Deconstructing Englishness, Relocating Britishness: Arthur Hugh Clough's *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich*

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> I will look straight out, see things, not try to evade them;
> Fact shall be fact for me, and Truth the Truth as ever,
> Flexible, changeable, vague, and multiform, and doubtful
> (Clough, *Amours de Voyage* 129, Canto V, ll. 100-102).

Introduction

In 1848, Arthur Hugh Clough, the Victorian iconoclastic poet who, in spite of being one of the main interpreters of Victorian dilemmas and contradictions, is still suffering from critical neglect in Italy and elsewhere, astounded the Victorian reading public with a work which, at different levels, deconstructs Englishness as well as relocates the concept of Britishness. Though presenting an apparently simple narrative frame, *The Bothie of Tober-Na-Vuolich. A Long Vacation-Pastoral* (from now onwards indicated as *The Bothie*) is a complex long poem characterized by heteroglossia, hybrid poetic forms and genre heterogeneity – all aspects somehow reflecting the poet's ideas of national identity and Britishness.

Through an inventive, idiosyncratic metre and a variety of styles and registers, Clough controversially and provocatively suggests that, behind its facade of cultural stability, Victorian Britain could not be conceived as a nation state with an organic, central political and cultural identity, but as several nations within the nation, an ethnic and linguistic

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multitude, that is, marked by decentralization and fragmentation. This image of a dis-united Kingdom is formally conveyed through a specific textual strategy which consists of adopting a heterogeneous amalgam of diversified languages, each expressing a particular geographical or cultural identity or coinciding with individual idiolects. Clough's aim is to challenge the cohesive force represented by the English language in a nation which, to his eyes, as well as to those of the hero of *The Bothie*, is "Only infinite jumble and mess and dislocation" (89, Canto IX, l. 64). However, this image of disharmony and disconnectedness conveys much more than a mere critique of Victorian conservative ethics and ideological structures. It reflects the author's existential philosophy, his sceptical frame of mind, as well as his idea of a poetry that, taking issue with his friend Matthew Arnold's classicist ideals of beauty, grandeur, and decorum, must represent the flow and chaos of life, express epistemic (self)doubt, and, at the same time, sublimate the ugliness and incongruities of experience by representing, rather than escaping, them. Such a poetics and *Weltanschauung* clearly emerge in Clough's long poems *Amours de Voyage* (1858) and *Dipsychus* (posthumous, 1865), as they similarly underpin the stylistic patchiness of *The Bothie*.

The poem was written in two months in 1848, after a five-week sojourn in Paris, during which Clough and Ralph Waldo Emerson, whom he met there, observed with great satisfaction the effects of the February revolution[1]. Interestingly enough, 1848 was also the apogee of the Chartist movement in Britain[2], whose impact on the poem (both in the first and later editions) is evinced by the author's adoption of some typical characteristics of Chartist rhetoric, such as the use of Biblical intertextual references, ballad-like refrains, the Bunyanesque hymn, class antitheses and martial symbolism. With Chartist songs *The Bothie* also shares the celebration of the ideal of freedom, which, in the case of Clough, can be also associated with the particular circumstances in which the poem was conceived. In 1848, he had to resign his Oxford Fellowship at Oriel college as a consequence of his refusing to subscribe to the Thirty Nine Articles of the Anglican Church[3], a choice which paradoxically produced in him a sense of release and euphoria, rather than defeat and failure. As a matter of fact, while the Oxonian community was expecting him to write a work which would explain, if not apologize, for his unorthodox decision, Clough composed instead a completely different poem, inspired by the reading parties and trips to the Scottish Highlands that he, as an Oxford tutor, used to organize for his students. Both the geographical setting and the narrative frame of the *Bothie* are based on those moments in Scotland, and, interestingly enough, it is from such a decentred perspective that he presents his vision of British society and culture.

Indeed, *The Bothie* tells the story of an undergraduate reading party or vacation study group that, accompanied by their tutor, leave the domestic, albeit stifling, Oxford environment to travel to a remote site in the Scottish Highlands. The hero is one of these students, Philip Hewson, an upper-middle class bookish young man, would-be poet and advocate of social reform. The pastoral vacation turns for him into an opportunity for romance with three women with a different class and social status: the peasant girl Katie, the aristocratic heiress Lady Maria, and Elspie, the self-educated daughter of an ex-blacksmith, ex-soldier and ex-schoolmaster and now farmer, living in a typical Highland *bothie*, the small cottage named in the title. Eventually, Philip decides to forsake his cloistered Oxford life, marry Elspie, emigrate to New Zealand with her and start there a new, simple life as a farmer.

Philip the exile might be regarded as the alter-ego of Clough's friend, Tom Arnold – brother of the more famous Matthew – who, being disenchanted with Oxford education and, more generally, Victorian Britain, moved for a period of his life first to New Zealand and then Tasmania, before eventually returning to England[4]. In fact, the poem's final idyll only represents one of the many alternatives Philip might have chosen, thus no unique or definitive solution to his inner tensions. In that sense, rather than Tom Arnold's experience, Philip mirrors, just like the eponymous "double-minded" protagonist of Clough's *Dipsychus*, his creator's watchful scepticism and self-contradictoriness, which makes him constantly oscillate between idealism and common experience, metaphysical aspirations and the call of reality, thus turning any choice into no more than a vexing solution.

The Bothie celebrates relativism, arbitrariness and inconsistency as opposed to an unshakable faith in absolutes and unequivocal truths. As the critic W. D. Shaw underlines, "Clough reminds us that to answer questions is always to delimit arbitrarily a whole *terra incognita* of unknowables" (Shaw 141). Inadvertently, Clough seems to be offering his own idiosyncratic version of the Keatsian concept of "Negative Capability", the condition of "being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason" (Buxton 77), an epistemological approach whereby open possibilities and what may be defined as integrity of doubt prevail over conclusive answers or easy solutions. This outlook also involves Clough's contentious conception of Englishness and alternative representation of a multifaceted Britishness, which reflect some of the ideas expounded by Linda Colley in her magisterial 1992 study, recently republished by Yale University Press (2014): the problematic concept of a "British national identity", and the persistence of divisions and tensions in the "forging" of the "British nation" from 1707 onwards, which "was never based on ethnic or cultural uniformity" (Colley xxx).

At the same time, I maintain that Clough's vision of a (dis)United Kingdom even looks forward to theorisations on the Britishness question which show the long-term effects of historical processes, such as the 1707 Union of Parliaments and the building of the British empire, on post-war and contemporary British culture and society. "The British state and the British nation", Andrew Gamble and Tony Wright argue, "was always a sham, a political creation which suited the interests of those groups in all nations which favoured the Union and wished to create a new supranational focus for loyalty and allegiance" (1). By the same token, John K. Walton has called attention to "the lack of a clear overarching sense of British identity". Consequently, "the existence of a general preference […] for geographical definitions of the self in society that focus on entities nearer to home", and "ideas about what it is to be British have been, and are being, relocated along a variety of axes and in several dimensions" (Walton 2), including issues of region/nation, class, gender/sexuality, ethnicity and culture (4, 6).

In particular, the present article will argue that Clough's deconstruction of Englishness can be tackled by focusing on three interrelated "axes" and "dimensions" of the poem. First, metrical eccentricity and genre heterogeneity, which are features of its essential heteroglossia – an ideological, rather than merely formal, choice. Form and significance are always juxtaposed in Clough's poetry. Secondly, the relationship between Englishness (or Britishness for that matter), gender and, more specifically, masculinity, a theme conveyed by the hero's three liaisons with Scottish women foregrounding national socio-political divisions. Finally, what may be defined as the South-versus-North paradigm, that is, the dialectics between centre and periphery deriving from the Oxonians' incursion into the exotic Scottish Highlands, the latter becoming an intercultural “contact zone” (Pratt 33-40) which exposes the prejudice and tensions marring national unity. In combining these three aspects to address the issue of Englishness/ Britishness, my work builds on previous scholarly studies which have examined each of them individually or as interconnected components of the poem, starting from Isobel Armstrong’s pioneering chapter on Clough included in *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics and Politics* (1993).

There Armstrong defines the “brilliance” of *The Bothie* as deriving from the poet’s creation of a form “to which a politics was intrinsic” (“The Radical in Crisis”, 178) and a “radical language” that becomes “the object of democratic investigation” by exploring “speech as it is determined and organised by and in specific social groups” (181). It is my contention that this politics characterizes both the first 1848 and posthumous 1862 editions of *The Bothie*, although, as far as its idiosyncratic English hexameters, I agree with Joseph Patrick Phelan that the corrections to the metre introduced in revised versions of the poem show Clough’s “retreat from the radical position” achieved in the first edition (166). Christopher Matthews’ study of the poem’s “heterosexual and political narrative” and of “the synergy between the poem’s sexual and metrical allegories” (478) is behind my identification of a similar synergy between the language(s) and the theme of (multi)national identity in the poem, as well as it underpins my analysis of the intermeshing of the protagonist’s erotic life and politics.

In line with Francis O’Gorman’s analysis of the poem’s “difficulties”, that is “problems, blockages in the communication of meaning […] dramatized in the poem itself” (127), the present reading of *The Bothie* will show how Clough foregrounds the divisions and fractures of British society without making any ultimate effort to recompose them. After all, such “difficulties”, meant as both relational impediments and internalized conflicts, are ingrained in the author’s philosophical outlook. As the article will demonstrate, “difficulties” also concern the relationships between English and Scottish characters, following the Oxford students’ temporary “exile” to the Highlands. In examining this intercultural encounter as well as Philip and Elspie’s final migration to New Zealand, the present article is also partly indebted to Jane Stafford’s reading of *The Bothie* as an example of “immigration narrative” (34) exposing telling connections between places and the experience of cultural dis- and re-location.

1. Heteroglossia and national identity

The poem's metrical idiosyncrasies and generic hybridity thwart any attempt at classifying it. *The Bothie*, a "curious mixture of seemingly incompatible ingredients" (Harris 39), can be variously defined as a Theocritan pastoral poem, an epic and a verse *Bildungsroman*, all suffused with a parodic penchant to play with each tradition's norms, transgress the boundaries between them and hybridize them. The Muse is to Clough a "Muse of great Epos, and Idyll the playful and tender" (Clough, *The Bothie* 91, Canto IX, l. 139). In his study on Clough, Walter E. Houghton defines *The Bothie* as a "modern poem" attempting "a synthesis of elements hitherto kept apart for reasons of simplicity or decorum" (112). Indeed, lyrical, narrative and dramatic passages alternate without fusing into that harmonious whole that Matthew Arnold saw as an essential requisite of poetry. Thus it is not surprising that Arnold untowardly described *The Bothie* as a "serio-comic poem" written in a "grotesque" (Thorpe 69) style which contrasts with the classical metre – the hexameter – adopted by the author, as Robert Southey and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow had done before him.

In fact, Clough reshaped the hexameter to adapt it to the cadences of conversational speech, in an attempt at combining high and low registers, high-flown and prosaic styles, thus deliberately giving rise to bathetic effects. In order to produce naturalistic speech rhythms, he subverted the traditional fixed form by instilling into its classical aura extravagant elements, deviations from the "norm", and anti-conventional prosodic turns. In other words, he constructed a boisterous metrical form which visually and phonetically could express the sense of freedom, the variety of experience and inquisitive spirit he intended to uphold in the poem. Charles Kingsley wrote that, reading the poem, one understands the warning that Clough gave to readers in an introductory note, that is, "to 'expect every kind of irregularity in these modern hexameters'. […] a large proportion of his hexameters are, to use the very mildest word, abnormal" (Thorpe 41).

On the one hand, Clough confirmed his iconoclastic and experimental attitude by refraining from adopting the conventional English metres; on the other hand, he did not commit himself to the classical tradition either, but he invented instead his own singular hexameter by letting the "longs" and "shorts" of quantitative metre go by the board and going by accent instead (six stresses yet any number of syllables). He was so innovative and irreverent in appropriating this metre that Charles Kingsley, in his review of the poem in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1849 wrote that his verses should not be defined as hexameters at all but were "a fire-new discovery of his own genius, to be christened henceforth Bothiaics" (Thorpe 43). Unlike Arnold, Kingsley admiringly commented on the "*bizzarerie*" of the poem in terms of both subject matter and style, and appreciated its genre hybridity observing that Clough "found the sublime and the ridiculous hand-in-hand, as they usually are […] on this earth" and "how a playful, mock-heroic key" can give scope "for all sorts of variations into the bucolic, sentimental, broad-farce, pathetic, Hebrew-prophetic, whatnot" (Thorpe 40). As the critic J. P. Phelan observes, mental agility is required in order to appreciate Clough's narrative poems, an "ability to switch rapidly between very different levels and registers" (Phelan 8).

Indeed, in *The Bothie*, Clough can easily oscillate from lyricism to scientific jargon to prosaic terminology, as in these passages referring to one of Philip's romantic escapades:

[…] by the mail, ere the morrow, came Hope, and brought new tidings;
Round by Rannoch had come, and Philip was not at Rannoch;
He had left that noon, an hour ago.
                                                            With the lassie?
With her? the Piper exclaimed, Undoubtedly! By great Jingo!
(64, Canto III, ll. 242-245)

So in the golden weather they waited. But Philip returned not.
Sunday six days thence a letter arrived in his writing.—
But, O Muse, that encompassest Earth like the ambient ether,
Swifter than steamer or railway or magical missive electric
Belting like Ariel the sphere with the star-like trail of thy travel
Thou with thy Poet, to mortals mere post-office second-hand knowledge
Leaving, wilt seek in the moorland of Rannoch the wandering hero.
(64, Canto IV, ll. 1-7)

Or, speaking about relationships between men and women, he can switch from architectural jargon to Biblical intertextual references. The former is used by Hobbes, one of the Oxford students, to tease Philip's diverse taste in female beauty, without consideration of their social rank:

Philip who speaks like a book, (retiring and pausing he added),
Philip, here, who speaks—like a folio say'st thou, Piper?
Philip shall write us a book, a Treatise upon *The Laws of*
Architectural Beauty in Application to Women;
Illustrations, of course, and a Parker's Glossary pendent,
Where shall in specimen seen be the sculliony stumpy-columnar
(Which to a reverent taste is perhaps the most moving of any),
Rising to grace of true woman in English the Early and Later,
Charming us still in fulfilling the Richer and Loftier stages,
Lost, ere we end, in the Lady-Debased and the Lady-Flamboyant
Whence why in satire and spite too merciless onward pursue her
Hither to hideous close, Modern-Florid, modem-fine-lady?
No, I will leave it to you, my Philip, my Pugin of women.
(53, Canto II, ll. 142-154)

A few lines after this passage, Philip retaliates this mockery, as well as his Tutor's warning against disregarding one's "station" in life, even in love, by taking issue with a phrase from the prayer-book: "*Doing our duty in that state of life to which God has called us*" (55, Canto II, ll. 202-203). As a matter of fact, in the long disquisition about women, labour and class in Canto II, Philip and his tutor seem to speak, as it were, two different languages: their speeches, as O'Gorman has poignantly noticed, meet "only obliquely", "rejoinders are only partially in focus" (O'Gorman 130-131). Adam's didactic and moralistic speech clashes with Philip's juvenile impetus and radical spirit. Communication in *The Bothie* may fail even between characters with the same social and educational backgrounds and, therefore, supposedly speaking the same language.

As has been said, the interaction of diversified voices and registers is a central feature of moral sense in Clough's work, of his intellectual honesty and existential scepticism. Such eccentric style and diction, moreover, accompany Clough's vision of a dislocated and fragmented British identity. As in his other masterpiece, *Amours de Voyage*, Clough exploits language to convey the many cultural and social divisions corroding the deceptive image of a unified English language as an effective means of communication. The poem is heteroglossic in the sense that it encompasses a conception of language, even a single national language, as a multi-discursive phenomenon determined by a variety of extra-linguistic factors which reflect the differences between individual characters, their world views, as well as between social groups and classes (i.e. gentry, keepers, gillies, peasants, clansmen, priests and ministers, landlords, marquises, and students)[5]. By presenting English as a polylinguistic system, Clough questions any centralized vision of a monological and monolithic British culture while depicting a complex, multilayered and differentiated national picture. So, the poem's linguistic heterogeneity becomes a political means of unmasking the conflicting forces lurking behind the apparently sturdy facade of Victorian security and self-confidence deriving from economic progress and imperial power. At the same time, the alternative image of Britishness that derives from it looks forward, with striking insight, to the future multi-cultural and multi-ethnic identity of Britain, and to definitions of culture as "an organism, nor a totality, nor a unity" which exists "in the relations" between itself and other cultures, and which is "the site of a dialogue, […] a dialectic, a dialect" (Craig 205-6). Actually, in the poem culture and language are sites of dialogic contest, of ethnic and social divides which the characters hardly manage to bridge.

Language in *The Bothie* is an individual, social, as well as a national question. Each of its characters is, as it were, defined by how he or she speaks. In Isobel Armstrong's words, Clough "evolved a radical language [...] by enabling language to become the object of democratic investigation", and by exploiting the power of words to be "a subjective correlative, so to speak, of an internal condition" ("The Radical in Crisis", 180) – in fact, an "internal" but also social condition. The peculiarity of the poem's diction results from Clough's remarkably authentic, yet also mocking or self-mocking, reproduction either of specific jargons, corresponding to the various classes or coteries the characters belong to, or of their own idiolects. For instance, Clough half-jokingly refers to the newly created "dialect" (Clough, *The Bothie* 45, Canto I, l. 29) which Lindsay, one of the students visiting the Highlands, has expressly concocted for the occasion: an effervescent undergraduate jargon flaunting the Oxonian party's intellectual or pseudo-intellectual pursuits, yet also meant as a self-caricature. Speaking from behind the narrator's mask, Clough mimics and deliberately inflates the students' use of a mock-heroic rhetoric, filled with Latinate words, sexual jokes, academic puns, bombastic repetitions, French borrowings and facetious epithets to refer to the single characters – Lindsay, for example, because of his linguistic creativity, is "the ready of speech, the Piper, the Dialectician (45, Canto I, l. 27).

In order to differentiate the students' coterie language from the narrator's voice, Clough generally italicizes their most idiosyncratic words and phrases, as when Hope, one of the students, in his typical singing rhythm, refers to the cottage and bathing place in the Highlands as the "*shop*" and the "*wash-hand-stand-bason*" (55, Canto II, l. 230). Or again when Lindsay, continuously interrupted by Arthur, tells the other students about their trip to the Highlands in a language which mocks the phraseology of their rivals, the undergraduate students from Cambridge:

And there was told moreover, he [Lyndsay] telling, the other [Arthur] correcting,
Often by word, more often by mute significant motion,
Much of the Cambridge *coach* and his pupils at Inverary,
Huge barbarian pupils, Expanded in Infinite Series,
Firing-off signal guns (great scandal) from window to window,
(For they were lodging perforce in distant and numerous houses,)
Signals, when, one retiring, another should go to the Tutor:—
Much too of Kitcat, of course, and the party at Drumnadrochet,
Mainwaring, Foley, and Fraser, their idleness horrid and dog-cart;
Drumnadrochet was *seedy*, Glenmorison *adequate*, but at
Castleton, high in Braemer, were the *clippingest* places for bathing,
One by the bridge in the village, indecent, *the Town-Hall* christened,
Where had Lauder howbeit been bathing, and Harrison also,
Harrison even, the Tutor; another like Hesperus here, and
Up the water of Eye half-a-dozen at least, all *stunners*
(61, Canto III, l. 136-150).

The overall effect is one of broken rhythm and lexical as well as typographical fragmentation, all somehow echoing what Clough, in "A Lecture on Dryden", defines as the "escaping components" of modern English language, which, after Dryden, hardly nobody has ever managed to "re-unite" and "re-vivify" (Clough, *Poems and Prose Remains* 332-333) – including himself, one may add, who in *The Bothie* dramatizes the "dissolution" which he sees affecting it. While John Dryden was able to promote a "democratic movement in language" (331) by adapting classical "elegance and propriety of writing" (330) to modernity's need of a new "living instrument", to the "desires and aspirations of the age" (332), the nineteenth-century English diction, according to Clough, is "popularized" in the sense of "vulgarized" (332-333). Not at all worried about appearing self-contradictory, in the "Lecture" Clough suggests that an "aristocratic reconstruction" would be needed to guide the contemporary "democratic revolution" (333) of language and re-unify the English language, whereas his own poetry seems to go in a different direction by evoking its disunity and diversity and, in a sense, also reflecting his existential anti-dogmatism. It "was wholly impossible", his wife wrote, "for such a character to accept any merely external system of authority" (Clough, *Poems and Prose Remains* 12) – an attitude which would seem to include his anarchic treatment of language.

The cohesion and authority of the English language appear as contentious issues already in the opening Canto, which is almost entirely occupied by a particular episode: Highlanders and Oxonian guests have their first "confrontation" when, during a dinner, they are asked to make public speeches. In the already quoted review in *Fraser's Magazine*, Charles Kingsley depicted this scene as a humorous picture containing all sorts of incongruities generated by the mixing up of English tourists with Scottish Highlanders: "marquises and gillies, shooters and tourists – the luxuries and fopperies of modern London amid the wildest scenery and a primitive people – Aristotle over Scotch whisky – embroidered satin waistcoats dancing with bare-legged hizzies – Chartist poets pledging kilted clansmen" (Thorpe 39). The social differences among the commensals are evidenced both by how they speak and where they are seated at the four tables set in the barn, as explained in these lines:

[…] Four tables were in it;
Two at the top and the bottom, a little upraised from the level,
These for Chairman and Croupier, and gentry fit to be with them,
Two lengthways in the midst for keeper and gillie and peasant.
(45, ll. 47-50)

By the same token, the narrator zooms on the individual participants according to the class hierarchy they represent and their roles at the dinner, from the bottom to the top of the social scale: starting from "keepers", "gillies" and "pipers", then moving to the "Catholic Priest" and "Established Minister", the gentry, "Members of Parliament", the Marquis of Ayr" and Dalgarnish Earl, and finally to Sir Hector, "the Chief and the Chairman" (45-46, ll. 52-70).

As far as the characters' dictions are concerned, in this scene the omniscient narrator steps aside in order to allow them to speak with their own voices, none of which prevails but participates with the others in a dissonant chorus: instead of a Wordsworthian common ordinary language, what we have, to borrow Armstrong's words, is a profusion of languages, each felt as "extraordinary, a special variant or form" ("The Radical in Crisis" 181). The dinner scene is, moreover, exemplary of Clough's attention to the sociolinguistic and culture-specific varieties of English. The narrator himself asks the Muse to be exonerated from reporting all the speeches, because of their "strangeness" and formal whimsies, thus implying a difficulty of understanding experienced by the characters, too:

Spare me, O great Recollection! for words to the task were unequal,
Spare me, O mistress of Song! nor bid me remember minutely
All that was said and done o'er the well-mixed tempting toddy;
[…]
Bid me not, grammar defying, repeat from grammar-defiers
Long constructions strange and plusquam-thucydidëan,
Tell how, as sudden torrent in time of speat in the mountain
Hurries six ways at once, and takes at last to the roughest,
Or as the practised rider at Astley's or Franconi's
Skilfully, boldly bestrides many steeds at once in the gallop,
Crossing from this to that, with one leg here, one yonder,
So, less skilful, but equally bold, and wild as the torrent,
All through sentences six at a time, unsuspecting of syntax,
Hurried the lively good-will and garrulous tale of Sir Hector.
(46-47, Canto I, ll. 82-97)

Clough deconstructs the authorial power of the narrative voice through self-referentiality and effective dramatizing procedures. In *The Bothie* he makes use of voices in dialogue and a variety of linguistic registers which comment on and correct one another.

"The poet and radical" (48, Canto I, l. 134) Philip Hewson's diction extravagantly combines alliterative high-flown rhetoric with a mock-heroic register and a parodic treatment of the battle clichés typical of Chartist songs. The pungent irony of the following lines is hardly caught by those present, possibly not even by the host and Highland "laird" Sir Hector:

I am, I think, perhaps the most perfect stranger present.
I have not, as have some friends, in my veins some tincture,
Some few ounces of Scottish blood; no, nothing like it.
[…]

And, surely seldom have Scotch and English more thoroughly mingled;
Scarcely with warmer hearts, and clearer feeling of manhood,
Even in tourney, and foray, and fray, and regular battle,
Where the life and the strength came out in the tug and tussle,
Scarcely, where man met man, and soul encountered with soul, as
Close as do the bodies and twining limbs of the wrestlers,
Where for a final bout are a day's two champions mated,—
In the grand old times of bows, and bills, and claymores,
At the old Flodden-field—or Bannockburn—or Culloden.
—(And he paused a moment, for breath, and because of some cheering,)
We are the better friends, I fancy, for that old fighting,
Better friends, inasmuch as we know each other the better,
We can now shake hands without pretending or shuffling.
(48, Canto I, ll. 143-155)

The reference to Scotland's famous battles (only one victorious) against England to contrast them with the present friendly situation sounds rather incongruous. Like most of his Oxford comrades, Philip's coterie language is generally marked by double entendres which the Northern hosts can hardly appreciate: after his "doubtful conclusion" – "I have, however, less claim than others perhaps to this honour,/ For, let me say, I am neither game-keeper, nor game-preserver" – the narrator comments that "his satire had not been taken" and the men who stood up during his speech "mostly sat down without laughing" (48, Canto I, ll. 159-164). Communication, or even spontaneous conviviality, consequently, fails.

Thus, from the beginning of the poem, Clough presents us with a variety of "Englishes", a multiplicity of voices and a fluidity of points of view suggesting a disjointed and polyhedral national identity that cannot be defined according to essentialist ideas of "Englishness" or "Britishness" but depends on individual and social dynamics, subjective experiences and relative circumstances. Apart from language, in *The Bothie*, these ideas are also conveyed by gender relations, particularly the relationship between Philip and Elspie.

2. Gender and class divisiveness

Not only Philip's masculinity but also his political convictions and cultural identity are challenged by having relationships with three very different women. Through them he faces the deepest cracks undermining the stability and unity of contemporary Britain: the gender divide; class conflicts; and the clash between rural and urban worlds.

Each of the three stages of Philip's sentimental *Bildung* is associated with a particular political positioning and ideological discourse[6]. First, when he falls in love with "golden-haired" (62, Canto III, l. 195) Katie, the uneducated Highland peasant who personifies his ideal of the natural working-girl, he convincingly declares himself a Chartist. Secondly, after being seduced by the aristocratic Lady Maria, he turns to the opposite side, to the extent of justifying the social stratifications at the basis of the class system: "What of the poor and the weary? Their labour and pain is needed./ Perish the poor and the weary! What can they better than perish,/ Perish in labour for her, who is worth the destruction of empires" (72, Canto V, ll. 51-53). However, this passage is imbued with an irony that is reinforced a few lines later: "Dig in thy deep dark prison, O miner! and finding be thankful;/ Though unpolished by thee, unto thee unseen in perfection,/ While thou art eating black bread in the poisonous air of thy cavern,/ Far away glitter the gem on the peerless neck of a Princess" (73, ll. 64-67). Finally, the humble yet self-confident, autodidact Elspie Mackaye, occupying an in-between status between the other two, apparently offers Philip the ideal compromise that not only may solve his inner tensions but also suggests the possibility of bridging the socio-cultural and political divisions which the initial dinner scene drew attention to.

However, contemporary gender-normative behaviours as well as cultural differences act against this achievement: neither Elspie nor Philip seem to be equipped to definitely overcome these obstacles and establish a balanced relationship on equal terms. Interestingly enough, it is rather the external voice of the narrator that, at some moments, intrusively calls attention to such a possibility, in spite of the different circumstances of their birth, upbringing and education:

> […] a revulsion again came over the spirit of Elspie,
> When she thought of his wealth, his birth and education:
> Wealth indeed but small, though to her a difference truly;
>
> […]
> But the many things that he knew, and the ease of a practised
> Intellect's motion, and all those indefinable graces

(Where they not hers too, Philip?) to speech, and manner, and movement,
Lent by the knowledge of self, and wisely-instructed feeling.
(83, Canto VIII, ll. 1-10)

For the time, Elspie displays a proto-New Woman's self-confidence, determination and anti-conventional conception of marriage as a pact of reciprocal respect, but she cannot repress an intermittent sense of inferiority towards Philip at the thought of his intellectual pursuits and knowledge:

With these thoughts, and the terror withal of a thing she could not
Estimate, and of a step (such a step!) in the dark to be taken,
Terror nameless and ill-understood of deserting her station,—
Daily heavier, heavier upon her pressed the sorrow,
Daily distincter, distincter within her arose the conviction,
He was too high, too perfect, and she so unfit, so unworthy
(Ah me! Philip, that ever a word such as that should be written!)
It would do neither for him nor for her; [...]
Should *he—he*, she said, have a wife beneath him? herself be
An inferior there where only equality can be?
It would do neither for him nor for her.
(83, Canto VIII, ll. 13-24).

Confirming the sceptical mindset of Clough's major heroes, Elspie's self-inquisitiveness is a warning to the reader against rushed, simplistic conclusions, and a reminder of the complexity of gender negotiations in a society which is still far from guaranteeing man and woman equal civil and educational rights. By the same token, her father, David Mackaye, though finally giving his consent to their marriage, does not seem to feel totally reassured by Robert Burns's line "*Rank is the guinea stamp, but the man's a man for a' that*" (87, Canto VIII, l. 164), which the narrator quotes in order to assert the Scot's democratic principles. Indeed, the narrator adds: "Still he was doubtful" (l. 165). In fact, it is not only class difference that complicates their union, but also, on the one hand, Elspie's inner struggle between idealism and realism, and, on the other, Philip's fluctuating attitudes and ideas. At one point, he seems to be ready to renounce the prerogatives of gender-normative masculinity by openly showing his sentimentality and almost submissively prostrating himself – "he retained her hand, and, his tears down-dropping on it,/ Trembling a long time, kissed it", "he fell at her feet, and buried his face in her apron"

(80, Canto VII, ll. 80-81, 85). At another, he reasserts those prerogatives and expounds theories of womanhood and femininity which contrast with his radical politics while rather concurring with the contemporary societal codes.

Unsurprisingly, considering Philip's unresolved moral inconsistencies, this apparent compliance with a mentality moored in conventional mental schemes emerges both at the beginning and at the end of the poem. "Labour, and labour alone, can add to the beauty of women", he first says in Canto II (50, l. 26). After reading these lines, one cannot but agree with Clough's biographer James Insley Osborne:

> the discussion of the beauty of work for women is an echo presumably of Clough's long talks with his sister about what she was to do in the world. […] His sister […] became in the decade after his death one of the persons most actively interested in the education of women. […] she was a moving spirit in the establishment of a hall of residence for women at Cambridge, and in securing their admission to lectures and examinations. When Newnham Hall was founded, she was made its Principal, and she retained the position after the hall became a college. […] A similar connection of Clough's with the enfranchisement of women may be found in the position he held as the trusted friend and adviser of Miss Florence Nightingale. (103-104)

However, later on, in the same Canto, he especially identifies the beauty of work for women in "Needful household work, which some one, after all, must do,/ Needful, graceful therefore, as washing, cooking, and scouring,/ Or, if you please, with the fork in the garden uprooting potatoes" (52, ll. 104-106). In Canto VIII this romanticization of feminine work is replaced by a hackneyed association of woman with Nature as opposed to intellectual nurturing. When Elspie asks him to leave her some of his books, Philip replies:

> This is the way with you all, I perceive, high and low together.
> Women must read,—as if they didn't know all beforehand:
> Weary of plying the pump, we turn to the running water,
> And the running spring will needs have a pump built upon it.
> Weary and sick of our books, we come to repose in your eye-light,
> As to the woodland and water, the freshness and beauty of Nature.
> (86, ll. 113-118)

Rejecting Philip's equation between feminine and natural beauty and rebelling against his allusion to a woman's unnecessary devotion to study and reading, this time Elspie pushes aside any feeling of inferiority towards him and retorts with pride:

I am to read no books! but you may go your ways then
And I will read […] with my father at home as I used to.
[…]
What, you suppose we never read anything here in our Highlands.
(ll. 120-125)

[…] I will not be a lady,
We will do work together, you do not wish me a lady,
It is a weakness perhaps and a foolishness; still it is so;
I have been used all my life to help myself and others;
I could not bear to sit and be waited upon by footmen,
No, not even by women—.
(ll. 136-141)

Although eventually her firm principles seem to get the better of Philip, the question of whether they will definitely succeed in challenging contemporary prescribed gender codes and the traditional politics of marriage remains open. Interestingly enough, to suggest the solidity of her relationship with Philip, Elspie compares it to the "high new bridge, they used to build at […]/ Over the burn and glen on the road" (79, Canto VII, ll. 58-59), but this image appears while "dreaming at nights about arches and bridges", about the two sides of the bridge joining "with a queer happy sense of completeness" (ll. 67, 72). The reader is left doubting whether eventually they will be able to realize this dream.

Throughout the poem, Clough subtly hints at Philip's suspect and shifting views on women. Therefore, one wonders if he can represent for Elspie the "great key stone coming in" and allowing "all the other stones" (ll. 70-71) to form a whole. For example, the peasant Katie seemed to perfectly respond to his Carlylean conception of labour and disdain for "plain women", "unhappy statuettes […]/ Poor alabaster chimney-piece ornaments under glass cases" (88, Canto IX, ll. 26-28). Yet, he gradually lost interest in her, and when interrogated about the reasons why he deserted her, he admits that "What had ended it all [...] was singular, very"

(68, Canto IV, l. 103). "Singular" like the quick glance cast over him by a girl he had met, like her "simple superior insight",

Quietly saying to itself—Yes, there he is still in his fancy,
Letting drop from him at random as things not worth his considering
All the benefits gathered and put in his hands for fortune,
Loosing a hold which others, contented and unambitious,
Trying down here to keep-up, know the value of better than he does.
(ll. 113-117)

The reader will later discover that that admonishing glance was cast by Elspie herself. It may be, as Armstrong has pointed out, that Philip's fluctuating opinions about womanhood and femininity reflect the poet's own "anxiety about the sexual feelings and demands of women in heterosexual relationships" ("The Radical in Crisis" 178). At the same time, though, they also reflect his relativist *visio mundi*, his unresolved inner battles and that honesty of doubt which makes him perceive the fragmentariness of modern reality, the temporary and limited scope of all human experiences. Once Matthew Arnold said of Clough that he was "too content to *fluctuate*—to be ever learning, never coming to the knowledge of the truth" (Lowry 146).

Hence, Clough closes the poem with an ambiguous analogy between the marriage of the two protagonists and the complexity of life and identity in general. This time Clough's *dramatis persona* is Hobbes. In a letter to Philip, he refers to the Biblical episode of Job and his two wives, Rachel and Leah, in order to explain why he sees marriage as a conjunction of heterogeneous components: a "bigamy only,/ Even in noblest kind a duality, compound and complex,/ One part heavenly-ideal, the other vulgar and earthy" (92, Canto IX, ll. 168-170), "Rachel we dream-of at night: in the morning, behold, it is Leah" (l. 179). Hobbes seems to suggest that Philip and Elspie's final idyll of perfect marriage might turn out to be an illusory dream. Thus, if *The Bothie*, as Christopher Matthews argues, presents a "romantic thesis, antithesis, and synthesis on the level of the story" (Matthews 492), corresponding to the three stages of his erotic/ political *Bildung*, the final step of such dialects is an imperfect synthesis and leaves the reader with open questions. There is no denying that the concluding picture of the married couple with children now in New Zealand living in a new version of the Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich is anticlimactic:

There he hewed, and dug; subdued the earth and his spirit;
There he built him a home; there Elspie bare him his children,
David and Bella; perhaps ere this too and Elspie or Adam;
There hath he farmstead and land, and fields of corn and flax fields;
And the antipodes too have a Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich.
(93, ll. 196-200)

As Claude says in *Amours de Voyage*, "*ACTION will furnish belief*,—but will that belief be the true one?" (127, Canto V, l. 20). Is Philip's choice a true solution to his erotic and political dilemmas? In this case, too, the text provides no ultimate answer. Charles Kingsley explained such elusiveness by saying that Clough preferred to "let the reader draw his own conclusions [...] than to tack a written moral to the last page of his poem" (Thorpe 46)

3. Exiles

Seen as an escape from Britain – be it the rural Highland retreat or the Oxford academic world – Philip and Elspie's exile, like the language(s) of the poem and cross-class and gender relationships, provides a further key to reading the discourses of Englishness and Britishness at the heart of the poem. The newly married couple's supposedly permanent expatriation to the British colony of New Zealand is preceded by the Oxonian students' temporary exile from the cloistered world of English academia to the exotic landscape of the Scottish Highlands. After all, Adam's pupils are also tourists, and their gaiety, holiday spirit and desire for freedom are clearly a projection of Clough's own *wanderlust* after resigning the Oriel Fellowship and leaving what he felt as the oppressive ideology of Anglo-Catholicism and Tractarianism. More importantly, they are the protagonists of a transcultural experience, since, as the initial banqueting scene has shown, the Oxford coterie's slang and habits are translated and adapted to the new environment. However, the meeting between the two different worlds, even when it involves, as is Philip's case, closer intercourses with local women, does not give rise to a third space of successful interaction and integration; so the English visitors will remain "the Strangers" (47, Canto I, l. 115), as Sir Hector calls them.

A strong sense of place, on the other hand, is conveyed by the narrator's landscape pictures, which sometimes he seems to present from an insider's perspective, so much so that William Thackeray, after reading the poem, wrote to Clough: "I have never been there but I think it must be like Scotland – Scotland hexametrically laid out" (Thorpe 30). Thus, following in the steps of the "wandering hero", with a geographical accuracy combined with fine examples of nature poetry, he draws a map of his journey through the Highlands, and, by means of a series of interrogatives, has the reader directly involved in the tour:

There is it, there, or in Lofty Lochaber, where silent upheaving,
Heaving from ocean to sky, and under snow-winds of September,
Visibly whitening at morn to darken by noon in the shining,
Rise on their mighty foundations the brethren huge of Ben-nevis?
There, or westward away, where roads are unknown to Loch Nevish,
And the great peaks look abroad over Skye to the western most islands?
There is it? there? or there, we shall find our wandering hero?
Here, in Badenoch, here, in Lochaber anon, in Lochiel, in
Knoydart, Moydart, Morrer, Ardgower, and Ardnamurchan,
Here I see him and here: I see him; anon I lose him!
(65, Canto IV, ll. 8-17).

Local colour and evocative power also characterize the detailed description of the Bothie's pastoral location:

Blank hill-sides slope down to a salt sea loch at their bases,
[…]
Cottages here and there outstanding bare on the mountains,
[…]
There on the blank hill-side, looking down through the loch to the ocean,
There with the runnel beside, and pine-trees twain before it,
There with the road underneath, and in sight of coaches and steamers,
Dwelling of David Mackaye and his daughters Elspie and Bella,
Sends up a column of smoke the Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich.
(75, Canto VI, ll. 7-15)

However, behind these and other similar samples of the Scottish picturesque and sublime, there is often an embedded critique of the contemporary tourist industry and how it reduces to stereotype the mythical image of the Highlands made popular by Walter Scott's novels and poems. Clough denounces "the irresponsibility of the holiday stranger who treats the environment he has entered in an unscrupulous and insensate way" (Armstrong, "The Radical in Crisis" 182). For instance, in Canto III, before the romantic description of a mountain stream, the narrator satirically says: “There is a stream, I name not its name, lest inquisitive tourist/ Hunt it, and make it a lion, and get it at last into guide-books” (57, ll. 25-26).

Throughout the poem, there are moments such as this one in which the narrator ventriloquizes Clough’s irritation at effortless and superficial ways of responding to or consuming a foreign culture, while the attempt should be made to approach and appreciate its otherness beyond purely folkloric aspects. The students show no deep interest in Highland culture and Gaelic language, respectively reduced to trite symbols like the tartan kilt[7], and to few enticing words to pick up local girls, as in the following lines, in which Lindsay describes how Philip approached the farmer’s daughter, Katie:

What was the Gaelic for *girl*, and what was the Gaelic for *pretty*;
How in confusion he shouldered his knapsack, yet blushingly stammered,
Waving a hand to the lassie, that blushingly bent o’er the porridge,
Something outlandish—*Slan*-something, *Slan leat*, he believed, *Caleg Looach*,
That was the Gaelic it seemed for ‘I bid you good-bye, bonnier lassie’
(62, Canto III, ll. 184-188)

In fact, the absence of Scottish Gaelic in the poem, except for a few sparse words and the title, should be read as symbolically referring, first of all, to the strangers’ inability or unwillingness to truly understand Scottish otherness on its own terms. In *The Bothie* Clough portrays a Scotland, in Armstrong’s words, “dominated by the English and an anglicised ruling class” (“The Radical in Crisis” 182), and the Highlands, to borrow Charles Kingsley’s expression, as a “cockneyized” space of dislocated Englishness (Thorpe 40). Secondly, the silence surrounding the *Gàidhealtachd* (Gaelic-speaking culture) may perhaps hint at the risk of gradual decline and disappearance produced by the Highland Clearances in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries[8], as well as by the imperium of English and the consequent marginalization of linguistic and cultural minorities.

The poem’s polyphony and shifting points of view mean that the reader can see the limits of the “Strangers”’ simplistic, somehow distorted, vision of otherness also from the opposite perspective of the insider. Elspie, as a matter of fact, becomes the main vehicle of the poet’s attack on specious ideas of cultural superiority, on an essentialist conception of English identity obstructing the vision of an inclusive, non-hierarchical and heterogeneous Britishness. Significantly enough, the self-taught Highland lass Elspie speaks perfect English without ever dropping into Gaelic. The poet deliberately creates an ironic contrast between her humble origins and her indulging in sophisticated, not to say tediously long, descriptions of love or sexually-connoted, elaborate similes to describe her feelings for Philip. One significant example occurs in Canto VII:

You are too strong, you see, Mr. Philip! just like the sea there,
Which *will* come, through the straits and all between the mountains,
Forcing its great strong tide into every nook and inlet,
Getting far in, up the quiet stream of sweet inland water,
Sucking it up, and stopping it, turning it, driving it backward,
Quite preventing its own quiet running: and then, soon after,
Back it goes off, leaving weeds on the shore, and wrack and uncleanness:
And the poor burn in the glen tries again its peaceful running,
But it is brackish and tainted, and all its banks in disorder.
(81, ll. 120-128)

Clough, in other words, is very careful not to idealize his heroine; at the same time, not only does he endow her with witty self-humour – as when she refers to her "ignorant Highlands" (82, Canto VII, l. 174) – but he also elects her as mouthpiece of the most important, albeit utopian, message of the poem concerning British cultural identity: how it may be possible to see it as unity in diversity rather than, as Philip suggests, "only infinite jumble and mess and dislocation" (89, Canto IX, l. 64). For that, Elspie advocates the need to re-assess allegedly marginal cultures as constituent parts of that national identity rather than patronisingly treating them as exotic allure or, for that matter, tourist attractions. In the above-mentioned passage, in which Philip interprets the meaning of Elspie's gaze – "Doesn't yet see we have *here* just the things he is used-to *elsewhere*;/ People here too are people, and not as fairy-land creatures" (68, Canto IV, ll. 119-120, my italics) –, the implied message is that, in his oscillating moods, he is misled by deceitful myths of her native Highlands. By alluding to the similarities between the "here" and "elsewhere", she also expresses the possibility of a conciliation between Englishness and Scottishness based on what connects them, and that is, essentially, the overarching idea of humanity.

This is why, later in the poem, Elspie expands the scope of her cultural argument. Britishness, in this vision, is not exclusively rooted on national prerogatives but relocated and reformulated from a transnational and cosmopolitan perspective. Here, once again she acts as counterpart to

Philip's wavering (between struggle and defeatism, action and dejection), and to his indecisiveness as to whether or not it is sensible for them or rather a folly to leave Britain for New Zealand:

> [...] I don't myself feel always,
> As I have felt, more sorrow for me, these four days lately,
> Like the Peruvian Indians I read about last winter,
> Out in America there, in somebody's life of Pizarro;
> Who were as good perhaps as the Spaniards; only weaker;
> And that the one big tree might spread its root and branches,
> All the lesser about it must even be felled and perish.
> No, I feel much more as if I, as well as you, were,
> Somewhere, a leaf on the one great tree, that, up from old time
> Growing, contains in itself the whole of the virtue and life of
> Bygone days, drawing now to itself all kindreds and nations,
> And must have for itself the whole world for its root and branches.
> No, I belong to the tree, I shall not decay in the shadow;
> Yes, and I feel the life-juices of all the world and the ages
> Coming to me as to you, more slowly, no doubt and poorer;
> You are more near, but then you will help to convey them to me.
> (85, Canto VIII, ll. 82-97)

The "great tree" is a metaphor of the world, of the nations (branches) composing it and the single individuals (leaves) inhabiting each of them. Elspie's description suggests no identification of the tree with a centre of power, but rather conjures up an image of multiple and variegated (inter)connections. However, she latently alludes to a link between Scotland (namely Gaelic Scotland) and Peru as both oppressed "colonial" others, subjugated to "stronger" nations, thus also implying that they suffered from political as well as cultural marginalization.

Elspie's symbolic tree, with its spreading roots and branches, challenges any cultural, political and social value system ostensibly based on fallacious distinctions between dominant and minority cultures, centre and periphery, supremacy and subordination. In fact, she dismisses all hierarchies and grand systems to focus on the "leaf on the one great tree", the single human being and his or her connections with other human beings, without consideration of geographical and national boundaries. Elspie's speech points to the relational and rhizomatic quality of individual and national identity against essentialist concepts, or, to adapt Stuart Hall's words, against “an unproblematic, transcendental ‘law of origin’”, since cultural identity “is not a fixed essence at all, lying unchanged outside history and culture”, “not an essence but a positioning”, a “matter of becoming as well as being” (Hall 225-226). If Philip is at first hesitant about leaving his fixed roots to embark on uncertain new routes, Elspie, on the contrary, already sees herself as part of the big tree, therefore as entitled to taste “the life-juices of all the world” (l. 95). Her cosmopolitan spirit counterbalances Philip’s rooted Englishness and consequent scepticism about their escape – a deliberately ironic contrast which problematizes facile polarizations between centre (England, Oxford, culture) and periphery (Scotland, the Highlands, nature).

In line with Hobbes’ above-mentioned theory of bigamy, analogically signifying the inherent complexity, mutability and relativism of any human experience, Elspie’s image of the branching-out tree suggests diversity, multiplicity and mobility in individual, cultural and national identity, as opposed to unified, centre-oriented notions of Englishness and Britishness. By means of an eccentric metre, genre heterogeneity, shifting registers, language varieties, and the representation of class divides *vis-à-vis* conflicting gender discourses, Clough deconstructs the concept of Englishness as synonymous with national unity, organic culture and political stability.

On the one hand, a negative implication of such “jumble and mess and dislocation” (89, Canto IX, l. 64), to return once more to Philip’s already-quoted key line, is that an individual can hardly find the answer to his or her doubts. Indeed, the poem dramatizes Clough’s own self-conscious scepticism, the tension between his unshaken ideal of a truly democratic society and the sad awareness of the impossibility to fully achieve that ideal in the fragmented modern world. This is why Philip and Elspie’s retreat, from England to New Zealand, is a relatively happy ending, not the climactic moment of resolved conflicts. On the other hand, though, as this article has already argued, in the poet’s vision, open-endedness in life as well as art, the lack of incontrovertible truths and an endless search for meaning are not obstacles to be overcome but the principles at the basis of his scepticism and refusal of absolute moral and ideological values.

The critic Francis O’Gorman has observed that “what *The Bothie* actually amounts to is still not a question easy to answer. A reader’s chief feeling today is of regarding a conundrum” (125). In other words, as is often the case with Clough’s poems, *The Bothie* perplexes us by ultimately expressing a paradox: while exposing the fractures in Victorian society and debunking myths of Englishness, it celebrates cultural and linguistic diversity as images of possibility, and of Britishness as a fluid, multiple discourse in which frontiers, without being eliminated, must be conceived as thresholds rather than walls. Thus, the poem also perplexes us by adumbrating Homi Bhabha's idea of national identity as "impure" and of nation as a site of cultural differences rather than one in which an overarching culture encompasses subordinate formations (1994). In this way, as remarked by Marc Augè, "respect for differences would start with the equality of all individuals, independent of their origin or gender" (Augé XV). Clough was a child of his time, but his conception of individual and cultural subjectivity as dynamic and relational, open to changes and transformations, points to contemporary definitions of (trans)national identity – rooted while also branching out, like Elspie's "great tree".

Note, Notes, Anmerkungen, Notes

1 It was written in November 1848 and published by the Oxford bookseller Macpherson in December of the same year. An American edition then appeared in 1849. The "bothie" of the title refers to the hut where Elspie, one of the main female characters, lives with her father. Originally the poem had a slightly different title, *The Bothie of Toper-na-Fuosich*, a Scottish Gaelic expression possibly meaning "the well of the frightful (or bearded) woman". In fact, it was the name of a real hut that Clough saw during one of his Highland tours. Since the title was regarded unseemly because of the possibility to read it as a metaphor for a woman's genitalia, Clough replaced it with an invented one but with exactly the same rhythm: *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich*. The posthumous 1862 edition (used in the present article) bears this title. For a detailed analysis of the differences between the 1848 and 1862 editions see Patrick Scott's 1976 facsimile edition published by the University of Queensland Press.

2 Chartism was a radical movement fighting for the rights of urban working-classes, but it was also associated with the 1848 French Revolution. In 1848 the House of Commons rejected for the third time the Chartist petition asking for parliamentary reform after the 1832 Bill.

3 Clough gained the Balliol scholarship and later an Oriel fellowship at Oxford during the Tractarian controversy, when both William George Ward and John Newman, two leaders of the Oxford Movement, were there. All dons at Oxford and Cambridge had to sign allegiance to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Church. However, Clough could not, as he wrote: "I can have nothing whatever to do with a subscription to the xxxix articles—and deeply repent of having ever submitted to one" (Mulhauser 219). After resigning the scholarship, he visited Paris, Rome, and Venice during the 1848 Revolutions. From 1849 to 1852 he was in London, in charge of University Hall at University College. Totally unhappy with that job, he emigrated to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to try a writing career, but he failed and returned to England in 1853. He had to accept a minor job as examiner in the Education Office, which allowed him to marry Blanche Smith. At the same time, he started assisting his cousin Florence Nightingale in charitable work.

To restore his increasingly poor health, in the late 1850s he travelled to Italy. He died in Florence in 1861.

4 Tom Arnold took up farming in New Zealand, but all his plans failed, so in 1850 he moved to Tasmania, where he was appointed as Inspector of Schools by Governor William Denison. There he converted from Anglicanism to Roman Catholicism, but, since at the time in Tasmania it was not possible for Catholics to be employed in senior civil service positions, in 1857 he moved back to England with his family.

5 For a challenging Bakhtinian reading of *The Bothie* see Tasker, Meg. "Time, Tense, and Genre: A Bakhtinian Analysis of Clough's *Bothie*". *Victorian Poetry* 34. 2 (Summer, 1996): 193-211.

6 William Michael Rossetti explained these three stages in his favourable review of the poem in the *Germ* in 1850. See Thorpe 54-64.

7 After the repression of the Jacobite rising of 1745-6, the kilt had to be banned, but the clan chiefs loyal to the Hanoverians continued wearing it. George IV wore it on his state visit to Edinburgh in 1822, turning it into a kind of fancy dress, as it is described in the poem.

8 The term "clearances" refers to forced removals, for purely economic reasons, of the inhabitants of the Scottish Highlands and western islands between 1750 and 1860; the dispossessed lands were used mainly for sheep raising to comply with the flourishing wool trade, but the evictions resulted in the destruction of the traditional clan society, in depopulation and mass emigration from Scotland to America and Canada. See T. M. Devine's study quoted in the bibliography.

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