envisioned more or less as a personified embodiment of ultimate goodness:

As their [heathen] goodness did not arise from any knowledge, so it could not spring from any imitation of the Divine perfections. That inspiring principle, the love of God, the vital spark of all religion, was a motive of which they had not so much as heard; and if they had, it was a feeling which it would have been impossible for them to cherish, since some of the best of their deities were as bad as the worst of themselves.

While pagan belief has no centre or governing principle, Christian belief centres on ‘the love of God’ as a lasting foundation of their faith. According to More, it is such a personified embodiment of perfect goodness that makes Christianity a religion that has a powerful effect on people’s conduct. What More aims at in *Essay on St. Paul* is to present the personality of St. Paul as both divine and human and make people imitate him as an accessible ideal.

Similarly, Martineau discusses the character of Jesus Christ in her *Devotional Exercises*, based on the assumption that it is beneficial to study and imitate his character as an embodiment of perfection:

I HAVE often contemplated the character of Jesus Christ; and the sentiment which always recurs on the contemplation, is that of admiration of the perfect consistency of the whole. Virtues which some think incompatible with each other, there subsist in beautiful harmony. His meekness is consistent with his holy dignity, his forbearance with his indignation against vice, his exalted holiness, with perfect sympathy for his species, his acute sensibility for the sufferings of all men, with perfect trust in God. Self-control could be the only means by which he could so subdue his

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inclinations, balance his affections, make the lesser virtues subservient to
the greater, as to form that christian character, which ought to be a model
to all his followers . . . . 41

To present Jesus as a model of perfect humanity seems natural enough for Martineau
who, at this stage of her life, believed in what Ruth Watts explains as ‘a Unitarian form
of Christianity which denied the Trinity . . . and sought to establish a pure, simple,
optimistic religion which upheld the humanity of a perfect Jesus and strove for similar
moral perfection.’ Martineau seems to have adopted More’s strategy of presenting an
ideal Christian figure in a way more suitable to her religious orientation.

There is another notable thing in this passage. Martineau enumerates various
characteristics of Jesus that are not necessarily consistent to each other, which has a
striking similarity to the way More describes the multiple virtues of St. Paul:

There is in Saint Paul’s writings and conduct . . . so much social kindness,
with so much Divine love; so much practical activity, with such deep
spirituality; so much human prudence, with so much of the wisdom which is
from above; so much tenderness for the persons of men, with so little
connivance at their faults . . . .

Yet in all these opposite excellencies, there is nothing that is not
practicable, nothing that is not imitable. 43

Both Martineau and More regard the characters they describe as consistent and
harmonious as a whole in spite of the seeming incompatibility of their various qualities.
While More is not so specific about the reason why these opposite qualities can coexist,
Martineau explicitly ascribes it to the ‘self-control’ of Jesus Christ. Such a view has a
strong affinity both with her Unitarian view of Jesus Christ and her associationist view
of human mind.

In the second part of Observations on Man, Hartley reveals the moral scheme of
his whole work. His sustaining purpose that penetrates the first and second parts of this

41 [Martineau], Devotional Exercises, 50-51.
book is to make people realize their ‘Duties of Piety, Benevolence, and Self-governement’ as a logical consequence of the mechanism of mental development discussed in the first part. Hartley uses an entire chapter in this part to classify and illustrate various senses or desires which affect man’s action by the pleasures and pains they cause. In the chapter, which is titled ‘Of the Rule of Life,’ he classifies them into seven kinds: Sensation, Imagination, Honour and Shame, Self-interest, Sympathy, Theopathy, and Moral Sense. Following this order, he discusses the nature of each sense and how to regulate one’s pursuit of it. Hartley warns against indulging in the pleasures of ‘Sensation’ and ‘Imagination’ because they are pleasures of lower orders that should generate and give way to other higher ones such as ‘Sympathy,’ ‘Theopathy,’ and the ‘Moral Sense’ successively. He argues that they ‘ought not to be made the primary Pursuit of Life; but require to be restrained and directed by some foreign regulating Power,’ suggesting ‘the Precepts of Benevolence, Piety, and the Moral Sense’ as the power to regulate one’s inclination.

In this part of his treatise, there is also a chapter where Hartley tries to ‘prove the Truth and Divine Authority of the Scriptures.’ He discusses the character of Jesus Christ, whose perfection he considers one proof of Christianity:

Let us begin with the Consideration of the Character of Christ. This, as it may be collected from the plain Narrations of the Gospels, is manifestly superior to all other Characters, fictitious or real, whether drawn by Historians, Orators, or Poets. We see in it the most intire [sic] Devotion and Resignation to God, and the most ardent and universal Love to Mankind, joined with the greatest Humility, Self-denial, Meekness, Patience, Prudence, and every other Virtue, divine and human.

Such enumeration of his multiple virtues combined with the overall framework of his portrayal as an epitome of ideal humanity resemble Martineau’s presentation of his character in Devotional Exercises.

44 Hartley, Observations on Man, part 2, ii.
45 Hartley, Observations on Man, part 2, 245.
47 Hartley, Observations on Man, part 2, 214, 245.
Although it is tempting to think Martineau read the second part of *Observations on Man* and was influenced by its argument before she wrote *Devotional Exercises* in 1823, her letters to her brother James in this period indicate that she only started reading the second part of *Observations* in the spring of 1824.\(^\text{50}\) However, one can perceive a striking similarity between the perspectives and vocabularies of the two works. Thus, it is not hard to imagine how readily and deeply Martineau was convinced of the overall moral scheme of Hartley’s book when she finally came across it.

We have examined three features Martineau learned and adopted from More's treatises of practical divinity: i.e. emphasis on actual conduct in everyday situations, the importance of emotion to stir people into action, and the centrality of character study. Martineau gave her first book *Devotional Exercises* a unique stamp of her own by incorporating into these features her theological stance and associationist view of the mind. The authorial attitudes and perspectives she inherited from More turned out to provide enduring principles for her writing, particularly for her fiction.

The first theme she chose for her work of fiction as a young apprentice author, just as it was with her *Devotional Exercise*, which can be called a ‘rhetorical fiction,’ were the mental or emotional issues of young people, which were in fact connected to her deep-rooted personal issue of coming to terms with her own mind. In fact, some of her earliest fiction that followed *Devotional Exercises* addresses the issue of how to govern one’s moral or emotional life. Even though they cannot be exempted from the same impression of being simplistic and naive as in *Devotional Exercises*, one can detect in them embryonic insights that later led her to write *Deerbrook* (1839), whose central issue was the emotional conflict and crises within middle-class domestic life. In the following chapters, I will examine some of her early fiction which dealt with moral or emotional issues, written from mid 1820s to early 1830s, immediately before she wrote *Illustrations of Political Economy: Christmas Day* (1825), *Principles and Practice* (1827), and *Five Years of Youth* (1831). In these chapters, too, Hartley’s enduring influence on her work is self-evident.

\(^{50}\) Her letter dated 12 April contains her remarks about her intension to read the second part of *Observation* and the one dated 8 May her appreciation of it. See chapter 1.
Ch.3: *Christmas-Day* (1825) as a Religious Tract in Anna Barbauld’s Language of Feeling

*Christmas-Day* (1825) is Martineau’s first work of fiction. In the 1820s she wrote several short didactic tales for children and young people which were published by ‘the solemn old Calvinistic publisher, Houlston,’ as she described him, who paid her between five and ten pounds per tract. Even in the 1820s, when she was still extremely religious, writing tracts for a ‘Calvinistic’ publisher must have been a dubious venture. Not only her Unitarian religious outlook but also her literary aspirations were incompatible with the enterprise. There are two anecdotes in her *Autobiography* that indicate her view of this undertaking and its outcome. One was the rumour she heard from friends that her tales were sold as by Mrs. Sherwood, a renowned evangelical writer for children, whose name was virtually synonymous with the genre of the religious tract. Martineau’s amused response to this incident indicates her relative indifference to their denominational difference. On the other hand, Martineau also recounts her vexation when a certain religious tale which she considered worthless was mistaken for her work by her aunt. This suggests that she took pride in the unique quality of her tales. Even though she made use of the format and conventions of popular tracts, she did not let them define the essence of her tales. To clarify what she regarded this essence is one purpose of this chapter.

In her discussion of Martineau’s tales of the 1820s, Linda Peterson divides them into two groups. The first contains the earlier tales such as *Christmas-Day* and its sequel, *The Friends* (1826); the other the later tales such as *The Rioters* (1827) and *The Turn-Out* (1829). While she rates the latter group highly, arguing that they substituted the old biblical interpretative framework for human actions with a new scientific one based on political economy, she dismisses the earlier group as works that ‘look backward. . . rather than forward.’ One should note that what Peterson considers a typical framework that

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1 The formal title of the book was *Christmas-Day; or, The Friends*. It was published without the author’s name by F. Houlston and Son in Wellington, Salop in 1825.
4 Linda H. Peterson, ‘From French Revolution to English Reform: Hannah More, Harriet Martineau,
supports most religious tracts is one based on evangelical doctrines. She uses Mrs. Sherwood’s tale, *A Drive in the Coach through the Streets of London* (1819) to illustrate how these doctrines are inscribed in the text as unmistakable teachings based on the absolute authority of the Bible.\(^5\) However, this does not apply to the tales by Martineau, whose Unitarian background naturally make such a framework unpalatable. Margaret Maison points out that Unitarians were ‘conspicuous’ or even ‘notorious’ among other Nonconformist sects ‘for their freedom from hell-fire doctrines’ or ‘damnation.’ She further points out that ‘their tracts and tales did not follow the usual convention of dealing out heavy punishments for sin.’\(^6\) Martineau’s Unitarian outlook provided a point of departure for her tales from other typical tracts.

What shaped the earlier tales was not only the style and convention of the religious tract, but also her belief in rational thinking and her interest in the human mind, both of which had been part of the Unitarian tradition from the eighteenth century onward. This hybrid nature of Martineau’s earlier tales can be regarded as proof that they also looked forward, though in a different direction from the tales written after 1827 that paved the way for the *Illustrations of Political Economy*. They also prepared a basis not only for her future development as a fiction writer, but also for a new interpretative framework of human action that could be used in a work of fiction. It is a framework based on moral philosophy, or psychology.\(^7\)

In order to reveal the Unitarian heritage that underpins Martineau’s fiction, I would like to compare *Christmas-Day* with the works of Anna Letitia Barbauld (1743-1825), the eighteenth-century Unitarian poet and writer, whose works included some written for children. Barbauld encountered the associationist moral philosophy of Locke and Hartley about half a century before Martineau. Its influence is apparent in her poems, which depict physical sensations as something which produce various kinds of moral sentiments or ideas in one’s mind and which also retain their connections to the produced ideas. Brought up within the Unitarian cultural tradition, Martineau had been familiar

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7 As we have seen in the earlier chapters, in the early nineteenth century, the word ‘psychology’ was not established as a generic term to refer to studies that were concerned with the nature and workings of the mind. ‘Moral philosophy,’ a more traditional term in contrast to ‘natural philosophy,’ was often used to refer to what we today regard as psychology.
with Barbauld’s works since childhood. Christmas-Day exhibits her deep influence on the younger writer. This chapter reveals how closely they were connected to each other by Hartleian moral philosophy, particularly by its associationist theory and the idea of God as an infinitely benevolent Father. To begin, however, I will identify several characteristics of Christmas-Day in comparison to some typical evangelical tracts, along with a brief overview of their development as a genre.

**Christmas-Day; or, The Friends (1825) as a Religious Tract**

*Christmas-Day* is a story of a young girl, Sarah Brunton, the only child of affectionate parents. Although the story begins with a picture of a blissful Christmas Day, her happy life suddenly ends with her father’s death. Sarah becomes mournful and neglectful of her duties. On the following Christmas, however, she resolves to grow out of her despondency by applying herself to her duties, studies, and benevolent activities. When the third Christmas Day comes around, she convinces herself that true happiness resides in one’s inner life and that there should be no anxiety if one lives with a perfect reliance on God. It is a simply-structured story of about sixty pages of duodecimo.8 Although the story lacks dramatic action or suspense, it is effectively punctuated by the three successive Christmas days to show the protagonist’s change and growth from a Christian perspective.

Looking back at the story in her *Autobiography*, Martineau calls it ‘trumpery,’ which means not only worthless but also deceitful or fraudulent.9 Linda Peterson senses an irony in this dismissive epithet. She regards the story as containing many autobiographical elements from Martineau’s early life and as being ‘true to her lived experience.’10 It is true that the psychological portrait of Sarah, the young heroine, resembles Martineau in her adolescence in many respects. In this sense, the story is far from a fraud. Peterson, however, also points out that the story is in fact fraudulent in the sense that it depends solely on a rigid biblical interpretative framework following the typical formula of religious tracts. In Peterson’s view, such a fixed uncompromising framework only extracts ‘erroneous interpretations’ and ‘false lessons’ from ‘lived

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8 The standard size for a volume of a religious tract, in which each leaf was 5 x 7.375 inches.
experience.’ 11 Accepting both points made by Peterson, my argument is that Christmas-Day can be seen as a story that deliberately avoided becoming an authentic tract. Or rather, under the guise of a religious tract, Christmas-Day was becoming a work that contained other messages than those informed solely by Christian teaching or evangelical doctrines. It is in this sense that I would argue that Christmas-Day is ‘trumpery’ or fraudulent, failing to conform to the themes and conventions of the tract.

In order to examine how far Martineau succeeded in adopting, or disguising the themes and conventions of the religious tract in Christmas-Day, it would be helpful to examine the style and subjects of typical religious tracts. The emergence of the tract as a popular form of publication can be traced back to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge founded in 1699, which began to issue cheap religious publications for mass distribution.12 However, it was Hannah More’s Cheap Repository of Moral and Religious Tracts in the late eighteenth century that had a direct and lasting influence upon the publishing culture of nineteenth-century Britain. They were part of an extensive industry that published and distributed morally improving reading matter for the literate poor between 1795 and 1798. More than fifty tracts written by More were augmented by her fellow evangelicals and aristocratic literary friends.13 According to M. Nancy Cutt, ‘[t]he brilliant success of the Cheap Repository venture... had been taken to heart by publishers as well as by dozens of earnest writers’ who had ‘the spirit of Hannah More’ and brought about ‘the Golden Age of the religious tract’ in the early decades of the nineteenth century.14

Martineau’s comment on More’s stories in the mid 1820s can be regarded as yet another proof of the enduring impact of the Cheap Repository Tracts. In spite of the nearly thirty years’ gap between the active period of the Tracts and the time Martineau was making a hesitant debut as a tract writer, what she envisioned as a typical religious tract was one by Hannah More. In her letter to her family in 1824, Martineau mentioned that she was writing a little story in the style of a tract and deplored her talent by saying ‘I generally make my stories so vulgar, worse than Mrs. H. More’s.’15

15 See her letter to her brother Tom and her sister-in-law Helen dated 3 January, 1824. The Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau, vol. 1, 11.
What Martineau considered More’s ‘vulgar’ style was in fact the generic style employed in the *Cheap Repository Tracts*. Susan Pedersen summarizes their stylistic and structural characteristics as follows:

At first glance the Cheap Repository tracts do not strike the reader as didactic literature. Most are stories or ballads, with simple plots, vivid language, and a moral message made clear through actions rather than words. Structurally, the stories follow a predictable formula. Most begin by describing a single central character, usually poor, who is put to some kind of trial. The character either responds well and is moderately rewarded or goes dramatically downhill and dies repenting. The account is often rendered more authoritative by use of the first person or an intrusive narrator.¹⁶

Some of the characteristics listed in this passage match those of Martineau’s *Christmas-Day*. It follows what Pedersen calls ‘a predictable formula’ in which the central character is ‘put to some kind of trial’ and meets a suitable ending according to her responses to the calamity. In *Christmas-Day*, the trial falls on the heroine Sarah in the form of her father’s death and the decline of her situation in life. She responds badly at first by mourning and not exerting herself and then meets her punishment in the shape of a loss of her self-esteem. However, after she corrects her initial response and starts to cope with the calamity by performing her duties industriously, she is in the end rewarded with a newly emerging confidence in herself and in God.

Martineau was probably ashamed of the simple, predictable plot of her story. It was unavoidable, however, if she was to write in the style and structure of the tract. According to Pedersen, More and her fellow contributors of the *Cheap Repository Tracts* consciously adopted the form and style of popular literature such as chapbooks and ballads that were circulating among the literate poor in the late eighteenth century:

. . . if More’s Repository can be seen within a long tradition of attempts at moral reform, her strategy was uniquely subtle. By consciously adopting the forms, writing styles, and even distribution channels of popular literature, the evangelicals tried to infiltrate and subvert, rather than legislate and overtly

¹⁶ Pedersen, 88.
control, the day-to-day lives and culture of the poor. Yet despite their familiar
woodcuts and racy titles, the evangelicals’ little books carried a message
markedly different from—and sharply at odds with—the chapbook and ballad
literature of the time.\textsuperscript{17}

The \textit{Oxford English Dictionary} provides several definitions for the word ‘vulgar.’ It
means not only ‘common and offensively mean’ or ‘lacking in refinement or good taste,’
but also ‘of or pertaining to the common people.’ It is in the latter sense that More
consciously made her tracts ‘vulgar.’ On the other hand, she was also fully aware of
the other meaning of vulgarity. She stated explicitly that the object of the \textit{Cheap Repository
Tracts} was ‘to combat the “vulgar and licentious publications . . . profane and indecent
songs and penny papers”’\textsuperscript{18} Thus, in order to thwart the ‘vulgar’ or ‘offensively mean’
contents of the popular publications of her day, she employed a highly strategic measure
of adopting the ‘vulgar’ or ‘common people’s’ form of chapbooks in her tracts. After
thirty years, the urgency of More’s moral reform campaign was lost on Martineau. Even
though she followed More’s style, the idea of strategic adoption of a ‘vulgar’ form was
alien to her.

Another aspect of mainstream religious tracts that was alien to Martineau was their
evangelical teaching. Between 1810 and 1820, shortly before her initiation into the
literary marketplace, the situation surrounding the publication and distribution of
religious tracts entered a new phase. According to Cutt, it was by their ‘breath-taking
confidence’ in guiding people that the Evangelicals gained sway over the popular mind
in early-nineteenth-century Britain, which was plagued by the wars with France, social
instability, economic depression and widespread poverty. With appealing simplicity,
they set up ‘unvarying standards of conduct and belief’ based on their doctrines and
reduced all issues to moral and spiritual ones.\textsuperscript{19} Cutt argues that ‘the Evangelicals were
establishing their position as educators’ with the help of the tract publishers, who were
quick to respond to the growing religious atmosphere of society.\textsuperscript{20} For instance,
Houlston increased dramatically the number of religious books and tracts in his list,

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{17} Pedersen, 87-88.
\item\textsuperscript{18} Pedersen, 87. According to her note, Pedersen quotes from More’s ‘Plan for Establishing a
Repository of Cheap Publications . . . ,’ which is quoted in Victor Neuburg, \textit{Popular Literature
(London: Woburn Press, 1977) 255.}
\item\textsuperscript{19} Cutt, \textit{Mrs. Sherwood and Her Books for Children} (1974) 9.
\item\textsuperscript{20} Cutt, \textit{Mrs. Sherwood and Her Books for Children} (1974) 31.
\end{itemize}
particularly those for children in the 1810s.\textsuperscript{21} The main target of the tracts, or didactic literature in general, was shifting from working-class adults to children of all social classes.\textsuperscript{22}

Mrs. Sherwood arrived on the scene with \textit{The History of Little Henry and his Bearer} published by Houlston in 1814. As an appealing expression of uncompromising evangelical teaching against the background of the exotic life in India, it was accepted warmly and became one of her most famous books for children, continually reprinted in a variety of editions well into mid-twentieth century.\textsuperscript{23} Until around 1830, she constantly wrote didactic stories for children in various forms, including about a hundred tracts published by five different publishers, all of which contributed to establish the strong Evangelical orientation in children’s books.\textsuperscript{24} Cutt effectively summarizes the different roles played by Hannah More and Mrs. Sherwood:

In Hannah More, the Evangelical Movement had found its tract writer of genius whose Cheap Repository Tracts were said to have driven out much crude and vulgar reading matter . . . . In Mrs. Sherwood and her sister, Mrs. Cameron, it found tract writers who could inculcate ‘correct’ doctrine from the very beginning, and train up children of all social classes in a religious habit of thought.\textsuperscript{25}

Evangelical tracts for children stressed the importance of inculcating a religious habit of thinking from the early stages of life. Martineau’s \textit{Christmas-Day} also stresses the importance of the early years by depicting a young girl’s spiritual improvement. Even though they share some common assumptions, the overall impressions one receives

\textsuperscript{21} Cutt, \textit{Mrs. Sherwood and Her Books for Children} (1974) 31-32.
\textsuperscript{22} Neuburg states that ‘[t]oward the end of the eighteenth century. . . chapbooks began to go out of fashion amongst adult readers’ and came to be ‘entirely intended for child readers’ in the first decades of the nineteenth century. He also points out that ‘[r]eligious tracts were produced in ever-increasing numbers’ during this period. Neuburg (1968) 59, 65.
\textsuperscript{23} As for the different editions of \textit{The History of Little Henry and his Bearer}, see ‘Bibliography, I. Mrs. Sherwood’s Works: Arranged by Publisher’ in Cutt, \textit{Mrs. Sherwood and Her Books for Children} (1974) 117.
\textsuperscript{24} Mrs. Sherwood formed the strongest alliance with Houlston. ‘Houlston printed as many of Mrs. Sherwood’s titles as all the rest of her English publishers put together.’ Cutt, \textit{Mrs. Sherwood and Her Books for Children} (1974) 4, 24, xi.
\textsuperscript{25} Cutt, \textit{Mrs. Sherwood and Her Books for Children} (1974) 12. Mrs. Sherwood, Mrs. Cameron, and George Mogridge, who wrote under various pseudonyms such as ‘Peter Parley,’ ‘Ephraim Holding,’ and ‘Old Humphrey,’ were the three most prolific evangelical tract writers. Cutt, \textit{Mrs. Sherwood and Her Books for Children} (1974) 35. Neuburg (1968) 71-75.
from them are quite different. These can be accounted for more by their different religious doctrines than by the differing styles of individual authors. Religious teaching in Martineau’s early tracts is based on her Unitarian outlook. In the following section, I compare *Christmas-Day* with some works by Mrs. Sherwood in terms of their different perspectives toward the world that are reflected in their respective religious teaching.

### Warning, Death, and Prayers in *Christmas Day* and *The Little Woodman and his Dog Caesar* (1818)

*The Little Woodman and his Dog Caesar* (1818) is a story for children which enjoyed an enduring popularity through a long succession of reprints until the early twentieth century. Although it was intended for much younger readers than those of *Christmas Day*, it still is suitable for comparison because it contains essential tract material that conveys evangelical doctrines in simple language. It is written in the style of a folktale, in which a little boy called William, the youngest son of a widowed woodman, survives his father’s death, the mischievous plotting of his six elder brothers, and finds his long-lost grandmother with the help of his faithful dog Caesar. With this story as a main text for comparison, I would like to examine the Unitarian characteristics in *Christmas-Day*, particularly with regard to three aspects of Christian belief: warning and punishment, death, and prayers.

The first indication of the overt didacticism that colours *Christmas-Day* is the moral warning right after the beginning of the story. The succinct portrayal of its heroine Sarah and her parents in the opening paragraph is concluded by the narrator’s observation that they ‘only erred in one respect, in the want of firmness.’ More obvious warnings follow soon after:

But some of her friends, who were more clear-sighted than her father and mother, were afraid that Sarah would be very unhappy if any of her present

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26 Cutt notes that along with *Henry and his Bearer*, *The Fairchild Family*, and *The Lady of the Manor*, *The Little Woodman and His Dog Caesar* was one of the four most famous works by Mrs. Sherwood at the beginning of the twentieth century. Cutt, *Mrs. Sherwood and Her Books for Children* (1974) 46.


28 Anonymous [Harriet Martineau], *Christmas-Day; or The Friends* (Wellington, Salop: F. Houlston and Son, 1825) 5.
advantages were withdrawn . . . she would have been much surprised . . . to have known that she must soon part with any one thing which she had possessed all her life. It would have been both wise and kind to have taught her early that she might perhaps lose her health, or her comfortable home, or, what would be more dreadful still, her parents.  

The passage gives a clear hint about the nature of the calamity that is going to befall the heroine. It is implied that she will lose something essential in her present life. Even though the tone is mild, it has a sufficiently chilling effect. Obviously, it adopts the typical framework of an evangelical tract, which begins with a warning against neglecting Christian duties and proceeds to the inevitable outcome.

However, if one looks at *The Little Woodman* by Mrs. Sherwood, a text shaped by an authentic evangelical outlook, the difference between the two texts is obvious. The story begins in a similar way to *Christmas-Day*, with a picture of a prosperous family combined with a warning that is predictive of their future misfortune. It begins with the hero’s father, the wood-cutter, rather than the little hero William himself:

[The wood-cutter] was an industrious man, and gained a very good livelihood by cutting wood in the forest. . . . He made his sons also work with him . . . they might have been very happy, had not that one thing been wanting without which no family can be happy. The wood-cutter was so sinful as to neglect to teach his children to serve God . . . .

The narrator makes an explicit statement at the beginning of the story about what should be the first priority in life. It is ‘to serve God.’ Although the wood-cutter is initially portrayed positively, he is immediately judged ‘sinful’ on account of neglecting his duty to teach his children to fear God. He receives punishment in the form of a severe injury that makes him unable to work. The narrator explains this as an event in which ‘God brought him to reflection.’

Even though the plot and language are simplified for

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30 Mrs. Sherwood, *The Little Woodman, and his Dog Caesar* (Wellington, Salop: F. Houlston and Son, 1828) 6-7. It is printed on its title page that it is the twelfth edition of this work and that the author is ‘Mrs. Sherwood, Author of “Little Henry and his Bearer.”’ The first edition was published in 1818. The facsimile of this text is attached to the critical work by Cutt (1974).
31 *The Little Woodman*, 8.
children, the essential logic that is working behind the story is exactly what forms a main characteristic of the evangelical tract; namely, an emphasis upon one’s duty to God combined with punishment for the unfaithful. Another logical scheme of the tract to be noted is that the punishment is dealt out equally to everyone according to their misdeeds. In discussing *The Little Woodman*, Cutt argues that ‘Mrs. Sherwood plays no favourites: duty is as strictly imposed on parent as on child.’ As she points out, it is not only William’s father but also his grandmother and his elder brothers who have their own share of punishment and repentance.

In *Christmas-Day*, on the other hand, Sarah’s parents’ ‘want of firmness’ in their daughter’s religious education is not regarded as their ‘sin.’ Even though it is criticized as thoughtlessness, they do not receive punishment for their ‘erring’ nor repent for their former life. The sudden illness and death of Sarah’s father is never portrayed as a punishment, it is presented only as a calamity that Sarah must face. Thus, even though it shares the typical framework of warning and calamity, *Christmas-Day* differs considerably in that it does not put much emphasis upon duty to God nor deal out punishment to each character according to their ‘sins.’

The difference between *Christmas-Day* and typical evangelical tracts becomes most obvious in their attitudes toward death. In terms of their basic ideas about the meaning of death, they do not differ much. Both have a view that death is not altogether a mournful thing but a blessing for the faithful as an entrance to a better world. In *Christmas-Day*, when Sarah confronts her father’s death, she is soothed by her cousin Margaret, who speaks of ‘her father’s piety, and of the promises the Gospel makes to the faithful.’ She further speaks ‘of death as a sleep, as a release from care.’ Similarly, Mrs. Sherwood tries to open the eyes of the reader about the meaning of death for the faithful in *The History of Little Henry and His Bearer*, her other famous story for children. She describes the death of Henry, the hero as follows:

. . . too many are only able to view the gloomy side of them [scenes of death], instead of following, by the eye of faith, the glorious progress of the departing saint. . . . The next day at twelve o’clock . . . he was delivered from this evil world, and received into glory.

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33 *Christmas-Day*, 21.
34 Mrs. Sherwood, *The History of Little Henry and His Bearer* (Wellington, Salop: F. Houlston and
Both stories share the belief that death for the faithful is a release from worldly care and an entry into a better state.

However, there is considerable difference between Christmas-Day and many evangelical tracts in the importance placed on the actual scene of death. In the latter’s scheme of making the reader aware of sin and the need to repent, the death scenes are given central importance. In the Little Woodman, the wood-cutter’s death is preceded by his repentance, prompted by imminent death. He talks of his sin, repentance, and flees to ‘the merits of a gracious Redeemer’ as his ‘only hope of being saved from everlasting punishment.’ Unlike the death of Little Henry, the wood-cutter’s death is not pictured as an entry into glory but as an example of perfect trust in God that brings peace of mind in the last moment. Thus, although the entry to a better world is not guaranteed even for the repentant, death is presented as an urgent reason for the sinner to repent and start a new pious life.

On the other hand, in Christmas Day, the illness and death of Mr. Brunton are not presented as an awakening to his sins nor a prompt to seek salvation. Christmas-Day does not follow the narrative pattern of what Cutt calls the ‘obituary tract.’ No word of repentance for his sin or prayers for his salvation is heard from Mr. Brunton after he falls ill. It looks strikingly at odds with the usual formula of the tract. Not only literally but also symbolically, he is shut up in his sick room. He is described as ‘always delirious’ when his death is approaching, and his death is reported to the reader remotely; ‘In a few days, all was over.’ His death is framed neither as an entry to a better world nor as a reward for perfect reliance on God for his redemption. He leaves no words of blessing or caution to Sarah. The only voices surrounding his deathbed are those of the doctor, Mrs. Brunton, cousin Margaret, and Sarah herself.

In a sense, Mr. Brunton’s illness and death are presented more realistically than in

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35 According to Cutt, ‘For readers raised upon the obituary tract, The Little Woodman and his Dog Caesar contained all the familiar elements: beginning with the illness, repentance, and death of the woodcutter, it ends with the repentance of the six wicked brothers.’ Mrs. Sherwood and Her Books for Children (1974) 50.
36 Little Woodman, 17.
37 Little Woodman, 20.
38 In her discussion of Mrs. Sherwood’s tracts, Cutt calls a group of tracts that emphasize the importance of repentance before death ‘obituary tracts.’
40 Christmas-Day, 22.
the standard tract. It is depicted from a domestic point of view, focusing on the care, both physical and mental, that should be provided for the dying man and his family:

He was restless, and incessantly attempting to rise; but his wife’s calm voice seemed to have power to control him for the moment. Sarah sank down by the bed-side, and began to weep, at first, quietly; but her sorrow increasing, she soon sobbed violently: and her mother, making allowance for her undisciplined feelings, left her to herself for a while, with the hope that her full heart would relieve itself, and that she would recover her calmness. But her emotion becoming more and more violent, at length evidently disturbed the sick man.

What is striking about this passage is the stress placed on calmness and control. Mrs. Brunton’s self-possession has the power to soothe her husband’s restless movements in the agony of physical suffering, whereas Sarah’s unchecked emotion makes her sob violently and disturb the sick man. It is suggested that the most important thing in scenes of death, or those of suffering and grief, is the power to control one’s feeling and keep calm.

A third aspect to compare Christmas-Day with typical evangelical tracts is how they present the meaning and effect of prayer. In discussing the narrative structure of The Little Woodman, Cutt argues that it emphasizes the importance of faith and prayer and illustrates the relationship between them in a way that is straightforward enough for children to understand:

... every incident demonstrates answer to prayer: Little William’s finding scraps of food and a spring of water; the dog’s arrival in time to save him from the wolf and to drag him from the water... The faith of adults, too, is shown to be justified as the prayers of the woodcutter and the grandmother are answered.

The whole framework of the story is neatly shaped by the logic that the prayers of the

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41 Christmas-Day, 17.
faithful are always answered by God. In this framework, whether one’s prayer is answered or not, prayer is regarded as a sign of the justification of their faith.

In this sense, the problem about the effect of prayer Martineau brings into Christmas-Day through Sarah is totally out of tune with an evangelical perspective. In order to cope with her overwhelming grief, Sarah seeks help in prayer:

What could she do? Was there no help? Yes; there was help, if Sarah had known where to find it. She had been taught, that she ought to pray to God in joy and in sorrow . . . . But though she knew this, and persuaded herself that she believed it, she had not thought enough about it . . . . She felt (and it was not a right feeling) as if her mind was too much disturbed for the effort of prayer. She knew that it was right to pray in sorrow, but she had no idea of the relief and comfort it would have brought to her.43

Sarah cannot even make ‘the effort of prayer’ because of her disturbed state of mind. If she was judged from an evangelical perspective, she would be condemned as an unbeliever. However, what Martineau tries to inculcate in Christmas-Day is not the relationship between faith and prayer as in the evangelical tract. The primary message is how prayer can bring ‘relief and comfort’ to one’s troubled mind. When the authorial voice points out that it was wrong for Sarah to think that she is too disturbed to pray, it is not condemning her as ‘sinful’ but simply ‘erroneous’ or ‘misguided.’ The narrator regrets that she has ‘no idea of relief and comfort’ that prayer can bring. What is questioned is not her faith but her understanding of the power of prayer. In Christmas-Day, the focus is on one’s state of mind rather than one’s faith. This becomes more obvious when we consider the influence of Anna Letitia Barbauld on Martineau.

The Unitarian Tradition: Associationist Philosophy and *Hymns in Prose for Children* (1781)

In her ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity’ (1822), her debut essay in the Unitarian *Monthly Repository*, Martineau discussed Anna Barbauld, who was renowned
as a female poet and religious writer belonging to an earlier generation of Unitarians. There are three notable points in her discussion of Barbauld. The first is the surprisingly small space she devotes to her works compared to Hannah More’s. In this two-part essay on several female writers, running to about seven pages in the original, she uses about a page for Barbauld, whereas she discusses More in more than four. Martineau herself seems to be aware of the imbalance in her treatment. She admits apologetically that she has given only ‘a cursory view’ of Barbauld, discussing ‘too few fruits’ of her genius.

As discussed in the previous chapter, in spite of their denominational difference, Martineau gives an emphatic commendation to More’s views and principles as a religious instructor. Her influence is traceable in Martineau’s own book of practical piety, *Devotional Exercises*, which was written soon after this essay. On the other hand, she has much less to say about Barbauld. Brought up within a Unitarian intellectual milieu, Martineau must have been more familiar with Barbauld’s writings than those of More. However, it appears that as a novice writer Martineau found fewer things to learn from Barbauld than from More.

A partial explanation for this apparent indifference to Barbauld can be found in the second notable point of her discussion. Martineau argues that the ‘force and eloquence’ one would find in the writings of More and Barbauld ‘are of totally different kinds.’ She explains the difference as follows:

> Mrs. More awakens and impresses us, and we listen to her warnings with an awe which would make us believe that we are on no equality with her. We stand reproved under her solemn exhortations. But with Mrs. Barbauld it is different. She meets our ideas, and seems to express what had passed through our own minds, much more forcibly than we ourselves could have done.

Martineau considers Barbauld’s writing as something that provides an apt expression for those inarticulate but familiar thoughts and feelings shared by her readers. This may be the reason why she does not enter into a detailed discussion of her views. If they are so familiar and natural, they require no further explanation. However, it is arguable

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44 ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity’ (Dec.1822) 748.
45 ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity’ (Dec.1822) 749.
46 ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity’ (Dec.1822) 749.
whether Barbauld’s writings always met with such immediate understanding from the contemporary reader. In a sense, Martineau was misguided in assuming the intrinsic lucidity or familiarity of her writing. The reason why she felt Barbauld’s words to be a better expression of her own thoughts was probably the result of her early immersion in Barbauld’s vision and her internalization of it. Considering Martineau’s intellectual upbringing, including the early encounter with Barbauld’s innovative juvenile literature and that of her brother Dr. Aikin, it is possible that their influence was so deep in her mind that she had become unconscious of its origin.

A third point to be noted in the essay is that even though Martineau admired Barbauld, she makes it clear that she does not entirely agree with her beliefs and attitudes. After extensively delineating Barbauld’s idea of devotion in ‘Thoughts on Devotional Taste,’ her famous and rather controversial essay published in 1775, Martineau inserts the following statement:

I must not quit this subject without stating that the Essay has not my entire approbation. I think that though it professes to treat of devotional taste, and not religious principle, it is still too imaginative. . . . there is too much of the language of poetry and romance, instead of that calm, though warm, that sedate, though animated tone of feeling, which the theme demands.47

Martineau is explicit about her point of diversion from Barbauld. Her criticism helps one to understand their respective positions within the Unitarian tradition.

What Martineau criticizes about Barbauld’s writing is its excessive imagination and feeling. While her objection to unrestrained imagination is straightforward enough, her criticism of emotion is ambiguous. She argues that the topic of devotion should be discussed with ‘that calm though warm, that sedate, though animated tone of feeling.’ What she describes as a proper tone of feeling is framed in almost incongruous pairs of opposite qualities. They depend on an elusive balance between tranquillity and enthusiasm. Martineau’s ambiguous attitude toward feeling is also shown in the passage where she admits her indulgence toward Barbauld’s ‘errors.’

We have a fellow-feeling, and are tempted to overlook all errors, and all that

47 ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity’ (Dec.1822) 749.
borders on extravagance, in consideration of the justice with which she paints our passions and emotions, and touches every chord of feeling in our bosoms.\textsuperscript{48}

Obviously, Martineau does not underestimate Barbauld’s vivid portrayal of emotion itself. She considers it as a valuable mediator that connects the writer with her readers by a sense of shared humanity. Thus, in spite of her scepticism toward the predominance of emotion, Martineau lets her ‘fellow feeling’ counteract her logical disagreement with Barbauld. Martineau’s ambiguity derives from her attitude of giving equal importance to reason and feeling without regarding them as conflicting forces. This attitude is similar to Barbauld’s own. Although Martineau criticizes Barbauld for her ‘language of poetry and romance,’ their difference is not fundamental. The essential similarity between them is only natural because both of them were influenced by Hartley’s moral philosophy as part of the Unitarian intellectual tradition. As we have seen in the previous chapters, Martineau received a life-changing inspiration from Hartley’s theory of the mind in her adolescence. However, considering the fact that Barbauld had also been influenced by Hartley, the young Martineau’s wholehearted acceptance of his theory had long been prepared through the language and imagery she imbibed from Barbauld.

Martineau had been immersed in the religious views and attitudes presented in the poetry of Barbauld since her childhood. She recounts a memory when she was about seven:

\begin{quote}
In those days, we learned Mrs. Barbauld’s Prose Hymns by heart; and there were parts of them which I dearly loved: but other parts made me shiver with awe. I did not know what ‘shaking bogs’ were, and was alarmed at that mysterious ‘Child of Mortality.’\textsuperscript{49}
\end{quote}

What she calls ‘Mrs Barbauld’s Prose Hymns’ is one of her most famous and influential works for children, \textit{Hymns in Prose for Children} published in 1781.\textsuperscript{50} The young

\textsuperscript{48} ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity’ (Dec.1822) 749.

\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Autobiography} (2007) 55.

\textsuperscript{50} At least seventeen editions were published within Great Britain during Barbauld’s lifetime. The sixteenth edition published in 1814, to which Barbauld added three new hymns, is considered to be the most important edition. See the editors’ introduction and footnote on this poem. Anna Letitia Barbauld, \textit{Anna Letitia Barbauld: Selected Poetry and Prose}, eds. William McCarthy and Elizabeth Kraft (Toronto: Broadview, 2002) 234.
Martineau’s learning the ‘hymns’ by heart suggests that the book was read as a book of instruction. As Barbauld’s modern editors explain, in the late eighteenth century conventional reading primers for young children progressed ‘from alphabets and phonics directly to catechisms or Bible stories’ often within a volume. Barbauld, however, separated religious instruction from reading practice. *Hymns in Prose for Children* was designed exclusively for the primary religious education of children.

Her idea about what should constitute initial religious instruction for young children is shown clearly in her preface to the *Hymns*:

> The peculiar design of this publication is, to impress devotional feelings as early as possible on the infant mind. . . . to impress them by connecting religion with a variety of sensible objects; with all that he sees, all he hears, all that affects his young mind with wonder or delight; and thus by deep, strong, and permanent associations, to lay the best foundation for practical devotion in future life.  

What informs *Hymns in Prose for Children* is the Hartleian theory of the mind, which explains the formation of human intellect as the accumulation of associative connections between simple ideas based on physical sensations. Joanna Wharton discusses how Barbauld makes her reader build an associative connection of ideas through her text. She points out that one can observe ‘a profusion of objects’ in much of Barbauld’s poetry and prose and that this is connected to her intention of making these objects engage the senses of the reader. Taking *Hymns in Prose for Children* as an example, she states that Barbauld makes ‘objects take centre-stage as the means by which important religious ideas are communicated to the child’s mind’. Martineau, on whom Hartley had been a fundamental influence in her youth, had actually been immersed in the language and vision where the essence of his philosophy has been crystallised.

Her lived experience also seems to have complied with his philosophy. She records in her *Autobiography* a peculiarly impressive scene in her early childhood in which her infantile perceptions associated gay coloured crocuses with Sundays and

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Heaven:

I was getting some comfort, however, from religion by this time. The Sundays began to be marked days, and pleasantly marked, on the whole. I do not know why crocuses were particularly associated with Sunday at that time; but probably my mother might have walked in the garden with us, some early spring Sunday. My idea of Heaven was of a place gay with yellow and lilac crocuses.54

This episode is recounted as a memory from about the age of four. Even though she had changed much in terms of her religious outlook by the time she wrote this in the mid 1850s, her basic view about the origin of religious sentiment seems to have changed little since the mid 1820s when she was bound within the Unitarian tradition and studied Hartleian philosophy with enthusiasm.

As we have seen in the case of Martineau’s adolescence, mental philosophy, or the philosophical inquiry into the mechanism of the human mind, particularly in the tradition of the associationist school, attracted much interest and lively discussion among Unitarian intellectuals in the 1820s. Such active interest in the philosophy of the mind already existed from the late 1760s in the intellectual milieu where the young Barbauld belonged. Wharton traces the influence of Lockean or Hartleian philosophy in her early poems written around this time, including ‘An Address to the Deity,’55 which Martineau praises emphatically in her 1822 essay.

Kathryn Gleadle provides an illuminating explanation of the particular importance of the philosophy of Locke and Hartley in the religious and intellectual tradition of Unitarianism. According to Gleadle, Unitarianism as an avowed denomination ‘only crystallised towards the end of the eighteenth century.’56 Because of the loose dogmatic character of Unitarianism, it is difficult to define its lineage. Gleadle, however, presents a picture of its developing from the ‘open, fluid nature of eighteenth-century Dissent’57 and points out that ‘the great catalyst’ of Unitarianism as rational Dissent was the ‘impact

54 Autobiography (2007) 44.
55 ‘An Address to the Deity’ was first published in Poems, a collection of her poems in 1773. However, the time of its composition is presumed to be in 1767. Selected Poetry and Prose (2002) 41.
56 Kathryn Gleadle, The Early Feminists: Radical Unitarians and the Emergence of the Women’s Rights Movement, 1831-51 (Palgrave Macmillan, 1995) 9. Gleadle mentions that it was in 1774 that ‘the first avowedly Unitarian church was established at Essex Hall in London.’ Gleadle, 10.
57 Gleadle, 9.
of Lockean philosophy,’ which upheld a ‘faith in man’s ability to reason’ and advocated one’s duty ‘to use one’s God-given powers of rational inquiry.’ She argues:

If Unitarians were divided as to the precise denominational origins of their sect, they were unequivocal in claiming Locke as its founding philosopher. Locke’s materialistic concept of knowledge, together with the theories of Locke’s successor, Hartley, became the intellectual linchpins of Unitarian thought. Indeed, the great explicator of modern Unitarianism, Priestley, based his philosophy upon Locke and Hartley. . . . Consequently, the study of Locke and Hartley became embedded within the curriculum of Unitarian academies.

If the theories of Locke and Hartley were the foundation of Unitarian thought, it was only natural that both Martineau and Barbauld encountered them in their youth. Although neither could follow the regular curriculum of Unitarian academies for male students, both received sufficient education in their childhood, including subjects usually reserved for boys such as Latin, and their private circumstances in later years allowed them to access ample intellectual resources. As we have seen in chapter one, Martineau encountered Hartleian philosophy through the Reverend Lant Carpenter in the year she spent in Bristol and continued to pursue her own self-directed course of study, which paralleled her brother’s studies at the Warrington Dissenting Academy, and which included works by Priestley and Hartley. About fifty years before, as a daughter of a tutor at the Warrington Academy, Barbauld, developed her intellectual ideas through conversation with tutors and students there. Among them was Joseph Priestley, who was the chief explicator of modern Unitarianism and also the most vigorous proponent of associationist philosophy. Thus, it was only natural that both Martineau and Barbauld’s early writings were firmly embedded in the key philosophy which made up the foundation of the Unitarian intellectual tradition.

In her 1822 essay ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity,’ Martineau names four titles as representative of Barbauld’s work: the ‘Essay on the Inconsistency of Human

58 Gleadle, 10.
59 Gleadle, 10.
Expectations,’ ‘Address to the Deity,’ ‘Summer Evening’s Meditation,’ and ‘Thoughts on Devotional Taste.’ In her essay, she examines ‘Thoughts on Devotional Taste’ closely, using extensive quotations from the original text. The other three texts are left undiscussed without explaining why she chose them as representative works of Barbauld. They are merely presented collectively as the product of ‘the eloquent, elevated and tender breathings of such a mind.’

Among the three texts that were left without comment, two of them, ‘Address to the Deity’ and ‘Summer Evening’s Meditation,’ convey images and messages that are similar to those expressed in *Hymns in Prose for Children*. Both present a picture of the natural world in relation to the devout feeling that praises God as their creator. Because of her early immersion in the religious worldview presented in *Hymns in Prose for Children*, Martineau may have considered the feeling that was aroused by these poems as intuitive and requiring no further explanation, when she wrote her essay on Barbauld. However, when she turned to writing *Christmas-Day*, she filled her story with visions and expressions derived from Barbauld’s poems. Although she may have done so without acknowledging her influence, Martineau’s fictional world has many elements that are similar to Barbauld’s poetically rendered worldview.

**Pleasures, Beauties and God’s Blessing in *Christmas-Day***

As a religious tract, *Christmas Day* contains a superfluous amount of natural scenery and detailed descriptions of domestic lives. This becomes obvious when one compares it with a typical evangelical tract such as one by Mrs. Sherwood, which conveys its religious message through a simple plot of retribution that deals out rewards and punishments to each character according to his faith. Even though it also has a simple plot, *Christmas Day* does not give one the impression of being plot-driven. On the contrary, it contains many descriptive passages that do not appear to be connected to

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61 ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity’ (Dec.1822) 748.
62 Contrary to the order in which Martineau encountered these poems and prose in her life, both poems were written much earlier than *Hymns in Prose for Children* (1781). According to McCarthy and Kraft, Barbauld had written ‘six of the original twelve hymns’ by January 1780. On the other hand, it is believed that Barbauld wrote ‘Address to the Deity’ after listening to Priestley’s sermon ‘On Habitual Devotion’ which he delivered in 1767. Though there is no information about the time of composition concerning ‘A Summer Evening’s Meditation,’ it was first published in *Poems* in 1773. Barbauld, *Selected Poetry and Prose* (2001) 234, 98, 41.
religious teaching. Near the beginning of the story, festive scenes of a Christmas Day are introduced from the perspective of its heroine Sarah:

All was delightful that happy birth-day. The walk along the hard glittering highway, and over the crisped snow in the fields; the merry dining in the parlour, and the much larger party in the kitchen; the evening games; the late going to bed; the presents that were given to them all—O! Sarah thought it was the best Christmas-day they had ever passed.63

There are some noticeable features of this passage. The first is that the birthday of the heroine is deliberately set on Christmas Day. Secondly, the merriment of the day is conveyed through a description of objects which invite a sensory response. Thirdly, the story is set in the countryside. Each of these aspects is significant when one considers the religious perspective of this story. The first two aspects are related to the Hartleian idea of the mind that stresses the importance of early impressions. The third aspect is related to the traditional religious view that sees God's presence in the natural world, a view which was particularly popular among Dissenters.64

It is striking that in Christmas-Day, the first celebration of Christmas is presented almost solely in terms of its pleasures, without any emphasis on its religious significance. From the perspective of its young heroine, the day is significant primarily because it is her birthday and thus full of private secular enjoyment. If one looks at these scenes from an evangelical perspective, Sarah is committing a serious offence in not thinking of God on this important day. One would expect a turn of events where she is punished for this. In fact, her confidence that she will have even happier birthday next year is shaken by her cousin, who warns that one can never be certain about the future. However, there is a significant difference in the treatment of joy and pleasure between Christmas-Day and typical evangelical tracts. Judging from the structure of the whole story, even though it warns against a blind confidence in one's present blessings, Christmas-Day does not criticize the genuine sense of pleasure itself. On the contrary, it is this innocent sense of joy and happiness that has been instilled in Sarah in the initial

63 Christmas-Day, 8-9.
64 McCarthy and Kraft notes that '[t]he idea that nature is the “writing” of God was traditional, and the belief that science is a means to the worship of God was popular with Dissenters.’ Barbauld, Selected Poetry and Prose (2001) 43. note 4.
part of the story that eventually helps her to regenerate and gain a truly religious perspective toward life.

Sarah embraces the pleasures of Christmas by making full use of her physical senses. She enjoys the sensations she feels when she walks outside in winter, such as feeling the hard surface of frozen road or the surface of a snow-covered field. The visual perception of the frost and the snow also raise her spirits. These examples of pleasant sensations are followed by many others connected to the enjoyment of Christmas, such as the taste and appetite stimulated by the special dinner, the excitement of endless talking with many guests, and the satisfying sense of fatigue at the end of the day. These sensory fragments are accumulated and associated with each other to form a deep-rooted idea of a Christmas Day, or in this case also one’s birthday, as the happiest day of the year.

In *Hymns in Prose for Children*, Barbauld tried to make her young readers form an associative connection between the sense of joy and the idea of God through the medium of physical sensations. Similarly, Martineau here makes her readers remember how their happy associations with Christmas or a birthday have been shaped by sensory impressions. They both believed in the importance of early impression on the minds of children or young people so as to build a foundation of positive association with the idea of God and the world that surrounds them. With this in mind, one can identify a special relationship between the first and second Christmas in *Christmas-Day*. Martineau makes the second Christmas an occasion on which the heroine not only retrieves her healthy mind and affection but also gains a religious perspective on life with the help of the positive associations that have been ingrained deeply in her mind.

In contrast to the first Christmas, Martineau presents the second Christmas primarily in terms of its religious significance. There is, however, one similarity between them. Both are depicted as a day filled with joy and happy sensations. Although Sarah knows the church service is ‘a service of joy and gratitude, for a blessing great to all,’ she feels that ‘words of rejoicing’ are not appropriate for her because of her recent misfortune and still troubled mind. She is taken by surprise when she notices ‘her mother’s countenance, not only tranquil, but joyful’ at the service in spite of all the unhappy events in the past year. Her cousin’s words further open her eyes

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65 *Christmas-Day*, 31.
67 *Christmas-Day*, 31.
when she is admonished for her claim that she can never be as happy as in the last Christmas. She is told ‘every Christian ought to be grateful and cheerful on this day.’

Unlike the typical evangelical tract, what Martineau presents here as the primary obligation for all Christians is to be happy and cheerful on Christmas Day, when one should feel the presence of God most closely.

Sarah learns this lesson not through reasoning but through recollecting her positive impressions that have been inscribed in her mind repeatedly every Christmas. She remembers the joyful impressions involuntarily connected to various physical sensations when she walks outside in the wintry air:

The bright sun, the cold brisk wind, and the glittering hedges, would have raised the spirits of one even more depressed than Sarah. Her countenance brightened, and her pace quickened involuntarily, as she saw the troops of people who were going forth into the country to enjoy that happy day, the happiest of the year.

There is a noticeable similarity between this passage and the description of the first Christmas. The two Christmases are united by happy associations and influence Sarah’s thinking at the almost unconscious level. It is only after she takes a long walk in the countryside at Margaret’s suggestion that she resumes her positive attitude toward life and rejoices with a growing sense of piety:

They returned when the sun was already declining in the fleecy sky. The church bells were heard chiming at a distance over the fields, and the robin hopped merrily in the glistening path before them. Sarah’s heart beat with many emotions, and she determined to tell her mother all that had passed.

Thus, the important scene of Sarah’s religious awakening is subtly presented, framed in the poetic description of the natural scenery.

There are several other scenes in Christmas-Day where the natural surroundings are presented with poetic imagery. One of the most impressive is the description of

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68 *Christmas-Day*, 32.
69 *Christmas-Day*, 31.
70 *Christmas-Day*, 38.
Sarah and her parents taking a stroll in the summer evening:

One day in August, at the time of the harvest, Mr. Brunton came in to tea, hot and tired, from the field. . . . he proposed to his wife and child to take a short walk in the cool of the evening. . . . They directed their walk towards the river-side; and the meadows looked so green, and the river so clear and cool in the light of the setting sun, the nightingale poured out her song so sweetly, and the stars began to shew themselves in such a deep blue sky, that the little party soon forgot their fatigue, and sauntered far from home. When moon had risen they turned homeward again; but before they left the riverside the meadows were covered with white mist, and the air felt very chilly.71

Here again the beauty of the summer evening is expressed through sensory perceptions. The green of the meadows, the transparency of the river, the fading light of the setting sun, and the deep blue sky, all convey rich visual perceptions. There is also a sound of the nightingale and the tactile sensations of the mist and the cool air. In addition to these physical sensations, the vast image of the sky and the fields extends one’s spatial sense. The passage of the time is effectively conveyed by the contrast between the starlight in the darkening sky and the moonlight intensified against the completely darkened sky.

These expressions of natural beauty echo some of Barbauld’s poems. One particular poem that bears a marked resemblance in terms of its setting is ‘A Summer Evening’s Meditation,’ which Martineau praised emphatically in her essay about a year before she wrote Christmas-Day.72 The poem begins with a picture of the transition in the sky from glaring sunshine to the soft beams of the moon and stars:

’Tis past! The sultry tyrant of the south
Has spent his short-liv’d rage; more grateful hours
Move silent on; the skies no more repel
The dazzled sight, but with mild maiden beams

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71 Christmas-Day, 10.
72 Martineau’s essay on Barbauld was published in December 1822. According to her correspondence with her family members, she was writing her first tale in early January 1824. She sent it to Houlston in early March after being rejected by Darton and Harvey. Although the title of this story is not mentioned in any letter, it is assumed to be Christmas-Day. Martineau’s manuscript list of her writing 1822-1834 includes the title Christmas-Day in 1824 as the only tale in this year. The Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau, vol. 1, 11, 17, and its ‘Appendix A’, 351.
Of temper’d lustre, court the cherish’d eye
To wander o’er their sphere; where hung aloft
DIAN’s bright crescent, like a silver bow
. . . . one by one, the living eyes of heaven
Awake, quick kindling o’er the face of ether
. . . . these friendly lamps,
For ever streaming o’er the azure deep
To point our path, and light us to our home.
How soft they side along their lucid spheres!73

Both Martineau and Barbauld capture the atmosphere of a summer evening.

Martineau’s passage does not directly refer to the interior of her characters. However, the narrator states that they have forgotten their fatigue and lost their sense of time before they direct their way home. So, it is implied that they have been in a meditative mood. On the other hand, Barbauld’s poem presents the poet’s meditation on the mystery of the universe and its creation which leads to a vision of her imaginative flight into space.74 Gazing at the starry sky, the poet exclaims, ‘How deep the silence, yet how loud the praise!’75 As Damian Walford Davies points out, Barbauld here presents the image of the stars singing loud in praise of God. Quoting another line from the poem which reads that God ‘Inscrib’d the mystic tablet; hung on high’ in the sky, Davies argues that ‘[n]ature is seen—or rather heard and read . . . as the language of God’ in this poem.76 Barbauld expressed the idea that one can feel the presence of God in nature more plainly in her *Hymns in Prose for Children*. Considering how long Martineau had been immersed in Barbauld’s poetic vision and language, the summer evening scene in *Christmas-Day* can be regarded as Martineau’s own expression of God’s presence in the natural world.

74 According to Rob Browning, ‘A Summer Evening’s Meditation’ can be placed within the tradition of the ‘cosmic voyage genre of poetry,’ which had been popular during the first half of the eighteenth century. He points out that it includes Barbauld’s ‘entirely up-to-date’ knowledge of astronomical science which she may well have gained through her engagement in the intellectual community at Warrington Academy. Rob Browning, ‘Anna Letitia Barbauld’s “A Summer Evening’s Meditation” and the Cosmic Voyage since Paradise Lost’ *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* Vol. 39 No. 3 (2016) 395-396.
76 Damian Walford Davies, ‘“A tongue in every star”: Wordsworth and Mrs. Barbauld’s “A Summer Evening’s Meditation,”’ *Notes and Queries* 43.1 (1996) 29.
There is another significant influence of Barbauld on this story. As a final message, Martineau presents the image of God as ‘a kind Father’ along with the idea of peace one can experience when feeling God’s presence. These images can be traced back to poems by Barbauld. In *Hymns in Prose for Children*, one can find the image of God as a loving parent in a plain but poetic language:

God is the parent of the mother; he is the parent of all, for he created all.
All the men, and all the women who are alive in the wide world, are his children; he loveth all, he is good to all.  

Similarly, the lines from ‘The Address to Deity,’ a poem to which Martineau gives an emphatic commendation in her 1822 essay, presents a vision of the peace brought by one’s deep conviction of God’s presence:

As by a charm, the waves of grief subside;
Impetuous passion stops her headlong tide;
At thy felt presence all emotions cease,
And my hush’d spirit finds a sudden peace,
Till every worldly thought within me dies,
And earth’s gay pageants vanish from my eyes;
Till all my sense is lost in infinite,
And one vast object fills my aching sight.  

The essential idea these lines convey is simple and straightforward. It envisions the peace one can experience only if one can feel God’s presence. In her 1822 essay, Martineau points out the intimate feeling this poem may arouse in the reader’s mind:

Who has not felt in reading her sublime Address to the Deity, that he meets with his own aspirations, clothed in finer language than he could have found,

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77 Christmas-Day, 56.
79 Barbauld, Selected Poetry and Prose (2001) 42.
and illustrated by loftier imagery than his own imagination could have furnished him with?\textsuperscript{80}

In Martineau’s view, the poem addresses a universal feeling.

The picture of total freedom from one’s cares is echoed in the last scenes of *Christmas-Day*. The final resolution of the story is presented by the picture of Sarah who has learned her lesson:

She had never before felt the happiness and support of dependence upon God. The feeling of security in the unfailing care of a kind Father was almost as new as delightful to her… she could never be anxious or unhappy again, with such an invariable support.\textsuperscript{81}

Here, the concept of perfect trust in God that is used to address the question of one’s faith and salvation in the evangelical tract is restructured as one’s safeguard for peace of mind. This shows that for Martineau the real threat that one needs to cope with in life was not one’s ‘sin’ or ‘everlasting punishment’ but the suffering caused by a troubled mind. This is related to her longstanding interest in the problems of the mind since her childhood.

As a tract written shortly after her debut as a sectarian writer, *Christmas-Day* contains more traces of Barbauld’s influence than Martineau herself may have been aware of. Even though she was not explicit about her literary inheritance from Barbauld, close examination of their texts reveals an unmistakable affinity between them. Barbauld’s texts served as a direct source of the religious outlook and worldview in *Christmas-Day*, which differ strikingly from those of typical evangelical tracts. The story can be seen as Martineau’s youthful attempt to translate the poetic visions of Barbauld into the plain language of the religious tract. Clearly, at this stage of her career, Martineau was firmly embedded in the Unitarian tradition both in terms of its religious orientation and its intellectual scope. The only difference from Barbauld one might perceive in Martineau’s text is her more secular perspective upon the human mind.

So far, I have discussed the influence of Barbauld’s language of feeling on

\textsuperscript{80} ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity’ (Dec.1822) 749.
\textsuperscript{81} *Christmas-Day*, 56.
Martineau. It is, however, impossible to separate the role of feeling from that of reason when one considers the works of both Martineau and Barbauld. It is because both were the followers of Hartley’s mental philosophy, which regards feeling as an active agency for the formulation of ideas and also the framework of one’s thought. In the next chapter, I will examine another of Martineau’s tracts, *Principle and Practice* (1827), which also contains traces of her unconscious apprenticeship to Barbauld but which exhibits more of her debts to her and the Unitarian intellectual tradition as a whole in terms of their emphasis upon rational thinking.
The preceding chapter discussed the multi-layered influence of Hartleian philosophy upon Martineau. Martineau encountered it not only directly from books or treatises about his theory both by himself and others but also from Barbauld, whose literary works reflect the essence of his theory. It was a complex influence that helped to give Martineau’s first work of fiction its own unique quality in spite of its framework of a typical evangelical religious tract.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the influence of yet another aspect of Hartleian philosophy, namely, its emphasis upon the importance of reason. For this purpose, I will compare Martineau’s *Principle and Practice* (1827) with *Evenings at Home* (1792–), a work for children written by Barbauld and her brother Dr. Aikin. These two works share many attitudes and teachings. There are three core principles which are emphasized in both works; namely, the centrality of family life, a rational approach toward education, and an emphasis upon character. Though all three principles are related to the Unitarian intellectual tradition, the last two are particularly important because they can be considered as a response to the idea of human mind and the Christian faith as presented in Hartleian philosophy. I propose to examine these aspects in both works to clarify what Martineau owed to *Evenings at Home*. I will also examine the way in which she departed from its influence and introduced her own method of expression as well as her own views on morality and humanity.

**Realism and the Tradition of Eighteenth-Century Children’s Literature**

James Martineau recorded the excitement he sensed in a letter from the young Harriet Martineau late in 1825, telling him about her newly written story:

. . . and Harriet has got heartily enthused in a tale she has written, of a family of orphans who by industry and self-denial conquered all dangers and win a position of wealth. She keeps the authorship secret, because she introduces
into it some Madeira scenes . . . .1

Judging from the synopsis, the story must have been *Principle and Practice* published by Houlston in 1827. According to this letter and Martineau’s personal memorandum, at least some of it was written in 1825.2 Considering the theme and the tone of this tale, the timing of composition is significant. During the years in which *Principle and Practice* was written, successive misfortunes hit the Martineau family. Her father was suffering from a serious liver disease and was ‘evidently a dying man’3 in the winter of 1825. There were circumstances that aggravated his illness. His eldest son Tom died from consumption in the summer of 1824, which was devastating to him. He was also under incessant nervous strain due to the unstable market that affected the nation’s economy, and more pertinently his manufacturing business, between 1825 and 1826. As Martineau later recalled, ‘in the middle of the winter, when the banks were crashing down all over England, we began to contemplate absolute ruin.’4 Her father died in June 1826 leaving the family deprived of a considerable part of their fortune. It is not accidental that the central theme of *Principle and Practice* is about overcoming hardship. Martineau’s enthusiasm for her new tale can be traced back to her resolution in the face of the calamities that were befalling her family at the time. She explicitly states the aim and the characteristics of the story in the opening paragraph:

Let none sit down to read this little tale, whose interest can only be excited by the relation of uncommon circumstances, of romantic adventures, of poetical perplexities, or of picturesque difficulties. No beauties of this kind will here found. I propose to give a plain, unaffected narrative of the exertions

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1 James Martineau’s shorthand summary of Harriet Martineau’s letter dated 22 December, 1825. His reference to ‘some Madeira scenes’ was presumably the incident that befell their brother Henry on a voyage to Madeira, where he found a fellow passenger dying from consumption and felt obliged to nurse him in spite of their being total strangers. The situation resembles the one in *Principle and Practice* where Charles, one of the protagonists, nurses his fellow passenger who injured his leg severely on their coach journey. The story of Henry’s incident is recorded in another summary of Harriet’s letter dated 28th May, 1824. *Further Letters* (2012) 423, 409.

2 This is one of two tales written in 1825 in the manuscript list of her writings between 1822 and 1834. The two are listed as ‘Friends, a continuation of Christmas Day,’ and ‘Part of Principles and Practice.’ ‘Appendix A’ in *The Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau*, vol. 1, 351.


4 *Autobiography* (2007) 117. According to her autobiography it was not at this time but in June 1829 that the Norwich house failed and she faced the urgent need to earn her own living. *Autobiography* (2007) 126.
made by a family of young persons, to render themselves and each other happy
and useful in the world. The circumstances in which they are placed are so
common, that we see persons similarly situated every day. . . .  

Unlike Christmas Day, the central focus of which is the heroine’s emotional development,
*Principle and Practice* is declared to be about its protagonists’ practical efforts and
conduct within the solid realities of everyday life. Such commitment to the
practicalities of life appears to have little connection with Martineau’s sustained interest
in the human mind. However, the central focus of the story is in fact placed on self-
discipline and the development of character. In spite of the totally different impressions
they give to the reader, the two tales are both based on Martineau’s lived experience and
interest in the human mind.

There is another reason why Martineau was so enthusiastic about *Principle and
Practice*. Although she called it ‘fiddle-faddling’ in her *Autobiography*, she also
recorded its significance as a literary endeavour:

Meantime, in 1827 I was on excellent terms with old Houlston, and writing for
him a longer tale than I had yet tried my hand on. It was called ‘Principle
and Practice,’ and it succeeded well enough to induce us to put forth a ‘Sequel
to Principle and Practice’ three or four years after.

*Principle and Practice* is over a hundred and fifty pages in total, more than double the
length of *Christmas-Day*. Martineau made a good use of this extended length and
introduced several new literary techniques. The story has two protagonists, sixteen-
year-old Jane and fifteen-year-old Charles, who are orphaned siblings with two younger
sisters and a brother to support. Each of them alternately becomes a principal agent
who shifts the plot by their actions and also provides a narrative from their own
perspective through letters to each other. There is also the authoritative voice of the
narrator who sometimes enters into the two protagonists’ consciousness. The story has
an increased number of characters, who are given more or less well-defined personalities

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5 [Harriet Martineau], *Principle and Practice; or The Orphan Family. A Tale* (Wellington, Salop: Houlston and Son, 1827) 1.
made visible through their own words and actions. Above all, it contains an element of suspense that leads, for the most part, to a satisfactory resolution. For these reasons, *Principle and Practice* is a more mature narrative than *Christmas-Day*. It is no wonder that Martineau was absorbed in her story, regarding it as an opportunity to try out a variety of narrative skills.

The tale exhibits not only a number of new narrative techniques but also new themes and attitudes. The opening paragraph reflects a society that values worldly success if it is gained through the spirit of independence and industry. The tale also endorses realism as an effective means to convey its moral messages. This is very different from the typical evangelical tracts. Martineau’s tale is informed by a different literary tradition, namely, the tradition of children’s books. According to M. O. Grenby, the second half of the eighteenth century saw an increasing demand for books specifically written with the aim of providing children with a sound moral education. Reflecting the general trend of the eighteenth-century novel as a whole, children’s books in this period articulated ‘new, radical bourgeois values’ that sanctioned their protagonists’ ‘rise to wealth and status’ through their ‘assiduity and good sense.’

It was in the 1780s, argues Grenby, that children’s literature was established as a specific genre with its own themes and styles:

> As much larger numbers of children’s novels appeared over the next decades, issuing from an increasing number of publishers, the basic formula established in the 1780s remained fairly standard. The novel could be shorter or longer, more or less sophisticated, but the teaching of simple moral and developmental lessons—to control one’s temper, not to complain of trivial hardships, not to waste time—through realistic stories of family life remained at the core of many children’s reading experiences.

It is exactly these features that constitute the messages in *Principle and Practice*.

In the early nineteenth century, however, as Grenby points out, these standard features of children’s books that had developed in the late eighteenth century were

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9 Grenby, 506.
overshadowed by the ‘huge numbers of Evangelical titles.’\textsuperscript{10} It was a new trend that was generated in the excessively religious atmosphere of this period. \textit{Principle and Practice} indicates that Martineau was more committed to the older tradition of children’s books that provided simple moral lessons rather than dominantly religious ones. This can be partly accounted for by the fact that she had been brought up within a Unitarian intellectual milieu. What characterized the Unitarian attitude toward education was its emphasis upon rationality and an antagonism towards religious bigotry.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Joseph Priestley, one of the founding figures of Unitarianism, was an ardent proponent of the mental philosophy of Locke and Hartley, which was based on faith in man’s ability to reason. According to Ruth Watts, Priestley was a ‘particularly dynamic tutor’\textsuperscript{11} when he taught at Warrington Academy, one of the leading dissenting academies in the second half of the eighteenth century. She enumerates the characteristics of his educational practice at Warrington:

\begin{quote}
Freedom of inquiry, thinking for oneself, learning from experiment and experience—all underpinned by Hartleian psychology—were at the heart of the education for liberal, humane, active, ‘enlightened’ citizens which Priestley promoted.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

This philosophy of liberal and ‘enlightened’ education was undoubtedly shared by the inhabitants of Warrington Academy and also by the wider circle of the dissenting community. In 1792, Anna Barbauld and her brother Dr. Aikin, whose father had been a theology tutor at Warrington, published the first volume of their series of books for children, \textit{Evenings at home; or the juvenile budget opened: consisting of a variety of miscellaneous pieces for the instruction and amusement of youth}. The series continued to the sixth volume published in 1796. It was a work that reflected their belief in liberal and rational education and went into several successive editions, becoming one of the most influential books for children in the early nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{13}

There is no doubt that Martineau read \textit{Evenings at Home} in her childhood. She

\textsuperscript{10} Grenby, 507.
\textsuperscript{12} Watts (2011) 639.
\textsuperscript{13} Aileen Fyfe, ‘Reading Children’s Books in Late Eighteenth-Century Dissenting Families,’ \textit{The Historical Journal} 43.2 (June 2000) 455. According to Fyfe, it remained in print until 1915.
recounts in her *Autobiography* how highly its authors were regarded in her household when she was a child. She writes, ‘We had all grown up with a great reverence for Mrs Barbauld . . . and, reflectively, for Dr. Aikin, her brother—also able in his way, and far more industrious, but without her genius.’

Although Martineau does not mention any specific title, it is clear that what she had in mind was *Evenings at Home*, a compilation of tales, anecdotes, conversations, poems or fables, all of which are designed to convey certain moral or intellectual lessons. It presents an overarching frame narrative at the beginning, which states that all pieces in it are produced for private entertainment in the household of the Fairbornes, a genteel family of caring and well-principled parents and children of both sexes. There are narratives and conversations in which several figures recur. Each piece is self-contained and connected only loosely to the whole. According to the annotation by Lucy Aikin, Dr Aikin’s daughter, who edited *The Works of Anna Laetitia Barbauld* in 1825, only fourteen out of ninety-nine pieces in the work were written by Barbauld.

Although Martineau is dismissive of Dr. Aikin’s literary talent, this does not matter when one considers the influence she derived from the educational principles and attitudes that were expressed in *Evenings at Home*. Michelle Levy emphasizes the point that in *Evenings at Home* each piece of work is presented without the indication of its author, arguing that Barbauld and Dr. Aikin did this deliberately:

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\ldots \text{they [Barbauld and Aikin] intentionally rejected a model of autonomous authorship, preferring to take joint responsibility for the work as a whole, which throughout displays a unified style and a shared set of ethical and political beliefs.} \]

In this sense, in spite of its loose structure and double authorship, one can regard *Evenings at Home* as a book that represents a consistent, unified view.

**Domestic Values and the Legacy of an Antimilitary Ideology**

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16 Levy, 130.
Both *Evenings at Home* and *Principle and Practice* emphasize family life as a place for character development. Its importance, however, is shown differently in each work. *Evenings at Home* presents the family as a solid background against which various moral and intellectual lessons are presented. Here, the domestic sphere is where all sorts of wisdom is in stock and ready to be provided for children according to their needs. In discussing the trend towards realism in eighteenth-century children’s books, Grenby describes the characteristics of their representation of the domestic sphere:

They often introduce harsh social realities. . . . And even if most of the actual readers of these books did not live in comfortable houses, set in spacious grounds, in semi-rural environments, with devoted if firm parents who were always attentive to their well-being, the books were designed to present an idyll that was recognizable and realizable, unlike the world of fairy tales.  

As Grenby points out, the Fairbornes, who make up the frame narrative of *Evenings at Home*, are a family of landed gentry who live in ‘the mansion-house of the pleasant village of Beechgrove.’  Other parents and children who appear in succeeding episodes are also from genteel and comfortably situated families. As a result, the children in *Evenings at Home* learn about the harsh realities of the world not through their direct experience but through the reflections or observations which are prompted and more or less controlled by their parents.

For example, Sally Meanwell in ‘On Different Stations in Life—A Dialogue’ deplores her modest style of living compared to that of her friend who is a baronet’s daughter. Her mother then tells her that there are a ‘great many people poorer’ than themselves who ‘often do not get as much victuals as they could eat.’  Mr. Everard in ‘Humble Life; or the Cottagers,’ on the other hand, tries to correct the prejudice of his son Charles, who thinks that working people are all ‘as ignorant as brutes.’  He takes Charles to the cottage of a weaver’s family, where they witness not only their industry but also ingenuity in managing their household. Charles realizes his prejudice and

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17 Grenby, 505  
19 *Evenings at Home*, 91.  
20 *Evenings at Home*, 257.
comes to believe that they are ‘truly respectable members of society.’

Thus, in *Evenings at Home*, children gain mature insight into social realities through reflections or observations which are coordinated by their parents. Since the existence of a comfortable domestic sanctuary is taken for granted, the importance of family life is not emphasized in the story.

On the other hand, *Principle and Practice* foregrounds the role of domestic life by making its protagonists a family of orphaned sisters and brothers. Because they have lost their parents, the young protagonists have no one who can prescribe suitable moral lessons for them to learn in various situations, as in many of the episodes in *Evenings at Home*. They come across various lessons of life as real experiences with which they have to cope by themselves. Sibling bonds along with a few reliable adult friends are their sole resources. In order to present her protagonists with first-hand experience of harsh social realities, Martineau makes their social status a little closer to less privileged, working people in contrast with the children in *Evenings at Home* who only distantly observe the lives of the less fortunate.

Charles Forsyth, the fifteen-year-old hero of *Principle and Practice* is thrown into a ‘laborious’ situation ‘in the warehouse of a general merchant’ in London in order to make his living and support his family. He writes to his sister about his prospects and determination:

> I do not see why, by industry, I may not do as grand things as others have done before me. . . . I want to rise, as fast as possible, from trust to trust, in this house, and it can only be done by duly qualifying myself: so I mean to learn first everything requisite for the proper discharge of the most responsible situation of all; and then, if I have time left, I will learn other things, to which my wishes begin to tend, for the sake of general cultivation and enlargement of mind; which, I am convinced, is as great an advantage to the man of business, as to the professional man, or the private gentleman.

Such an attitude that appraises the financial prosperity and social distinction achieved through one’s industry and ingenuity is common to *Evenings at Home*. The difference

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21 *Evenings at Home*, 260.
22 *Principle and Practice*, 25.
between them though, lies in the point that in *Principle and Practice*, the message is conveyed through the protagonist’s own words, a protagonist who is on a lower rung of the social ladder and who aspires to success. It is also notable that Martineau adds a message about the importance of the ‘general cultivation’ of mind for people of whatever social standing.

Another characteristic of the domestic scenes in *Principle and Practice* is that its protagonists assume the role of not only passive recipients of moral lessons but also active enactors of moral education. Jane, the sixteen-year-old heroine who is the eldest of the Forsyth family, reflects upon her responsibility in assuming the role of a parent for her younger siblings:

> Jane was awfully impressed with the sense of responsibility, when she took her place as mistress of the house, and when she looked upon the three children who depended on her for their domestic comfort, and for much more than this; for guidance in the formation of their habits and characters.\(^{24}\)

Taking the position of a parent, Jane becomes aware of the parent’s responsibility and the importance of domestic life in the development of children’s characters. The moral significance of family life is not directly addressed in *Evenings at Home*, whereas it constitutes one of the central messages in *Principle and Practice*. This can be seen as Martineau’s significant departure from her predecessor in terms of her attitude in presenting domestic scenes.

The moral significance of domestic life, particularly its effect upon the formation of character is addressed most explicitly in the episode in which Jane and Charles make a decision about their young brother Alfred. Mr. Rathbone, a friend of their late father, offers an opportunity and financial support for Alfred’s education linked to a military career in India. Even though the offer is both generous and advantageous for their brother’s future prosperity, they decline it on the grounds of the moral effect of the whole plan upon him. They ponder upon several points which they cannot readily accept. They are concerned about the effect of ‘the rapid acquisition of wealth,’\(^{25}\) which Mr. Rathbone counts as the biggest advantage of the plan. They also fear that the early

\(^{24}\) *Principle and Practice*, 9.

\(^{25}\) *Principle and Practice*, 87.
separation from the family might chill ‘the family affection on which [one] should wish
to depend as a safeguard to higher principles,’ especially if the family has had ‘little
influence in forming or strengthening them.’ Their attitude, which gives the highest
priority to one’s principles as well as regarding the domestic sphere as the primary site
of fostering them, is presented explicitly.

Jane and Charles’s discussion introduces a further issue concerning the moral
implication of Mr. Rathbone’s plan. In spite of its seeming irrelevance, this additional
issue indicates a significant aspect of Martineau’s idea of the role of the domestic sphere:

But there is another question of greater importance still—Alfred’s moral
welfare. His early separation from his family would be a sad thing; but not
half so fearful as the risk of sending him into the society of the dissolute, or, at
best, the careless, where his duty will lie in scenes of bloodshed and
devastation, where his employment will be to contrive and execute plans for
spreading ruin and wasting life. Can we devote him to an employment like
this? Some may represent the matter in a different light, and say that he is
promoting the prosperity of his country and the extension of commerce by his
services. But I say, let him, if he serves his country, serve it by innocent
means; by means reconcileable [sic] to the law of God, and to the duty which
man owes to man: let him do this, even if he live and die in hardship and
poverty, rather than corrupt his mind, and harden his heart, and become such a
one as we could not love. . . .

Jane makes it clear that her biggest objection to the plan is that it is bound up with a
military career. She is outspoken in her criticism of the military profession, describing
it as ‘spreading ruin and wasting life’ or corroding one’s mind. In fact, this remarkable
anti-war attitude is an unmistakable indication that Principle and Practice was written
under the influence of Evenings at Home and in the Unitarian tradition of rational
opposition to wars.

Penny Mahon considers Evenings at Home as a text where the origin of ‘peace
education’ can be found. Between 1793 and 1815, when the successive wars with

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26 Principle and Practice, 90.
27 Principle and Practice, 88-89.
28 Penny Mahon, “‘Things by Their Right Name’: Peace Education in Evenings at Home,”
France excited vigorous war-and-peace debates, the anti-war campaign was directed ‘almost exclusively by the rational dissenters, specifically the Unitarians.’

According to Mahon, Aikin and Barbauld expressed a ‘radical antimilitarist ideology’ not only in writing for adults but also in the ‘relatively new genre of children’s literature.’

As she points out, *Evenings at Home* includes several stories that exemplify their style of peace education for children. For example, ‘Things by Their Right Name’ takes the form of an instructive conversation between Charles and his father. Upon Charles’ request that he tell ‘a bloody murder’ story for him, his father starts to tell him a story of military aggression against a village. After several questions and answers, Charles realizes the truth and protests that it is a story of a ‘battle.’ The father coolly replies, ‘I do not know any murders half so bloody.’

As its title suggests, the story presents a criticism of militarist ideology that prevents people from regarding ‘battles’ in terms of ‘murders.’

‘The Price of a Victory’ conveys a similar message, where Oswald is checked by his father when he is delighted at the news of his country’s ‘complete victory’ over ‘many thousands of the enemy.’ His father makes him reflect upon his own words by asking him whether he thinks ‘killing a great many thousands of creatures is a thing to be very glad about.’

Both stories present a radical redefinition of wars and military operations in general.

It is known that these radical antimilitarist messages in *Evenings at Home* provoked an extremely critical response from conservatives, such as the educator and children’s writer Sarah Trimmer. However, in *Evenings at Home*, the morally questionable nature of military operations was not criticized directly but only implied. On the other hand, *Principle and Practice* presents an outright criticism through Jane’s negative portrayal of military employment. It shows how Martineau inherited the anti-war message from Aikin and Barbauld and developed it into a more forceful message. In addition, Martineau effectively unites antimilitary ideology with domestic values in the plot of her story. The underlying connection between the antiwar message and the


29 Mahon, 165.
30 Mahon, 166.
31 *Evenings at Home*, 103-104. Mahon states that ‘Things by Their Right Name’ was the first anti-war story written specifically for children and it became a paradigm for other stories that was to follow. 168.
32 *Evenings at Home*, 300
33 For the contrast between Aikin-Barbauld antimilitaristic ideology and the conservative and implicitly militarist attitude of Sarah Trimmer, see Mahon 166, Levy 123.
domestic affections in *Evenings at Home* is also suggested by Levy:

Because *Evenings at Home* presumes that the cultural celebration of military heroes, both classical and contemporary, had already corrupted their readers, their aim is to advance alternative ideals of human, especially male, achievement. Men must in particular learn to value the domestic affections by remaining close to their families and dedicating themselves to their well-being; only by doing so, by spending many evenings (and some days as well) at home, will, Barbauld and Aikin suggest, social transformation be possible.  

What Martineau did in *Principle and Practice* was to reveal a fundamental connection between the denial of military ideology and domestic values in a plain, straightforward language.

**Rational Morality and Independent Judgment**

The Unitarian attitude toward education is characterized by its rational approach. Fyfe compares *Evenings at Home* with a similar contemporary children’s book by Sarah Trimmer, who, as she points out, was a staunch member of the Church of England.  

According to Fyfe, her work never fails to underpin moral messages with biblical references based on the ‘absolute faith in the authority of the Bible.’  

Fyfe, on the other hand, sums up the characteristic of *Evenings at Home* as follows:

The moral lessons in *Evenings at home* were presented as being obvious to the reasoning mind which has been provided with the necessary information and experiences, whether this means reading about different races of man, or actually meeting and talking to a poor weaver. The Bible was never presented as the basis for this ‘rational morality.’

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34 Levy, 142.
35 Fyfe, 456. Although Trimmer is often regarded as an evangelical by historians of children’s literature, Fyfe is sceptical of Trimmer’s evangelicalism. She compares *Evenings at Home* with her *An easy introduction to the knowledge of nature, and reading the Holy Scriptures, adapted to the capacities of children* (1780).
36 Fyfe, 461-2.
37 Fyfe, 463.
Evenings at Home makes children actively involved in the process of reflection and judgment. Whether the issue is physical facts or moral matters, parents in Evenings at Home never instruct nor preach depending on any absolute authority. They simply provide their children with careful questions which help them to reflect upon the issues by themselves. It is their own rational conclusion that give the children a new perspective upon the world. Levy calls this ‘a pedagogy of “instructive conversation” by which children discover their own moral knowledge.’

Obviously, this pedagogy is based on Hartleian moral philosophy, or associationism which explains the origin of one’s ideas by a process of association between multiple impressions from the outer world. In order to make their children receive impressions that lead to proper knowledge, parents in Evenings at Home also try to give them the opportunity of direct experience and observation. ‘The Ship’ provides a good example of this method. Mr. Osborn notices that his son Charles has become less attentive to his study after seeing his schoolfellow who has recently become a midshipman. In order to counteract the impressions made by his friend, Mr. Osborn takes Charles to a large ship. He asks Charles later what is required to build and operate such a huge vessel. With the vivid impressions from his direct observation, along with his father’s guiding questions, Charles realizes that a good knowledge of mathematics, chemistry, astronomy, etc. is necessary to perform many tasks on the ship. ‘Eyes and No Eyes,’ on the other hand, illustrates the importance of the power of observation, which affects the amount and quality of the impressions one can gain from the outer world. It demonstrates how an active mind learns something from every object it encounters, while a dull mind can have very limited perception and learn very little. In these episodes, man’s thoughts and behaviour are primarily regarded in terms of mental habit rather than religious faith.

Martineau shares the rational and psychological approach of Evenings at Home. Even though Principle and Practice was published as a religious tract by an evangelical publisher, it does not judge the conduct of its protagonists or present its moral messages by referring to religious authority. Its young protagonists also discover their own moral knowledge through direct experience and observation. There is, however, a crucial difference between them. In Evenings at Home, almost all mentors are parents or

38 Levy, 132-133.
teachers. They invariably take a rational attitude toward children. In *Principle and Practice*, on the other hand, the protagonists seek their mentors among a few adults who guide and support them. Not all of them take rational attitude toward them. In a sense, *Principle and Practice* juxtaposes two kinds of mentors—one rational and consistent and the other irrational and authoritative.

Mr. Barker, a friend of their late father Mr. Forsyth, is a mentor who is rational and supportive throughout the story. Just after their father’s death he makes it clear to the young family that he means to treat them with perfect frankness. He explains the reasons for this:

> [Mr. Barker] was the more inclined to do so, from the knowledge that they were worthy of this confidence. . . and that whatever exertions they might make, would be more efficient if they knew perfectly what they had to do, what objects were to be accomplished, and what resources they had to depend on.\(^{39}\)

As a family of orphans, what the Forsyth children need to learn is the practical management of their lives. In order to guide them, Mr. Barker employs the same approach as the one in *Evenings at Home*. Just as the children in *Evenings at Home* are provided with sufficient information to discover a new idea by themselves, Barker’s approach helps the young Forsyths make rational decisions about their own fate independently.

Mr. Rathbone, another mentor, takes a different approach. He willingly becomes their benefactor because of some undisclosed obligation he owes to their late father. His benevolence, however, always takes a form that is at odds with their own rational judgment. His first act is to send them a huge box of fancy gifts. Its sudden arrival delights them all but also disturbs their evening employment. Although subtle, the incident carries a negative implication. Before this incident, Jane’s resolution and efforts in setting up a regular routine is described in detail, presented as an integral part of her rational, moral attitude. Mr. Rathbone’s next kindness is directed toward Charles. At their first interview, he suddenly suggests that he should secure him a fortnight’s holiday from his employer in order to see his family. He, however, shows obvious

\(^{39}\) *Principle and Practice*, 4.
displeasure when Charles states his wish to time the holiday to coincide with Jane’s so that they can spend a longer time together. Mr. Rathbone regards Charles’ innocent expression of his wish as impertinence and presses his original plan.

Mr. Rathbone’s authoritative attitude becomes most obvious in his final offer of benevolence. Jane and Charles decline his offer of support for Alfred’s education, considering its moral effects upon him. Anticipating the offense it may cause to Mr. Rathbone, Charles states that ‘[they] ought to look on his gifts as curses, if they take from [them] the liberty of unbiased choice.’ It is notable that Charles uses strong words such as ‘curses’ to describe the constraint they may suffer. Mr. Barker supports their decision and advises them that they should be explicit about their ‘resolution of independence.’ This terminates their relationship with Mr. Rathbone, who sends them a cold letter stating that they are led by ‘the romantic whims of unformed judgements’ and are unworthy of his further assistance. Obviously, he is meant to be a false mentor whose offers of help they are expected to reject.

In *Principle and Practice*, Martineau adds more intensity to the Unitarian tradition of rational morality. The narrative conveys an uncompromising message that nothing but reason should direct one’s behaviour. It even implies that one should doubt the authority of his or her superior if it turns out to be an irrational force which constrains or distorts rational independent judgment. This view was unthinkable in traditional religious stories for children. In her discussion of early-nineteenth-century evangelical tales, Nancy Cutt points out that obedience was the ‘foundation-stone of Evangelical doctrine’ and that it was instilled into children as their primary duty, which was considered ‘a prerequisite to faith.’ According to Cutt, representations of family relationships, particularly the parent-child relationship, were used to inculcate a proper religious attitude. She points out, for example, that Mrs. Sherwood made extensive use of the family as a metaphor for the divine order:

No writer made it clearer to her readers that the child who is dutiful within his family is blessed in the sight of God . . . . Neglectful, harsh, or cruel, as a parent might be, children in Evangelical belief were still under heavenly

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40 *Principle and Practice*, 97.
41 *Principle and Practice*, 98.
42 *Principle and Practice*, 108.
command to be dutiful. Indissolubly linked to the divine order, the situation on earth was not to be judged on appearances.\textsuperscript{44}

It is easy to imagine that this model can be extended to relationships such as a teacher and student or a benefactor and dependent. \textit{Principle and Practice} makes the young protagonists achieve prosperity in the end in spite of their implicit disobedience to their benefactor. This suggests that Martineau wrote her story within the eighteenth-century rational tradition rather than adhering to early-nineteenth-century evangelical orthodoxy.\textsuperscript{45}

\textit{Principle and Practice}, however, differs also from \textit{Evenings at Home} in its presentation of the relationship between mentors and their dependents. Because of their rational pedagogy, mentors in \textit{Evenings at Home} never give their pupils fixed judgments or instructions. Children follow their own rational judgment derived from ‘instructive conversations’ with their mentors, so that there is no imposition from their mentors for them to doubt or resist. Even though their judgment is in fact not completely independent but dexterously guided, at least they do not suffer the constraint of irrational authority. In this sense, \textit{Principle and Practice} presents a unique situation in which the young protagonists stick to their rational independent judgment against the constraint of an irrational mentor.

Martineau was aware that it was often inexplicable, irrational motives or feelings that drove one to certain actions. Mr. Rathbone is given what other characters describe a ‘peculiar’ temper. As it is suggested both by Mr. Barker and the rumours about him, he ‘cannot bear to be opposed, especially in any scheme of benevolence.’\textsuperscript{46} In terms of his willingness to practice benevolence, Mr. Rathbone is apparently a virtuous figure. His benevolence, however, easily turns into ‘curses’ because his gifts and kindness are not based on a rational conscience but are more susceptible to temporary impulses. Charles’s chance encounter with him on a London street after their break can be seen symbolically. His quick and almost furtive disappearance is puzzling and is not explained. He does not speak to Charles either to criticize him or to attempt a

\textsuperscript{44} Cutt, \textit{Mrs. Sherwood and Her Books for Children} (1974) 41.
\textsuperscript{45} Cutt points out that when Mrs. Sherwood started writing for children in the late 1810s, she made use of the existing formula for children’s literature, namely, the traditional formats and devices derived from eighteenth-century children’s books, such as allegory, dialogue, question and answer, and child and mentor, etc. However, she substituted Evangelical assumptions for ‘eighteenth-century dependence upon reason.’ Cutt, \textit{Mrs. Sherwood and Her Books for Children} (1974) 37.
\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Principle and Practice}, 97.
reconciliation. After this incident, he disappears from the text. It seems probable that he has in fact no rational reason for his action. Martineau’s intention is to show that such inexplicable, irrational behaviour can produce a considerable strain on human relationships.

In fact, there are several adult characters in *Principle and Practice* whose relationships with the protagonists entitle them to act as mentors but who do not become ones. One common feature among these characters is that they do not always act rationally. Mrs. Everett, Jane’s employer, for whose four children she is a day governess, suddenly begins to treat her coldly without any reason. Although their relationship returns to normal in a few days, Mrs. Everett’s true motive is never revealed. Not only Jane but also the reader is left mystified. Jane rationally observes, ‘I wish, however, that she would tell me the causes of her discontent, and then the evil might be remedied without any ill-will on either side.’ On the other hand, Charles describes his employer, Mr. Gardiner, as having ‘the drawback of a fault of temper, which will occasionally try [one’s] patience’ in spite of his kindness. Although it is not specified how Mr. Gardiner’s temper is flawed, it is assumed that from Charles’ point of view he sometimes behaves irrationally. Both adults, who are in the position of guiding the protagonists, behave unreasonably and their true motives are never revealed. The narrator’s total silence about their motives conveys the same message as the one presented by Mr. Rathbone’s sudden disappearance.

*Principle and Practice* teaches the importance of rational judgment and behaviour by placing its protagonists against the background of realistic social life. One of the integral messages in it is that considerable evils or ‘curses’ in life can be removed if everyone acts according to ‘rational morality.’ Unlike *Evenings at Home*, which conveys its moral message through wise mentors who teach good conduct, *Principle and Practice* introduces many adults who lapse into irrational behaviour and fail to act as role models for the protagonists. As a children’s book, it presents a more realistic picture of social and psychological life than its predecessor *Christmas-Day*. Although the narrator remains silent about the details of irrational motives and feelings, it suggests their considerable influence over human behaviour.

47 *Principle and Practice*, 31.
Character Development as a Religious Trial

*Principle and Practice* contains an element which is singularly out of tune with other didactic tales for the young published by an evangelical publisher, namely, the story’s emphasis on the importance of reason rather than religious faith. One of its central episodes, however, assumes an intensely religious tone. This is the coach accident which the protagonist Charles Forsyth experiences on his way home from London. Though he is not harmed, Charles witnesses the serious injury of his fellow passenger, Henry Monteath, whose leg is crushed so severely as to be amputated. Unlike other parts of the narrative, the incident is suffused with overtly Christian views and vocabulary. Both Monteath, who bravely endures the affliction, and Charles, who attends him with sincere compassion, speak of the calamity in religious terms:

‘. . . . I ought to feel, even at this moment, that all is right, that this suffering is for my good.’

‘It is,’ said Charles; ‘and it is this thought which has comforted me for you. . . . think whose hand has brought this evil upon you, and remember that He is pitying your pain. He also gives strength and courage to those who ask for them.’

Charles’ reflection upon the meaning of this sudden catastrophe also assumes a predominantly religious perspective:

By degrees, he became aware that he was looking only at the dark side of the picture. He reproached himself for overlooking the mercies which had attended this dispensation. His own preservation, that of many besides, that only one life was lost among so many, that the suffering had fallen upon those who were apparently the best able to bear it; and he was not forgetful that the warning which was afforded them all of the uncertainty of life, and health, and peace, was of itself a great mercy.

49 *Principle and Practice*, 68.

50 *Principle and Practice*, 69.
Unlike most of his reflections, which are characterized by his steady observation and rational thinking, here he simply applies a conventional Christian interpretative framework to the event, showing his absolute reliance upon providence. Such an abrupt shift in the narrative tone and perspective may be explained by the gravity and anomalousness of the situation. Nevertheless, the portrayal of Monteath’s injury as a God-given trial and the whole incident as a warning about the unpredictability of life reads more like an evangelical tract than a secular moral tale descended from eighteenth-century children’s literature.

According to Cutt, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, writers for the young were divided into two groups depending on the way they placed religion in education. One was the party she calls ‘rational moralists,’51 who taught morals along with practical information. They gave no special weight to religious instruction and often avoided it because of their belief that ‘any sort of virtue and Christian religion could be acquired through self-control and reason.’52 Cutt includes writers like Thomas Day, Maria Edgeworth, and the Aikins53 in this group.54 Another group was what she calls ‘the Sunday School and Evangelical writers.’55 Among them are Mrs. Trimmer and Hannah More, who laid the groundwork of the ‘wave of urgent religious teaching,’56 and Mrs. Sherwood, who wrote stories in this line and did much to turn the tide of children’s literature between 1810 and 1830. A basic tenet of this group, according to Cutt, was that education should be subservient to religion and aim at preparation for life after death. The ongoing social and industrial changes at the turn of the century brought about a sense of disorientation and made people turn to religion with more urgency. Thus, Cutt points out, the works of the former group, the rational moralists, were eclipsed either by being ‘evangelized’ or taken over by the works of the latter group of writers.57

Written in 1827, Principle and Practice can be seen as a typical example of the rational moral tales which were ‘evangelized’ under the influence of the contemporary social atmosphere. One should note, however, that Martineau’s private situation also

52 Cutt, Ministering Angels (1979) 11.
53 By ‘Aikins,’ Cutt seems to refer to John Aikin and his sister Anna Letitia Barbauld, nee Aikin.
54 Cutt, Ministering Angels (1979) 8.
55 Cutt, Ministering Angels (1979) 9.
56 Cutt, Ministering Angels (1979) 11.
57 Cutt, Ministering Angels (1979) 11.
helped to intensify the evangelical tenor of her writing. As we have seen, it was through her religious faith combined with her intellectual aspiration in her late teens that she overcame the deep-rooted emotional problems of her childhood. In a sense, her individual emotional needs coincided with the religious mood of the age. Viewed from a modern perspective, her religious writings appear anomalous beside the works written in the later periods. However, it was only natural at the beginning of her career to commit herself to writing religious essays, fiction or poetry. Moreover, the initial years of her writing career were filled with various hardships in her personal life. Her autobiography records how her private situation and mental state in this period, the year 1827, were reflected in her writings:

Such poetry as I wrote (I can’t bear to think of it) I wrote in those days. The mournful pieces . . . may be referred to that period. And so may some dull and doleful prose writings, published by the solemn old Calvinistic publisher, Houlston, of Wellington in Shropshire.

The writings that Martineau retrospectively deemed too sombre and depressing might well include Principle and Practice. The seemingly abrupt interposition of an intensely religious tone can be ascribed to both the historical and personal contexts which surrounded its composition in the mid-1820s.

As we have seen, however, the overall tenor of Principle and Practice follows the eighteenth-century tradition of rational moral tales. Fyfe sums up their characteristics as follows:

The moral lessons drawn by Percival, Aikin, and Barbauld were not dependent on any specific creed, and could theoretically be agreed by all rational humans. . . . Some of the attitudes were typical of contemporary conduct books: sincerity; the importance of personal influence, and especially that of family members; respect for character, not wealth or rank.

58 Cutt writes that ‘[y]oung Harriet Martineau’s brief excursion into “tract” writing for Houlston of Wellington produced four moral tales of Unitarian leanings.’ Cutt, Ministering Angels (1979) 19.
60 Fyfe, 462.
They regard reason as the sole foundation of morality and try to inculcate the young reader’s respect for character endowed with rational morality. Even the episode of the coach accident in *Principle and Practice*, which is overburdened with religious language, depends upon this scheme.

There are two episodes in *Evenings at Home* whose influence is strongly felt in *Principle and Practice*. One carries a lesson of the importance of the ‘presence of mind’ as a basis of solid character. Another urges a reconsideration of the meaning of ‘heroism’ in terms of the hero’s character. In *Principle and Practice*, Martineau ‘evangelized’ these lessons by grafting religious implications onto them. The unique characteristics of her narrative can be illuminated by comparing the two works.

‘On Presence of Mind’ is an episode in *Evenings at Home*. Mrs. F., who is injured and bleeding considerably, insists her young daughter Eliza stay with her while her wound is being treated. Mrs. F. explains that it is a good opportunity for Eliza to fortify herself against losing her presence of mind at any event:

Eliz. What is the presence of mind, mamma?

Mrs. F. It is that steady possession of ourselves in cases of alarm, that prevents us from being flurried and frightened. You have heard the expression of *having all our wits about us*. That is the effect of presence of mind, and a most inestimable quality it is, for without it we are full as likely to run into danger as to avoid it . . . .

As this passage shows, presence of mind, or the power to control one’s mind is regarded as a most important quality.

*Principle and Practice* presents the same idea in the episode of the coach accident. Henry Monteath helps to minimize the catastrophe by his quick rational judgment. He takes the reins of the horses ‘with much presence of mind’. This is praised repeatedly by Charles. He ensures that Monteath has the ‘strength of mind and self-command’ to endure the painful operation on his leg because it has been proved by his self-possessed action at the time of the accident. When he recounts the whole incident to his family

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61 *Evenings at Home*, 192.
63 *Principle and Practice*, 68.
later, Charles admires him again for his ‘rational and manly courage.’

The difference between *Evenings at Home* and *Principle and Practice* lies in the point that the latter presupposes a direct connection between presence of mind and the power of endurance. In *Evenings at Home*, presence of mind is regarded mainly as a power to cope with an emergency without losing one’s composure. Mrs. F.’s injury is not presented as sufficiently serious as to be a proof of her endurance. It simply suggests her calmness in contrast to her daughter Eliza who is frightened and becomes ineffectual by the mere sight of blood. On the other hand, in *Principle and Practice*, the emphasis is shifted to the virtue of endurance against hardship. The main focus of the episode is not Charles, who overcomes his momentary weakness and comes to Monteath’s aid effectively. Its real focus is Monteath, who endures the severe pain, both physical and mental, with great forbearance.

Such different emphases in their depiction of self-possession is related to the two writers’ respective treatment of another common issue, namely, the meaning of heroism. *Evenings at Home* contains a short piece ‘True Heroism,’ in the form of an address from a father to his son. The father dismisses such well-known heroes as Achilles or Alexander, whom his son may admire, and calls them ‘false heroes.’ According to him, their seemingly great actions are motivated only by their selfish desire to gratify ferocious passions of revenge or love of glory. Therefore, they don’t deserve the name of heroes. Then he presents two examples of what he considers true heroism. One is the selfless devotion of a philanthropist for the benefit of the weakest in society, namely, the deeds of John Howard, the great eighteenth-century prison reformer. The other is the mute endurance of an obscure village boy, who supports his family in place of his drunken father. His sense of duty toward his family is so strong that even when he breaks his leg during his hard labour, all he cares about is not himself but the prospects of his family without the money he earns. Thus, the standard of the heroic act presented here is more to do with the hero’s character than the scale or gravity of his accomplishment. The actions of these two true heroes are both motivated by their ‘impulses of duty and humanity.’ In this way, heroism is redefined as a quality which is in line with the values of the rational moralists.

Henry Monteath’s heroism in *Principle and Practice* resembles the one shown by

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64 *Principle and Practice*, 102.
65 *Evenings at Home*, 220.
66 *Evenings at Home*, 219.
the obscure village boy in *Evenings at Home*. Their situations are strikingly similar. Both injure their legs and go through a painful operation. They both exhibit courage and firmness in their passive act of endurance. However, Martineau places more emphasis on the degree of affliction and the way it is endured. In her version, suffering itself is given special importance. It is regarded as a trial which proves one’s virtue:

> It has been proved, by a fiery trial, that Monteath has many virtues. I know, beyond a doubt, that he is religious, that he is attached to his family, that he is considerate to others, that he is courageous and patient.⁶⁷

As the expression ‘a fiery trial’⁶⁸ suggests, Monteath’s suffering and endurance are imbued with a religious significance. The narrator emphasizes that he gains peace of mind and strength by seeking comfort in ‘a better friend with [him], who can yield support when earthly friends are far away, or too feeble to give comfort.’⁶⁹

‘On the Dangers of Adversity,’ an essay Martineau wrote for the *Monthly Repository* in the same year as she published *Principle and Practice*, states that ‘[n]o subject of exhortation is oftener chosen by the divine and the moralist than the danger of prosperity and the blessings of adversity.’⁷⁰ According to her, while people are justly suspicious of prosperity and give warnings ‘against the sins of ingratitude, pride, and avarice,’⁷¹ they blindly encourage the unfortunate to regard their sorrows as ‘marks of God’s especial favour’⁷² which make them entitled to ‘an inheritance in the future world.’⁷³ With such warnings against sin and references to the afterlife, Martineau appears to share a popular evangelical view.

> It is true that Martineau shapes her argument so as to give it a religious framework. However, closer examination reveals elements which differ from a typical evangelical perspective:

We must remember that though sorrow may soften the heart, it may also harden

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⁶⁷ *Principle and Practice*, 77.
⁶⁸ ‘Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.’ *The Bible: English Standard Version*, 1 Peter 4:12.
⁶⁹ *Principle and Practice*, 73-74.
⁷¹ ‘On the Dangers of Adversity,’ 558.
⁷² ‘On the Dangers of Adversity,’ 558.
⁷³ ‘On the Dangers of Adversity,’ 558.
it... that it may bring us to God or alienate us from him, according to our previous habits of mind, or to our course of action under the pressure of new circumstances... If we do not endeavour to discern what influence the operations of Providence ought to have on our character, and strive to subject ourselves duly to them, we may expect in vain the precious results from which we look with confidence... it is not every mind which will come forth from its fiery trial adorned with solid and shining virtues.

In arguing that adversity has its own snares, Martineau focuses on the effects of the affliction upon character. Her emphasis on the importance of character combined with the view that it is formed by ‘habits of mind’ or one’s ‘course of action’ under given circumstances can be regarded as a typical of the eighteenth-century rational moralists. It is this combination of religious and rational perspectives that gives Martineau’s argument a unique quality.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, in the early 1820s Martineau was influenced by the moral philosophy of David Hartley. Contrary to the impression of modern readers, the second part of his famous book, Observations on Man, consists of an idealistic argument about the relationship between the mental and physical framework of human beings and God’s grand scheme which leads to perfection. In his shorthand summary of Harriet’s letter to him dated 8th May, 1824, James Martineau wrote, ‘The second volume of Hartley’s has deeply impressed Harriet; his views of the divine government and the place of man in it seem to her to be sublime.’

It should also be noted that the Unitarians derived their founding principles from the philosophy of Locke and Hartley. Thus, Martineau’s religious outlook at this time can be illuminated more by the religious aspects of Hartleian philosophy than from the influence of evangelical doctrine.

Martineau’s idea of character is informed by Hartley’s argument about the ultimate goal of human nature designed by God. He explains that human nature develops from a stage where it simply seeks sensual pleasures to later stages where it seeks higher pleasures in what he calls ‘theopathy’ or love of God, and in sympathy and benevolence toward fellow human beings.

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74 ‘On the Dangers of Adversity,’ 558-559.
75 Further Letters, 407.
76 Theodore L. Huguelet, ‘Introduction,’ David Hartley, Observation on Man, His Frame, His Duty,
in 1827, Martineau argues that there are progressive stages in the process of defining dignity of character, which bear an apt parallel with Hartley’s illustration of the development of human nature. According to Martineau, people tend to regard dignity of character as dependent on wealth or social standing when they are not ‘enlightened as to the moral constitution and destination of man.’ Whereas, once their understanding of human nature develops, they start to consider it as based on ‘moral superiority.’ The source of moral superiority, however, is also ascribed to different causes according to an awareness of the ultimate goal of human nature. In this essay, Martineau gives special significance to suffering and endurance as a higher source of moral superiority:

There is an unalterable dignity in suffering well; the more protracted the suffering, the greater the dignity, because the more assured the purity and strength of the motive from which the power of endurance proceeds. . . . we shall turn with a deeper veneration to behold the serene glories of a spirit possessing itself in patience, and passing through degradation, want, and misery, bearing pain of body and anguish of mind for the sake of conscience and God.

Her argument, with its deliberate stress on the value of prolonged affliction and its graphic enumeration of various kinds of suffering, may sound a little too ‘doleful’ as she herself described it. On the other hand, it reveals how strongly she believed in the positive effects of suffering for the cultivation of character in this period. She clearly states that pain or anguish should be borne ‘for the sake of conscience and God,’ that suffering and endurance are deemed an act of faith. Obviously, the overtly religious tone of Martineau in the portrayal of Henry Monteath’s affliction has its roots here. Even though it is undeniable that she was influenced by her own personal situation, the intensely religious perspective of Principle and Practice can be regarded as an expression of her belief in the Hartleian view of humanity based on his theory of God’s grand design.

Although her emphasis on the importance of character can be traced to the eighteenth-century rational moralists, Martineau pursues it more rigorously in Principle and His Expectations (1749). Delmar, New York: Scholar’s Facsimiles & Reprints, 1976, xi.

77 ‘V’. [Harriet Martineau], ‘On Dignity of Character,’ Monthly Repository 1.11 (December, 1827) 786.
78 ‘On Dignity of Character,’ 786.
79 ‘On Dignity of Character,’ 789.
and Practice than Aikin and Barbauld in Evenings at Home. It is shown primarily in the heavier ordeal she gives to her character Henry Monteath. There are also other indications of Martineau’s special concern about the dignity of character in Principle and Practice. She mentions seemingly insignificant details of their personalities in order to imply how dignified each character is in terms of its moral superiority. Because of her high demands upon character, Martineau’s examples are mostly negative ones, such as Charles’ employer, Mr. Gardiner who has ‘the drawback of a fault of temper’80 or Mr. Rathbone whose ‘haughty spirit [is] rendered imperious by power and rank.’81

Apart from the dramatic ordeal of Monteath, the most significant example of Martineau’s rigorous demands upon character is shown in the portrayal of a certain unnamed lady. Charles talks about her life as an example of ‘the wasted talents’82:

I have heard of a cousin of my mother’s, who was a cripple from disease. She passed through life very quietly. She never complained of her deprivations: her temper was placid, and she found employment for her cultivated intellect in studies of various kinds: but nobody was ever the better for them. She did no good, though she never did any harm: she never seemed to love any one person more than another, and of course nobody was particularly attached to her. . . . she had not those comprehensive views, which teach that the very best of selfish pleasures, those of intellectual cultivation, are to be pursued as a means only, not as an end, and that the grand design for which we are created is to diminish continually our concern for ourselves in an increasing love of God and our neighbour.83

Unlike other negative examples, this person has no positive drawbacks either in temper or intellect. Martineau, however, rejects her life as a futile one. Such a severe judgment is understandable only when one recognizes the framework which Martineau depended upon in this period, namely, the Hartleian idea of human nature which is destined to perfection in the grand scheme of God.

80 Principle and Practice, 28.
81 Principle and Practice, 97.
82 Principle and Practice, 128.
83 Principle and Practice, 128-129.
In the last two chapters, I have examined the influence of Hartleian moral philosophy upon Martineau’s two early didactic tales, *Christmas-Day* and *Principle and Practice*. Obviously, the influence of his theory is multi-faceted. If *Christmas-Day* is inspired mainly by his theory of sensations, what penetrates *Principle and Practice* is his rational but also religious vision of human nature. Although *Principle and Practice* was written in the tradition of eighteenth century rational moral tales, in her new story character development assumes religious significance.
As we have seen in the preceding chapters, there are two main sources behind the themes and motifs in Martineau’s early works. One is her dialogue with Hartleian psychology, or moral philosophy, based on her deep-rooted interest in the human mind since her late adolescence. Another is her own personal experiences as a woman whose life was characterized by a typical middle-class domesticity in a provincial town, but who also tried to pursue her own literary aspiration. This chapter examines *Five Years of Youth* (1831) in which both of these elements manifest themselves most obviously among her other early tales. With regard to Hartleian psychology, this work exhibits not only the idea of the mind and its development based on his ‘doctrine of association,’ but also the moral teachings based on his ‘rule of life’ which he illustrated in the second volume of *Observations on Man*. Although this story is little known today, it has a significant characteristic in terms of her development as an author. The framework of this work is, in a sense, exactly the same as the one that she was to employ in her groundbreaking series of tales, *Illustrations of Political Economy* published just a year after this story. Just as she ‘illustrated’ the principles of political economy in the form of fiction so as to make her message more digestible to the reader, Martineau tried to illustrate the doctrines of Hartleian psychology in the form of fiction in *Five Years of Youth*. In this sense, it is important to examine this story as a springboard for her career.

### Three Prize Essays and *Five Years of Youth*

‘I felt an earnest desire to ascertain whether I could write, as Mr. Fox and other personal friends said I could.’\(^2\) So writes Martineau in her *Autobiography*, looking back to the moment when she decided to compete for three prizes that were announced by the Central Unitarian Association in 1830. It is now well-known that she, an unknown young lady in the provinces at the time, won all three prizes. The essays were written

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for the promotion of Unitarianism directed to Catholics, Jews, and Mohammedans respectively. Because she had left Unitarianism long before she wrote her Autobiography, Martineau retrospectively criticized these essays scathingly, describing them as ‘ignorant and metaphysical’ or ‘mere fancy pieces.’ However, the winning of all three prizes is given special significance in the Autobiography. Unlike other events that she recalls with a concise synopsis, the incident is presented dramatically. She narrates how she was informed that she had won all the prizes, vividly describing an awkward conversation between herself and a friend who believed that she had known the news already. The incident is regarded as one of the decisive moments in her career, equal to another important moment earlier, when her first contribution to the Monthly Repository under a pseudonym was recognized as hers and highly commended by her eldest brother Thomas.

According to Martineau, Five Years of Youth is a story written ‘while waiting in suspense,’ just after she sent off the first of the three essays and was about to work on the next. Although she dismisses the story stating she has never read it since then and has no intention of looking at it again, this is as disingenuous as her retrospective evaluation of the three prize essays. What is not stated here is whether this story, which was written at the same time that she experienced a major breakthrough as an argumentative prose writer, gave her a similar degree of assurance about her competence as a fiction writer. One can find a clue to this by looking at the way this new fiction was received by a contemporary critic in comparison to her famous three prize essays.

The Monthly Repository carried an unsigned review of Five Years of Youth in August 1831 shortly after its publication. The article begins with an excuse that the

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4 According to the Autobiography, it was the day before the Unitarian May Meeting in 1831, when she returned to London from her short holiday in Kent, that she was informed about her winning all the prizes. Autobiography (2007) 134-35.
5 ‘Female Writers on Practical Divinity’ (1822). In her Autobiography, Martineau recorded that she wrote and sent this essay to the Monthly Repository as her first attempt at publication. She recounted how her eldest brother Thomas, of whom she was usually in awe, commended it by saying ‘Now, dear, leave it to other women to make shirts and darn stockings; and do you devote yourself to this,’ which, she testifies, gave her so strong an impression as to determine the course of her life from that moment on. Autobiography (2007) 111-112.
6 Autobiography (2007) 132. The Catholic prize essay was to be adjudged by the end of September 1830 and the other two in March 1831. Presumably, Martineau sent her Catholic essay to the Association at some point in August 1830. Five Years of Youth was written before she started to work on the next essay directed to Mohammedans in October. Autobiography (2007) 131-32.
7 It is a short review which appeared as a page-long two-columned article about ‘General Literature’ in the ‘Critical Notices’ of this issue’s Monthly Repository. Although it is unsigned, according to Francis E. Mineka’s list of the ‘Identification of Authorship’ for the Monthly Repository, it was written
*Monthly Repository* has not reviewed Martineau’s first prize essay directed to Catholics, which had been awarded and publicized several months prior to the other two. Mentioning ‘the somewhat startling fact’ of her having carried off all the prizes, the reviewer promises to review all three prize essays in due course. It is obvious that *Five Years of Youth* was given special attention precisely because it was written by the author of the three prize essays. The reviewer frankly states that the reader would prefer her ‘production of the higher walks’ related to theological or philosophical themes, which was regarded as her strongest field, to this moral story directed at youth.

However, the review does not fail to provide a careful critical assessment of *Five Years of Youth* as a work of fiction. The merits and deficiencies identified are valid and useful to measure Martineau’s achievements as a fiction writer at this point:

The book is full of incidents, some relating to childhood, others to advanced life; some playful, and other touching; some homely, and others extraordinary, but almost all bearing the stamp of nature and of reality; exciting a lively interest. . . . The style both of the narrative and the dialogue is more easy and flowing than any other of Miss Martineau’s productions with which this can be brought in to comparison; some of them have exhibited a deficiency in this quality, which, in the present instance, she seems completely to have overcome.  

The reviewer appreciates Martineau’s distinct progress as a fiction writer, particularly her natural and lively presentation of the fictional world. On the other hand, the work still has shortcomings in terms of integrating its moral messages into the plot. The fact that it contains so many incidents indicates a discursive tendency in the story. The reviewer points out ‘that some of the anecdotes are not sufficiently inwrought into the very

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8 ‘ART. VI.—*Five Years of Youth; or, Sense and Sentiment*, by Harriet Martineau London: Darton and Harvey. 1831,’ *Monthly Repository* 5.56 (1831) 538. Martineau won the prize for the Catholic essay in the autumn of 1830, which was announced in the October issue of the *Monthly Repository*. Her winning the rest of the prizes was announced at the Unitarian May Meeting in 1831. This review is in the August issue of the *Monthly Repository*.

9 ‘ART. VI.—*Five Years of Youth*’ (1831) 538.

10 ‘ART. VI.—*Five Years of Youth*’ (1831) 538.
In addition, he regrets that though Martineau succeeds in presenting impressive pictures of various intellectual and moral challenges her characters have to face, she leaves them as ‘mere delineation for moral effect’ without providing sufficient analyses and explanation to guide her young readers to a proper judgment.

These achievement and deficiencies of *Five Years of Youth* can be ascribed to the rapid transformation Martineau was undergoing between 1830 and 1831. Looking back at the period in her *Autobiography*, she states that the change she underwent was not only drastic but also fundamental:

> . . . it amazes me now to think what liberality and forbearance were requisite in the treatment of me by Mr. Fox and the friends I met at his house, and how capable they were of that liberality. My Sabbatarian strictness, and my prejudices on a hundred subjects must have been absurd and disagreeable enough to them: but their gentleness, respect and courtesy were such as I now remember with gratitude and pleasure. They saw that I was outgrowing my shell, and they had patience with me till I had rent it and cast it off; and if they were not equally ready with their sympathy when I had found freedom, but disposed to turn from me . . . this does not lessen my sense of obligation to them for the help and support they gave me in my season of intellectual and moral need.\(^13\)

One noticeable thing in this passage is that she only gives the name of Fox among those who influenced her. As I noted in the first chapter, Fox contributed more both to her development as a writer and to her initial career building than any other person. William Johnston Fox, known primarily as the editor of the second series of the *Monthly Repository*, was also the minister at Finsbury Unitarian Chapel in South Place, London. He was reputed for his oratorical powers, and by the end of the 1820s was becoming a central figure among the radical dissenting intellectuals who shared a reforming spirit concerning both theological and social questions. Martineau started working with him after becoming a regular contributor to the *Monthly Repository* under his editorship.

\(^{11}\) ‘ART. VI.—*Five Years of Youth*’ (1831) 538.  
\(^{12}\) ‘ART. VI.—*Five Years of Youth*’ (1831) 538.  
\(^{13}\) *Autobiography* (2007) 130. Martineau notes the eventual termination of her close relationship with Fox in the later period when she avowedly gave up her belief in Christianity.
On the other hand, there were also people whom she referred to as ‘friends I met at his [Mr. Fox’s] house’. The fact that Martineau cannot avoid mentioning them, even if not by name, and expressing her sincere gratitude to them in spite of a later disagreement and separation, makes one suspect that they were figures who had a lasting influence on her. Martineau’s correspondence with Fox and also with her brother James indicates that they were Eliza Flower and Sarah Flower, with whom she developed a close friendship at this time. Martineau wrote about her friendship so enthusiastically to her brother James as to make him concerned about its excessiveness, which I will discuss later. They were the only daughters of Benjamin Flower, the editor and publisher of the *Cambridge Intelligencer* (1793-1800) who became an iconic figure of liberalism in British publishing history because of his imprisonment for comments which aroused the hostility of the House of Lords. He lost his wife early and brought up his daughters according to his own unique principles on education. The two heroines of *Five Years of Youth* are modelled on them.

In the quotation above, Martineau calls this period ‘my season of intellectual and moral need.’ As we saw in chapter one, in her account of childhood and adolescence, she repeatedly uses the words ‘intellectual’ and ‘moral’ to indicate two major spheres of human interiority. This, along with the slightly different connotation of the word ‘moral’ from the present one, constitutes the chief characteristics of her perspective on the human mind. Although the meaning of the word ‘moral’ is very close to ‘emotional’ in modern usage, it is also inseparable from the sense of right or wrong as it is today. In the next section, I will first examine her transformation in terms of these two aspects—intellectual and moral—respectively. This will provide a basis for my analysis of *Five Years of Youth* as a work upon which she projected both aspects of her experience in this period without having digested them completely herself.

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14 This was not the only instance where Martineau is silent about the facts and people whom she regards as unnecessary or inconsistent with the story that she wishes to present to the reader. One should be careful not to discount important influences on her life and career because of their absence from the *Autobiography*, as in the case of Hannah More whose importance with regard to Martineau’s development as an author I discussed in chapter two.


16 They are also thought to be the models of the Ibbotson sisters in Martineau’s later novel *Deerbrook* (1839).
1830—Martineau’s ‘annus mirabilis’ with the Monthly Repository

In his illustration of the ‘sturdy, sterling, cordial amity’ which existed between Martineau and W. J. Fox, Richard Garnett describes the year 1830 as ‘the *annus mirabilis* of her connection with the *Repository*.’ What he means by this is accounted for by the sheer number of contributions she made to the periodical in this year under Fox’s editorship. The total number of miscellaneous works she contributed, including articles, reviews, tales, poems, and sketches amounted to fifty-two. However, the year 1830 can also be considered a decisive year in her early career in other ways. It was the year she first seriously considered a literary career in London. She stayed at her uncle’s and helped Fox with the *Monthly Repository* for six months. In the latter half of the year, although she had to return to Norwich against her wishes, she wrote the three prize essays which eventually turned her into a celebrity among Unitarians. *Five Years of Youth* was written in the midst of this eventful year.

In fact, in terms of her development as a professional writer, it was not just 1830 but also several adjacent years that saw the gradual but fundamental transformation of her prospects. From 1828 to 1831, she established the foundations of her literary career. In the autumn of 1828 she responded to Fox’s advertisement for new writers for the *Monthly Repository*. Although it was voluntary unpaid work, she regarded his comments on her writing as more valuable than monetary reward. Her often quoted statement in the *Autobiography* reveals how highly she regarded her relationship with Fox in this period:

> His editorial correspondence with me was unquestionably the occasion, and in great measure the cause, of the greatest intellectual progress I ever made before the age of thirty.

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18 Garnett, 80.
20 Martineau stayed at her Uncle John’s house in London from January to June to work for Fox’s *Monthly Repository* and also to look for an opportunity to develop her literary career. See *Collected Letters* (2007) note 2 in page 61.
Martineau was by no means a passive follower of Fox in these years of apprenticeship. In June 1829 her family’s business in Norwich failed. She told Fox that she could not spare as much time for voluntary literary work as before because of her need to earn her own living. Fox responded by offering her the position of a regular writer for the *Monthly Repository* for fifteen pounds a year. Her letter to him written in the following autumn shortly after she started to work under the new arrangement reveals that she was outspoken about her aim and actively engaged in moulding herself into a professional writer:

> As my own improvement is a primary consideration with me, I must prefer reviewing under your direction to choosing my own topics. The thorough study of a book... is very useful & delightful; & I am always pleased when you find fault, as there is not one friend at hand whom I can consult on these matters, with any hope of honest criticism.  

She regarded her reviewing for the *Monthly Repository* as a most effective way to broaden her intellectual scope and deepen her critical thinking.

There was a particular situation surrounding the *Monthly Repository* in this period which worked advantageously for Martineau’s development as a writer. The second series of the *Repository* was launched in 1827, when the Unitarian Association purchased it and took over its editorship from Robert Aspland. The first series of the *Repository* under Aspland was ‘a genuine miscellany, fashioned after eighteenth-century models.’ In order to meet the taste of its wide readership, which was not restricted to the clergy, it offered a variety of materials. The new series was designed more to suit the Unitarian ministers and scholars than lay readers by establishing its new character ‘as a serious journal for the discussion of religious, moral, and philosophical topics.’ This change in editorial principle enabled its writers to discuss specialized topics more thoroughly than before. This must have been a welcome change for Martineau, for the fields it

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25 The Unitarian Association continued to sponsor the magazine until 1831 when it was purchased by Fox, who had been its single responsible editor since August 1828. *Mineka*, 187.
26 *Mineka*, 205.
27 *Mineka*, 205.
came to focus on were exactly those she had been interested in and studied by herself through extensive reading since her adolescence. According to Mineka, the topics of her reviews were chosen from fields such as theology, morals, mental philosophy, and biography.\textsuperscript{28} He regards Martineau as one of the leading writers of the \textit{Monthly Repository} from 1829 to 1832\textsuperscript{29} and summarizes her writing as ‘calm, ordered, and generally concise.’\textsuperscript{30} There is no doubt that the \textit{Monthly Repository} provided an ideal environment for Martineau to deepen the scholarship of her chosen areas and grow into a competent writer.

\textbf{Personal Agenda—Split between London and Norwich}

James Martineau’s summaries of her letters reveal another aspect of her transformation in this period. They indicate a growing gap between them concerning their respective views of her new literary enterprise. The summary of her first letter from London in 1830 already indicates his irritation:

The first letter from the scene of her new and stimulating existence under the influence of W. J. Fox, at whose house and in whose study she spends day after day, in literary work largely suggested by him, or controlled by his judgement.\textsuperscript{31}

He slipped in a hint of sarcasm when he summarized her enthusiastic involvement in the new literary endeavour and her absolute trust in Fox, an indication of a noticeable rift between Martineau and her adored brother who had been her primary confidant and mentor.

His coolness can be regarded not only in terms of his personal reaction as a close family member who had nurtured her primary views and values, but also in terms of the contemporary idea of female domesticity. In June 1829, around the time the Norwich house failed and about half a year before the letter above, Martineau wrote a ‘Private

\textsuperscript{28} Mineka, 241.
\textsuperscript{29} Mineka, 207.
\textsuperscript{30} Mineka, 242.
\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Further Letters} (2012) 448. Dated January 26, 1830.
Memorandum,’ or a list of resolutions about her literary career. It contains a clause where she defined the nature of her authorship:

To impart full confidence to my family respecting my pursuits, but to be careful not to weary them with too frequent a reference to myself; and to be as nearly as possible silent on the subject to all the world beside.\textsuperscript{32}

The silence she imposed upon herself toward people outside the family was based upon the prevailing negative view of female writers. Alexis Easley argues that she guarded against being labelled as a ‘literary bluestocking,’ which was increasingly used as a pejorative term in the early nineteenth century to refer to ‘any woman with literary ambition’ regarding them as ‘intellectual exhibitionists.’\textsuperscript{33}

On the other hand, according to Easley, because of their authors’ anonymity, periodicals enabled women to pursue literary careers by becoming contributors ‘while still maintaining the privacy and customs of domestic life.’\textsuperscript{34} This applied to the young Martineau well. The \textit{Monthly Repository} enabled her not only to broaden her views by reading and discussing its articles with her family but also to contribute several essays herself under pseudonyms. Thus, until she went to London in 1830, Martineau’s authorship was conceived of and carried out in a way perfectly compatible with her domestic role which met with the approval of both her family and the world at large.

However, her six-month stay in London revealed the precarious balance between domesticity and literary pursuits. Martineau’s plan to base herself in London in order to pursue a literary career was met by a strong objection from her mother. The letter below suggests a considerable tension between them:

\ldots once knowing your wishes, I have no other desire than to comply with them, reserving to myself, however, the liberty of changing my plans when

\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Autobiography} (2007) 655.
\textsuperscript{34} Easley (2004) 27. Easley’s illustration of the growing print culture in the 1830s gives an illuminating picture of the significance of periodicals to middle-class women both as readers and contributors. According to her, periodicals whose format is characterized by serialization and variety, were ‘particularly adaptable to the life of the middle-class woman, whose private time was often interrupted by social and domestic responsibilities.’ They, she argues, enabled intellectually oriented women to acquaint themselves with broad public issues and form their opinions without sacrificing their domestic duties and propriety. Easley (2004) 26-27.
I find my resources fail, as Mr Fox says they inevitably will, if I remain at a distance from town. There is no periodical work ever sent into the country, and my choice lies between the little stories for Houlston and Darton, and original works, which I have neither capital nor courage to undertake. . . .

Her choice at this point was to give priority to her domestic duties rather than her desire to pursue her career further by engaging herself in periodical writing in London. It can be regarded as her reconfirmation of domestic values. Nevertheless, she could not be satisfied with her limited framework of authorship anymore, which she describes in the passage above as a choice between trivial stories for Houlston and Darton and original works. Caught between domestic values and professional ambitions, the letter exhibits her ambivalence and wavering attitude toward her career.

Summaries of her letters by James reveal yet another aspect of her emotional conflict in this period. Her letter from London written three months after the first one contains indications of her growing estrangement from him and rapidly growing intimacy with Fox as her new confidant:

She often wants my advice, if she could but have it. If I do not become more accessible, Mr. Fox will step into my place. . . .

The charm of London society has so transformed her opinions, standards, and tastes that she feels as if she had begun life at the wrong end.

Although James ascribes their estrangement mainly to her being carried away by the excitement of London life, the summary also records her urgent appeal to him for guidance and sympathy.

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36 What Martineau meant by ‘original work’ here was a series of stories to teach the principles of political economy which eventually became her Illustrations of Political Economy a few years later. Her private letters written in this period indicate that she already had started making specific plans for this new literary enterprise. James Martineau’s summary of her letter dated August 18, 1829 refers to ‘her own plans for literary work, with present leaning to political economy exposition’ and her request to him for ‘an opinion for some more serious and systematic work than story and tractal [tract] writing.’ Further Letters (2012) 447.
As is suggested in the summary above, Martineau was gradually transferring her main source of intellectual and moral support from James to Fox. However, as far as her moral, or rather emotional need is concerned, she was even more fascinated and devoted to the Flower sisters, which made James express an outright criticism of the nature of their relationship:

Then she launches into the new relations on which she stands to Mr. Fox and {the} Flowers, describing in detail the freedom of her intercourse with them, and restating the conversations which they have together, in which they tell exactly what they think of each other’s experiences and faults ** and the relative strength of their temptations.

The whole process of self-analysis and mutual admiration and criticism appears to me unhealthy and repulsive, and not without a considerable taint of indelicate freedom. The account confirms rather than lightens my impression of the questionable tone of their free-thinking clique.38

Though there is no knowing whether James expressed his disagreement directly to her, one thing is clear: that Martineau’s relationship with the Flowers was of a kind that she had never had with anybody else before, perhaps, except James himself. The stark contrast between Martineau’s elated report of their intimate conversations and James’s bitter criticism of their impropriety indicates that the gap between them had grown almost irreparable.

There may have been a certain truth in James’s view that she was blinded by the charm of a hitherto unknown kind of liberal social intercourse in London society. It may also have been partly due to the charismatic charm of the Flower sisters, whose exceptional beauty and talent are recorded in various sources.39 However, Martineau’s rapid and fond attraction was based more upon her innate tendency to crave sympathy and confidence from those she adored. Richard Garnett argues that in spite of the general impression of her strong and assertive character derived from her self-portrait in

38 Further Letters (2012) 450. Dated on May 5, 1830. The brackets are by Logan, which indicates material that has been added by an unidentified hand to the original transcripts of the letters. The asterisk in the quotation is by Logan, which indicates a gap in the text either because it is damaged or indecipherable.
39 See Garnett (1910), Mineka (1944), Hulcoop (2003).
the Autobiography, this was not what characterized the tone of her letters to Fox in this period. He points out that ‘she [was] swayed by a constant craving for sympathy, and an affectionate desire to bestow it where she could expect a return.’ Along with Fox, the Flower sisters became the primary objects of her confidence and affection.

A poem by Martineau entitled ‘The Flower of the Desert’ appeared in the Monthly Repository in April 1830. It is a short poem consisting of four stanzas, the last two of which read as follows:

Meek in thy solitude, thou dost not deem
That winds and showers were sent for thee alone:
For wand’ring gales oft visit thee that teem
With foreign fragrance, richer than thine own,
And whisper tidings of a genial clime
Where groves and gardens flourish in their prime.

A soul there is, as pure as thou and rare;
’Midst heartless crowds in solitude she dwells;
Conscious that kindred spirits breathe afar,
And cheer’d by that prophetic hope which tells
That flowers shall spring where now no promise shows,
And e’en this desert “blossom like the rose.”

It is tempting to assume that the poem is dedicated to the Flower sisters, the namesakes of the title. Martineau alludes to herself and the sisters as the two flowers, who are ‘kindred spirits,’ one in the desert and the other in the midst of ‘heartless crowds.’ Such an interpretation is even more plausible when juxtaposed with her letter to Fox written about the same time:

I beg my love to the Flower girls [Sarah and Eliza] if they are with you. Knowing them, I cannot wonder at your love of a profusion of many coloured blossoms, such as you were speaking of the other day. They

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40 Garnett (1910) 81.
have made just such a bank as you like of my memory: but I am afraid the scythe will pass over in a few days, & then I must come to you for a new crop. I should like to live a 7th part of any time with those girls;--& more, if my brain can stand it. . .

Here she compares ‘the Flower girls’ with ‘a profusion of many coloured blossoms’ which may disappear in a few days for whatever reason. Then she proposes to come and provide another crop of blossoms for him by herself. Although the exact situation and implication are difficult to discern, this letter also makes use of the image of flowers to allude to herself and the sisters. What is expressed in these passages is an almost ecstatic sense of happiness and joy that Martineau found in her relationship with her new friends, whom she regarded as ‘kindred spirits.’ One can also sense that the intensity of her attachment and craving is paralleled by her deep-rooted sense of solitude.

Perhaps it was not only James but also Fox and the Flower sisters themselves who sensed a precarious excessiveness in her attachment. A few letters to Fox written in the early spring of 1831 after she spent several months back in Norwich indicate that the intensity of their friendship was not precisely reciprocal:

I have only waited to hear how Sally was to mention my strong desire to make trial of a residence with Lizzie & her. . . . My love to the girls, & entreaty for plain-speaking. As to Lizzie, my present intention is never to doubt her. I won’t say that my faith has not in certain hours of withering loneliness been in the least shaken: but it is firm as mortal faith can be, in general.—can it be that in 3 weeks I may have somebody to speak to?

Although her tone is as fond as it was when they constantly saw each other in London the year before, her proposal to live with them if the prospect of her coming to London comes true seems to have been politely declined in a letter from Fox. It is not difficult to imagine her deepened sense of loneliness when her long-cherished hope of their

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43 *Collected Letters* (2007) 82. Dated Saturday, 15 Janry 1831. ‘Sally’ was the nickname of Sarah Flower and ‘Lizzie’ of Eliza Flower.
reunion in London was discouraged.

*Five Years of Youth* was written several months after Martineau’s return to Norwich in 1830. Although it looks like yet another example of her ‘little stories’ that contain teachings about the importance of religious faith and domestic values, several characteristics indicate its marked difference from her former didactic tales. One of them is its more forceful moral lessons concerning control over one’s own mind based upon Hartleian mental philosophy. Martineau had already published several essays on the mechanism and management of one’s mind in the *Monthly Repository* before writing *Five Years of Youth*. Her apprenticeship with Fox and the *Monthly Repository* as a writer of argumentative articles left significant traces in her new fiction. Another difference of this tale from former ones is that she became more interested in the complexity of the human mind. Her characters became more realistic portraits of individual personalities rather than mere puppets to serve didactic purposes. In the following sections, I will examine this new fiction by Martineau by comparing it with her *Monthly Repository* essays on mental philosophy. Then, I will analyse its character portrayals in relation to her personal moral issues around 1830.

‘Essays on the Art of Thinking’ (1829)

Martineau’s talent as a populariser manifested itself when she was reviewing wide-ranging scholarly works for the *Monthly Repository*. Among the many themes and topics, mental philosophy was her strongest field. Responding to Fox’s recruitment of new writers in 1828, Martineau expressed her willingness to write reviews and specified her preferred fields: ‘Works on Metaphysics & the Belles Letters suit me best.’

In the early nineteenth century, the word ‘metaphysics’ often meant mental philosophy, or psychology in modern terminology. She also sent him a piece of her essay as a possible contribution to a future number. It eventually came out as twin essays under the titles ‘On the Agency of Feelings in the Formation of Habits’ and ‘On

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46 In her earlier essay, ‘Defence of Metaphysical Studies,’ which was published in 1824 in the first series of the *Monthly Repository* under Aspland’s editorship, she argued against the critical views of Hartleian mental philosophy. She used the term ‘metaphysics’ to refer to his theory, which was regarded by some people as harmful to religious faith.

47 Martineau referred to this essay as ‘Tendency of the Mind &c.’ in this letter.
the Agency of Habits in the Regeneration of Feelings’ in early 1829. These were the precursors of her three essays on the human mind: ‘Essays on the Art of Thinking,’ which was published in six installments, ‘Essay on the Proper Use of the Retrospective Faculty,’ and ‘Essay on the Proper Use of the Prospective Faculty.’

All these essays on mental issues appeared between 1829 and 1830. Mineka argues that ‘almost everything she wrote at this time aimed at severe objectivity’ and that ‘little of the writer’s personality was allowed to reveal itself.’ As ‘the possible exception’ from her austere objective style in this period, he identifies her ‘Sabbath Musings’ and a few poems. However, I regard the essays on the human mind as potentially more revealing than Mineka suggests. Unlike most of her review articles, which discussed highly specialized works on theology or philosophy, her essays on the human mind afford a glimpse of her personality. It is obvious for instance, in the way she illustrates the ideas of mental philosophy by presenting realistic examples in daily life. Her tone is more relaxed and personable than in her more scholarly review articles. She does not place herself in the privileged position of a specialist, yet they were a product of her thorough knowledge of the topics, based upon her extensive reading in mental philosophy.

Martineau’s strength in this field did not go unnoticed by Fox and the readers of the *Monthly Repository*. When the first of her ‘Essays on the Art of Thinking’ came out in August 1829, it was placed first in the number. That the series obtained particular editorial approbation is clear, as the three further essays out of five also appeared as the leading articles. In fact, the fourth and the fifth essays both appeared in November by special editorial arrangement in order to make the series complete in December so that ‘this valuable manual of Thought’ as the editor Fox described it, could appear in the volume for 1829. In her letter to Fox in early December, Martineau thanked him for his complimentary editorial footnote and mentioned the favourable responses she received:

To my great surprise, I have been repeatedly urged, within a week or two, to

48 They were published in the February and March numbers of the *Monthly Repository* respectively.
49 Mineka, 244.
50 ‘Essays on the Art of Thinking V,’ *Monthly Repository and Review of Theology and General Literature, 1827-1831*, 3, 34 (Nov.1829): 761(note). Mineka points out the distinction of their being presented as leading articles more than once. He counted the incident incorrectly as ‘twice.’ It actually occurred four times. Mineka, 240.
publish separately & immediately the Essays on Thinking... Now, I have a very decided opinion on the matter... Not only your permission indispensable, but your approbation also: & I believe you cannot give it. It is true you have dignified the essays with the epithet “valuable”; but (without questioning your judgement) what may deserve the name in a monthly publication may be little worth making a book of.  

There is no record that this series of essays was published separately after all. However, the special editorial arrangement and the enthusiastic reaction from readers provide sufficient evidence to measure Martineau’s achievement as a writer at this point. Although she did not consider them worthy enough to make a book, there is no doubt that the series had a fresh appeal for readers. Their unique attraction depended upon the combination of her expert knowledge in mental philosophy and her imaginative and sympathetic presentation of it.

**Five Years of Youth as an Illustration of the Doctrine of Association**

*Five Years of Youth* can be regarded as a fictionalized version of these *Monthly Repository* essays on the human mind. Most of the moral lessons presented in this story are inspired by Hartleian psychology, particularly those based upon the doctrine of association and the rules of life which he illustrated in each volume of his *Observations on Man*. The title of the story itself is suggestive of its moral message. According to associationist theory, the human mind does not have any innate ideas or frameworks which define the course of one’s thinking. The early years of life are important because this is a period in which the fundamental structure of the mind is built up. ‘The five years of youth’ in the title of this story is used to indicate the years of adolescence. Martineau tried to express how crucial this period is in terms of establishing one’s mental attitude and habits by presenting the experience of its two contrasting heroines. The story reveals their moral growth and failure according to the ways each of them spends their crucial years.

Mary and Anna, the heroines of *Five Years of Youth* are sisters, who are twelve

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and ten at the outset of the story. They are the only daughters of Mr. Byerley, whose wife has been dead for several years. Mr. Byerley brings up his daughters in a way that does not conform to the manners and customs of genteel society. Both Mary and Anna have deep feelings and a willingness to be useful to others. However, because of their lack of knowledge and experience of the practical management of a household or social life, their good will often fails to produce its intended effect. Although their differences in temperament are not noticeable at first, they become obvious as they go through various experiences. Their different reactions to each incident build different attitudes and habits. At the end of the story, Mary, who has spent the five years effectively, becomes the mistress of their household with her father’s full confidence. On the other hand, Anna, who fails to connect her active feelings and imagination to any practical aim or conduct becomes an ineffectual person who cannot control herself and troubles both herself and others.

*Five Years of Youth* presents a series of incidents which should be read as lessons for both the heroines and the reader in the proper cultivation of the mind. There are mainly three lessons. The first is about the importance of feeling and its proper management. The second is about the meaning of the multiple impressions one receives from the outer world along with the importance of the power of observation. The third is about the danger of an excessive imagination and its uncontrolled exercise. The moral messages of these lessons are conveyed both by the narrator and through the words of the characters. Although their teachings are straightforward, some are not persuasive enough to the reader because it is difficult to connect them to contemporary value systems or the cultural and intellectual contexts upon which they depend. Martineau’s authorial intention, which is imbedded in contemporary psychological theories, become clear only when these moral lessons in the story are juxtaposed with her series of *Monthly Repository* essays on the human mind. A comparison between the moral lessons in *Five Years of Youth* and the illustration of contemporary psychological theories in her *Monthly Repository* essays will reveal how effectively she conveyed her messages in these contrasting texts.

In the early part of the story, Mr. Byerley receives a group of guests. In spite of their inexperience in practical household management, Mary and Anna try hard to be good hostesses. One of their guests, Signor Casimiro Elvi, an exotic looking engaging gentleman, turns out to be a high-ranking political refugee from Italy who has fled under threat of death, leaving his family behind. Both girls are impressed with his background.
Anna, whose feeling is overexcited by his tragic history, becomes melancholy herself. The narrator ascribes such a sentimental behaviour to her strong feelings:

[Anna’s] feelings were strong, and she had never tried to restrain them; and as this was the first time she had ever heard so sad a tale from the actual sufferer, and that sufferer was peculiarly interesting and amiable, she was in danger of being more strongly excited than her health and spirits would bear.\(^{52}\)

The narrator’s warning against excessive feeling is repeated several times in the story by presenting various incidents of a similar nature. Mrs Fletcher, another guest, who was once a close friend of the heroines’ deceased mother, is criticized by the narrator for her ignorance of the danger caused by uncontrolled feeling:

Mrs Fletcher seemed, in the education of her own daughters, quite unaware that a feeling, innocent or amiable in itself, may be indulged to an injurious excess. On the present occasion, she was delighted to witness in Anna indications of the sensibility she had loved in her mother. . . \(^{53}\)

Mrs. Fletcher, though unintentionally, encourages Anna’s indulgence in sentimental feeling by praising her sensibility as if it is a proof of her resemblance to her deceased mother.

The caution against excessive emotion is also expressed through the words of other characters. Mr Byerley, who is concerned about his daughters’ recent behaviour, argues:

Nobody values more than I do the lofty and deep emotion which prompts to the most vigorous and benevolent action; but feeling of this kind cannot subsist in the mind in mature years, if an excessive sensibility be allowed early and idly to excite the imagination. If Anna’s compassion for Signor Elvi’s misfortunes could lead her to active exertions on behalf of him and

\(^{52}\) Harriet Martineau, *Five Years of Youth, or, Sense and Sentiment* (London: Harvey and Darton, [ca.1846]) 75-76. The first edition is assumed to be published in 1831.

\(^{53}\) *Five Years of Youth*, 76.
his family, let her pity him as much as she will; but as she can do nothing, and tries to do nothing, I am afraid of the consequences of so many sighs and tears, natural and amiable as they may be in themselves.\textsuperscript{54}

Mr. Byerley’s criticism is directed particularly to a sensibility that does not initiate any positive action as in the case of Anna’s mournful compassion for Signor Elvi. On the other hand, her sister Mary’s quite different reaction to Signor Elvi is pointed out by Mrs. Fletcher. She says that although she believes that Mary feels just as much as Anna, she does so ‘to better purpose, for she tries to amuse him, instead of awakening painful feelings.’\textsuperscript{55}

It is clear that the contrasting behaviour of Anna and Mary is meant to be read as moral teaching, one as a negative example and the other as a positive one. Although the teaching itself is straightforward, the story fails to convey on what system of beliefs or values it is based. In order to grasp the whole picture of Martineau’s moral message including its intellectual background, one should turn to her \textit{Monthly Repository} essays which deal with the same issue, namely, the function and the role of feelings in youth.

‘On the Agency of Feelings in the Formation of Habits,’ Martineau’s first essay on human mind in the \textit{Monthly Repository}, explains the value and function of feelings as follows:

\begin{quote}
The chief value of good feelings arises from their being instruments in the formation of good principles and habits. Children begin life without a bias towards any course of action, but with a large capacity for pleasure and pain, and a lively sensibility to them. It is the work of a good education to engage these sensibilities on the side of virtue, and to make them act as a stimulus to virtuous actions. The misery which a kind-hearted child feels at the sight of a starving family. . . prompts him to bestow all that he has in order to impart relief. His sensibility is no less wounded by the sight of a nest of unfledged birds, deprived of their parents’ care, or of the writhings of the fish upon the hook; and this vivid emotion tends to confirm his newly-formed habits of humanity towards the brute creation. These feelings are,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Five Years of Youth}, 89.

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Five Years of Youth}, 89.
in themselves, evanescent, and if not connected with action, are worse than useless. . . . A frequent repetition of these feelings produces a series of actions, till, by the unfailing power of association, the emotion and consequent action become inseparably connected; and the feeling, rising in dignity and importance, becomes a principle.\textsuperscript{56}

In this passage, the value of feelings is defined exclusively in terms of its function as a stimulus to virtuous actions and also as a foundation of moral principles. There is a marked similarity between this passage and Mr. Byerley’s remark about the value of emotion and the danger when it becomes excessive and detached from actual conduct. However, it is in the essays rather than in \textit{Five Years of Youth} that the whole system of beliefs about the role and function of feeling in the development of moral character is illustrated more thoroughly. Due to the impossibility of presenting a whole system of belief in a limited space of a realistic conversation, Mr. Byerley’s beliefs about the proper management of emotion is expressed only fragmentally.

The essay also provides a deliberate explanation of why unchecked indulgence in feeling is particularly harmful to young people. It argues that ‘the vivid, undisciplined emotions of youth’ should be made ‘subservient to principles’\textsuperscript{57} so as not to overpower them, claiming that there are ‘abundance of illustrations’ of this truth if one looks at the world:

There we behold beings once innocent, amiable, and well-disposed, happy in the full flow of youthful sensibility, and attractive from the simplicity of their minds and ingenuousness of their hearts; but now . . . some, victims to a morbid sensibility which makes their life one lingering sickness of the soul; others, hardened to the most awful degree of indifference to the welfare of their species, or to their own peril. At the critical period of life when principles should, if ever, be formed, they surrendered themselves to the mastery of their passions and sensibilities. Their passions being nourished by gratification, gained an unlimited ascendancy; their sensibility, amiable still, but undisciplined, misled them day by day, weakening their intellectual


\textsuperscript{57} ‘On the Agency of Feelings in the Formation of Habits,’ 104.
and moral powers, and reducing them through one stage of disease to another, till they stand on the brink of the grave of their best hopes and noblest endowments.\textsuperscript{58}

The pictures of youth whose moral and intellectual well-being is gradually eroded by their uncontrolled emotion in this passage overlap with the negative transformation of Anna in the course of the narrative. The essay helps the reader of \textit{Five Years of Youth} to grasp the theoretical background of its teaching about the danger of excessive sensibility for young people.

Martineau’s assured tone can be ascribed to her wholehearted belief in Hartleian mental philosophy as the source of her teachings. However, it also drew on a Unitarian intellectual culture where Hartley’s doctrines were regarded not only as an explanation of the mechanism of the mind but also as providing practical moral teaching. As I discussed in chapter one, Martineau’s first encounter with Hartleian psychology was through Lant Carpenter, a Unitarian minister whose lectures she attended in Bristol in her late teens.\textsuperscript{59} An outline of his lectures on the human mind, which was published in the 1830s,\textsuperscript{60} summarizes their general attitude and purpose:

\begin{quote}
Mental Philosophy presents many subjects of laudable curiosity—it aids in self-knowledge and discipline—in the business of education—in the acquirement of Moral Science.\textsuperscript{61}
\end{quote}

It indicates that mental philosophy was regarded as a morally beneficial subject of study. His sixth lecture on ‘Sensitiveness and sensibility’ is summarized as follows:

\begin{quote}
Effect of the undue excitement of any part of the system—means of curing or preventing excessive sensibility—importance of its right direction.\textsuperscript{62}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{58} ‘On the Agency of Feelings in the Formation of Habits,’ 104-105.
\textsuperscript{60} Anon. [Lant Carpenter?], \textit{Outline of Lectures on the Powers of the Mind} (ca. 1830-1840). It is a small leaflet containing the titles and short summaries of his fourteen lectures, each dealing with specific themes such as consciousness, memory, or imagination. It consists of nine pages in total and is printed and bound with other lectures and writings by him. Whether the outline was written by him or by some other person is not clear. Held in the Harris Manchester College Library, Oxford.
\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Outline of Lectures on the Powers of the Mind}, 4.
\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Outline of Lectures on the Powers of the Mind}, 5.
This shows that this series of lectures also dealt with the danger of excessive sensibility, which Martineau warned against emphatically in her essays. In other words, Martineau’s moral instruction about one’s mental life was within the well-established framework of the practical application of Hartleian mental philosophy among Unitarians.

Martineau’s *Monthly Repository* essays on the mind were highly regarded by Fox and by Unitarian intellectual culture because there had already been a basis for their acceptance. Their popularity can also be ascribed to her skilful presentation of the otherwise overly intellectual argument of mental philosophy. Martineau made her teachings appealing and persuasive through applying her knowledge of mental philosophy imaginatively to various concrete situation in daily life. However, it is questionable whether she was equally successful in presenting her message in *Five Years of Youth*. As we have seen, some of the moral teachings in it are not as clear or persuasive as those in her essays. It could be argued that she was more skilful in conveying her moral messages through her essays than in fiction at this point in her career.

**From Moral Instructions to a Study of the Inner Life**

There are some scenes and episodes in *Five Years of Youth* which leave more lasting impressions than the plain moral messages of the essays because of their deep insight into human interiority. It is in these points that her growth as a fiction writer is detectable. This development can be ascribed to her London life, particularly to her friendship with the Flower sisters. As we have seen, Martineau found much joy and satisfaction in her close association with them and in sharing their thoughts about themselves and each other frankly, which James regarded as ‘unhealthy and repulsive.’ In these conversations, Martineau may have confided the emotional issues that had plagued her since childhood and in return heard the thoughts and experience of their early life. With the two heroines modelled on the Flower sisters, *Five Years of Youth* can be read, at least partly, as a record of what was exchanged between the young Martineau and the sisters about their private lives. In addition to the warning against excessive feeling, there are two other central issues in this story: namely, the importance of observation and the danger of imagination.

Two years after the first episode, Mr. Byerley and his daughters set out for a
journey to the continent to join their friends in France. On their way, he arranges a
month in London to visit galleries, concerts, places of natural beauty and historic interest,
along with various social engagements. Mr. Byerley explains to Mary and Anna that he
wants them to get as many new impressions as possible in order to cultivate their taste
and judgement. On the other hand, he also warns them against falling into the habit of
merely chasing one pleasure after another, and describes the importance of keen
observation combined with serious reflections:

‘Observe keenly, and lay yourself open to the full relish of every beautiful
object which is presented to you; and refer it perpetually to your best ideas
and feelings. So, in some far distant place or time, in the midst of the sea,
or after the lapse of years, alone among strangers, or on a sick bed, the bright
and beautiful objects which are now new to you, will come, like familiar
friends, to cheer you, and help your gratitude for the blessings which have
strewed your path of life.’

The importance of the power of observation was a common topic in the tradition
of rational education from the eighteenth century. Evenings at Home (1792-96) by
Aikin and Barbauld, for example, contains many episodes where young protagonists gain
knowledge through their own observation and reasoning. Martineau herself deals with
this topic in her Monthly Repository essays. She argues that ‘we are careful to develop
the power of Observation in a child’ because ‘[i]n proportion to the perfect development
and wise direction of this faculty will be the improvement of the intellect at large.’

Mr. Byerley’s words are yet another instance of this familiar teaching. However, unlike the
straightforward moral instruction in the essay, his teaching is presented through poetic
language and evocative visions.

This episode has its obvious source in the early lives of the Flower sisters. As I
noted earlier, they were known for the unique style of upbringing they received from
their father, Benjamin Flower. His principles of education for his daughters were

63 Five Years of Youth, 169-170.
64 Although the rational tradition in children’s literature was largely taken over by the evangelical
surge in the early nineteenth century, Martineau, with her Unitarian upbringing, was still much under
its influence. See the chapter 4 on Principle and Practice.
1829) 745.
described as follows:

“Their bringing up,” says Mrs Bridell Fox, “had been original and erratic. A few masters, the best that the little country village of Harlow afforded, a few lessons from the father and a good deal of travelling about the country in an old-fashioned one-horse chaise with the idea of cultivating their powers of observation, which led to many adventures. . . .”

It is not difficult to imagine how such an anecdote might have worked on Martineau, increasing her attraction to the sisters, and possibly forming the basis for her natural and realistic portraits of the heroines of *Five Years of Youth*.

Another central theme of *Five Years of Youth* is the danger of imagination. In fact, it is the primary issue of this story. Following Mr. Byerley’s teaching about the importance of observation, the narrator presents contrasting pictures of his daughters. Anna is portrayed as a prisoner of her imagination and Mary a keen observer with a healthy mind:

. . . Anna’s imagination, which had received a new direction from the new scene in which she was placed, returned to its accustomed trains of images, and she saw little and heard nothing of what passed near her; while Mary, who. . . possessed the same faculty in much greater strength and perfection, learned and experienced something new every hour. There was not a passing cloud in the sky, or a purple shadow on the water, not a drifting weed or a sprinkling of foam which escaped her glance, or failed to awaken some thought or feeling.

In spite of their similar talent and innate capacity, the inner lives of Anna and Mary make a stark contrast to each other.

It is notable that Anna’s incapability is connected to her overwhelming imagination. Although the warning against poor observation is a familiar topic in both

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66 Garnett (1910) 64. Eliza Florance Bridell Fox was the daughter of W. J. Fox who had a close friendship with the Flowers. After the death of Benjamin Flower in 1829, the sisters became the wards of Fox and lived with his family.

67 *Five Years of Youth*, 179.
Evenings at Home and Martineau’s own essays, neither of them ascribes it to excessive imagination. This indicates the unique emphasis of Five Years of Youth’s. It repeats warnings against indulging in one’s imagination or reveries. The narrator argues for the fatality of its evil effects by criticizing Mr. Byerley for being unaware of ‘the danger in which Anna stood of losing all energy of character, all vigour of body as well as of mind, through an unbounded indulgence of the imagination.’

The story unfolds so as to justify the narrator’s prediction. In their journey to the continent, Anna further retreats into her own interior world and loses touch with reality. Even at the long-awaited reunion with their friends, the Fletchers, her spirit is not roused to enjoy their company. Her neglect of the practical management of her daily life, such as keeping times for dinners or other social engagements, develops into a fixed habit and makes her a troublemaker and an outcast among them:

It frequently happened, that she came out of a reverie flushed and feverish, or that her hands were damp and cold, and her voice broken and almost lost. “What could she be thinking of?” was a frequent subject of speculation with her friends; but they could never discover which of the thousand agitating scenes of human suffering and delight were oftenest presented in vivid apparition to the poor girl’s diseased imagination.

Anna’s unwillingness to exert herself becomes an indirect cause of the calamity which befalls the Byerleys. Mr. Byerley’s trip to Paris unaccompanied by his daughters leads to his imprisonment caused by his unguarded behaviour in rousing suspicion from the authorities. The sisters’ respective reactions to this catastrophe again make a striking contrast. Whereas Mary keeps calm and exerts herself to make every practical effort for her father’s deliverance, Anna becomes hysterical and makes herself a further burden to the family. Thus, the problem of uncontrolled imagination becomes the central theme which dominates the whole story.

Martineau addresses the problem of excessive imagination in one of her Monthly Repository essays:

68 Five Years of Youth, 131.
69 Five Years of Youth, 207.
When trains of ideas are allowed to enter and depart, while the understanding remains passive, the mind cannot properly be said to be engaged in meditation, but is rather amused in reverie. . . . The most active thinkers have ever lamented the loss of time and power which their tendency to reverie has occasioned; and those who are less aware of the existence of the evil, are in the habit of making yet greater sacrifices to intellectual sloth. . . . yet we indulge our minds in indolence. . . to an awful extent, unconscious or regardless of the danger of losing all power over our thoughts, and of enervating every faculty we possess. By the law of association, every idea entertained in the mind introduces other ideas, which, in their turn, bring in more. This law we cannot suspend; but it is our power to control its operation, and to make choice of the mode in which our ideas shall be combined. . . . The effort is unremittingly necessary only during the formation of our habits of mind, only while setting the machine in motion.70

Five Years of Youth can be seen as a story through which Martineau tries to convey the same message she addresses in this essay.

It is arguable to what extent such a view about the problem of imagination as presented here was shared even among contemporary readers. However, the fundamental basis of his theory, namely, the doctrine of association, presupposes the propensity of the human mind which automatically follows some or other trains of ideas incessantly. Carpenter’s lecture on the mind, for instance, deals with this issue and distinguishes the ‘legitimate’ kind of imagination from the ‘disordered’ ones:

If these [vivid conceptions of sensible objects] simply result from a disordered operation of the Associative Power, they scarcely deserve to be referred to the Imagination. The legitimate exercises and objects of the IMAGINATION consist in framing new combinations of thought or conception. . . . Its own highest operations continually need the exertion of the powers usually referred to the Understanding.71

71 Anon. [Lant Carpenter?], Outline View of the Powers and Operations of the Mind, According to
One can detect a similarity between Martineau and Carpenter in their illustrations of the nature of imagination and its proper management. Both discuss them in relation to the spontaneous operation of association and stress the importance of controlling it by conscious effort. At least among the Unitarians, there may have been a sufficient common intellectual background which enabled the reader to grasp the central moral message of *Five Years of Youth*.

It is undeniable that Martineau gave an exceptional significance to the problem of imagination. Her unique perspective upon this issue made her cast a new light upon one’s hidden interior and make it a central theme of her fiction. Anna becomes ‘mysterious and very selfish’\(^\text{72}\) in the eyes of her friends and family as she retreats into her own thoughts. She becomes a heroine who leads a secret inner life which gradually wears her away both mentally and physically. This is reminiscent of another romantic and misguided heroine created about a decade before, namely, Marianne Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility* (1811). The similarity between *Five Years of Youth* and this famous novel by Jane Austen has long been noticed. As Vera Wheatley points out, *Sense and Sentiment*, the subtitle of *Five Years of Youth* itself bears a striking resemblance to Austen’s novel. On the other hand, Wheatley states that in spite of Martineau’s avowed admiration of Austen throughout her life, there is no specific evidence of her having read *Sense and Sensibility* before she wrote *Five Years of Youth*.\(^\text{73}\) Similarly, Sanders refers to *Five Years of Youth* as ‘a kind of junior *Sense and Sensibility*’\(^\text{74}\) but does not point out any direct connection between the two works. Thus, there is no knowing whether the similarity is a result of conscious attempt or not.

However, the two seemingly very similar heroines have a fundamental difference. Whereas Marianne’s silence hides her secret engagement and the sufferings resulting from the fact, Anna’s silence hides nothing real behind it. Her problem lies in the very fact that she has nothing but her own vain thoughts in her mind. Toward the end of the story, she confesses to her father that the cause of her decline and wretchedness is her fancy:

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*the Principles and Classification in Dr. Carpenter’s Lectures* (Bristol: Mirror Office by John Taylor, 1836) 8. It consists of eleven pages in total, which are numbered from three to twelve. It is bound with other writings such as the outline of his lecture quoted above. Held in the Harris Manchester College Library, Oxford.

\(^{72}\) *Five Years of Youth*, 204.


\(^{74}\) Sanders (1986) 9.
‘Yes, it [fancy] is that which has ruined me,’ said Anna at length. ‘For years my chief motive has been praise, human praise; and now I cannot act against my inclinations from any other. And I have lost all power over my thoughts: they wander away at all times: the attempt to restrain them made me miserable; and now that I have given it up, I am more miserable still.’

Although the passage resembles a common moral warning against vanity, its chief criticism is not directed to vanity as is shown in Anna’s own assertion that what has ruined her is her fancy or unruly imagination.

The problem of excessive imagination was Martineau’s own personal issue in her late adolescence. James Martineau’s shorthand summary of her letters which were sent to him in the early 1820s records her concern:

After some reflections on her and my relative moral dangers and temptations, partly arising from too “warm an imagination,” temptation to dream instead of act, she reports the favourable progress... of Tom’s suit to Helen... It is presumable that the picture of Anna was inspired by Martineau’s own self-image in the past. Such first-hand experience combined with her interest in the human mind prevented her from presenting Anna merely for a didactic purpose. Wheatley points out a unique achievement of *Five Years of Youth* in spite of its obvious limitations. Whereas she argues that it ‘becomes wordy and tedious’ toward the end, she pays special attention to the fact that Martineau did not attempt to reform Anna. Wheatley regards this as a rare sort of courage in her day. It can be argued that Martineau’s awareness of the complexity of the human mind made her grow out of didacticism in her presentation of her character’s inner life.

As I have noted, in her *Autobiography* Martineau describes the period in which she was attempting to develop a literary career in London as the ‘season of intellectual and moral need.’ If her prize essays helped to reassure her of her intellectual aptitude for authorship, *Five Years of Youth* was a work which recorded her moral growth. It

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75 *Five Years of Youth*, 247.
77 Wheatley, 70.
would appear that her experience in London helped her to cast a new light on her own emotional issues in her early adolescence. To objectify her emotional experience through fiction must have helped her to resolve some of her emotional problems. In this respect, Martineau’s friendship with the Flower sisters has had a great influence in her development. *Five Years of Youth* can be seen both as a product of Martineau’s self-reflexivity and as an indication of her entering a new epoch after her own difficult season both intellectually and morally.
Ch. 6: Domestic Scenes in the *Illustrations of Political Economy* (1832-34)

Considering Martineau’s long career, her tales written in the 1820s occupy a very limited space both in terms of their volume and significance. Cutt summarizes their impact and relevance as follows:

Young Harriet Martineau’s brief excursion into “tract” writing for Houlston of Wellington produced four moral tales of Unitarian leanings and two touching on industrial disputes. The latter seem to be for young adults and are very dull.¹

Most modern readers would probably agree that the early moral tales were an unsuccessful digression in the early stages of her career. However, it is worth considering whether they were indeed mere digressions which left no trace in her later more successful work. One of the reasons why her early tales tend to be regarded as insignificant is that there is an apparent disconnection between her fiction in the 1820s and her first major work, *Illustrations of Political Economy* (1832-34). Although there were only a few years between them, the latter were such an unexpected success that they were regarded as virtually her debut work. One cannot but notice a marked difference between her earlier tales and her stories in this series, both in terms of their themes and their maturity as literary works. Martineau’s early moral tales deal with the importance of religious faith and moral integrity in relation to her longstanding interest in the mind. Her idea of man’s mind and inner life are informed by Hartleian moral philosophy. Her stories in the *Illustrations of Political Economy*, on the other hand, focus on more concrete issues in contemporary society, which she illuminates by drawing on theories of political economy. It appears as if Martineau has left behind her persistent interest in man’s mental life in relation to religion and moral philosophy.

As for the apparent gap between the early tales and the stories in the *Illustrations*, even greater distance can be felt in terms of their maturity as works of fiction. Stories

in the *Illustrations* exhibit by far superior powers of description and the evocation of human emotion. The huge success of the series depended upon not only its commitment to urgent contemporary issues but also upon its quintessential power as a work of fiction. Sanders points out that there is evidence that ‘many of her contemporaries openly preferred the imaginative part of her tales to their dialogues about rents and wages.’ It is undeniable that there is a great difference in the quality of imaginative power between her early moral tales and her stories of political economy.

However, differences in theme and artistic maturity do not necessarily mean that there is no continuity between them. I would like to argue in this chapter that we can find certain elements of the early moral tales in some stories in the *Illustrations* but that they are in more developed or mature forms than before. It is not a discontinuity but rather a rapid growth that happened between her early tales and the *Illustrations of Political Economy*. It is particularly in the domestic scenes that one can sense Martineau’s continuous interests and her maturing power as a writer of fiction. For this purpose, first, I will examine one of her *Monthly Repository* essays which was published just prior to the first of the *Illustrations* series and clarifies the connection between her interest in political economy and her longstanding adherence to Hartleian moral philosophy. Secondly, I will compare *A Manchester Strike* (1832), one of the stories in the *Illustrations*, with *The Turn-Out* (1829), one of her early tales written for Houlston, which deals with the same theme as the former. I will compare them particularly in terms of their respective representations of domestic values. Finally, I will discuss the implication of the ambivalent ending of *A Manchester Strike* in relation to Martineau’s necessarian views and her unique idea of heroism, both of which are connected to Hartley’s theological argument in the second volume of his *Observations on Man*.

‘On the Duty of Studying Political Economy’ (1832)

Unlike her early moral tales, Martineau does not deal with issues such as piety or morality in relation to the proper management of one’s behaviour and mental state in the *Illustrations*. It appears as if she has left off addressing these issues as the central themes of her fiction, and has found wholly new ground to explore by presenting the

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2 Sanders (1986) x.
principles of political economy in the form of fiction rather than following the well-trodden paths of her religious or moral tales. However, for Martineau, her interest in political economy was by no means a departure from her long engagement with religious and moral issues. It is located more in the extension of her long-explored fields of study such as theology and moral philosophy.

There is an essay by Martineau which indicates the underlying continuity of her intellectual concerns. ‘On the Duty of Studying Political Economy’ appeared in the *Monthly Repository* in January 1832, just a month before the first number of the *Illustrations* was published.³ It is a review essay which examines *Lectures on the Elements of Political Economy* by Thomas Cooper.⁴ Martineau’s views about the role of political economy appear totally in line with the author’s. However, one can also sense an original perspective in her explanation of the importance of studying political economy. She writes: ‘[i]t is not enough for a member of society. . . to be upright and industrious, and amiable, and generally intelligent⁵ if he wishes to perform his social duty without making unnecessary errors nor causing unintentional misery to others. ‘[E]very honest man who writes himself a member of society,’ she argues, ‘must understand political economy.’⁶ Martineau counts the knowledge of political economy as yet another virtue which is required to make a responsible citizen. It was to be added to other traditional moral or intellectual qualities, the importance and cultivation of which she had advocated in her early moral tales. It is clear that Martineau regarded the principles of political economy as closely related to moral questions. Such a view of the nature of political economy may not have been so unusual among her contemporaries. In this review essay, she clarifies her own position and that of Cooper as follows:

³ ‘Life in the Wilds,’ the first number of the *Illustrations of Political Economy*, was published in February 1832.
We are not among those who mix up moral questions with political economy as if they were not only connected but identical. . . . but we think that this study partakes much more of the nature of a moral than a mathematical science, and are quite certain that it modifies, or ought to modify, our moral philosophy more extensively than any other influence whatsoever.7

Thus, her stories in the Illustrations can be seen as a natural development of her early moral tales.

Another thread that connects Martineau’s early moral tales and her new literary enterprise is her religious perspective. In the same essay, she argues that there exists a particular kind of ‘beauty’ or ‘elegance’8 in 'the natural workings of the principles of social polity,'9 which she believes ‘gratify the taste, as well as the understanding.’10 After repeating several rhetorical questions about the pleasures one may gain from the study of political economy, she concludes:

Above all, is there no beauty in the dealings of providence with man? Can it be a dry and irksome task, to explore the plan by which communities are wrought upon to achieve the great ends of human virtue and human enjoyment? Social institutions are the grand instruments in the hands of Providence for the government of man; and no labours can be more worthy of the disciple of Providence than that of deducing the will of God from the course of events—of ascertaining the Divine signature by which institutions are sanctioned or prohibited.11

Martineau sees beauty in the natural laws of political economy because she regards them as indications of God’s will.

Her religious perspective on the study of political economy was a product of her long commitment to the study of Hartleian moral philosophy. In the second part of

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Hartley’s *Observations on Man*, there is a passage which bears a striking resemblance to her argument about the beauty of the ‘Divine signature’ that can be found in the principles of political economy:

Those parts of the Arts and Sciences which bring Glory of God, and Advantage to Mankind, which inspire Devotion, and instruct us how to be useful to others, abound with more and greater Beauties. . . and ‘the Study of the Scriptures, of Natural History, and Natural Philosophy, of the Frame of the human Mind &c. when undertaken and pursued with benevolent and pious Intentions, lead to more elegant Problems, and surprising Discoveries. . . \(^{12}\)

As we have seen in the previous chapters, Martineau was influenced by Hartley from her late adolescence. She was influenced not only by his doctrine of association, which explained the mechanism of human mind, but also by his doctrine of necessity which denied man’s free will and propagated the existence of the great chain of causation created by God where man’s volition and action simply make its necessary parts. By combining these two doctrines, Hartley’s theory provided an optimistic millennial vision. He argued that God had programmed human nature and society to achieve perfection characterized by pervasive sympathy and benevolence. For Martineau, the study of political economy revealed natural laws that were working in human society. Thus, it was natural for her to consider such laws as closely connected to moral laws and religious faith. Each social or economic issue in the *Illustrations* contains at its core moral and religious concerns that are continued from her early moral tales.

In the same essay, Martineau compares a nation to a family by pointing out the similarity of the dynamics of their members’ emotions and conduct:

> It is as true of a nation as of a family that its individual members will be less exposed to temptation, and more enlightened to perceive, and more at liberty to discharge its duties in a state of ease than of poverty; and that its most favourable circumstances are those where there is

harmony between the various members at home and goodwill towards their neighbours abroad. . . .

This indicates Martineau’s keen awareness of the continuity and mutual infiltration of the domestic lives of individuals and the general state of society. In the Illustrations, she represented the domestic lives of her protagonists as a parallel picture of the larger community to which they belonged. Even when she dealt with social and political issues as her main topics, she considered the domestic scenes as an important element of her stories. It is through the analogy of the moral implication of people’s thoughts and behaviour in their domestic lives that Martineau tried to convey her lessons of political economy. Here again, we discern the consistency of her ideas from the earliest stages of her career.

The Turn-Out (1829) and The Manchester Strike (1832)

In general, Martineau is quite dismissive of the moral tales written in the latter half of the 1820s. She is especially severe in her assessments of the stories written for Houlston around 1827. She ascribes their colourlessness and heavy didacticism to her poor health and low spirits at the time, which were connected with the rapid deterioration of her family’s fortunes in this period. However, there are two tales written at the same time, which she evaluates quite differently: The Rioters (1827) and The Turn-Out (1829). Martineau gives an account of the origin of these two stories as follows:

. . . Houlston wrote to ask for another story of somewhat more substance and bulk. My ‘Globe’ newspaper readings suggested to me the subject of Machine-breaking as a good one,—some recent outrages of that sort having taken place: but I had not the remotest idea that I was meditating writing on Political Economy, the very name of which was then either unknown to me, or conveyed no meaning. I wrote the little story called ‘The Rioters;’ and its success was such that some hosiers and lacemakers of Derby and Nottingham sent me a request to

write a tale on the subject of Wages, which I did, calling it ‘The Turn Out.’ The success of both was such as to dispose Mr. Houlston to further dealings; and I wrote for him a good many tracts, which he sold for a penny, and for which he gave me a sovereign apiece.\textsuperscript{14}

Martineau’s special regard for these two stories can be attributed to the fact that they turned out to be important milestones in her career. It was not only that they secured further dealings with Houlston, but also that they led her to a promising new field to explore. A few pages later, Martineau recounts how she encountered the concept of political economy for the first time and how she immediately hit upon the idea of writing a series of stories through which she might illustrate its principles effectively:

> It was in the autumn of 1827, I think, that a neighbour lent my sister Mrs. Marce’s ‘Conversations on Political Economy.’ I took up the book, chiefly to see what Political Economy precisely was; and great was my surprise to find that I had been teaching it unawares, in my stories about Machinery and Wages. It struck me at once that the principles of the whole science might be advantageously conveyed in the same way, --not by being smothered up in a story, but by being exhibited in their natural workings in selected passages of social life.\textsuperscript{15}

It was fair enough for Martineau to claim that she had been teaching political economy in her two early moral tales unconsciously even before she came to understand what it really meant. However, \textit{The Rioters} and \textit{The Turn-Out}, are much inferior to the stories of the \textit{Illustrations}, particularly in terms of their maturity as literary works. Examining the differences between these two tales and the stories in the \textit{Illustrations} establishes clearly how and why Martineau made such remarkable progress as an author in the latter. For this purpose, I will compare \textit{The Turn-Out} with \textit{The Manchester Strike}, a story published in 1832 as the seventh number of the \textit{Illustrations} series. Both dealt with the theme of wages and a strike.

To begin with, it is important to note that Martineau thought it crucial to write her

\textsuperscript{14} Martineau, \textit{Autobiography} (2007) 121.
series on political economy in the form of fiction. She recounts in her *Autobiography* how upset she became when her original plan of adopting a narrative form was nearly thwarted by W. J. Fox, her literary mentor at the time, who became sceptical of the work’s likely success and recommended her to adopt a non-narrative form. Calling the narrative form ‘my method of exemplification,’ Martineau makes it clear that she counted it as ‘the grand principle of the whole scheme’ at the time. She states that she deemed it worse to give up the narrative form than to give up the project as a whole, Thus, she emphasizes how important it was for her to stick to a fictional form. It was a conviction founded on her insight into the merits of fiction as a means of conveying certain ideas. By making use of narrative, one could present a concrete picture of human society, which could better serve the purpose of making people understand the nature of various relationships or their dynamics, rather than depending on explanations or arguments. Martineau’s own observation of the limits of this method inversely indicates how distinctly she understood the particular merits of narrative:

> Students of all manner of physical sciences afterwards wanted me to ‘illustrate’ things of which social life (and therefore fiction) can afford no illustration. I used to say till I was tired that none but moral and political science admitted of the method at all; and I doubt whether many of those who talk about it understand the matter, to this day.¹⁹

She did not employ narrative as a bait to coax otherwise indifferent readers into reading her stories that were filled with abstract arguments of political economy. Rather, she adopted it in order to show the principles of political economy at work in concrete situations or relationships.

Martineau’s insight that fiction could present specific ideas not through abstract argument but through concrete situations or relationships was essential not only for the success of the *Illustrations* but also for the maturing of her skills as an author. Her conscious effort to present her message through dynamic pictures of the social and personal lives of her characters helped to reduce the amount of the direct preaching either

by the narrator or by the characters. There is a marked difference between *The Turn-Out* and *The Manchester Strike* in the degree of the dramatization she employed. In order to examine how Martineau reflected her insight into the unique advantage of fiction, I would like to compare the two stories in terms of the following aspects. First, I will examine the way they present domestic values. Secondly, I will compare their attitudes toward the power of emotion by analysing the way their characters argue for their beliefs.

**Domestic Scenes in the Fiction of Political Economy**

Martineau is often considered to have written one of the earliest examples of what is called ‘domestic fiction’ or ‘domestic realism.’ Critics like Vineta Colby and Susan Fraiman discuss *Deerbrook*, Martineau’s first novel written in 1839, in terms of its domestic realism. In her pioneering re-evaluation of *Deerbrook*, Colby sums up the essential characteristics of novels in this genre:

> The qualities that define the domestic novel are all here [in *Deerbrook*]. It is bourgeois and anti-romantic. It glorifies the solid values of home and family. It recognizes that the goal of all humans is happiness and self-fulfilment, but it constantly reminds us of the Christian-evangelical imperatives of duty, submission of the individual will, self-sacrifice, and endurance. It emphasizes the importance of compromise, cooperation, and common sense both in the individual’s private life and in his public life, as he functions in the social community in which he lives and works.

Martineau’s contribution to the development of domestic fiction has been discussed primarily in relation to her innovative use of middle-class settings in *Deerbrook*, which was very unusual at the time of its publication. Fraiman gives a similar exposition of the characteristics of domestic fiction considering the middle-class settings prerequisite to this genre. On the other hand, she also points out the ideological implication of this

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21 Colby (1974) 212.
genre.

Domestic fiction doesn’t simply represent middle-class life as it already exists but also actively works to produce it as a cultural ideal... the genre’s project of producing righteous middle-classness is closely tied to notions about women’s normative relation to marriage, family, and the domestic sphere.²³

Fraiman lays emphasis upon the meaning of middle-class culture and values which domestic fiction tries to produce and disseminate.

It is arguable that what each of the critics above call ‘the solid values of home and family’ or ‘righteous middle-classness’ can and does exist in fiction whose settings are not necessarily middle-class. In fact, many of Martineau’s stories written before Deerbrook contained themes and plots similar to those of domestic fiction. The Turn-Out and The Manchester Strike have settings and characters drawn from the working-class. In both narratives, however, a ‘normative relation to marriage, family, and the domestic sphere’ plays a crucial role in their plots and themes just as in typical domestic novels. Domestic realism, which was to first to blossom in Martineau’s Deerbrook, had its roots in these works.

The Turn-Out is a story which emphasizes the uselessness and the positive harm of strikes. Its heroes are two brothers, Henry and James Gilbert, who are intelligent and thoughtful factory workers. Although both are young and unmarried, the younger brother James has been engaged for some time and is thinking about getting married, which turns out to be the primary cause of their division of opinion. Henry becomes the leader of the strike and insists that they should not yield at whatever cost. He believes that it is the only way they can win proper wages for their own future and that of their children. On the other hand, James is reluctant to join the strike because he will have to live on his savings while they are out of work, which will inevitably postpone his marriage. After a prolonged period of want and lethargy, the strike breaks up without producing any desirable effects upon their wages or working conditions. While Henry faces a bitter defeat at the termination of the strike, James feels relieved and convinced that it is much better to put up with low wages than to suffer the damage of a turn-out.

As is indicated by the fact that the story concludes with James’ negative evaluation of the strike, it is his opinion rather than Henry’s which is given the author’s endorsement. Unlike his high-minded brother, who considers it his duty to fight for the rights of working men, James is reluctant to join the strike and refuses to play an active part in it. He is more concerned about the prospect of his marriage and domestic felicity. Such prioritization of private happiness over social conditions is neither criticized by the narrator nor punished in the course of the narrative. On the contrary, the story treats these domestic values as proof of James’s well-balanced, wholesome approach to life. He is presented as a supplementary hero to Henry. In spite of ‘his superior knowledge and sense,’ Henry has a streak of complacency and finds it difficult to sympathize with people who are weaker or less determined than himself. It is this subtle flaw in his character that made him insist on continuing the strike even after witnessing the misery of his cousin whose family life is completely ruined by the prolonged strike. It is implied that Henry’s defeat as the leader of the strike was brought about by his insufficient recognition of the importance of domestic happiness. In *The Turn-Out*, happiness in the domestic sphere is presented as a vital sign of the health of the community and of social justice.

*A Manchester Strike* also presents domestic values as its key element. One aspect that helps to make this story more complex than *The Turn-Out* is its focus on a single hero rather than two. Martineau creates a hero who represents not only working men’s rights but also wholesome domestic values. Allen, the hero of *A Manchester Strike* has his own family to look after including his delicate young daughter Martha, who works in a factory. This makes him more cautious when he is asked to become the leader of the strike by his fellow workmen. While willing to serve their common cause, he is also aware of the difficulty and the heavy responsibility of the task which may affect his family life. He is portrayed as a more realistic character than either hero of *The Turn-Out*: the unyielding strike leader Henry or the more family-oriented brother James. Unlike them, Allen accommodates both views and suffers from contradictory feelings and a sense of duty. Such complexity makes him a realistic character rather than a mouthpiece of a single position.

Martineau’s intention of creating a working-class hero who is both appealing and

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24 [Harriet Martineau], *The Turn-Out; or Patience the Best Policy* (Wellington, Salop: Houlston and Son, 1829) *Google Books Online*, 10.
convincing is felt from the outset of the story:

One fine Saturday evening in May, 18—, several hundred work-people, men, girls, and boys, poured out from the gates of a factory. . . . He was one of the most respectable looking among them, decent in his dress, and intelligent though somewhat melancholy in countenance. . . . All seemed anxious to know what Allen had to relate or to advise; and Allen had some difficulty in getting leave to go home, much as he knew he was wanted there. When he had at length escaped, he walked so rapidly as presently to overtake his little daughter, Martha, who had left the factory somewhat earlier. He saw her before him for some distance, and observed how she limped, and how feebly she made her way along the street. . . .

Although the story begins with a distant view of hundreds of nameless workers, the narrator immediately provides a close-up of Allen. He is described as a distinctive individual whose opinion and advice are much wanted both by his fellow workmen and his family. It is clear that he is the character from whose perspective the story is going to be told. In order to make him attractive, the narrator emphasizes that his appearance is both respectable and intelligent and that he gives more priority to his domestic concerns than ongoing issues at the factory.

Although its main focus is a factory dispute and the strike that follows, the narrative contains a lot of domestic scenes which emphasize that credit and respectability in the public sphere are closely connected to values and conduct in domestic life. The first thing that indicates Allen’s domesticity is his affection to his daughter. His close observation of her from a distance is presented in a detailed description of how she limps while she walks and how she jumps when a dog barks at her. It effectively conveys his concern and affection as a caring parent. The scene that follows, on the other hand, indicates his views of a wholesome matrimonial life. When he arrives home, he finds his friend’s young wife swearing at his own wife and children. Seeing that she is only transferring her anger toward her absent husband upon them, he promises to bring her

husband home. Allen’s ability to cope with the domestic troubles of his colleague indicates his ability to guide a mass of working people.

That Allen is an essentially a family-oriented man is shown most clearly in the scene where he is elected the chair of the Union:

Allen could not deny this, and did not, therefore, dally with his duty; but it cost him a bitter pang. . . . Thoughts of the dismay of his timid wife, of the hardships to which he might expose his children, of the difficulties of his office, and the ill-will which its discharge must sometimes bring upon him. . . . might have overcome a man of firmer nerve than Allen. . . .

Such a conflict between domestic feelings and public duty does not exist in *The Turn-Out*. *A Manchester Strike* does not prioritize either the social cause or domestic happiness but suggests the equal importance of both. Instead of writing a simple didactic story to preach the harm of strikes, Martineau tries to appeal to the readers’ sympathy and make them appreciate the difficult situation of the working people. Allen’s conflict makes the reader aware of the essential problem where the two claims, namely, the social and the domestic, cannot co-exist. The strike is thus portrayed as a complex human drama. The story, however, also implies that the strike should be still avoided even if its cause is understandable because of the undue pain and loss it causes to all who are involved in it. In order to achieve such a complex authorial intention, it is essential to create a hero both convincing and personable with whom the reader can sympathize. In this sense, various domestic concerns which Allen has to cope with both as a father and a husband help to make him a realistic and sympathetic character.

**Emotion as a Means of Persuasion**

Another notable difference between *The Turn Out* and *A Manchester Strike* is their rhetoric of persuasion, or the means of conveying their chief messages. The fundamental difference lies in whether their messages are conveyed in the form of direct

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26 *‘A Manchester Strike,’* 165.
statements or in dramatic situations. While the former conveys its main message almost exclusively through the statements of its narrator or characters, the latter portrays dramatic situations which prompt the reader to figure out their implied message. In *A Manchester Strike*, Martineau makes use of the method of illustration just as its series’ title indicates. The difference in the method of presenting their messages results in a difference of attitude toward the power of emotion. She exhibits almost the opposite attitude toward its power to persuade people in the two stories.

In *The Turn-Out*, each of the main characters functions as a mouthpiece of a specific opinion or standpoint. Their contesting opinions are presented in the form of direct statements either in private conversation or in public speeches to the mass of working people. It is through such argumentative discourse that the reader is informed of each party’s views and opinions. However, it is not easy to compare the merits or advantages of each standpoint because of the difference in their modes of speech. Whereas one is almost solely dependent upon the personal values or feelings of the speaker, the other is based upon objective facts and analysis without any subjective feelings.

In the climactic scene of the public meeting, Henry, as the leader of the strike, gives an impassioned speech to the workmen arguing against those who consider submission inevitable:

‘There are some among you. . . who think that the time has arrived when we must yield. . . . Listen to me, while I relate and reply to their arguments; and I call upon every principle of honour, pride, and conscience, within you. . . . They cannot say that our cause is a bad one; they cannot say that our principle is a wrong one; they cannot say that it was error to assert our rights. . . . They demanded submission from me; they demanded it, my friends, in your name; but I refused to yield. . . . For you I have undergone days of labour and nights of watchfulness; for you I have denied myself food, and rest, and recreation. . . .’

Henry’s oration continues nearly for nine pages. His rhetoric and vocabulary reveal not

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27 *The Turn-Out*, 110-115.
only his deep and sincere feelings but also his idealistic tendency mixed with a hint of complacency. It contains little factual argument to contradict the opposing opinion. Although his speech is greeted by bursts of applause from the audience, it is difficult for the reader to share this moment of heightened emotion. In fact, it soon turns out to be of a transient nature. The sudden reversal of the general mood of the crowd that follows this scene suggests how precarious such an unnaturally heightened emotion is.

Henry’s speech is contrasted with one by Mr. Wallace, one of the factory owners who is respected for his fair and rational attitude. Wallace, who has been witnessing the meeting, comes up to the front in place of another committee member who is against Henry:

‘... if your aim be, as you declare, to follow truth, you will give your best attention to what I have to say. It will not be in my power to rivet your attention, as your leader has done; for, instead of allowing myself to appeal to your feelings, I must confine myself to argument and fact... I must begin by establishing my ground, instead of asserting that I am right, and then working up your feelings, as if I were certain that you agreed with me...’

Wallace begins his address by a polite but ruthless criticism of Henry’s speech particularly about his mode of persuasion. He exposes the ineffectuality of his argument which appeals exclusively to the feelings of the audience. He declares that he will rely solely upon the objective facts and logical argument as his means of persuasion.

He follows this declaration with an extensive address, which is more like a lecture on political economy than an appeal. Beginning with the definition of wealth and capital, he tries to enlighten the crowd about the interdependency of the manufacturers and labourers:

‘You are aware that the wealth, the capital, of a country, consists of land and its fruits, the produce of manufactures, houses, money, and whatever is possessed for the purposes of use and enjoyment, by the inhabitants of that country. Some possess more of this capital, and

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28 The Turn-Out, 118-119.
some less: some are enriched by the labours of their fathers, others by their own. . . . the laboring population subsists on the capital of the rich. . . . It is as much the interest of the poor as the rich, that capital should grow, and, above all, that it should not be laid by. . . . Generally speaking, the fortune of masters and men rise and fall together, and their interests are eventually the same. . . .”

Mr. Wallace’s speech continues for nearly eleven pages, which is even longer than Henry’s. In the middle of his address, he self-consciously remarks that he is aware that the manner of his address is ‘very unusual at the public meetings’ but that he ‘wish[es] to do it fully’ in spite of ‘the risk of wearying [the audience] with argument’ because he believes it ‘the only means of explaining [his] views.’ This can be taken as Martineau’s authorial voice, anxious to disseminate the principles of political economy and make her readers look at current social issues from a new perspective. One of the primary objects of this story is to convey the importance of an argument based on facts and scientific principles. It is because of this belief that Martineau makes Wallace criticize Henry’s impassioned, if not insincere oration, which is of the kind often heard at public meetings.

The speech concludes the discourse between him and Henry over the issue of the strike and its effectiveness. It results in a dramatic reversal of public opinion:

Mr. Wallace had been but little applauded during his address, for the attention of his hearers had been so completely fixed, that they thought only of listening. A long pause succeeded the conclusion of his speech, and then a universal shout arose. It was renewed again and again. The applause was continued, till Gilbert was assured that all was lost. . . . and, overcome by his feelings, he retired to the back of the cart, and sinking down, hid his face in his hand.

The narrative does not end here but with concluding conversation between James and

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29 *The Turn-Out*, 120-123.
30 *The Turn-Out*, 124.
31 *The Turn-Out*, 124.
32 *The Turn-Out*, 124.
33 *The Turn-Out*, 131.
Maria, his fiancée. Both of them express the central lesson of the story in unambiguous language. Maria firmly states: ‘We must be content with our wages, and wait patiently for better times.’ James agrees with her, making it clear that his brother has been wrong in his judgment: ‘Whatever [Henry] may think now, depend upon it, Maria, he will soon be as well convinced as we are, that though it is a hardship to have low wages, any thing is better than a TURN-OUT.’ As a didactic tale, Martineau may have thought it necessary to insert such plain instructive messages. However, it is at the risk of spoiling the dramatic effect of the preceding scene which could have worked directly on the reader’s feelings. This indicates that at this stage, she was not trying to maximize the dramatic effect of her story as she would do when she wrote *A Manchester Strike*.

Just as in *The Turn-Out*, one of the most climactic scenes in *A Manchester Strike* is that of the public meeting. The basic structure of the public meetings in the two stories are almost identical. In both, it is the hero who first speaks to the crowd as a leader of the strike. He is followed by a factory owner who is both rational and humane and who tries to illustrate the principles of political economy to the workmen. In other words, the roles of Henry and Mr. Wallace in *The Turn-Out* are taken by Allen and Mr. Wentworth in *A Manchester Strike*.

There are, however, fundamental differences between the two scenes. The first is that Allen does not make an impassioned oration about his beliefs or his devotion to duty, nor does he try to persuade his audience to carry on with the strike for the future of their children. Instead, he asks several questions which are intended to awaken a sense of honour and solidarity in the crowd, and to maintain that their strike is lawful and respectable:

“... does the Union sanction forcible attempts to prevent work being carried into the country?”

Answer, “No. Law and Concord for ever!”

“If the men abide by the law, the masters are found disposed to concord, will the Union be disposed to concession?”

Mixed cries, the most distinguishable of which was, “Stick by the Union! The Union for ever!”

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34 *The Turn-Out*, 134.
35 *The Turn-Out*, 135.
Mr. Wentworth and Allen exchanged the nods, as much as to say, “You see”—“Yes, I see.”

In fact, Allen’s questions contain a subtle suggestion of compromise. In this sense, his address is of the opposite nature to Henry’s. Another noticeable point is that the scene indicates a mutual trust and understanding between Allen and Mr. Wentworth in spite of their opposing positions.

Wentworth begins his address by taking over Allen’s last question about what standard of wage equalization they can consent with. Seeing that none of them are sure of exactly what they want, he advises Allen not to make them decide hastily and proposes to ‘tell them something which may help their judgments.’ Thus begins his lecture-like address which illustrates the nature of the wages according the principles of political economy. Like Wallace’s address in The Turn-Out, Wentworth’s speech is depicted as something that attracts the workmen’s attention in spite of its length and didactic character. It appeals because of the refreshingly new perspective it provides:

Mr. Wentworth was encouraged to pursue his argumentative manner of speaking by the attention of the people near the wagon. Some of them had become a little tired of the weekly meetings at which their orators had said the same things over and over again, and were pleased to be reasoned with by one whom they esteemed, and to obtain, by these means, a better insight into their affairs than was given them by leaders who were all of one party.

It is clear that Wentworth’s address is given the same authorial endorsement as Wallace’s in The Turn-Out. Martineau considered such a rational and scientific approach as essential to solve social issues. Here again, she dismisses the typical orations in public meetings, which are directed exclusively to the feelings of the audience. However, unlike in The Turn-Out where Henry’s emotionally charged oration is frustrated by Wallace, Allen is not shaken by Wentworth’s address. On the contrary, his address

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36 ‘A Manchester Strike,’ 193.
37 ‘A Manchester Strike,’ 194.
38 ‘A Manchester Strike,’ 199.
makes him ‘thoughtful’\textsuperscript{39} and he urges his audience to postpone their decision in order ‘to take into consideration some matters of important concern.’\textsuperscript{40} Thus, the central message of \textit{A Manchester Strike}, is not shown as a verdict on two competing arguments.

Although no dramatic change of public opinion immediately follows Wentworth’s address, the story moves to its end after this scene just as in \textit{The Turn-Out}. Allen suffers a sudden downfall like Henry although his is not brought about by his hard-line policy but by his well-balanced approach which allows compromise if necessary. He is wrongly accused of betraying the Union to the masters by a group of mischievous workmen led by a former Union leader who has been forced to resign because of his rash behaviour. Allen’s leadership is weakened by this and the resulting confusion frustrates his effort to make a reasonable concession to enable both parties to close the strike as soon as possible. After a period of stagnation, where people barely live on the Union funds the strike comes to an abrupt end with no positive outcome. The final result turns out to be a particularly cruel one for Allen. In spite of his consistent efforts to avoid unnecessary strife and seek a reasonable concession between the workers and the factory owners, he is branded as the chief leader of the fruitless strike and left with no prospect of employment by any factory in the region. Nor he is to be provided by the Union in return for his selfless devotion because its fund has already been used up.

In short, Allen loses everything in spite of his high-minded principles and honest disinterested behaviour. The injustice of the situation is felt tellingly in the successive scenes where he faces the reality of his fellow workers’ unfeeling words:

“Did you hear, Allen, what Elliot said about you? He hopes you will go to him for work, that he may have the pleasure of refusing you.”

“Mortimer has got a promise out of his cowardly partner, that he will not let you set foot on the premises, Allen, on account of the part you have taken.”

“They say, Allen, that you are a marked man in Manchester, and that no master in any trade will take you in among his men. What do you think of doing, I wonder?”\textsuperscript{41}
This helps to excite a strong sympathy with Allen, appealing both the reader’s sense of justice and compassion. Sympathy is further strengthened by what follows. Considering it his only hope, Allen goes to Mr. Wentworth to ask for employment in his factory. Mr. Wentworth, however, declines, not from any enmity or prejudice against him but from his fair and straightforward judgment. He explains that because of his losses from the turn-out, he can employ only two-thirds of what he used to employ and that for the sake of fairness, they should be taken from those who turned out from him unwillingly. This emphasizes the grim reality that even though Allen has exceptional virtues and credit among the other workmen, which is well understood by Mr. Wentworth, whose judgement is sound and unprejudiced, it does not save him from becoming the foremost victim of the strike as its chief exponent.

The conclusion of the story is given by the narrator, couched as a sorrowful outcry over the stark consequences of the strike rather than a simplistic warning against it:

> When will it be understood by all that it rests with all to bring about a time when opposition of interests shall cease? When will masters and men work cheerfully together for their common good, respect instead of proscribing each other, and be equally proud to have such men as Wentworth and William Allen of their fellowship?  

There is a fundamental shift of emphasis in the authorial message between *The Turn-Out* and *A Manchester Strike*. In the latter, the narrator tries to make the reader aware of the central dilemma that surrounds the relationship between the factory owners and the workmen rather than simply preaching against the strike. The unjust victimization of Allen in successive incidents toward the end of the narrative is intended to impress the reader with the ruthless reality that the wages and employment of the workers are determined by the inexorable law of political economy, or the wage fund doctrine, and that there is no exception in the application of this grim law. No matter how high-minded or virtuous a workman like Allen might be, he cannot be saved from becoming its victim once he is trapped by this ruthless mechanism. Martineau’s mercilessness in sealing his doom is so complete that it makes one wonder about her real intention.

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42 ‘A Manchester Strike,’ 215.
Considering the careful portrayal of his moral integrity and clear-sightedness throughout the narrative, it is difficult for the reader to regard such a depressing ending simply as a forceful warning against strikes. For this purpose, the whole narrative has awakened too much sympathy for Allen. I will discuss the real cause of this apparent disparity later in this chapter.

It is also notable that not only the message itself but also the way it is conveyed has changed. *A Manchester Strike* appeals directly to the reader’s feelings by depicting affective scenes and situations instead of presenting argumentative statements. In *The Turn-Out*, the highly emotional argument of its hero Henry loses against the rational argument of Mr. Wallace at the public meeting. The story seems to imply that emotion can only produce a temporary effect. In *A Manchester Strike*, on the other hand, the narrative tries to portray affective scenes and situations positively in order to convey its moral message. The opposing attitudes toward the effect of emotion in the two works can be understood if one looks at whose emotion is in question. Whereas in *The Turn-Out*, it is the crowd of people who are influenced by the emotional rhetoric of the hero, in *A Manchester Strike*, it is the reader to whom the affective scenes and situations are presented. Clearly, by the time Martineau wrote the latter, she had a clear sense of whose emotion should be affected and how this should be achieved. Although it is difficult to point out exactly when she formed her ideas about the use of emotion, her essay on Scott written in 1833—during the period in which her monthly publication of the *Illustrations* was still going on—provides an important clue:

> He [Scott] has taught us the power of fiction as an agent of morals and philosophy. . . . We rather learn from him how much may be impressed by exemplification which would be rejected in the form of reasoning, and how there may be more extensive embodiments of truth in fiction than the world was before thoroughly aware of.43

It shows that by this time Martineau was fully aware of the advantage of fiction as a means of conveying moral messages. When she praises Scott for his art of impressing his readers by ‘exemplification’ much more than by ‘reasoning,’ she is pointing out the

evocative power of the scenes and situations in his narratives.

Martineau’s special attention to the evocative power of fiction is also reflected in her style of description. In fact, it was deemed one of the primary characteristics of the Illustrations. A review written in 1833 praised her power of description:

A remarkable excellence in Miss Martineau, is the beauty of her descriptions—not exaggerated—not prolix—but fresh, nervous, graphic, and full of homeliness or of poetry as the subject may require. And this power of description extends not only to the delineation of scenery, but also to that of circumstances and of persons.44

Such expressions as ‘fresh,’ ‘nervous,’ and ‘graphic’ which explain the characteristics of Martineau’s descriptions indicates how successful she was in making them impressive and evocative. It indicates that her descriptions can be taken almost as providing physical sensations. This reminds one of the associationist idea of the mind, which explains the formation of ideas in relation to the physical sensations and the spontaneous feelings generated by them.

One of the most affective descriptions in A Manchester Strike is that of the dawn in the factory where Martha works on the night shift. She falls asleep over her work and is checked by an overseer who is humane enough not to be too harsh on her because she is industrious. In order to encourage her, he points to the window and tells her that morning has come:

It was a strange scene that the dawn shone upon. As the grey light from the east mingled with the flickering, yellow glare of the lamps, it gave a mottled dirty appearance to everything; to the pale-faced children, to the unshaved overseer, to the loaded atmosphere, and even to the produce of the wheels.45

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44 [Edward Bulwer-Lytton], ‘On Moral Fictions—Miss Martineau’s Illustrations of Political Economy,’ The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal 37 (Feb. 1833) 150-151. Although the original review appeared in the New Monthly Magazine unsigned, it is identified as written by Bulwer-Lytton in the Wellesley Index. An excerpt of it is printed as his review in the Appendix of the Illustrations of Political Economy: Selected Tales (Toronto: Broadview, 2004) 427-429.

45 ‘A Manchester Strike,’ 177.
The scene leaves a more lasting impression because it is not followed by any didactic comment or moral observation by the narrator. It is as if the reader has also seen the dawn with the characters. The pathos of the scene consists of the mixed feelings of fatigue, relief, and despondency. Such an imaginary experience prompts the reader to think about the cause of such mixed feelings. Thus, as Martineau recognized, the evocative power of fiction can be an effective way of making readers seek for solutions to various moral or social issues by themselves.

**Heroism in Modern Fiction**

Allen’s deprivation at the end of the story is too gloomy to be taken as a simple didactic message against strikes. Courmanche dubs this story ‘a strangely ambivalent tale’ and ascribes its strangeness to ‘Martineau’s personal twist on the rhetoric of political economy’ by her necessarian outlook which presupposes the God-given universal natural laws that govern the world:

. . . Providence assures, through the natural laws that govern the economy, that all temporary suffering is ultimately for the good of society, but there is no way of evading or modifying those economic laws. The point of her *Illustrations* is to help her readers resign themselves to the inevitability of the capitalist system and work with it rather than against it.

This illuminates a central aspect of Martineau’s message behind the depressing picture of her hero. As we have seen in the introduction, her necessarianism was fostered by her study of Hartleian moral philosophy in the early 1820s. I would like to add another element of Hartleian philosophy, which also inspired the young Martineau, and which constituted her final message in this story, namely, the need for ‘a suffering Saviour’ for the progress of the humanity.

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The essay on Scott in 1833 reveals Martineau’s ideas about the role of fiction at this stage of her career. She argues not only about those of Scott’s achievements that one can emulate, but also about his shortcomings. Among what she considers as Scott’s limitations, the foremost one is his indifference or ignorance of the lower orders:

... Sir Walter rendered no service to humble life in the way of delineating its society. Faithful butlers and barbers, tricky lady’s maids, eccentric falconers and gamekeepers, are not those among whom we should look for the strength of character, the sternness of passion, the practical heroism, the inexhaustible patience, the unassuming self-denial, the unconscious beneficence—in a word, the *true-heartedness* which is to be found in its perfection in humble life. ... He knew not that the strength of soul, which he represents as growing up in his heroes amidst the struggles of the crusade, is of the same kind with that which is nourished in our neighbours of the next alley, by conflicts of a less romantic, but not less heroic cast.\(^{50}\)

Martineau points out the stereotypical presentations of common people in Scott’s novels. She deplores the fact that his non-aristocratic characters are always presented as somewhat caricatured figures in whom one cannot expect to find any real dignity or nobility. She ascribes this to ‘his Toryism,’\(^{51}\) rather than to his lack of understanding or affection for those of lower orders. She points out that in spite of his general love of mankind, he had an immovable partiality for the aristocratic figures in his fiction. She regrets that such partiality narrowed his perspective and prevented his novels from becoming a more meaningful moral agent in modern society.

Martineau passes an even more severe judgement on the moral characteristics of Scott’s aristocratic heroes:

The sufferings of his heroes are represented to arise from wounded pride, and from the laceration of personal, or domestic, or feudal feelings and prepossessions; and in no single instance from sympathy

\(^{50}\) ‘The Achievement of the Genius of Scott,’ 453.

\(^{51}\) ‘The Achievement of the Genius of Scott,’ 453.
with the race, or any large body of them. The courage of his heroes is, in like manner, compounded of instincts and of conventional stimuli; and in no one case derived from principles of philanthropy. . . . None of Scott’s personages act and suffer as members and servants of society. . . . The weal or woe of many, or of all, is the only consideration which does not occur to them—the only motive to enterprise and endurance, which is not so much as alluded to. There is no talk of freedom. . . no suspicion that one class is in a state of privilege, and another in a state of subjugation, and that these things ought not to be.52

Though her tone is courteous, Martineau’s criticism is unsparing, which reveals her fundamental difference from Scott in her beliefs and aims as an author of fiction. In her view, it is not in the romantic aristocratic figures but in the common people that one should seek for a genuine heroism. Her wish to create a new kind of heroes who ‘act and suffer as members and servants of society’ is closely connected to her idea that fiction can serve as an effective means of illustrating social and moral issues in modern society.

What Martineau considers an expression of true heroism is almost always connected to the selflessness and endurance of the hero. Her view that suffering and forbearance were a prerequisite condition for heroism was suggested first in her earlier tale Principle and Practice (1827). As I discussed in chapter four, this story was written in the period when she was intensely religious and also much influenced by Hartley. In the second part of Observations on Man, Hartley envisions an idealistic world which is permeated with altruism, programmed by God as an ultimate goal of the human race. The selflessness of Martineau’s heroes is connected to this vision of an ideal society.

Allen is exactly the sort of hero who suffers and endures for the sake of others. The last scene, where he takes the blame for the turn-out all to himself and mutely endures the consequences, presents a depressing portrait. However, in spite of this tragic turn of fate, his goodwill towards his former fellow workmen and deep affection for his family are unchanged:

He no longer touched his hat to the masters, or appeared to see them as they passed. He no longer repaired to the Spread-Eagle to hear or

52 ‘The Achievement of the Genius of Scott,’ 454.
tell the news, or to take part in consultation on the affairs of the workmen of Manchester, though he was ever ready to give his advice with freedom and mildness when called upon. He stated that he was a friend to their interests, and therefore anxious to avoid injuring them by being one of the body. He would not even represent his children, who grew up one after another to be employed in the factories, while their father toiled in the streets with his water-cart in summer and his broom in winter; enduring to be pointed out to strangers as the leader of an unsuccessful strike, as long as his family were not included with himself in the sentence of proscription.53

By portraying Allen in this way, Martineau presents her idea of true heroism, which is not appreciated as much as it should be, but which she thinks is much needed in modern society.

In fact, such a picture of a hero who meekly surrenders to a cruel fate exhibits a close resemblance to the picture of Christ as ‘a suffering Saviour’ in the second part of Hartley’s Observations on Man:

First, That, laying down the present Disorders of the moral World, and the Necessity of the Love of God and our Neighbour, and of Self-annihilation, in order to the pure and ultimate Happiness of Man, there seems to be a Necessity also for a suffering Saviour. At least, one may affirm, that the Condescension of Christ, in leaving the Glory which he had with the Father before the Foundation of the World, and in shewing himself a perfect Pattern of Obedience to the Will of God, both in doing and suffering, has a most peculiar Tendency to rectify the present moral Depravity of our Natures, and to exalt us thereby to pure spiritual Happiness.54

Hartley argues that most effective means to rectify the moral depravity of man’s nature is to show the suffering saviour as ‘a perfect Pattern of Obedience to the Will of God.’

54 Hartley, Observations on Man, part 2, 167-168
This reveals another aspect of Martineau’s intention in presenting Allen as a suffering hero at the end of the narrative. The injustice of Allen’s fate is yet another indication of society’s ills. Allen is a new kind of hero who exerts himself not only for a social cause but also for everyday domestic concerns, and who endures, rather than triumphs, in consequence of his heroic campaign and his affection for his family. In short, his heroism is characterized by its humble practicality and altruistic selflessness. In *A Manchester Strike*, Martineau succeeded in dramatizing her long-term preoccupation with the idea of true heroism combined with what she considered the foremost issues of modern society.

This chapter has primarily focused on Martineau’s development as a fiction writer. In the next chapter, I will focus again on her interest in the human mind. As we have seen in each of the previous chapters, Martineau’s deep-rooted belief in the importance of Hartleian psychology is reflected in her early works of fiction in various ways. To write a work of fiction focusing on human interiority was one of her major goals. *Five Years of Youth*, which I discussed in chapter five, can be considered her first attempt, but it was hampered by the immaturity of her skill as a fiction writer. After the rapid maturing of her power of fictional representation in the *Illustrations*, she turned once again to her interest in human mind as the central theme of her first full-length novel, *Deerbrook*, the subject of my final chapter.
Ch. 7:  *Deerbrook* (1839) as a ‘Psychological’ Novel

*Deerbrook* was published in 1839. In spite of the general expectations, which were running high, its actual reception turned out to be an ambivalent one. An article in the *Edinburgh Review* that appeared shortly after the publication of the novel exhibited a division of opinion.\(^1\) The reviewer was quick to notice several positive features of Martineau’s fiction that had already been identified in the responses to the *Illustrations of Political Economy*: the ‘poetical beauty’ of the descriptions, her true and strongly expressed sentiments, and ‘a deep knowledge of human nature.’ On the other hand, the review was also quick to notice the novel’s particular weaknesses such as its thin plot, and the occasional lack of plausibility in the course of events and actions.\(^2\) However, it was not so much this combination of strengths and weaknesses as another particular feature of the novel, which was singled out later in the review, that contributed most to divide opinions among contemporary readers. The *Edinburgh* reviewer commented:

> Of the merits of Deerbrook, foremost in our opinion are its able analyses of dispositions, and especially of what may be called the morbid anatomy of human passions.\(^3\)

Although it was introduced as one of the ‘foremost’ merits of the novel, the very words chosen, namely, ‘the morbid anatomy of human passions’ indicated the reviewer’s ambivalence. It suggested an awareness that although the novel’s insight into ‘human passions’ was as consummate and palpable as to be called an ‘anatomy,’ it could be, at the same time, repulsive either morally or aesthetically as the word ‘morbid’ implied.

What characterizes *Deerbrook* is its psychological insight into the emotional lives of the characters. Most of these emotions are private feelings that are usually hidden. The novel shows that the intensity of such emotions often threatens the character’s peace of mind and sometimes erodes their minds from within. It was such a display of

\(^1\) Sanders (2004) xi. Sanders writes, ‘From the moment of its publication, *Deerbrook* divided critical opinion, and it has continued to do so ever since.’

\(^2\) ‘Deerbrook; A Novel,’ 495.

\(^3\) ‘Deerbrook; A Novel,’ 496.
emotion and their overpowering effects upon the mind that divided the reactions of readers. In a letter to her mother, Jane Carlyle described a friend’s response when she was asked her opinion of Deerbrook. She wrote, ‘She made wide eyes at me and drew her little mouth together into a button.’ Her friend’s ‘wide eyes’ and buttoned mouth told more eloquently than any words of her disapprobation of the novel, which was shared with Jane Carlyle herself. If this was one extreme reaction, there was also a middle-ground and a somewhat muted response from the future George Eliot. In her letter to Herbert Spencer in 1852, Marian Evans told him that she had read Deerbrook and was ‘surprised at the depths of feeling it reveals.’ The other extreme reaction was from Charlotte Brontë. In her letter to Martineau in 1849, written under the pseudonym of Currer Bell, Brontë claimed that the novel had ‘really done him good, added to his stock of ideas, and rectified his view of life.’ Even though there is no knowing exactly what Brontë thought she owed Martineau, it would not be so wrong to assume that she was inspired by what was called ‘the morbid anatomy of human passions’ in Deerbrook.

Three years after writing this letter, in 1853, Brontë published her third novel, Villette. With its extensive analysis of a hidden emotional life, it is tempting to regard it as a direct offspring of Deerbrook. Surprisingly, in her Daily News review of Villette, Martineau severely criticized the novel’s representation of subjectivity. Although there was more than a decade between the publication of Deerbrook and Villette, given the seeming affinity of the two novels, Martineau’s criticism of Villette is perplexing to the modern reader. What strikes us most is that Martineau doubted the ‘necessity and truth’ of its heroine Lucy Snowe’s suffering:

> With all her objectivity, ‘Currer Bell’ here afflicts us with an amount of subjective misery which we may fairly remonstrate against; and she allows us no respite . . . . An atmosphere of pain hangs about the whole, forbidding that repose which we hold to be essential to the true presentment of any large portion of life and experience.

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8 Allott, 172.
Martineau argued that the truth of life could be found only in the ‘repose’ of an objective mind and rejected the validity of Lucy’s suffering by calling it ‘subjective misery.’ She continued, ‘It is not thus in real life . . . . there is an absence of introspection, an unconsciousness, a repose in women’s lives.’

One may wonder whether Martineau’s opposition to subjectivity was not self-contradictory, given that she apparently endorsed the significance of subjective experience in her own novel. For example, Maria Young, another solitary suffering teacher like Lucy Snowe, was presented sympathetically throughout the novel and her private feelings and reflection on her unhappy life were depicted poignantly. It is possible that Martineau’s view of the inner life had undergone a considerable change since writing Deerbrook so as to make her opposed to certain aspects of subjectivity. However, the seeming contradiction makes one suspect that from the outset, Deerbrook was written from a completely different perspective on the inner life from that which informed Villette.

The purpose of this chapter is to determine on what principles or theories the psychological representation in Deerbrook was based. For this purpose, first, I will give a brief overview of the relationship between psychology and novels in the early-to-mid Victorian era. Then, I will discuss Martineau’s unique attitude toward human interiority by examining her portrayal of ‘introspection’ and the ‘hidden passions’ of the characters in relation to her lasting adherence to Hartleian moral philosophy at this stage of her career. This will clarify Martineau’s particular position and role in the development of so-called ‘psychological realism’ in the Victorian novel.

Psychology and the Novel in the 1830s and 1850s

The decade of the 1850s has a particular importance in the relationship between psychology and the novel. In her influential classic work, Novels of the Eighteen-forties (1954), Kathleen Tillotson points out that ‘the growing tendency to introspection in the novel’ from the 1830s had completely set in by the 1850s. She notes the negative reaction of a contemporary reader to Charles Kingsley’s novel Westward Ho! in 1855, about which the reader complained that it ‘had too little of the inward’ to satisfy ‘one’s modern tastes.’ Similarly, Nicholas Dames quotes George Eliot’s review of Westward

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9 Allott, 173.
10 Tillotson, 131. The comment was by Emily Winkworth in a letter to her sister.
Ho!, where she used the phrase “‘psychological’ novel” to refer to a certain type of domestic novel in vogue that made a sharp contrast to Kingsley’s novel. According to Dames, it was the first instance that the two words—‘psychology’ and the ‘novel’—were put together to make the phrase ‘psychological novel.’

Turning to the nascent science of psychology, the field had become wider and more dynamic by the mid-century. Discourses on the mind emerging from physiology and popular ‘pseudo-sciences’ like phrenology and mesmerism were becoming increasingly influential and were challenging the long established metaphysical or philosophical concepts of the mind. By the mid-century, psychology had become, in the words of Rick Rylance, ‘largely an eclectic, generalist field.’ Many Victorian novelists were known to have a serious interest in various psychological issues and debates, and their works often revealed their particular views on the mind, which in themselves made up a part of the wide-ranging discourses on the mind. Modern critical works have explored the implication of various strands of psychological thought for many mid-to-late Victorian novels.

In spite of its particular emphasis on the inner lives of the characters, Deerbrook has not been the object of serious critical attention in terms of its relationship to any strand of nineteenth-century psychology. After a long period of neglect, a serious re-evaluation of Deerbrook began in the mid 1970s, when the novel’s particular importance to the development of the domestic novel was emphasized by critics such as Vineta Colby and Valerie Sanders. However, both of these critics share a dissatisfaction that Martineau’s characters do not have enough psychological complexity to make ‘a full imaginative exploration’ of the moral and emotional issues in the domestic scenes. Whereas Colby simply points out Martineau’s incapability of ‘penetrating psychological analysis’ and the ‘inappropriate language’ she uses, Sanders goes on to suggest the possible reason for these shortcomings:

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13 One of the most influential pioneering works in this field is Sally Shuttleworth, Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996).
14 Sanders (1986) 80.
In the 1830s novelists had not yet developed a sophisticated psychological and emotional vocabulary which might have enabled Martineau to explore Hope’s feelings more subtly, as George Eliot was to do in *Middlemarch*, drawing on a new scientific range of reference. Martineau, instead, writes a philosophical novel . . .16

Sanders is right to say that *Deerbrook* is ‘a philosophical novel’ rather than a novel ‘drawing on a new scientific range of reference.’ However, this does not automatically mean that *Deerbrook* has little to do with psychological theories. Even though it does not comply with the modern concept of ‘science’ based on experimental investigation, philosophy was indeed regarded as a most orthodox ‘science’ of the mind throughout most of the nineteenth century. It was not because she had no concept or theories of the mind to draw on but because the theories that informed her writing were of a different and more traditional kind that *Deerbrook* appears somewhat conventional and lacking in depth to a modern perspective. Martineau was in fact actively involved with the current theories of the mind and explored their implications in *Deerbrook*, just as many later Victorian novelists were to do in their works.

As I have discussed in the previous chapters, Martineau based her idea of the working of the mind on associationism. In *Deerbrook*, associationist ideas appear in the early part of the novel, when the reader becomes aware of the private feelings of the heroines for the first time. Hester and Margaret are sisters of marriageable age who have recently been orphaned and have just arrived in Deerbrook to stay with the family of their cousin Mr. Grey. The sisters exchange their first impressions of their hosts and their guest Mr. Hope after retiring to their room. Although they found the petty concerns and gossip that filled most of the conversation tiresome, both have been struck by a comment made by Hope. Margaret observes:

‘. . . I am sure Mr Hope, for one, is of a different order. He dropped one thing, one little saying, which proved this to my mind.’

‘I know what you mean—about the old man that is to be our guide over that heath they were talking of—about why that heath is a different and more

beautiful place to him than to us, or to his former self. Is it not true, what he said?’

‘I am sure it is true. . . . I know that no tree waves to my eye as it did ten years ago, and the music of running water is richer to my ear as every summer comes round.’

‘Yes; I almost wonder sometimes whether all things are not made at the moment by the mind that sees them, so wonderfully do they change with one’s mood, and according to the store of thoughts they lay open in one’s mind. If I lived in a desert island (supposing one’s intellect could go on to grow there), I should feel sure of this.’

It is obvious that their understanding of the working of the mind is based on associationist ideas. As Margaret affirms, drawing on the episode of the old man and her own felt experience, the development of a person’s power of sight or hearing is thought to be dependent on his or her experience. Secondly, Hester’s impression that the all things she perceives seem to be ‘made at the moment by the mind’ and that the perception depends on ‘the store of thoughts . . . in one’s mind’ implies the process of association that accompanies cognition. Thirdly, the environment is considered an important factor for the development of the mind as is suggested by Hester’s doubt about the growth of one’s intellect on ‘a desert island.’

Thus, Deerbrook is also informed by a particular theory of the mind along with many Victorian novels written after around 1850. However, the very theory that inspired Martineau and the way she embraced it differed considerably from most novels in the later period, as is reflected in their respective aims and approaches in representing the inner lives of their characters.

**Introspection in Deerbrook**

One of the central aims of Deerbrook is to describe people’s hidden interior lives and to demonstrate the significant proportion of their private and social lives it occupies. Such centrality of human interiority is suggested from the early part of the novel. There is a symbolic conversation between its main characters—the Ibbotson sisters, Maria

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Young and Philip Enderby. They discuss the moral and aesthetic implications of man’s secret motives and intentions in comparison to the concept of allegory as a poetic expression:

‘The most cunning allegory that ever was devised is plain and easy in comparison with the simplest true story, —fully told: and a man is a poet in proportion as he fully tells a simple true story.’

‘A story of the mind you mean,’ said Mr Enderby, ‘not of the mere events of the life?’

‘Of the mind, of course, I mean. Without the mind the mere life is nothing.

‘Is not allegory a very pretty way of telling such a story of the mind, under the appearance of telling a story of a life?’

‘Yes,’ said Margaret; ‘and that is the reason why so many like allegory. There is a pleasure in making one’s way about a grotto in a garden; but I think there is a much higher one in exploring a cave on the sea-shore, dim and winding, where you never know that you have come to the end, —a much higher pleasure in exploring a life than following out an allegory.18

Hester argues that a story merely of the external events of life has no meaning. The statement conveys her impatience with a way of looking at life that is indifferent to human interiority. When Hester insists that ‘the simplest true story, —fully told’ is her idea of a story that has the depth and complexity of real life, she seems to be arguing that the truth of life lies more in one’s interiority but that few stories have represented it as fully as it should be.

Margaret, on the other hand, agrees that allegory is one way of representing human interiority. She also admits its limit and states her idea that there would be ‘a much higher pleasure in exploring a life than following out an allegory.’ This indicates her willingness to explore the hidden depths of real life rather than just to speculate upon it in her imagination. As it is expressed by the metaphors of ‘a grotto’ or ‘a cave,’ she conceives of human interiority as a shady mysterious area. The image of a large maze-like cave on the sea-shore juxtaposed to that of a small grotto in the garden indicates her

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wish to embark on an exploration on a much larger scale even if she encounters some unknown peril or danger. These metaphors can also be read as an indication of Martineau’s own authorial ambition that she would present a truer picture of human interiority through a realistic narrative rather than by allegories.

Martineau’s objective, however, was not solely to probe into man’s hidden depths and present it minutely as a true picture. This was a fundamental difference in attitude to that of Charlotte Brontë and other later Victorian novelists who were also interested in depicting human interiority. In *Deerbrook*, Martineau employs a consistent system of imagery to describe man’s thoughts and his moral condition, where the darkness stands for a hidden precarious sphere of one’s mind and light or sunshine stands for moral health which enables one to withstand negative emotions. Such imagery indicates that the primary aim of the novel is not to depict man’s darker passions but to provide a philosophical ‘light’ that can dispel such darkness.

Edward Hope is a village apothecary who provides overall medical care for the inhabitants of Deerbrook. In a letter to his brother he illustrates one aspect of his duty as a medical professional in a small village:

> . . . I could tell you a good deal that you do not and cannot know of the perils and troubles attendant upon being the depository of so much domestic and personal confidence as my function imposes upon me the necessity of receiving. I sometimes long to be able to see nothing but what is apparent to all in society. . . . but it is childish, or indolent, or cowardly, to desire this. While there is private vice and wretchedness, and domestic misunderstanding, one would desire to know it, if one can do anything to cure or alleviate it. Dr Levitt and I have the same feeling about this; and I sometimes hope that we mutually prepare for and aid each other’s work. . . . When I see him bland and gay among us, I feel pretty confident that his greatest pleasure is the same as mine,—that of reposing in the society of the innocent, the single-hearted, the unburdened, after having seen what the dark corners of social

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19 Martineau contributed several allegories concerning religious faith or morals to the *Monthly Repository* in the early 1830s. According to Mineka’s identification of the authorship of articles in the *Monthly Repository*, Martineau contributed seven ‘parables’ to the periodical between 1830 and 1832. They are all very short allegorical stories about two pages long. Although most of them have no specific titles other than a generic title such as ‘A Parable,’ a few of them have additional titles as ‘Faith and Hope. A Parable’ or ‘The Solitary: A Parable,’ both were published in the *Monthly Repository* in 1830. See Mineka 415-416.
Hope regards it a considerable burden that he cannot avoid witnessing the hidden troubles or apprehensions of his patients. However, he considers it his duty to ‘cure or alleviate’ his patients’ moral ailments just as he does their physical complaints. It is notable that he compares his duty with that of Dr. Levitt, the village rector, and believes that they share the same mission of dispelling the darkness which secretly corrodes people’s interior lives and bringing the repose of an innocent unburdened mind. It is also noticeable that Hope mentions that Dr Levit is very learned ‘in the complex science of Humanity.’ Thus, Hope and Dr. Levit are both presented as legitimate investigators and guardians of people’s mental lives. On the other hand, the novel depicts introspection or self-analysis by most of the other characters negatively. In spite of Martineau’s interest in presenting human interiority, Deerbrook generally represents introspection as an unhealthy, morally questionable act. Such a negative view is presented mainly through Hope’s precarious domestic life after his marriage.

The main plot of Deerbrook revolves around Hope’s misguided marriage to Hester out of a false sense of duty and honour in spite of his hidden attachment to Margaret. He is to suffer from the pressure of keeping the secret in order to maintain peace within his household, where, according to the common practice of the time, Margaret comes to live with the couple as an unmarried sister. Thus, Martineau introduces what Sanders call ‘the explosive domestic triangle.’ However, contrary to modern expectation, Martineau’s psychological analysis is not focused on Hope nor is his secret revealed to either of the sisters at the end. Most of the emotional crises in the household are caused by a particular weakness in Hester’s character. The ‘explosiveness’ of their emotions is ascribed more to her character than to the complicated situation caused by the ill-judged marriage.

What Martineau presents as Hester’s defect is her ‘morbid’ tendency to introspection, which was noticed by Hope earlier in the novel. He reveals his private feelings toward Hester and Margaret in the letter to his brother quoted above:

The eldest, Hester, is beautiful as the evening star. Margaret is very
different. It does not matter what she is as to beauty, for the question seems never to have entered her own mind. . . . She is, and there is an end of the matter. Such pure existence, without question, without introspection, without hesitation or consciousness, I never saw in any one above eight years old. Yet she is wise… The airs of heaven must have been about her from her infancy, to nourish such health of the soul. What her struggle is to be in life I cannot conceive, for not a morbid tendency is to be discerned. . . . Hester is also well worthy of worship. . . . She has a generous soul, strong affections, and a susceptibility which interferes with her serenity. She is not exempt from the trouble and snare into which the lot of women seems to drive them,—too close a contemplation of self, too nice a sensitiveness, which yet does not interfere with devotedness to others.23

The difference between Margaret and Hester lies in their mental habits. While Margaret is perfectly exempted from qualms that can arise from ‘introspection’ or ‘consciousness,’ Hester has a ‘susceptibility’ to ‘too close a contemplation of self’ that can disturb her peace of mind. Absence of introspection is in fact what makes Hope fall for Margaret in spite of Hester’s outstanding beauty and the similarity of the two in terms of their overall superiority in sentiment and intellect. Hope is ecstatic in praise of Margaret, using such phrases as ‘pure existence’ or ‘the airs of heaven.’24 However, he suppresses all such feelings after he regards it as his duty to marry Hester. On the other hand, Hester’s tendency to introspection shows up repeatedly as a major threat to the peace of their domestic life. The problematic nature of introspection is suggested by the

24 As mentioned in chapter five, the Ibbotson sisters are modelled on the Flower sisters. It is most probable that Margaret is modelled on Eliza, the elder of the two. After pointing out that the Flower sisters provided Martineau with the models of the Ibbotson girls in Deerbrook as well as of the Byerley girls in Five Years of Youth, Garnett writes: ‘Her description of the extemporaneous and almost involuntary character of Eliza Flower’s “woodnote wild” offers an epitome of her mental constitution. She was emphatically a child of nature, open and transparent as the day.’ Garnett, 66. Martineau’s letters to W. J. Fox between 1830 and 1831 indicate that she was particularly close to Eliza and confided in her. On the other hand, it is not clear whether Hester is modelled on Sarah, the younger of the sisters. According to the memoir by E. F. Bridell-Fox, Sarah’s health was always delicate and she broke down completely for a time due to the shock and grief of her father’s death in 1829, and that constant change of air and scene was devised by her anxious sister Eliza. Perhaps this was the background of her seemingly less engagement in the relationship with Martineau. E. F. Bridell-Fox, Sarah Flower Adams, A Memoir and Her Hymns, also The Flock at the Fountain (A Catechism for Children), (London: Christian Life Publishing Company, 1894) 8.
expressions that are employed to refer to her tendency, such as her ‘sick heart,’ her ‘propensity to self-torment,’ her ‘old malady,’ etc.

It is obvious that a dominant theme of Deerbrook is a criticism of introspection as morally problematic. In this sense, the novel seems to stand on a different ground from that of Villette or other works by Charlotte Brontë, who does not seem to question the moral implications of introspection and emphasizes the significance of subjective experience. The difference between the two authors indicates that the psychological thought that has informed Martineau’s view of the mind is within the boundary of philosophical inquiry, namely ‘moral philosophy.’ Michael S. Kearns argues that from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the first third of the nineteenth, psychology ‘was a well-defined endeavour,’ the general goal of which was to ‘discover the laws of thought and thereby improve human life.’ It is obvious that Martineau, who was born in 1802 and the formation of whose intellectual background can be stretched back to the 1810s, belongs to this period. Naturally, she had a different perspective on psychology from the mid-Victorian novelists.

In Deerbrook, introspection is considered especially harmful when it is concerned with one’s ‘mood’ or emotional state. Hope’s admonishment to Hester conveys this clearly:

‘Do not let us get into the habit of talking about spirits,’ said Hope. ‘I hear quite enough about that away from home; and I can assure you, professionally, that it is a bad subject to dwell upon. Everyone who lives has variations of spirits: they are like the sunshine, or like Dr. Levitt’s last sermon . . . . “It is to be felt, not talked about.”’

He criticizes ‘the habit of talking about spirits,’ and asserts that one should leave ‘spirits’ to be felt without being talked about. The same attitude toward one’s feelings is shown by Margaret in her remonstrance to Hester when she falls back on her habit of ‘morbid’ introspection:

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28 Kearns, 45.
‘Do let us speak of something else,’ said Margaret. ‘We are wrong to think and talk of ourselves as we do. There is something sickly about our state while we do so, and we deserve to be suffering as we are. . . .’

Hester’s self-tormenting complaint that precedes this admonishment serves as an effective dramatic representation of what Martineau called ‘the subjective misery’ in her criticism of Villette.

We find two strikingly similar statements on excessive introspection in Martineau’s early writings. One is in a letter written to her recently widowed sister-in-law in 1825. She writes, ‘Try to turn your attention from your feelings altogether . . . . Feelings are given us to be directed and controlled, not to be thought about: much less talked about.’

This somewhat trite moralizing is based on her understanding of the nature of feeling according to associationist psychology. A similar statement can be found in her essay, ‘On the Agency of Feelings in the Formation of Habits’ published in the Monthly Repository in 1829, which was discussed in chapter five. In this essay, she explains the function of feelings as an instrument to form one’s principles and habits drawing upon the associationist idea that the repetition of sensations and associations makes the structure of one’s mind. She then goes on to explain that the individual is not responsible for his or her feelings because they depend on circumstances beyond one’s control:

We are not responsible for our feelings . . . . They are not so directly in our own power, and are not the subjects of exhortation, approbation, or reproof . . . . Our emotions depend so much on circumstances wholly beyond our own control . . . . As far as we can . . . . command our associations, and govern the actions which are connected with certain feelings, it is in our power, and it is our duty, to cherish or repress those feelings . . . .

This is a good example of Martineau’s practical application of Hartleian doctrine. In his Observations on Man, Hartley explains that emotions are ‘no more than Aggregates of simple ideas united by Association’ and that they ‘are excited by Objects, and by the

32 ‘On the Agency of Feelings in the Formation of Habits,’104.
Incidents of Life.’ Although he does not elaborate on its moral implication here as Martineau’s essay does, he is explicit about the adventitious nature of emotion.

_Deerbrook_ can be considered Martineau’s fictionalized thesis upon the human mind. It is in accordance with her conviction that narrative is the best form in which ‘nearly every kind of moral science’ can be taught, as she declared in the preface to the _Illustrations of Political Economy_ in 1832. She uses the word ‘moral science’ here to refer to social and humanistic studies in contrast to the field of natural science. In _Deerbrook_, she tried to illustrate what ‘moral philosophy,’ or more specifically—Hartleian psychology—teaches about the human mind just as she did with principles of ‘political economy’ in the _Illustrations_. In this sense, in spite of obvious differences between _Deerbrook_ and the _Illustrations_, in their scale or degree of sophistication, one can still observe similarities in their way of illustrating the moral sciences that informed them. For example, both present dialogues between mentor-like figures and pupil-like characters.

One of the major issues explored in _Deerbrook_ is Hester’s unstable and violent emotions which are directly connected to her acute sense of self-blame and remorse. Her recurrent emotional crises often end in a lengthy dialogue with Hope. One such takes place in the evening before their wedding when Hester is suddenly seized by a vague fear of their united future. Hope tries to soothe her by telling her how to cope with a troubled mind:

‘... I believe half the misery in our lives is owning to straining after happiness... it is the weakness of many of us to stretch far forward into the future, which is beyond our present reach...

‘O, if you could prove to me that such is my weakness!’ cried Hester.

‘I believe that it is yours, and I know that it is my own, my Hester. We must watch over one another... And are we not sacrificing... our repose of mind, the holiness, the religion of the hour?’

‘I know I have defiled the holiness of this hour... But as my thoughts were troubled, was it not better to speak them? I could not but speak them.’

‘You cannot but do and speak what is most honourable, and true, and

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33 Hartley, _Observations on Man_ (1749) part 1, 368.
34 Martineau, _Illustrations_, vol.1 (1832) xiii.
generous . . . . ‘35

Their conversation, which continues as a long series of questions and answers, reads more like a mock dialogue for religious or philosophical instruction than a realistic representation of an emotionally charged scene between a couple about to be married.

Thus, some of the dialogues in Deerbrook, like those in the Illustrations, are presented with a didactic purpose. This overt didacticism, with its accompanying stiffness and clumsiness is something that critics point out as a particular weakness of the novel. However, it is not so much Martineau’s immaturity as a novelist as her conviction of the purpose of literature and also of psychology that made her place such central importance on moral instruction.

Another instance where didactic purpose is prioritized over realism in Deerbrook is Mrs. Rowland’s seemingly motiveless malice against the Hopes and Margaret. Although it is depicted as an accumulated animosity originating in her petty rivalry and jealousy of the Greys, who are distant relations of Hester and Margaret, it is unrealistic for anyone to have such intense and persistent malice against someone without a specific reason. Sanders, for instance, considers it ‘the weakest part of the novel, unless we regard Mrs Rowland as being the portrait of a pathological personality type.’ 36 However, this very motivelessness has a significant meaning if one considers the theoretical background to the novel. Near the end, Hope identifies the cause of Mrs. Rowland’s unreasonable hatred toward them as ‘the result of long habits of ill will, of selfish pride, and of low pertinacity about small objects.’ 37 He analyses the mental process which he presumes to have worked in her mind:

‘. . . . She nourished up all her personal feelings into an opposition to us and our doings; and when she had done this, and found her own only brother going over to the enemy, as she regarded it, her dislike grew into a passion of hatred. Under the influence of this passion, she had been led on to say and to do more and more that would suit her purposes, till she has found herself sunk in an abyss of guilt. I really believe she was not fully aware of

36 Sanders (2004) xviii. Sanders also refers to Margaret Oliphant’s criticism of the novel: she ‘grumbled about the “curious unnecessariness of the whole.”’ xv.
Hope’s analysis corresponds with Martineau’s illustration of the relationship between feelings and habits in the *Monthly Repository* essay quoted above. It is emotion that produces a series of actions and their connection is crystalized into a habit or principle by the power of association if the process is repeated frequently. The chief moral message of the essay is that even though emotion is involuntary and uncontrollable, one should still control one’s action so as not to connect negative feelings to malicious behavior until such a connection becomes a habit of mind. Mrs. Rowland’s malice can be seen as a dramatized version of this moral message.

It is clear that the primary objective of *Deerbrook* was to enlighten the readers about the nature and proper management of their inner lives. Martineau’s views on this changed very little in the years after 1839. She noted in her *Autobiography*, that in spite of various flaws she could spot in *Deerbrook* then, she was glad that she had written it because she believed that the novel had been useful in instructing ‘the discipline of temper’ along with ‘overcoming a prejudice against the use of middle-class life in fiction.’ In the earlier part of the *Autobiography*, she stated that at nineteen she had tried to write ‘a sort of theologico-metaphysical novel’ but gave up halfway finding it ‘excessively dull.’ It is possible that she tried once again to write such a novel— informed by both theology and metaphysics, a synonym of ‘psychology’ then, —and ended up with *Deerbrook*.

‘The morbid anatomy of human passions’

Before *Deerbrook*, the general estimation of Martineau as a fiction writer was based upon her stories in the *Illustrations of Political Economy*. In 1832, a reviewer of the *Illustrations* expressed a high opinion of her fiction:

> She can portray the beauty of heart and mind without degenerating into a sickly sweetness, and the workings of the darker passions without

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overstepping the modesty of nature. . . . And throughout everything she has written, there breathes a calm undertone of sustained philosophical cheerfulness.\footnote{Miss Martineau’s Illustrations of Political Economy, ’Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine (August 1832), rept. in Illustrations of Political Economy: Selected Tales, ed. Deborah Anna Logan, (Peterborough: Broadview Editions, 2004) 417.}

The reviewer’s praise is directed to Martineau’s skill of depicting the interiority of her characters in a well-balanced manner so as to make it both touching and enlightening. On the other hand, the readers of Deerbrook were surprised by a much more candid and detailed portrayal of the characters’ emotions including their dark passions than in the Illustrations. In this sense, Deerbrook was a significant departure from her previous works in terms of the representation of human emotions. This development, however, was in fact continuous with her aim in the Illustrations. As we have seen in the previous chapter, in 1833, several months after the review in Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine, Martineau published an essay on Walter Scott, also in Tait’s, where she discussed her idea of the mission of the modern novel in relation to his heritage:

\begin{quote}
The grandest manifestations of passion remain to be displayed; the finest elements of the poetry of human emotion are yet uncombined; the most various dramatic exhibition of events and characters is yet unwrought. . . .\footnote{The Achievements of the Genius of Scott,}44
\end{quote}

This can be taken as the expression of her own ambition as a fiction writer to explore new ground for the novel to answer the needs of the modern era. Martineau pursued this aim of representing human passions more thoroughly and obviously in Deerbrook than in the Illustrations.

Most of the graphic portrayals of passion in Deerbrook occur in the scenes of emotional conflict in the Hope household. Hester is presented as a ‘domestic torturer’\footnote{Deerbrook (2004) 244.} and Margaret her primary victim. Unlike the mock dialogues between Hester and Hope, which are filled with religious and philosophical teachings, the emotional conversations between the sisters overwhelm the reader with their extreme tension and a sense of entrapment. At a climactic point, they criticize each other in words of bitter resentment:
‘You [Hester] leave me [Margaret] nothing,—nothing but yourself,—and you abuse my love for you. . . . I have found a friend in Maria; and you poison my comfort in my friendship, and insult my friend. There is not an infant in a neighbour’s house but you become jealous of it in the moment I take it in my arms. There is not a flower in your garden, not a book on my table, that you will let me love in peace. How ungenerous. . . that you refuse me the least solace, when my heart is breaking with its loneliness! O, it is cruel!’

‘You do not trust me’ she [Hester], cried; it is you who make me miserable. You go to others for the comfort you ought to seek in me. You place that confidence in others which ought to be mine alone. . . . You have faith and charity for people out of doors, and mistrust and misconstruction for those at home. I am the injured one, Margaret, not you.’

Their respective claims reveal the essential nature of their conflict. It is not hatred but love that hurts both victim and also the torturer.

This insight into the nature of this specific domestic conflict can be interpreted as a product of Martineau’s personal experience in adolescence. In the Autobiography, she recounts several conflicts she experienced at home, which she ascribes to her sense of insecurity combined with her jealous temper. Although she relates how she grew out of such emotional problems toward the end of her adolescence, there is no doubt that she retained a vivid memory of her experience well into adulthood. In the later part of the Autobiography, she states that in writing Deerbrook she found ‘a relief to many pent-up sufferings, feelings, and convictions’ and that [she] ‘can truly say that it was uttered from the heart.’ Thus, in addition to the intellectual background of Hartleian moral philosophy, Deerbrook is also informed by Martineau’s own personal need to objectify and sublimate her past emotional issues.

Her object is to reveal the emotional constraint suffered in the closed arena of domestic life. In this sense, Hope’s psychology, which is criticized for not being

explored sufficiently, can be seen differently. His interiority is depicted more as a sufferer and redeemer of the moral problems within intimate family relationships, rather than as a victim of his own troubled feelings, torn as he is between his secret love for Margaret and a sense of duty to Hester. In spite of his consistent virtuousness and philosophical calmness, he at one point loses his peace of mind and nearly despairs when he confronts an emotional clash between Hester and Margaret. In his solitude, he gives a desperate cry:

‘So this is home!’ thought he, as he surveyed the room, filled as it was with tokens of occupation, and appliances of domestic life. ‘It is home to be more lonely than ever before—and yet never to be alone with my secret! At my own table, by my own hearth, I cannot look up into the faces around me, nor say what I am thinking . . . .’

It is true that Hope’s agony is rooted in his secret attachment to Margaret, which naturally deprives him of perfect confidence with his family. However, what he laments, namely the difficulty of keeping his private feelings to himself and his intense sense of loneliness, can be regarded as typical aspects of domestic emotional problems. They are imbedded in the nature of home as a place where one’s most private desires have to coexist with those of other family members. Naturally, one’s primary emotional needs, such as a desire to love and to be loved, are at their most acute in the domestic sphere. Hope’s situation, though not a typical one, effectively suggests that home is the very place where emotional tensions are heightened to the maximum degree.

The emotional conflicts in the Hope household, though based upon their complex and unusual situation, in fact is universal in its essence. Such universality is suggested by a mute soliloquy of their servant Morris, who has served the sisters since their childhood and who secretly discerns Hope’s hidden feelings for Margaret. Silently watching over the emotional tension, she senses what lies at the core of their problems. Her anxiety is summarized in her prayer: ‘. . . Father, if thou hast made thy children to love one another for their good, let not love be a grief and a snare to such as these.’

Morris’s prayer is primarily concerned with Hope’s hidden and unacceptable love for Margaret.

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49 See note 16 in this chapter.
51 Deerbrook (2004) 266.
Margaret and the possible disaster it could bring to their household. However, her prayer also reveals a universal truth that it is often love that produces grief and a snare.

_Deerbrook_ presents love as a precarious human passion, but at the same time presents a solution. Near the end of the novel, Hester finally comes to terms with her problem:

‘... no one is more aware than I that it is a blessing to love, —a blessing still, whatever may be the woe that must come with the love. It is a blessing to live for another, to feel for another far more deeply than the most selfish being on earth ever felt for himself. I know that it is better to have felt this disinterested attachment to another, even in the midst of storms of passion hidden in the heart, and of pangs from disappointment, than to live on in the very best peace of those who have never loved. . . . I should have been more willing, both for you and for myself, to meet the suffering which belongs to the exercise of all the highest and best part of our nature. . . .’

Thus, the emotional complication in the Hope household does not end in tragedy. Hester’s words can be read as a central teaching of the novel, that one should transform love from an egoistic passion to an altruistic devotion to others.

This teaching is once again based upon Hartleian moral philosophy. As I have discussed in the previous chapters, Martineau was much influenced by the second part of Hartley’s _Observations on Man_, where he discusses God’s grand design for the human race. Richard T. G. Walsh explains what Hartley envisioned as the progressive stages of the development of humanity as follows:

According to Hartley, when we become more able to love others, the self matures. . . . Whereas the lower self is fulfilled in rational self-interest, animated by imagination and ambition, the higher self is fulfilled in moral sensibility, inspired by sympathy and theopathy. When we fully express the latter, we experience “perfect self-annihilation and the pure Love of God” (Vol. II, prop. 67). Identification with divine purposes, Hartley posited,
leads to moral conduct and happiness.\textsuperscript{53}

It is this Hartleian view of humanity that permeates Martineau’s idea of love and passion. Sanders introduces an account by Anna Jameson who once argued with Martineau over the nature of love and disagreed with her:

The idea, for instance, that Love, as a passion, is merely one of many—on a par with love of fame, ambition, love of money, power & equally capable of being managed, resisted, modified, seems to me wrong. This led to a great deal of argument.\textsuperscript{54}

As Sanders summarized Jameson’s view, Martineau’s idea of love can be seen as an indication of ‘a basic ignorance of human nature.’\textsuperscript{55} However, the fact that she regarded love as a controllable passion could also be taken as a different conviction about human nature rather than ignorance of it.

\textbf{Solitude and Philosophical Introspection}

\textit{Deerbrook} presents Hester as a character who finally gains repose by transforming her insatiable demand for love into selfless affection for others. In this case, what is at stake is the nature of love but not the availability of love itself. \textit{Deerbrook} also portrays another emotional problem which arises when one is devoid of any intimate relationship filled with strong emotion. It is the case of Maria Young, who is bereaved of her father, her only family, in a coach accident and forced to live alone, earning her living as a governess. She has once experienced a youthful love for Philip Enderby. However, after the sudden decline in her fortunes, which not only killed her father but also lamed her, she loses his faint attachment to her and any hope of developing a new affection. Her portrait as a solitary governess reveals what it meant to live with an unrequited and repressed love deep inside oneself. Maria tells Margaret about her idea of women’s

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{53} Richard T. G. Walsh, ‘David Hartley’s Enlightenment Psychology: From Association to Sympathy, Theopathy, and Moral Sensibility,’ \textit{Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology} 37.1 (2017)
\item \textsuperscript{54} Quoted by Sanders (1986) 63. Sanders explains that Jameson’s account related to her visit to Martineau when she was ill at Tynemouth in 1842.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Sanders (1986) 63.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
love for men, or its meaning as a genuine emotional experience. She calls it ‘a voice which shakes her being to the very centre, —more awful, more tremendous, than the crack of doom.’ What Maria illustrates as women’s love is a kind of love which should be kept within oneself forever or until it is finally requited. This is another kind of dark passion in Deerbrook illustrated with blatant frankness which surprised many contemporary readers. On the other hand, this was the very element of the novel that seems to have given inspiration to Charlotte Brontë.

As we have already seen, there is a great difference between Martineau and Brontë in their respective treatment of female passion. A major difference is that Martineau portrays the emotional difficulties or sufferings of women caused by such passion as a moral problem which should and can be solved. In Maria’s case, her repressed affection gradually turns into bitter disappointment and subsequent despair, which corrodes her from within and deprives her of repose, without being noticed by anyone. Martineau’s primary objective in Deerbrook was to disclose the hidden tragedies of unrequited love among women as a problem which was inherent in the structure of contemporary society.

One can perceive a certain connection between this and what Martineau argued in her essay on Scott in 1833. In the essay, she complained that the true pictures of women had not been presented in any fiction so far including that of Scott. She stated that Scott ‘has been found fault with for the poverty of character of the women of his tales.’ However, instead of criticizing his poor portrayal of female characters, she adroitly makes an ingenious defence of it:

The best argument for Negro Emancipation lies in the vices and subservience of slaves: the best argument for female emancipation lies in the folly and contentedness of women under the present system, —an argument to which Walter Scott has done the fullest justice. . . .

Although Martineau makes a paradoxical argument that drawing women foolishly or complacently helps to raise questions about their situation in society, one cannot help sensing her ambition to make clear her own position by presenting a true picture of women. It is notable that Maria is emphatically portrayed as a ‘philosophical’ character,

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57 ‘The Achievement of the Genius of Scott,’ 455.
unlike Scott’s female characters whom Martineau in her essay called ‘passionless, frivolous, uninteresting beings.’ This was because she intended to present repressed emotional issues not as deriving from personal weakness but inherent in the customs and institutions of society.

One of the major achievements of Deerbrook is that it presented a forceful picture of the social and psychological effects of unrequited love. Although its stark realism was offensive to some readers, it is this very offensiveness that can be taken as a proof of how successfully the novel disclosed the hidden issues of polite society, a theme with universal appeal. Although she portrays the issue of unrequited love as a socially constructed problem, Martineau does not suggest any solution to it in Deerbrook. Rather than calling for a change in the customs or institutions of society, she presents a moral solution to the problem on an individual level. Maria succeeds in turning her dark passion into goodwill towards others, particularly to her newly found friend Margaret.

What has made such transformation possible for Maria is her power of introspection. There is, in fact, another kind of introspection in Deerbrook, which is different from Hester’s ‘morbid’ one. In chapter five of the first volume, there is a long solitary reflection by Maria. Looking out from the school-room window at the people gathering flowers in the field, she contemplates the working of the mind, such as the nature of emotions, recollection, and imagination:

The delight of a happy mood of mind is beyond everything at the time; it sets one above all that can happen; it steeps one in heaven itself; but one cannot recall it: only remember it was so . . . . The imagination is a better medium than the eye . . . . Once having received pictures into our minds, and possessing a clear eye in the mind to see with, the going about to obtain more is not of very great consequence. This comforts one for prisoners suffering carcer duro, and for townspeople who cannot often get out of the streets; and for lame people like me. I wish there was as much comfort the other way,—about such as suffer from unhappy moods of mind, and know little of the joy of the highest.  

Even though the subject of her introspection is one’s ‘mood,’ Maria does not brood on her own feelings. Rather, she contemplates the transient nature of feelings, which are irretrievable once they pass. She compares them to visual images, which one can recall and re-experience even more vividly with the help of the imagination. In spite of her unhappy situation, her introspection is anything but morbid.

It is obvious that Martineau intended to present Maria’s introspection as a ‘philosophical’ one, directed by her interest in the working of the mind. She represents intellectual contemplation as something that can be a refuge from emotional sufferings just as it was for her in adolescence. At the end of Maria’s long reflection the narrator notes, ‘Any one who could at the moment have seen her face, would have pronounced her cheerful at heart; and so she was.’61 In spite of such a rather forced serenity and rationality, Maria’s introspection is not void of emotion. Her reflection upon the mystery of the human mind leaves a lasting impression upon the reader, which is all the more convincing because of her quiet yearning for a ‘happy mood.’

Near the end of the novel, Maria admits that the loneliness she has to bear is a most trying evil. She, however, argues that it is precisely ‘that which has been the peculiar trial of the greatest and best of their race’ and that ‘there can be nothing morally fatal’ in such a trial.62 This can be taken as Martineau’s own conclusion about the evil of solitude that she herself experienced in her youth. It can be also turned into a philosophical repose. In the very last scene of the novel, in wishing happiness for Margaret, who is going to marry Philip, Maria compares her own fortune with that of her friend:

‘... In my wilderness, some tempter or another comes, at times when my heart is hungry, and my faith is fainting, and shows me such a lot as yours,—all the sunny kingdoms of love and hope given into your hand,—and then the desert of my lot looks dreary enough for the moment; but then arises the very reasonable question, why we should demand that one lot should, in this exceedingly small section of our immortality, be as happy as another; why we cannot each husband our own life and means without wanting to be all

Although her observation sounds overly philosophical and possibly unrealistic, it can be taken as Martineau’s final message about the management of emotions. It is followed by the very last passage of the novel:

Margaret kept Philip waiting while she lighted her friend’s lamp; and its gleam shone from the window of the summer-house for long, while, talking of Maria, the lovers paced the shrubbery, and let the twilight go.

Though the passage appears like a simple description of a peaceful evening, it can be read symbolically. In *Deerbrook*, the exploration of human interiority is presented as a consistent contrast between darkness and light. Here, one can see the contrasting imagery once again. Maria’s lamp, whose light will continue shining on her friends after dark, can be regarded as a symbol of her philosophical repose that can help them not to stumble or become lost in the darkness of their own minds.

Martineau’s representation of the mind and the emotions in *Deerbrook* was based on a different perspective from that of the later generation of novelists. It is based on the theory of associationist psychology, which she transformed into a practical moral philosophy. Even though it was tainted with didacticism, the novel still had a power to inspire a future generation. Whether morbid or philosophical, her representation of introspection had a great impact on the way of depicting subjective experiences. Martineau can be considered a novelist who revealed a new territory of psychological exploration to the novelists such as Charlotte Brontë, whose course to take a different direction from her own.

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Conclusion

The initial question that prompted the subject of this thesis was the problem of the inexplicable relationship between the mind and the self in Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*. In this novel, the eponymous heroine and narrator Jane continually refers to her mind and its faculties, such as reason, feeling, conscience, or memory as something that gives advice to, admonishes, or even rebels against her self. This is pointed out by Karen Chase with the following example:

When Jane first learns of Rochester’s previous marriage, she wonders how to respond: “But the answer my mind gave,—‘Leave Thornfield at once’—was so prompt, so dread, that I stopped my ears” (ch. 27). What a telling formulation! she stops her ears so as not to hear her mind, as though her mind and she were different beings in different places.¹

The passage does not strike the reader as strange when reading the novel and it appears to describe an experience common to everyone. However, it is in fact, logically unsustainable that her *mind* should stand apart from her *self* to whom it belongs, and confront her *self* as an advisor or opponent. If her *self*, the essence of her entity, exists apart from her *mind* and has its own will and thought, where are they located and what is their relation to each other? I considered the incongruity of the special configuration of the three closely related concepts, namely, *mind*, *self*, and *soul*, which partly overlap and yet are separate from each other. This prompted me to examine how other contemporary writers conceived of their relationship in order to compare their ideas with hers.

Martineau was the first writer I chose to examine. However, it soon became clear that it was difficult to compare the two in this respect. Martineau rarely discusses the mind in relation to such transcendental concepts as the soul, God, or the hereafter, whereas Brontë’s idea of the mind or the self is firmly connected to these concepts. The

second discovery which immediately followed this was that for Martineau, the **self** should not be the object of exploration because she considered it a morally questionable act. Although this provided me with a useful point of comparison between Brontë and Martineau, it also convinced me that it was of little use to discuss the relationship of the three concepts—mind, self and soul—in relation to Martineau. This made me change the course and main purpose of my study to focus on Martineau’s idea of the mind and the way she dealt with problems of the mind in her fiction.

This thesis has demonstrated that Hartleian psychology, particularly the teachings in the second part of *Observations on Man*, underpins various elements of Martineau’s fiction written in the 1820s and 1830s. In many cases, it makes up the chief ideological foundation of their central moral messages. Except for one of the tales from the *Illustrations* series and her novel *Deerbrook*, all of the stories discussed in this thesis are tales whose purpose was to give moral or religious instructions to young people. As we have seen in each chapter, some of the teachings appear neither straightforward nor relevant when they are viewed independently of their ideological context, Hartleian psychology. It is important to note that this is made up of not only its famous doctrine of association but also its prophetic vision of a programme for the human race to realize an ideal world permeated with sympathy and benevolence. As we have seen in successive chapters, many elements which are apparently irrelevant to the overall moral message of the story, such as landscapes or scenes which produce sensations or feelings are in fact meant to constitute an integral part of their moral message. There are also instances in which the moral teaching appears exaggerated or pointless, as in the case of warning against characters’ excessive sensibility or imagination. However, these also gain persuasiveness when placed within their theoretical context.

It is unclear how long Hartley’s influence lasted. As I noted in the Introduction, in her *Autobiography* which she wrote in 1855, Martineau stated that she still regarded Hartleian philosophy as ‘philosophically true, as well as holy, elevating and charming’ and that ‘its influence might very well spread into all the events and experience of life, and chasten the habits and feelings.’ On the other hand, this statement was preceded by her blunt dismissal of it as full of ‘monstrous deficiencies and absurdities.’ Such an ambivalent assessment at this point in her career suggests two things: one is that the

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inspiration she derived from Hartleian philosophy lasted until this later stage of her writing life; the other is that her wholehearted acceptance of his theory was replaced by a detached and critical assessment of its legitimacy by this point. It is obvious that this change was brought about by her gradual estrangement and final apostasy from Unitarianism and also from Christianity.

Several pages after the passage which contains the phrases quoted above, Martineau inserted a summarizing comment about the transformation of her religious standpoint over the years since her early twenties. She stated that what made her apostasy from both Unitarianism and Christianity complete was her confirmation of ‘the monstrous superstition’ in them. It seems not coincidental that she used the same word, ‘monstrous’, to express her view of aspects of Hartleian philosophy. Considering the fact the young Martineau was greatly inspired by Hartley’s theological argument in the second part of Observations on Man, the main purpose of which was the defence of Christianity, the primary target of her harsh criticism would appear to be this part, though she also rejected his doctrine of vibration with the same degree of acerbity.

Elsewhere in the Autobiography Martineau stated that her severance from Unitarianism became complete when she wrote Eastern Life, Past and Present (1848) which was published after her travel in Egypt and the Near East in 1846-47. It combined a travel account with what she calls ‘the genealogy, as it appears to me, of the old faiths—the Egyptian, the Hebrew, the Christian and the Mohammedan.’ Critics have pointed out that Martineau’s growing sense of the historicity of Christianity and its irrelevance was confirmed by this point. When dealing with this period in the Autobiography, Martineau inserted three letters she wrote to Henry George Atkinson, who was then a close friend and who would later become the co-author of her Letters on the Laws of Man’s Nature and Development (1851), a book which was regarded as a declaration of atheism. In these letters, the main topics of which were her changing views on Christianity and faith in general, one can also detect some traces of the influence of Hartleian philosophy. The third of these letters presents a summary of her current views on faith of all kinds:

As for the whole series of Faiths, my present studies would have been enough,

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if I had not been prepared before, to convince me that all the forms of the higher religions contain (in their best aspect) the same great and noble ideas, which arise naturally out of our own minds, and grow with the growth of the general mind; but that there is really no evidence whatever of any sort of revelation, at any point in the history.  

This view, which regards the development of the individual mind as directly connected to the development of the whole of mankind can be regarded as a natural development from Hartleian psychology and provides sufficient explanation for Martineau’s somewhat ambivalent evaluation of Hartleian philosophy in the later part of her career. As critics have noted, the mature Martineau rejected the Unitarianism of her youth in favour of free thought and Positivism, but retained the necessarianism she had taken up after reading Priestley’s edition of Hartley.

The second aim of my thesis was to explore how Martineau’s fiction contributed to the development of nineteenth-century fiction as a whole. As I have demonstrated in chapters three to seven, one contribution was to shift the meaning and significance of her characters’ inner lives from overwhelmingly religious concerns to more secular ones. Even her earliest religious tale, Christmas Day contains few references to God and almost no reference to the word soul. The heroine’s inner life is presented almost exclusively in terms of its emotional development. It is also noticeable that in Five Years of Youth Martineau describes the problematic emotional life of her heroine without inflicting any moral punishment on her in the plot. Such a separation of the realistic portrayal of emotional problems and the didactic purpose of the story is also a progressive movement.

Martineau’s other significant contribution to the development of the fiction was that she made family life the main site of her characters’ emotional experience or development. This was obviously prompted by her own personal experience in her childhood and adolescence. She was aware that the domestic sphere was a perilous place in term of the emotional conflicts it contained as demonstrated in her earliest publication, Devotional Exercises. Although it has already been amply pointed out by critics that Martineau was the pioneer of domestic fiction in relation to Deerbrook, her concept of and aim in representing domestic life can be traced back to her very first

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publication, which was written about fifteen years before Deerbrook.

To summarize: The primary achievement of my thesis is to have revealed the deep and extensive influence of the second part of Hartley’s Observations on Man on Martineau’s fiction. Its significance lies in the fact that up to this point the influence of Hartleian psychology on nineteenth-century fiction has been discussed almost exclusively in terms of its doctrine of association which is often considered in relation to its materialistic implications. However, the second part of Observations on Man is characterized by an almost opposite religious implication. Although there may not have been many Victorian writers and novelists who like Martineau were inspired by the second part of Hartley’s theory, it is important to be aware of its theological aspect. Elizabeth Gaskell is a possible successor to Martineau in the sense she was also informed by Hartleian psychology as a part of Unitarian theology. Critics have pointed out her associationist view of the mind combined with its moral and religious implications and the necessarian scheme which works in her narratives, particularly in her novel Ruth (1853).

What has not been achieved in this thesis is connected to what Martineau did not do or intentionally avoided. Namely, she did not regard the mind as an entity primarily connected to soul, nor was she interested in self-analysis. Her prohibition against self-analysis made her stop short of a deeper exploration into her characters’ emotional conflicts. It is as if she made her characters adopt her own attitude, namely, to solve their emotional problems intellectually. In Deerbook, Maria, the solitary governess is a good example. Although her philosophical resignation at the end of the novel makes her the epitome of spiritual heroism, a position which Martineau recommends, it is undeniable that it leaves readers dissatisfied. Although Martineau was helped by her belief in Hartleian psychology to make a more secular delineation of human interiority, its philosophical aspects prohibited her from moving further forward in her exploration. Possibly this was the reason why later Victorian novelists depended on other kinds of psychological theories—like phrenology for Charlotte Brontë or physiological theories for George Eliot—to develop their own representations of man’s interiority.

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