

High Church traditions within the Church of England"; Benjamin Brodie, "author of *Psychological Inquiries: in a series of essays, intended to illustrate the mutual relations of the physical organisation and the mental faculties* (1854)"; Bessie Rayner Parkes, appropriately identified as a "feminist writer and activist, met GE in 1852 and they became friends," to which is added: "She was the first editor of the *English Woman's Journal*, founded in 1858 with Barbara Bodichon and others, but after her marriage to Louis Belloc in 1867 she abandoned her feminist activities. Following Belloc's sudden death in 1872 she got into financial difficulties because of an imprudent investment." The entry for Eliot's close friend Barbara Bodichon is equally and unnecessarily prolix. The art of constructing notes for the general as well as the specialist reader is never straightforward, but succinctness is a good rule of thumb.

There is much to praise in the editorial apparatus of the *Journals*, not least the excellent headnotes to each of the sections which silently endorse, if further justification were required, the value of publishing the *Journals*. One of the most impressive is the headnote to "Recollections of Italy 1860," which Cross printed almost complete, and which both Acton and Henry James condemned for its tediousness in their reviews of the *Life*. Undeterred by the weight of this distinguished opinion the editors see the journal as marking a watershed, not only in Eliot's ability to understand and assimilate what she was seeing, but in the impact of her travels on her subsequent fiction, marking as they did a movement away from fiction which drew on a well of childhood memories to more intellectually ambitious fiction which had at its heart an interrogation of the historical past and its relation to the present. "From now on," the editors note, "her fiction was to be explicitly concerned with the presence of the past in the present."

There are many details to be savoured from the headnotes, not least some of the "direct transpositions" of the Italian journey into *Middlemarch* some twelve years later. There are also understandable but regrettable absences, notably the decision not to reprint some of her more minute financial reckonings which form part of the original notebooks. And there is the missing journal from 1849 to 1854. Of all the documents which formally constitute a writer's manuscripts, notebooks are unquestionably the most problematic to reproduce. This edition of *The Journals George Eliot* is a triumph of imaginative and intelligent editing. They will take their place among the essential documents in the armoury of Eliot scholarship.

Joseph Wiesenfarth

I have an inescapably personal response to Margaret Harris's and Judith Johnston's edition of *The Journals of George Eliot*. To read them again in this format is for me like finding old friends whom I haven't seen for years but who have clearly prospered since I saw them last. They've made some money, bought a house, and furnished it carefully with choice items; they've doffed their old clothes for something better than just decent. Theirs may not be designer fashions but they look wonderful in them. Which is to say that when I met the journals in the early 1970s while working on *George Eliot's Mythmaking* (1977) I found them often difficult to make out in manuscript and looking only marginally better in a tattered typewritten transcript. But even in such a down-at-heel outfit, the journals were invaluable documents. Now they look a lot better, have an enhanced value, and are universally accessible. Now anyone can use what formerly only

visitors to the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University could use. Harris and Johnston have transformed the journals into every scholar's documents by editing them with intelligent care. They present them in a clear text with introductions to the edition as well as to each of its discrete sections, and they also provide the reader with an explanatory index that makes the journals both easy and a joy to use.

My interest in George Eliot's use of mythological references in *Middlemarch*, sparked by "The Key to All Mythologies," first drew me to the journals in their original form. Chapter nineteen of the novel suggested to me that Ariadne and Antigone had something central to do with the extensive patterns of allusion in *Middlemarch*. Similar patterns already showed themselves in *Romola*. Was there some source that could confirm for me that I was really reading something out of these novels, not into them?

I actually found two sources: one was the journals that Harris and Johnston have now made available to us; the other was a Beinecke manuscript labelled "COMMONPLACE NOTEBOOK." As it turned out I later edited the latter as *George Eliot: A Writer's Notebook, 1854-1879* because it proved to be not a commonplace book but a working notebook. A few pages of entries from Adolf Stahr's *Torso: Kunst, Künstler und Kunstwerk der Alten* may serve as an instance. Eliot made these entries as working notes for her review "The Art of the Ancients" which appeared in the *Leader* in March 1855. The journals told us exactly when she read Stahr's book, and Harris and Johnston tell us that Stahr and "the celebrated novelist" Fanny Lewald, whom George Eliot met in Weimar, "had openly lived out of wedlock" just as Lewes and Marian Evans, soon to be a celebrated novelist herself, were beginning to do (32).

My interest in chapter nineteen suggests that the journals often work in tandem with various notebooks that George Eliot kept. They allow a scholar to know exactly when George Eliot read a particular author or work. Let me continue with this one chapter of *Middlemarch* for a moment. A scant 1700 words contain allusions to Dante, Hazlitt, Plutarch, Apollonius, Ovid, Sophocles, Winckelmann, Stahr, Coleridge, Overbeck, Lessing, and Schiller and involve the classical figures of Hercules, Theseus, Ariadne, Dionysus, Antigone, Aeolus, Cupid and Psyche. Seven of these authors appear in the exemplary fifty-six-page explanatory index to the Harris-Johnston edition of the journals, and their writings contain discussions of the mythological figures just mentioned. Let's look at the entry on Winckelmann, for example:

Winckelmann, Johann Joachim (1717-68), head of the Department of Antiquities in Rome and author of *History of Ancient Art* (1763), lived with his patron Cardinal Albani. His *Unpublished Antique Monuments: A catalogue of the highlights of the Villa Albani collection* (1767) includes an engraving of the bas-relief of Antinous
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Page 347 takes us to George Eliot's "Recollections of Italy 1860," which Harris and Johnston give in full, and there we find George Eliot discussing the bas-relief of Antinous, "the least beautiful of all the representations of that sad loveliness that I have seen." She would have earlier read a discussion of Winckelmann's description of Antinous in Stahr; it would have allowed her to compare the ill-fated Captain Anthony

Wybrow in "Mr Gilfil's Love Story" to Antinous, who died young after proving to be beautiful, but nothing else. These few instances show that if one is interested in tracking the chronology of Eliot's readings and their influence on her imagination, the journals as Harris and Johnston have edited them are invaluable.

As *Recollections of Italy 1860* suggest, the journals fed into more than George Eliot's fiction. They fed into a series of recollections of Weimar, Berlin, Illfracombe, the Scilly Isles and Jersey, all of which Harris and Johnston give us. These are autobiographical sketches made from diary and journal entries. But engaging as they are, they do not have the intensely personal side to them that we find in the journals, to which George Eliot confides her and George Henry Lewes's physical ailments and her own emotional fragility. I find myself deeply moved by George Eliot's self-doubt: "I do not feel very confident that I can make anything satisfactory of *Middlemarch*," she writes on 11 September 1869. She has to remind herself that she's been there before: "I have need to remember that other things which have been accomplished by me, were begun under the same cloud." But she didn't find it easy to be cheered up by past events: "I am not hopeful about future work: I am languid, and my novel languishes too. But tomorrow may be better than today," she writes on 20 May 1870 (139). And tomorrow does prove better. Writing of *Middlemarch*, she registers happy surprise: "The reception of the book hitherto has been quite beyond what I could have believed beforehand, people exalting it above everything else I have written. Kohn is publishing an English Edition in Germany; Duncker is to publish a translation; and Harpers pay me £1200 for reprinting it in America" (142). Her constant recording of proceeds from sales shows another side of Marian Evans; certainly she was a careful and successful financial planner!

When Lewes's son Thornton dies, she remarks on 19 October 1869: "This evening, at half past six o'clock our dear Thornie died," and reflects, somberly: "This death seems to me the beginning of our own." She was then just a month shy of her fiftieth birthday. We are reminded of the difference between our life expectancy and that of the Victorians. And although they believed in progress, they didn't believe in personal perfection—at least George Eliot didn't. On 1 January 1874 she writes: "I have been for a month rendered almost helpless for intellectual work by constant headache and nausea, but am getting a little more freedom. Nothing is wanting to my blessings but the uninterrupted power of work. For as to all my unchangeable imperfections I have resigned myself" (144). This doesn't mean, however, that she'll give up fighting the good fight: "And we have no real trouble. I wish we were not in a minority of our fellow-men!—I desire no added blessing for the coming year but these: That I may do some good, lasting work, and make both my outward and inward habits less imperfect, that is, more directly tending to the best uses of life" (134). The journals make it everywhere evident that the most important things in George Eliot's life are her own and Lewes's health, their constantly growing affection, and the effect of her writing on the reading public: "many deeply affecting assurances of its influence for good on individual minds" (143).

These journals give us a very human and affecting picture of a great writer who was in so many ways like us, only better. Better because she always wanted to be a better woman and a better writer. The journals everywhere testify to that. If they do not reveal to us the secrets of George Eliot's creative genius, if they do not explain to us

how such genius could doubt itself so greatly—"shall I ever be good for anything again?—ever do anything again?" (120)—they constantly show her facing down her doubts and depressions and getting on with the job. I find the day-to-day unfolding of George Eliot's life particularly poignant as entry follows entry until there are no more.

Having known these journals for many years in a less accessible state and used them principally as a scholarly tool, I rejoice now in having them as a book to read as well as a source to consult. For giving the journals to us in an edition that simplifies our work as well as increases our pleasure—perhaps, even edifies us with its remarkable moments of humanity—we owe Margaret Harris and Judith Johnston our thanks and admiration.

Response

Margaret Harris and Judith Johnston

In embarking on this project our prime concern was to make George Eliot's voice heard, as far as possible unmediated by our editorial intervention. "As far as possible" is an important qualification, given that in part we were working against the now notorious editing of the journals by J.W. Cross and the more scholarly but still (for good reason) selective editing of them by Gordon S. Haight. The received version of the journals, Cross's, had a century's accumulation of interpretation attached to it. The new, more complete text we have established at the least adjusts these accumulated interpretations and at times oversets them completely.

We were then faced by the need to make a set of editorial decisions about how best to present the journals to today's readers. We assumed that some of them would be George Eliot experts, others would be people working in the nineteenth century, and some perhaps of that mythical genus, the "ordinary" reader. We were fortunate in various ways that Andrew Brown took up the project for Cambridge University Press, providing us both with the informed advice of the editor of the Clarendon *Romola* as well as with publishing expertise. It was he who alerted us to the category of reader of the edition who would, as he put it, "read the book from the back," and that observation was a significant element in the decision to annotate largely by means of the explanatory index in which footnotes and index could be economically combined. The headnotes provide other and necessary and complementary information. A significant motivation here was to make George Eliot's text readable, as little encumbered as possible by obvious apparatus. Our decisions did not follow any editorial orthodoxy but were based on our interpretation of the text of the journals. That text is in itself incomplete because of missing items (specifically, the journal covering 1849-54; the 1878 diary; and the journal of the Spanish journey of 1867). We wanted to be true to our recognition that the journals themselves are a partial account (in a different sense) of George Eliot's life.

It is gratifying in the three commentaries to which we are responding to learn how George Eliot's voice is now heard by readers of the journals. We were motivated throughout by the desire to facilitate the work of others: even pre-publication Rosemary Ashton used the edition for her authoritative *Life*, as did John Rignall who is editing the *Oxford Reader's Companion to George Eliot*, and Helen Small for her *Oxford World's*