To instruct in gratifying| The historiographical style of Thomas Carlyle

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TO INSTRUCT IN GRATIFYING: THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL STYLE OF THOMAS CARLYLE

By

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B.F.A., University of South Dakota, 1982

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To Instruct in Gratifying: The Historiographical Style of Thomas Carlyle (111 pp.)

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Historiographical style is constantly changing. What constitutes good historical writing in one period may appear out of date and amateurish in another. This thesis analyzes the change in style that occurred in nineteenth-century historiography. At that time, the advent of scientific methodology changed the standards that historical writing had to meet if it were to be considered serious work.

The focal point for this analysis is the reputation of Thomas Carlyle as a historian. Today Carlyle is studied as a literary figure but not as a historian. In order to show what accepted historical writing in the Romantic tradition was like, five of Carlyle's historical works are analyzed in detail. The emphasis in this thesis then shifts to the use of scientific methodology and professionalization in the field of history in the late nineteenth century. Leopold von Ranke's influence is central to this shift away from Romantic writing and toward a detached analytical style. However, Ranke's own work did not entirely reflect the rigid adherence to verification and documentation his followers found so appealing. Ranke himself was a Romantic historian who shared many traits with Carlyle. The similarities between the two men are illustrated in chapter three.

This analysis shows that Carlyle's scholarship did meet the standards for historical work in his time. It was only later when the standards changed that his histories were no longer taken seriously.
For whereas, of old, the charm of History lay chiefly in gratifying our common appetite for the wonderful, for the unknown; and her office was but as That of a Minstrel and Story-teller; she has now farther become a School-mistress, and professes to instruct in gratifying.

Thomas Carlyle
"On History" 1830
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Introduction

Historical study has always been an evolutionary process. Diverse attitudes and styles have each developed, flourished for a time and then faded into the background as new ideas about the role of history and how it should be practiced emerged. The new ideas combined with old to create a dynamic, changing field for study.

The first historiographical style to emerge was the Homeric vision of early Greece. In that period, the history of humanity was seen as a reflection of the will of the gods, where people had little control over their own fate. Then the historical works of Herodotus and Thucydides helped bring the past down from the realm of the gods. These men were among the first to try to explain history in human terms, without recourse to divine intervention. Thucydides' standards for impartiality and accuracy have never been improved. Both Thucydides and Herodotus believed in history as a teaching device. Knowledge of the past helped create a better understanding of the present.

The early Greek view of the past which decisively influenced the historians of ancient Rome faded into the background when Christian historiography came to the forefront. St. Augustine, in his City of God, made the
study of the past an exercise in deciphering God's ultimate plan for humanity. Medieval historians continued in this vein, concentrating their historical writing on chronology and biography, all within a Christian context. Man's spiritual evolution provided the pattern these historians attempted to flesh out. Day-to-day experiences were important only inasmuch as they helped reveal God's plan.

During the Renaissance the bond between divine planning and human activity as reflected in written history weakened. History began to reflect man's process of self-discovery. The Classical models of Thucydides and Herodotus underwent a revival and their influence showed up in works like Petrarch's Lives of Illustrious Men. Machiavelli's work reflected the belief that history dealt with human beings, and God could not be used as an excuse for human behavior.

Enlightenment thinking of the eighteenth century extended the Renaissance model and added its own distinctive scientific character to the variety of historiographical traditions. Enlightenment thinkers relied on reason and science as the keys to a perfect future. Voltaire saw the past as a time of ignorance exploited by a faulty religious structure. He and other Enlightenment thinkers believed that progress would come for humanity not through religion but through science. Education could make people capable of
Along with the Enlightenment views on progress, the eighteenth century also saw the beginnings of the Romantic movement in historiography. Under the influence of Rousseau, Romantic thinkers viewed scientific progress not as a positive development on the way to making man perfect, but rather as an evil which threatened to destroy man's soul. Romantic writers reacted against the rationally-minded histories of the Enlightenment historians like Gibbon. They sensed there was something more important in history than mere reason. Particularly after the French Revolution, humanity's irrational, emotional side demanded the attention of historians. Nineteenth-century historiography reflected both the Romantic and Enlightenment traditions.

One historian of the nineteenth century was Thomas Carlyle. He was a Romantic historian, writing in an emotional, narrative fashion. Carlyle believed that history created a potent base for interpreting man's life and destiny. He believed, as Thucydides did, that through knowledge of the past, human beings could understand their own time better. The ideas that had inspired man's actions in the past interested Carlyle, not necessarily the actions themselves. History served a specific function in Carlyle's universe - to show what ideals had been successful in aiding
humanity's spiritual growth. Carlyle always looked at history not for its own sake, but for what lessons could be learned from it and applied to the present. A careful study of the past could reveal the highest ideals of an individual, or of a society. Carlyle wrote in *The French Revolution*: "How such ideals do realize themselves; and grow, wondrously, from amid the incongruous ever-fluctuating chaos of the Actual: this is what World-history, if it is to teach anything, has to teach us."\(^1\)

Carlyle knew great fame in his own lifetime. His works were widely read by the public. Yet, long before the end of the century, Carlyle's reputation had markedly declined. Today he is studied as a literary figure, not a historian, even though many of his major books were works of history and his historical sense was evident in everything he wrote. Why should Carlyle be ignored by today's students of history? If he is read at all, he is read more for his unique style, unusual even in his own time, rather than for any historical contribution he may have made. For example, in his introduction to the University of Nebraska Press edition of Carlyle's *On Heroes, Hero-worship and the Heroic in History* (1966), Carl Niemeyer wrote that Carlyle deserved some place in the study of the nineteenth century, but not as a historian. "Despite his [Carlyle's] loud insistence upon fact and reality, his history is over-simplified or
emotional." Niemeyer also remarked that Carlyle's weakness was that "... he is not explicit about the nature of national or personal morality, but his temperament was the prophet's, not the analyst's; and we must accept him for what he was." This attitude is typical of what historians think about Carlyle today.

Carlyle's prophetic historical style represented one view of what history was and how it should be presented to the public. A contemporary of Carlyle's, Leopold von Ranke, illustrated another more analytical and thus more "modern" view. Ranke and Carlyle shared many traits as historians, but Ranke is considered one of the great nineteenth-century historians while Carlyle remains an interesting man of letters with limited historical significance. Ranke's reputation rests not on his own writing but on the method he used for applying scientific empirical models to historical studies. Ranke's methodology was picked up by the burgeoning university history programs of the nineteenth century and soon professional history was characterized by a search for empirical, documentary verification of the facts with little room for imaginary interpretation of those facts. It is this change from viewing history as a field of literature and moral philosophy to one open only to the professional university-trained specialist which this thesis will explore in depth. Thomas Carlyle serves as the model
of a literary historian against which the specialization of historical study will be measured.

Carlyle's historical ideas are evident in everything he wrote, but some choices about what will be included in a brief analysis must be made. The works cited in this thesis present the reader with a broad overview of Carlyle's historical vision. The works to be analyzed include The French Revolution; Past and Present; On Heroes; Latter-day Pamphlets and the essays "On History and "On History Again."

Sartor Resartus is important because it presented the philosophical principles reflected in Carlyle's view of history, but as a complex work of fiction, Sartor will not be analyzed in any detail. Sartor presented Carlyle's life philosophy, but his philosophy is also evident in his more specifically historical writing.

An analysis of something as vague as a change in attitude presents some daunting problems. What should be included in such an analysis? How should the material be structured? In Consciousness and Society H. Stuart Hughes discusses the difficulties inherent in writing intellectual history and provides some guidelines for dealing with them. Hughes discusses the problem of including too much information in any one analysis. Gathering data can be relatively easy, but synthesizing the data into a coherent and readable format is difficult. One way to facilitate the
synthesis of material is to begin with a precise definition of the problem to be addressed. In my thesis this problem involves providing a concrete image for the reader of what literary history, as written by Carlyle was. This will be followed by a discussion of factors leading to the decline of Carlyle's reputation and the growth of historiographical style based on scientific models. The work and influence of Leopold von Ranke are central to this change and as such will be discussed in depth.

The historiographical tradition that started with Homer's vision and progressed through Thucydides and into the nineteenth century is still changing. Historiography continues to be a mix of diverse styles and attitudes. No student of history would attempt to write in the manner of Carlyle today and expect to be taken seriously. Nevertheless, by studying a different view of "good" history - its strengths and weaknesses - our own understanding of what constitutes good historical writing increases.

Chapter 1

Romantic Historiography: Carlyle's *The French Revolution*

*The French Revolution*, published in 1837, made Carlyle a household name. His lavish telling of the events of the Revolution won for him a wide reading audience. *The French Revolution* provides an excellent example of his writing style and his methodology in dealing with historical subject matter. Carlyle had his share of critics regarding both style and content as well as devoted followers. Analysis of these positive and negative criticisms will provide an overview of how Carlyle's historical writings were received by his contemporaries.

Carlyle began his history of the Revolution not with events of 1793, but rather with what had happened twenty years earlier, at the death of Louis XV. Carlyle wanted to show that the process of decline in French society had not begun with the reign of Louis XVI. It was a long erosion process over the centuries which finally came to a climax during Louis XVI's reign. Carlyle took his audience back to the death room of Louis XV. More than a king lay dying
there; so too were all the empty feudal traditions which had outlived their usefulness in French society. Carlyle used this image of a decaying society to bolster his own conviction that mankind was fast losing its spiritual way in his own time as it had in the eighteenth century.

Carlyle believed that the eighteenth-century world was a decadent place where man had lost his spiritual way, but he gave man limited credit for his accomplishments prior to that time. Man had made some progress. Paris had developed from a village of mud huts into a city of great cathedrals. These physical endeavors were worthy of note, but it was in the realm of the spiritual and the moral that Carlyle believed man had made his greatest progress before decadence set in. Developing the Church as a spiritual guide and Kingship, or leadership, as a temporal guide were mankind's two greatest accomplishments. It was this progress which crumbled during the Revolution.

Early in The French Revolution Carlyle's strong belief in the need for a powerful ruler became apparent. This theme appeared repeatedly in Carlyle's writing. Kings provided "A Symbol of true Guidance in return for loving Obedience; properly, if he only knew it, the prime want of man." Should the leadership principle fall into disrepute, society faced anarchy. It was such a loss which brought about the Revolution. The delicate balance between ruler and
ruled no longer existed. Instead, the traditional ruling class, the aristocrats, abdicated their responsibilities and left those over whom they had control to fend for themselves. All the aristocrats wanted from the peasants was the revenue to maintain lavish lifestyles and in return they gave nothing. The lot of the common people deteriorated and their aristocratic leaders did not care. Carlyle's description of the French masses in the days prior to the outbreak of the Revolution fit the English masses of his own day as well.

Untaught, uncomforted, unfed; to pine stagnantly in thick obscurcation, in squalid destitution and obstruction: this is the lot of the millions³

At the same time the aristocrats abandoned their traditional responsibilities, the philosophes helped to transform pre-Revolutionary French society. Carlyle referred to the anti-establishment intellectuals frequently, always with contempt. In their writings he saw precisely what had gone wrong in society.

French Philosophism has arisen; in which little word how much do we include! Here, indeed, lies properly the cardinal symptom of the whole widespread malady. . . Faith is gone out; Scepticism is come in.⁴

Faith gone out and scepticism come in described exactly the dilemma faced by society in pre-Revolutionary France and in
Carlyle's own England. For Carlyle, the French Revolution served as a parable for his own time. In both periods man no longer honored those who ruled over him, nor did he believe in an infallible God whose wishes were made known through a ruler. Instead, man had cast out certain faith and obedience in exchange for the right to wallow in his own indecision. Without absolutes to cling to, man was lost. Carlyle was especially contemptuous of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract* and its elevation to practically a religious work. He referred sarcastically to "the gospel of Jean-Jacques" and saw little hope in worshipping at the philosophe temple. Philosophy would not influence man nearly as much as would power.

Not what thou and I have promised to each other, but what the balance of our forces can make us perform to each other: that, in so sinful a world as ours, is the thing to be counted on.⁵

Philosophy would not provide man with a certain path for his future. The Philosophes had idealistic hopes for the future, but they had no concrete plans for bringing their ideas out of the realm of abstraction into reality. They existed in a fantasy-land where all men behaved reasonably and with the common good in mind.

Carlyle's call for a return to what he viewed as solid old traditions of obedience to a ruler did not rule out the possibility of meaningful revolt. Indeed, such revolt was a
proper response to poor leadership. In Carlyle's view no person became a true leader without the aid of God. When a traditional ruler was overthrown, and stayed overthrown, it was ultimately because he had ceased to follow the correct – the Natural – moral path which would be made evident through faith. God would not support a truly immoral or incompetent leader. Such a man would be replaced naturally by a more worthy individual. It was just such an adjustment which took place during the French Revolution. The Revolution was much larger than individuals or factions working against one another. Carlyle viewed it as a shift of the entire moral cosmos. It would toss out the deceit on which man's life had been based and return that life to basic Truths. This readjustment was not to be feared, but rather to be celebrated. It was also long overdue. For Carlyle, the outbreak of the Revolution had no specific cause. It illustrated the violent overthrow of the cant and quackery which had accumulated over the ages.

It was every scoundrel that had lived, and quacklike pretended to be doing, and been only eating and misdoing, in all provinces of life, as Shoeblack or as Sovereign Lord, each in his own degree from the time of Charlemagne and earlier. All this has been storing itself for thousands of years; and now the account-day has come.

The lack of a strong king, the abdication of the traditional ruling class, the widespread hunger and misery
of the masses and the spiritual decay hastened by the philosophes all combined to bring about the Revolution. The Revolution began with the calling of the Estates-general in an attempt to deal with France's enormous fiscal problems. No such meeting had been called since 1614. The anticipation of such a meeting was not limited to the upper class who could expect to play a major role in any political development. The masses, too, found a little hope in the process. The situation in France was so bad socially and financially that anything which offered even the hint of relief was eagerly adopted. The process of calling the Estates-general provided some slight encouragement for a lower class in hopeless despair. The traditional ruling parties, the nobles and the clergy, believed that the meeting would follow a traditional format. In such a situation, they would join forces for their mutual benefit and become a majority of two to one over the commoners of the Third Estate. As such, they effectively robbed the Third Estate of any real political power. Such a plan worked as long as all three Estates maintained individual voting privileges and no concensus was required to conduct business. Unlike previous meetings of the Estates-general, at this meeting the Third Estate did not simply give in to the pressure of the other two. The Third Estate demanded a concensus before conducting business, and when the other
Estates did not oblige, the Third Estate declared themselves a National Assembly. The King issued orders declaring such action illegal, but the troops he called out to enforce his orders refused to fire on the Assembly. The commoners would not submit to the tyranny of tradition.

The chaos caused by the formation of the National Assembly spilled into the streets of Paris and led to the storming of the Bastille. Such an act was totally unprecedented. Never before had the masses dared to exert such power. The taking of the Bastille symbolized for many the beginning of a new era of brotherhood. Carlyle described the actual takeover with mixed feelings. He supported the action of the masses in principle, but he shuddered at the violent form such action took. Carlyle questioned the mindless bloodletting and the chaos surrounding the takeover. To destroy a system which had ceased to provide real leadership was acceptable, but Carlyle would have preferred this process be less destructive. Since they were destroying the cant and quackery of their false leaders, perhaps the revolutionaries could have also left behind the brutality and violence of their oppressors.

The taking of the Bastille began the Revolution proper. Carlyle did not provide a carefully ordered and systematic analysis of the Revolution in his book. He told
the story of the Revolution as one would stage a crowded play. He provided many background characters who, one by one, stepped into the spotlight. Sometimes their stay in the limelight was solitary and fleeting, other times they remained for long periods and were joined by other characters. Others never entered the spotlight at all, but rather drifted around the shadows of the stage. Such a character was Napoleon, whom Carlyle mentioned frequently but never really illuminated. Napoleon was never the center of much attention, but his presence overshadowed much of the activity discussed. Napoleon existed as a character waiting for the curtain on the French Revolution to come down and a new play, one in which he had star billing, to begin.

Several of the characters Carlyle illuminated were leaders of the Revolution. Carlyle introduced these men with brief, pithy descriptions. The reading audience had no trouble picking out the characters Carlyle admired from those he despised. Carlyle held lively opinions about the men under discussion and he never failed to share those opinions with his audience. Robespierre, the leader of the Jacobin party and the ringleader behind much of the Terror, was described by Carlyle as:

. . . . that anxious, slight, ineffectual-looking man, under thirty, in spectacles; his eyes troubled, careful; with upturned face, snuffing dimly the uncertain future times; complexion of a multiplex atrabitiar colour the final shade of which may be the pale

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Throughout the rest of the book Robespierre remained "sea-green Robespierre."

Robespierre did not meet with much favor in Carlyle's eyes, but another Revolutionary leader, Mirabeau, did. Carlyle admired Mirabeau and believed he had the capability for providing the leadership which the entire Revolutionary process so desperately needed. Mirabeau possessed the strength of character and the cleverness required of any great leader.

He has opened his far-sounding voice, the depths of his far-sounding soul; he can quell the pride-tumults of the rich, the hunger-tumults of the poor; and wild multitudes move under him, as under the moon do billows of the sea: he has become a world-compeller, and ruler over men.

Mirabeau was the one individual who could harness all the factions within the political sphere and form a workable government. He was obviously Carlyle's choice as strong leader for the Revolution. But fate stepped in and shattered any chance Mirabeau had of living up to this destiny. Mirabeau died before any of his carefully conceived political plans matured. Once his steady hand was removed from the workings of Revolutionary politics, there was a slow descent into total chaos. Carlyle used Mirabeau and his untimely death to illustrate how little control man in any era had over his own destiny.
One of the most important questions Mirabeau and Robespierre and the other leaders of the Assembly faced was how to reconcile the new ideas of brotherhood and democracy rising in France with the status quo. The Assembly quickly split into factions between those who wanted to destroy the old Regime completely and others who wished to reform it. Carlyle pointed out that the National Assembly did not consist of men with a single viewpoint. Rather, it was composed of separate individuals, each with his own ideas and fears and dreams for the future. Such a split body seemed incapable of reaching any governing consensus. Carlyle used the French National Assembly to illustrate his belief that representative government was unworkable. All the factions and groups tended to support their own interests and cancelled each other out, giving no single group the power to govern effectively. Such a situation begged for one strong leader to step forward and take charge. In the case of the Assembly, Carlyle believed that the King, the traditional ruler, could have fulfilled such a role, except that Louis XVI did not have the strength of character such a commanding role required.

Overshadowing all the political maneuvering going on in France was the spectre of famine. The mobs in the streets who had so powerfully made their presence felt in the taking of the Bastille were now forced to stand in line at the
bakery for a meager portion of bread. The brotherhood and hope which had been so evident at the Bastille turned quickly to bitter disappointment with the direction the Revolution, as orchestrated by the Assembly, was taking. The Assembly passed edicts which seemed little different to the masses than the previous tyranny they had worked so hard to overthrow. The passage of the Martial Law Act gave the Mayor of Paris the power to order the National Guard to fire on unruly mobs. This edict caused much resentment since it was an unruly mob which had started the Revolution in the first place with the storming of the Bastille. Carlyle observed that it would have been a good law only if one had supernatural insight and could tell the good riots from the bad.

The factions within the Assembly became more clearly defined as time passed. The faction of the Right - those who would have preserved as much of the status quo as possible - believed the Revolution was little more than a political fluke. They considered all decrees and motions passed by the National Assembly as nothing more than temporary whims which would soon be put right when the status quo reasserted itself. On the other end of the political spectrum there was Marat, who advocated the violent overthrow of the old Regime, particularly the aristocrats. Marat was little more than a solitary voice in
the wilderness at first, but later his influence would have deadly consequences.

Carlyle did not depict the confusion of the Revolution by choosing one faction or party and following their activities exclusively. Instead he used a stylistic technique that harked back to Herodotus and tried to present many sides of the same issue. This unusual style earned him much criticism from his contemporaries, but it was not simply affectation. The switches he made in voice from the first to the third person added an immediacy to the story. They brought the events of the Revolution and Carlyle's readers into intimate contact with one another. Carlyle had been faulted for not presenting an impartial view of the Revolution. His impartiality lay not in finding one viewpoint and holding to it throughout his narrative but in presenting as many dissonant viewpoints as he could. He was not interested in writing a history of the Revolution which sanctioned the actions of one group over another. Hedva Ben-Israel in his *English Historians on the French Revolution* defended Carlyle's approach to his material.

The compact, ambiguous and problematical rendering of various points of view hints at a characteristic peculiar to Carlyle, that of presenting both situations and questions of judgment in the confused, uncertain way in which they appear to the people concerned. They may be distorted historically, but they are true to the working of human nature and they create, out of a multitude of false and subjective reactions the atmosphere and psychological background which make
Carlyle's ability as a master storyteller emerged brilliantly in every part of his text. One of the most exciting incidents Carlyle described involved the flight of the Royal Family from Paris toward the borders. Through a wealth of detail Carlyle brought this event to life for his readers, creating a sense of anticipation overshadowed by certain failure. His readers knew the flight had ended in failure, but Carlyle made them hope for the Royal Family's success.

The Assembly remained split into bitter factions, each working against the other. The Royalists - those who would shore up the monarchy - fought against those who would destroy it. In the midst of this infighting, the Royal Family had little choice but to sit by and watch events unfold around them. Early on there had been talk by the Royalists of removing the King and his family from Paris to join forces with the Royalist General Bouille on the German border. There, the King would serve as a rallying point for all Royalists. He could call the Assembly to join him there and disperse all those who refused to do so with the force of hired German soldiers. This plan was finally put into action in June of 1791. From the very beginning it was a total disaster.
Carlyle used the events of the flight to define the personalities of the Royal Family. Throughout the book he had been referring to Louis as hapless, completely overwhelmed by the situation in which he found himself. In Carlyle's account of the flight he added more detail to this picture of Louis and the rest of the Royal Family as well. He began his account with disparaging remarks about the preparations of Marie Antionette. She insisted on having new clothes made and in arranging to take her personal chest of drawers with her. Such inane preparations in the fact of such a dangerous political situation made Carlyle terribly impatient. He writes of these preparations:

Moreover, her Majesty cannot go a step anywhither without her Necessaire; dear Necessaire, of inlaid ivory and rosewood; cunningly devised, which holds perfumes, toilette-implements, infinite small queenlike furnishings; necessary to terrestrial life.\textsuperscript{11}

As the Queen was having new clothes made, the King attempted to cover his plans for departure by sending out false decrees in total support of the Assembly, assuring all parties that he fully intended to support any Constitution which they devised. Meanwhile, the details of the flight were being put in order. A loyal young officer had a new coach, a Berline, built for the journey. The guise under which the Family would travel was arranged - they would be disguised as a Russian baronness, her servant-woman, valet
and children.

The flight was to take place on the night of June 20, 1791. An old coach would wait outside the Palace and the members of the Family would one by one make their way to it. The King's sister, Elizabeth, would play the role of governess and be in charge of the King's two small children. The King played the part of the valet, and Marie Antoinette would be the baroness. From the first, things went awry. Marie, sneaking out of the Palace to the waiting coach, lost her way and wandered around for an hour before finally reaching it. In such a situation any loss of time could be disastrous. Finally all members of the Family were aboard and headed out of the city. Carlyle painted the tension of the scene with his words:

Crack, crack, we go incessant, through the slumbering City. Seldom, since Paris rose out of mud, or the Long-haired Kings went in Bullock-carts, was there such a drive. Mortals on each hand of you, close by, stretched out horizontal, dormant; and we alive and quaking!  

The plot progressed as the Family switched into the new Berline north of Paris and headed for Montmed, where they would join up with Bouille.

Back in Paris, the discovery that the King had fled caused consternation, but the National Assembly quickly filled in the void left by the departure. They issued directions for the government bureaucracy to continue
functioning and answer to the Assembly instead of the Court. Paris, where the National Assembly met, remained calm enough in the face of Louis' departure, but as the news spread throughout the countryside, agitation increased.

In Paris alone is a sublime National Assembly with its calmness; truly, other places must take it as they can: with open mouth and eyes; with panic cackling, with wrath, with conjecture.¹³

The loss of the King was a new experience for the French. Kingship had played a central role in the politics of the country for centuries, and for it to suddenly board a coach and flee was quite a shock.

The Berline, meanwhile, traveled at a snail's pace. Carlyle claimed the coach traveled only fifty-nine miles in twenty-two hours, a figure inaccurate due to his miscalculation of the distance that was covered. Carlyle was careful about detail, and made few mistakes, but occasionally he allowed his desire to share a dramatic story to overshadow the documented facts. Carlyle did not deliberately mislead his audience and he corrected his miscalculation of the distance in an editorial footnote.¹⁴ The feeling of the Royal Family wasting precious time was what Carlyle wanted to show his readers. He made his audience share his own impatience with the maddeningly slow pace of the Berline.

General Bouille had stationed men in villages all along
the route of the coach to act as escort. The presence of military escorts roused the suspicions of the Patriots, those loyal to the original tenets of the Revolution, and as the Berline fell further behind schedule the escorts were forced to wait, causing growing suspicion in the villages where they were placed. The military escorts were the King's idea, "a thing solacing the Royal imagination with a look of security and rescue; yet in reality, creating only alarm, and where there was otherwise no danger, danger without end."^15

The Berline finally arrived near nightfall at the village of Saine-Menehould, and left quickly with its impatient escort. But not quickly enough, for the postmaster, a Patriot named Drouet, had recognized the Royal Family and was riding in pursuit with another man. The news of the King's flight had spread by messenger throughout France, and the countryside became increasingly volatile. The climax of the flight was reached at the village of Varennes.

Carlyle's telling of the story's conclusion took on the elements of a tragic farce. Everything that could possibly have gone wrong did in Varennes. The Berline was to meet another escort and have fresh horses waiting. The fresh horses were nowhere to be found, the escort had gone to bed or to drink in the taverns after waiting six hours beyond
the appointed meeting time, Drouet and his companion arrived in the village minutes behind the Berline and were starting to raise the alarm and the countryside through which the Berline had just passed was in an increasing uproar as news of the King's departure became known.  

Drouet told other Patriots in Varennes about his suspicions concerning the Berline's passengers, and they blocked the highway so the coach could not leave the village. They were armed, and requested the passengers stay in Varennes overnight so they might determine the truth the next day. Carlyle eloquently vented his frustration at Louis's weakness at this point. He imagined for his readers what might have happened had Louis stood up and acted like a king worthy of the name.

Phlegmatic Louis, art thou but lazy semi-animate phlegm then, to the center of thee? King, Captain-General, Sovreign Frank! If thy heart ever formed, since it began beating under the name of heart, any resolution at all, be it now then, or never in this world: 'Violent, nocturnal individuals, and if it were persons of high consequence? And if it were the King himself? Has the King not the power, which all beggars have, of travelling unmolested on his own Highway? Yes: it is the King; and tremble ye to know it! The King has said, in this one small matter; and in France, or under God's Throne, is no power that shall gainsay. Not the King shall ye stop here under your miserable Archways; but his dead body only, and answer it to Heaven and Earth. To me, Bodyguards; Postilions, en avant!, - One fancies in that case the pale paralysis of these two LeBlanc musketeers, the drooping of Drouet's underjaw; and how Procureur Sausse had melted like tallow in furnace-heat: Louis faring on; in some few steps awakening young Bouille [the
The Royal Family stepped out of their Berline and were escorted back to Paris the next morning.

Once the King had been returned to Paris, infighting between the factions within the Assembly intensified. The rest of Europe had watched French events with alarm and prepared to move against France militarily. Internal and external pressures built until they exploded into general insurrection. The Royal Family's political position collapsed. When the Legislature requested the King's presence, Louis could not refuse the request.

The transport of the Royal Family to the meeting hall of the Legislature provided Carlyle with an opportunity to expound on another of his most cherished beliefs, that of the virtue of doing one's duty. The Swiss guards whose job it was to protect Louis were left standing outside the King's residence when he went to the Legislature. They were soon surrounded by armed National Guards. The King had left, but the Swiss had received no orders to abandon their posts or to do other than stand fast. The crowd grew uglier, the Swiss fired on the crowd and a major confrontation, with death on both sides, broke out. After the firing had
started, the Swiss received written orders from the King to cease firing, but there was no one to issue such orders to the National Guards. The Swiss stopped firing, as ordered, but they did not stop dying. The Nationals became a mindless, vengeful mob, wanting nothing but revenge for their fallen comrades. The Swiss, bound by the King's order and surrounded by a howling mob, tried to escape but were cut down in the streets. Carlyle saw in these unfortunate foreigners the epitome of honorable duty.

Not martyrs were ye; and yet almost more. He was no King of yours, this Louis; and he forsook you like a King of shreds and patches: ye were but sold to him for some poor sixpence a-day; yet would ye work for your wages, keep your plighted word. The work now was to die; and ye did it.\textsuperscript{18}

The general insurrection led to the formation of the Republic, and the fragile attempt made earlier by the moderates to shore up the monarchy crumbled away. The period of mad terror had begun. Carlyle condemned this turn of events even as he saw its inevitability. It was the result of a nation or people having nothing to which they owed obedience or loyalty.

Very frightful it is when a Nation, rending asunder its Constitutions and Regulations which were grown dead cerements for it, becomes transcendental; and must now seek its wild way through the New, Chaotic, - where Force is not yet distinguished into Bidden and Forbidden, but Crime and Virtue welter unseparated, - in the domain of what is called the Passions. ... \textsuperscript{19}
The chaos of the Republic contained the seeds of the order which would come out of it. "Sea-green" Robespierre was beginning to come into his own as the leader of the extreme left, and as a member of the newly formed Committee of Public Safety. This body would eventually take complete political control of France. The threats on the borders of France helped to solidify government factions. Every group saw the necessity for defending the frontiers no matter what their other disagreements might have been. The borders had to be defended or the Republic would be crushed. As the danger became more pressing, thousands of men flocked to serve in the armed forces. They had little training and less equipment, but they were driven by the belief they held in the Republic. Coffins and railroad tracks were melted down to provide metal for weapons, but it was more than weapons which led to French victories. The spirit of the Revolution, the unwavering belief that they were fighting for a cause made the French people feel invincible.

The young man shall go to the battle; it is their task to conquer: the married men shall forge arms, transport baggage and artillery; provide subsistence: the women shall work at soldiers' clothes, make tents; serve in the hospitals: the children shall scrape old-linen into surgeon's-lint; the aged men shall have themselves carried into public places; and there, by their words, excite the courage of the young; preach hatred to Kings and unity to the Republic. . . In this humour, then. . . will France rush against its enemies. Headlong, reckoning no cost or consequence; heeding no law or rule but that supreme law, Salvation of the People! The weapons
are, all the iron that is in France; the strength is, that of all the men, women and children that are in France.  

After the general insurrection broke out, a new Constitutional Assembly was called. The new Assembly quickly split into two major factions, the Girondins and the Jacobins. The split between the two developed along philosophical lines. Each side had a different view of what the Revolution really was all about. The Girondins wanted a Revolution for the middle classes, "a reign of Law and Liberty; according as the habits, persuasions and endeavors of the educated, moneyed, respectable class prescribe."

This course could not be followed because it was not respectability which fired the Revolution.

Hunger and nakedness, and nightmare oppression lying heavy on Twenty-five million hearts; this, not the wounded vanities or contradicted philosophies of philosophical Advocates, rich Shopkeepers, rural Noblesse, was the prime mover in the French Revolution. . .

The killing of the King irrevocably split the Jacobins from the Girondins. Louis was called to the Assembly to stand trial for vaguely defined "crimes" against the Republic. After three days of painstaking voting by the Assembly, he was sentenced, by a very small majority of the votes, to die at the guillotine. His execution took place on January 21, 1793. Carlyle showed his readers the turmoil such an act created. It was not a thing easily done, but it had to be
placed in the context of the time. He compared the killing of Louis with the Lilliputians conquering their Gulliver.

The French Nation, in simultaneous, desperate dead-pull, and as if by miracle of madness has pulled down the most dread Goliath, huge with the growth of ten centuries; and cannot believe, though his giant bulk, covering acres, lies prostrate, bound with peg and packthread, that he will not rise again, man-devouring; that the victory is not partly a dream.23

Once it was destroyed, the French people could not allow the monarchy to revive and perhaps destroy the Republic.

After the death of Louis, the Girondins lost their political power to the more radical Jacobin party and many of them made their own trip to the guillotine. The Jacobins, headed by Robespierre, were in complete control of the Republic. It was at this juncture that the Terror escalated. New laws were passed, one calling for the universal draft, which provided troops for the armies. Another law, the law of the suspect, allowed for the arrest of anyone suspected of committing crimes against the state. The unfortunate individuals accused of breaking the law were arrested and sentenced to death with the merest mockery of a trial.

Carlyle explained how the Terror took on a life of its own, almost as an entity separate from those individuals who carried out its atrocities. At the beginning of the Revolution, acts of terror had been the exception rather
than the rule. During the Reign of Terror, such acts became routine. As this grisly trend developed, attempts were made to rationalize it - to find some rules of nature which could explain such irrational behavior. There were no models in the French experience of the past to provide such a rationalization.

Carlyle believed the Terror was the climax in a long fight against the falseness of the past.

It is as if Twenty-five millions, risen at length into the Pythian mood, had stood up simultaneously to say, with a sound which goes through far lands and times, that this Untruth of an Existence had become insupportable. O ye Hypocrisies and Speciosities, Royal mantles, Cardinal plush-cloaks, ye Credos, Formulas, Respectabilities, fair-painted Sepulchres full of dead men's bones, - behold, ye appear to us to be altogether a Lie. Yet our Life is not a lie; yet our Hunger and Misery is not a Lie! Behold we lift up, one and all, our Twenty-five million right-hands; and take the Heavens, and the Earth and also the Pit of Tophet to witness, that either ye shall be abolished, or else we shall be abolished! . . . - a battle, alas, withal, against the Sin of Darkness that was in themselves as in others; this is the Reign of Terror.  

The Terror resulted in a bloodbath which produced nothing in the way of real reform. Robespierre himself eventually stood accused of crimes against the state and he too made the journey to the guillotine.

After the death of Robespierre, the worst horrors of the Terror abated. The chaos of rule under the Committee of Public Safety gave way to a political order in which the
army held power. The army had increased dramatically with the universal draft and had become an effective fighting force. Not only did the army manage to defend France's borders, it also went on the offensive and defeated foreign armies on their own territory. The return of order after chaos, even primitive order based on strength, was welcome.

For Arrangement is indispensable to man; Arrangement, were it grounded only on that old primary Evangel of Force, with Sceptre in the shape of Hammer! Be there method, be there order, cry all men; were it that of the Drill-sergeant! More tolerable is the drilled Bayonet-rank, than the undrilled Guillotine, incalculable as the wind.25

With the emergence of the army as the leading political power in France, Napoleon stepped out of the shadows of Carlyle's stage and into the spotlight, to leave his own mark on European history.

Carlyle's French Revolution was a dramatic, lively story, but was it good history? Stylistically it was a linguistic bombshell. Here was no carefully worded tome, paced and ordered. Rather, it was a book written from the heart, its style reflecting the passions of its writer. Carlyle wrote to John Sterling in 1837 after just completing the book: "What I do know of it is that it has come hot out of my own soul; born in blackness, whirlwind and sorrow. . . ."26 Early critics of the work agreed it was unique, compared often to poetry rather than to works of history.
The critics admired its passion, but often panned its strange literary style. William Thackeray wrote a favorable review of the work in *The Times* of August 1837, but he wrote of its style:

> But never did a book sin so grievously from outward appearance, or a man's style so mar his subject and dim his genius. It is stiff, short, and rugged, it abounds with Germanisms and Latinisms, strange epithets and choking double words, astonishing to the admirers of simple Addisonian English, to those who love history as it gracefully runs in Hume, or struts pompously in Gibbon - no such style is Mr. Carlyle's. 27

Critics viewed Carlyle's style as a confusing jumble which trampled indiscriminately over all the rules of proper English usage. Another reviewer wrote:

> Originality of thought is unquestionably the best excuse for writing a book; originality of style is a rare and refreshing quality; but it is paying rather dear for one's whistle to qualify for obtaining it in the university of Bedlam. 28

The style of the book required some adjustment on the part of its readers, but once they had become accustomed to its strangeness, the story took powerful hold. Here was a history which allowed the reader to get inside the historical events and wander around. This approach struck a responsive chord in Carlyle's audience.

Carlyle did not write in an era of neatly indexed bibliographies and footnote references to archival research collections. He found his sources in less than ideal
condition and had to make what sense he could of them. He used the written records of the French Parliament and supplemented them with memoirs and personal histories of the Revolution. Since he did not speak French, Carlyle had to depend on translations of these works for his information. He was not blind to the bias and inaccuracies in many of the personal memoirs he used. He tried to avoid gross errors of fact by comparing these accounts to each other to discern the truth. 29

Carlyle's research methods were far from perfect, and his interpretation of the Revolution had many shortcomings. His critics maintained, correctly, that he ignored much of what was important about the Revolution. For example, he paid no attention to the economic or class issues of the Revolution in terms of its effect on Europe as a whole. 30 His was a Revolution of personality conflicts and a mob crying for bread, not a social environmental study. Critics faulted Carlyle for his lack of vision concerning the importance of the Revolution. It was the watershed event in modern European history and Carlyle treated it as little more than a brief chaotic interlude which ended in the moral elevation of a strong leader, Napoleon. George Peabody Gooch, in his History and Historians of the Nineteenth Century saw this lack of foresight as Carlyle's major downfall as an historian.

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That the Revolution was the parent of the nineteenth century, that beneath its horrors lay the seeds of a more generous life, that construction work of a permanent character was accomplished, that it incorporated many ideas and tendencies of the Ancien Regime - all this was unknown to him.

But in Carlyle's time, especially in the early nineteenth century, this "more generous life" was not readily evident. In England the new Poor Law had eliminated the dole and forced thousands into the sewers of the workhouses. Industrialization, while not new, still created great uneasiness within a changing society. The great adjustments wrought by the Revolution in the political and social balance of Europe were hidden beneath the visible miseries of a society in the grip of modernization, a process in which democracy did not always play a positive role.

In his role as social critic, Carlyle did not view the Revolution as an event dead and buried. He used it as a warning for his own time. The same problems which had brought down the French monarchy - weak leadership, a lack of a responsible ruling class, no sense of duty to anything but one's own welfare - existed in Carlyle's England. With this view of his society in mind, Carlyle presented the Revolution as a bloody example to his reading audience, warning them that they had better alter their own social structure or face a similar fate. Carlyle may have arranged his facts to support his own viewpoint, but this
was certainly nothing unusual in Western historiography. For Carlyle, history was not a detached, intellectual exercise. Its purpose was to instruct the audience and give them a model upon which to base their own decisions. He viewed history in much the same didactic way Thucydides and other classical historians did. By emphasizing certain facts or events over others, Carlyle did not fabricate information, he highlighted one pattern which could be discerned out of that information.32 Highlighting one pattern in the available information did not make Carlyle's view the only correct or valid one, but neither did it make his history unreliable. Personal perspective cannot be eliminated from historical writing.

The French Revolution established Carlyle as a serious man of letters. The views presented in the book on duty, obedience and moral right emerged in all of Carlyle's later works as well. His first foray before a wide reading audience with his ideas met with a warm reception, even if his style put off some readers. His later works, although espousing the same ideas and utilizing the same style, met with a cooler response.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid. 12.

4. Ibid. 13.

5. Ibid. 259.

6. Ibid. 168.

7. Ibid. 47.

8. Ibid. 113.

9. Ibid. 101.


12. Ibid. 357.

13. Ibid. 360.


15. Carlyle, 364.

16. Ibid. 370.

17. Ibid. 372.

18. Ibid. 466.

19. Ibid. 473.

20. Ibid. 624.

21. Ibid. 563.

22. Ibid. 564.

23. Ibid. 537.
24. Ibid. 635.

25. Ibid. 700.


29. Ibid. 142.


Chapter 2

Later Works and Their Public Reception

Carlyle's belief that history served a specific purpose for society was evident in his use of the French Revolution as a parable for his own time. He believed that history provided a practical guide for thought and action. In his essays "On History" and "On History Again", published in Fraser's Magazine in the early 1830s, Carlyle told his readers why he found history such a compelling subject.

Carlyle saw history as the bedrock upon which all of man's intellectual endeavors were based. The telling of the past provided man with the first way of expressing his inner spirituality. One of the simplest ways to communicate was to tell about what one had experienced and how one had acted or felt during a particular time. History was a personal experience. As these experiences were shared they created something larger than individual history. Sharing a past created a common pool from which to draw inferences and conclusions about what events meant. It provided a common ground where all disciplines could meet.
Poetry, Divinity, Politics, Physics, have each their adherents and adversaries; each little guild supporting a defensive and offensive war for its own special domain; while the domain of History is as a Free Emporium, where all these belligerents peaceably meet and furnish themselves.¹

By studying the past man could place himself in a continuum that connected the distant past to the unknown future. Originally this was done with strict narrative, the telling of one's own story. Carlyle believed that in the nineteenth century, history still contained strong narrative elements, but had become more than mere storytelling.

For, whereas, of old, the charm of History lay chiefly in gratifying our common appetite for the wonderful, for the unknown; and her office was but that of a Minstrel and Story-teller, she has now farther become a School-mistress; and professes to instruct in gratifying.²

Carlyle fashioned his own historical works along this didactic pattern.

Carlyle thought that History was a suitable vehicle for exploring spiritual questions about man's existence such as where he came from, where he was headed, and whether or not he received any sort of divine guidance. At its best, history could address these issues, but Carlyle pointed out that facing these questions often proved beyond man's grasp. Several obstacles had to be overcome before the historian could address the major questions and reach any sort of conclusions on them. One of these obstacles
involved gathering and recording past experiences into some sort of meaningful order. Carlyle realized the impossibility of ever knowing the entire historical picture. He said that even a single life contained innumerable variables which led to decisions and beliefs, and to multiply these variables by the thousands of individuals who had lived would provide the historian with unworkable amounts of data if even a fraction of these variables had been recorded.

In "On History Again", Carlyle addressed the issue of having too much information. The printing press had made the situation worse by providing an easy means of spreading useless and false information. Carlyle said that before history could become universal, and fulfill its role as a teaching instrument, it had to be compressed. Forgetting played as important a role in preserving the past as did remembering.

Memory and Oblivion, like Day and Night, and indeed like all other contradictions in this strange dualistic life of ours, are necessary for each other's existence: Oblivion is the dark page, whereon Memory writes her light-beam characters, and makes them legible; were it all light, nothing could be read there, any more than if it were all darkness.³

One of the problems with this forgetting process was that often what was best in man's past - what provided the most useful moral lessons - was ignored while less worthy
information received all the attention. Eventually the really important information would surface. All the extraneous details of an event would fall away and reveal the event's spiritual or moral substance. "Thus does Accident correct Accident; and in the wondrous jostle of things, a result comes out that may be put-up with."\(^4\)

One problem with providing a true picture of the past was that the written records focused on developments which only later seemed significant. Carlyle pointed out that often the most noteworthy events received little attention at the time they took place. It was an error to assume one had a total grasp of the past through knowledge of its written records. Carlyle explained how events took on an artificial aura of importance in world history over time.

At first, among the various witnesses, who are also parties interested, there is only vague wonder, and fear or hope, and the noise of Rumour's thousand tongues; till, after a season, the conflict of testimonies has subsided into some general issue; and then it is settled, by majority of votes, that such and such a 'Crossing of the Rubicon', and 'Impeachment of Strafford' a 'Convocation of the Notables,' are epochs in the world's history, cardinal points on which grand world-revolutions have hinged.\(^5\)

Another problem with interpreting the past involved the way events were recorded in linear fashion - as one after another when they took place simultaneously. This linear recording oversimplified complex events.
It is not in acted, as it is in written History: actual events are nowise so simply related to each other as parent and offspring are; every single event is the offspring not of one, but of all other events, prior or contemporaneous, and will in its turn combine with all others to give birth to new; it is an ever-living, ever-working Chaos of Being, wherein shape after shape bodies itself forth from innumerable elements.

The linear quality of narrative history provided it with a false sense of order. It was only in looking back at events that they could be fitted into such a neat pattern. At the time they were taking place events did not appear in any particular order but rather as jumbled circumstances. It was impossible to tell what would be truly significant and what would have little impact.

Carlyle did not find the "ever-working Chaos of Being" which was history discouraging. He endorsed breaking history down into workable pieces, but he warned against using any single piece of the historical picture to draw definitive conclusions. For Carlyle, not losing sight of the larger picture while working within a smaller area of expertise distinguished the artist from the artisan in the field of history.

So likewise is it with the Historian, who examines some special aspect of History; and from this or that combination of circumstances, political, moral, economical, and the issues it has led to, infers that such and such properties belong to human society, and that the like circumstances will produce the like issue; which inference, if other trials confirm it, must be held true and practically valuable. He is wrong
only, and an artisan, when he fancies that these properties, discovered or discoverable, exhaust the matter; and sees not, at every step, that it is inexhaustible. 7

Carlyle's own historical work dealt with a few select elements from the inexhaustible picture of the past. He never stopped believing that history could teach practical, useful lessons to his own time. Carlyle chose from history those ideas or beliefs which he thought could assist man in formulating a perfect society. Some of the ideas he dealt with were hero worship, or leadership; the absolute necessity of faith in a higher being, and the value of meaningful work. All of these elements were closely connected, but of the three leadership, or, in Carlyle's terminology, hero worship, was by far the most important.

In 1840, Carlyle presented a series of lectures in London on the subject of heroes. The six lectures were later published in book form as On Heroes, Hero-worship and the Heroic in History. In On Heroes, Carlyle told his readers what made an individual truly heroic and the vital role such individuals played in society. Carlyle used examples of heroes from various time periods and professions, but they all shared some crucial traits.

Above all, Carlyle's heroes were men of true faith. Carlyle believed a hero could not function without divine guidance. This guidance took various forms, depending on the time and social conditions the hero had to face.
Carlyle did not limit divine guidance to religious dogma. For him, religion had little to do with man's outward practices and everything to do with how he felt in his heart. . ." the thing a man does practically lay to heart, and know for certain, concerning his vital relations to this mysterious Universe, and his duty and destiny there, that is in all cases the primary thing for him, and creatively determines all the rest. That is his religion." Any individual who tried to assume the mantle of heroism without being sanctioned by God was nothing but a charlatan. Such individuals could gain fleeting power or recognition, but over time they would be revealed as frauds. Nature would not allow a fraud to maintain any real power.

Along with faith, Carlyle's heroes were all men of great sincerity. They did not assume roles for convenience sake or personal profit. Often they were not recognized as great men at all, but rather struggled in their search for the truth in obscurity. For Carlyle, this struggle without material reward proved the inner greatness of his heroes. These included such diverse figures as a mythical Norse god, Odin; a great poet, Dante; and the founder of one of the world's largest religions, Mahomet. All were sincere, hard workers who never compromised their integrity by bowing to external pressure to conform or alter their ideals.
Odin, Mahomet and Dante were heroes from the past. There was little possibility that any individual in the nineteenth century would be considered a god, or even a prophet. The last two of Carlyle's lectures dealt with men who could be heroes for the nineteenth century - men of letters and kings.

Carlyle believed that men of letters played a crucial role in society - they gave voice to man's spiritual nature.

... since it is the spiritual always that determines the material, this same Man-of-Letters Hero must be regarded as our most important modern person. What he teaches, the whole world will do and make. The world's manner of dealing with him is the most significant feature of the world's general position.\textsuperscript{9}

Instead of dealing with the one figure he admired most in the literary world, Goethe, Carlyle used three men from the eighteenth century as his examples. He described Burns, Johnson and Rousseau as "not heroic bringers of the light, but heroic seekers of it."\textsuperscript{10} They were not heroic for their achievements but for their struggle. Their search for genuine Truth in an age of scepticism made them great.

The biggest problem a man of letters had to face in any century was the total disregard society had for him. It frustrated Carlyle that the very individuals society needed the most were treated the worst.
Whence he came, whither he is bound, by what ways he arrived, by what he might be furthered on his course, no one asks. He is an accident in society. He wanders like a wild Ishmaelite, in a world of which he is as the spiritual light, either the guidance or the misguidance.\textsuperscript{11}

Men of letters needed the support of society in order to do their work, but this support was piecemeal at best. Carlyle believed that this dilemma could not continue but there was no easy solution to it. He did not think that providing men of letters with adequate financing was the answer. Poverty provided a hard testing ground and helped weed out those who were unfit for the role of spiritual guide.

Carlyle briefly compared the Western approach to its men of letters with the approach of the Chinese. Carlyle saw great promise in the Chinese tradition of making men of letters political leaders. Even if the literary men had no talent for governing, they were still expected to make an effort at it.\textsuperscript{12} Carlyle saw this as common sense. Men of letters were men of insight, and who better to lead than an individual of uncommon vision? "The man of intellect at the top of affairs"\textsuperscript{13} was the finest societal aim.

Carlyle's three literary heroes had to face the hardest of all challenges - living in a time of spiritual paralysis. Intellectual and moral scepticism ruled the eighteenth century. Nothing seemed certain and worth believing in wholeheartedly. For Carlyle, this presented
the lowest level to which man could sink.

A man lives by believing something; not by debating and arguing about many things. A sad case for him when all that he can manage to believe is something he can button in his pocket, and with one or the other organ eat and digest! Lower than that he will not get. 14

Johnson, Burns and Rousseau never managed to free themselves from this deadly scepticism, but their struggle against it made them heroes to Carlyle.

Carlyle did not hold all three of his examples in high regard. He admired their sincerity, but Johnson and Burns were superior to Rousseau in many ways. Carlyle depicted Johnson as a proud, melancholy man who, despite the meanness of his surroundings, managed to produce meaningful work. Johnson provided an example of all the good that could come from poor circumstances, while Rousseau epitomized all the evil that could come from those same circumstances. 15 Rousseau "had not depth or width, not calm face for difficulty; the first characteristic of true greatness." 16 Rousseau seemed more fanatic than hero, but Carlyle included him because, despite his many faults, he had touched a nerve in society. That impact was not lessened by the world's contempt for him.

He could be cooped into garrets, laughed at as a maniac, left to starve like a wild beast in his cage; - but he could not be hindered from setting the world on fire. The French Revolution
Rousseau believed that society was on the edge of moral disaster and it was this singleminded sincerity which Carlyle admired.

Robert Burns held a special place in Carlyle's affections. Carlyle depicted Burns as a hearty peasant with a soul touched by God. Born into poverty, Burns became a great success in the literary world. Carlyle saw in Burns something of a mirror image for his own life. He did Burns the honor of comparing him very favorably to Mirabeau, the individual Carlyle believed could have provided real leadership for the French Revolution. "Wit, wild laughter, energy, directness, sincerity: these were in both."  

Men of letters brought Truth before their fellow men. It was the role of kings to see that the Truth was translated from rhetoric into practical action. Carlyle discussed the Hero as King in his last lecture, a fitting end to the series since he believed kingship was the summation of all the other types of heroism - the greatest of them all.

... that the finding of your Ableman and getting him invested with the symbols of ability, with dignity, worship, royalty, kinghood, or whatever we call it, so that he may actually have room to guide according to his faculty of doing it, - is the business, well or ill accomplished, of all social procedure whatsoever in this world.
Ideally, perfect government would be led by the most able man. Carlyle showed his readers in *The French Revolution* the chaos which occurred when leadership was absent. Carlyle believed absolutely that in a god-centered, moral universe some were meant to rule and others to be ruled. Neither the ruler nor the ruled had the right to question their place. "There is no act more moral between men than that of rule and obedience. Woe to him that claims obedience when it is not due; woe to him that refuses it when it is!"^20

Society had to choose carefully when seeking a true leader. There were many false kings who would wear the outer trappings of the office without possessing any of the spiritual or moral strength such a position required. Louis XVI was one such king. But the problem of weak leadership had not started with the eighteenth century. Carlyle believed the moral difficulty had started with the Protestant Reformation. When the Church no longer provided man with any moral or spiritual absolutes, then the descent into chaos - culminating in the French Revolution - began. During all the years between the Reformation and the Revolution society forgot how to choose her heroes, and in the nineteenth century the problem grew worse.

It was difficult for a hero to survive in a time of revolution. The hero would be seen as a revolutionary and
anarchist when in reality he only wanted to bring order back to society. Heroes served as centers of strength in the chaos of revolutionary times. Cromwell was one such hero, and Napoleon another.

Of the two leaders, Carlyle preferred Cromwell. Cromwell had exhibited real moral leadership during the Puritan Wars. Later on he would be reviled as an ambitious, dishonest leader, but Carlyle believed that this represented a false picture of the man. In his lecture on Cromwell, Carlyle defended him as a true hero. The charges of dishonesty and ambition brought against Cromwell were patently false. Carlyle told his audience that Cromwell was viewed as a liar by some of his contemporaries, but their accounts were based on their own prejudice. In fact, Cromwell, and all other heroes, were never easy to understand. They kept their own counsel and did not share their inner thoughts with everyone. "A man always is to be himself the judge how much of his mind he will show to other men; even to those he would have work along with him." Refusing to tell everyone everything did not make Cromwell dishonest.

On the charges of ambition, Carlyle pointed out that truly worthy individuals had no need for petty ambitions. They knew their own inner worth and did not seek the accolades of other men. Any person who did seek such
recognition was no true hero.

Examine the man who lives in misery because he does not shine above other men; who goes about producing himself, pruriently anxious about his gifts and claims; struggling to force everybody, as it were begging everybody for God's sake, to acknowledge him a great man, and set him over the heads of men! Such a creature is among the wretchedest sights seen under this sun.\textsuperscript{22}

However, all ambition was not the same. Carlyle believed that a hero had an intuitive sense of mission. A hero had to develop his own innate abilities and these would almost inevitably bring him to a position of power. "The meaning of life here on earth might be defined as consisting in this: to unfold your self, to work what thing you have the faculty for."\textsuperscript{23} Cromwell had the faculty for true leadership even if it was not appreciated at the time.

Napoleon also exhibited leadership, but to a lesser degree. Napoleon had been on the edges of the narrative action in Carlyle's \textit{French Revolution}. In his lecture, Carlyle focused on the man and shared with the audience his impressions of Napoleon's strengths and his weaknesses. Napoleon had fought great military battles, but those outer struggles did not add to his inner stature. Napoleon lacked one crucial element which prevented him from being a true hero. He had no faith in anything higher than himself. "Napoleon lived in an age when God was no longer believed; the meaning of all Silence, Latency, was thought to be
Nonentity: he had to begin not out of the Puritan Bible, but out of poor Sceptical Encyclopedies. In Carlyle's view this was a fatal flaw. Napoleon had faith not in God, but in his own ideals - the ideals of the French Revolution. It was in bringing those ideals down to the level of practical action that Napoleon excelled.

To bridle-in that great devouring, self-devouring French Revolution; to tame it, so that its intrinsic purpose can be made good, that it may become organic, and be able to live among other organisms and formed things, not as a wasting destruction alone: is not this still what he partly aimed at, as the true purport of his life; nay what he actually managed to do?

Napoleon became a leader because of his ability to work, but once in the position of leadership he let his outward ambition take over. Without any real faith to build on, Napoleon's work soon crumbled. What had lasted was only that which Nature supported, not anything built on Napoleon's personal ambitions. "What Napoleon did will in the long-run amount to what he did justly; what Nature with her laws will sanction. To what of reality was in him; to that and nothing more. The rest was all smoke and waste."

Carlyle's lecture series on heroes received a mixed reception. One reviewer criticized On Heroes as an unchristian book. The reviewer, William Thompson, pointed out that what Carlyle's heroes had in common was not sincerity but "radical pugnacity." All Carlyle's heroes
fought against established systems while none defended the status quo. Thompson, like many others, also disliked Carlyle's style. He wrote:

Nothing about his heroes is unheroic, their tears are crystallized into diamonds, their smallest motions noted in a book. Their lightest act is precious as the nail-paring of the Grand Llama. ²⁷

The lectures presented nothing new and they were given in the same lively narrative style which had made The French Revolution a success. However, Carlyle's next historical work, Past and Present, differed from On Heroes and the general essays on history in that it was written as a direct social criticism in response to a specific political situation.

In 1842, Carlyle was working on an edition of Cromwell's letters when the social conditions in England prompted him to write Past and Present. The 1830s had been difficult times for the country, with economic depression and labor strikes common. The worst of these strikes centered on Manchester and spread to the surrounding coal mines of Scotland and Wales. The Corn Laws, enacted in 1815, protected English farmers from foreign competition by placing a high tariff on imported grain. Under these conditions, farmers could charge whatever the market would bear, driving up the price of food. Industrialization
affected everything, forcing workers into unsafe and underpaid factory jobs. To add to the problems, the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 had sought the end of the welfare dole and its replacement with the workhouse. The deliberately horrible conditions of the workhouses were intended to discourage people from being poor.

Carlyle decided the time had come to voice his outrage at such conditions. He chose to do this with a theme familiar to his readers. In *Past and Present* Carlyle compared his society and its way of choosing leaders and organizing itself with the way things had been done in the past, specifically in a twelfth-century monastery. Here, again, the past could provide a practical moral guide for the present.

Carlyle began his social criticism with general comments about the changing conditions in England. He called England a paradox, a place where great material wealth and great poverty existed side by side. The increased material goods seemed to benefit no one. "We have sumptuous garnitures for our Life, but have forgotten to live in the middle of them." For Carlyle, England did not face economic or political difficulties as much as she faced moral and spiritual ones. The economic and political problems were only the outer manifestations of an inner moral sickness. The cure for this sickness was in Carlyle's
words ". . . to cease to be a hollow sounding-shell of
hearsays, egoisms, purblind dillettantisms; and become, were
it on the infinitely small scale, a faithful discerning
soul."\(^{29}\)

The path back to a moral and just existence was not an
easy one. Carlyle found a guide to help in this journey in
the chronicles of Jocelm of Brakelond, a monk who had lived
in St. Edmundsbury in the twelfth century. Medieval man had
faced many of the same physical challenges as his
nineteenth-century counterpart. The struggle for food and
shelter and justice had been much the same. Taxation and
obligations were different then, but not necessarily easier
to bear. Carlyle pointed out that the crucial difference
between the two centuries was that one was an age of faith
and the other was not. Carlyle used the election of a new
abbot in the monastery to emphasize the differences between
the centuries. The way society chose its leaders reflected
its spiritual health. "The grand summary of a man's
spiritual condition, what brings out all his herohood and
insight, or all his flunkeyhood and horn-eyed dimness, is
this question put to him, What man dost thou honour?"\(^{30}\)
In
the monastery, the abbot was chosen not on the basis of his
age or political ability or financial expertise; he was
chosen on the basis of his faith in God. With faith as a
guide, the monks could not make the wrong choice. Carlyle
believed the new abbot, Sampson, was a just and wise leader because he had his absolute faith to guide him. The situation had altered completely by the nineteenth century.

Carlyle told his readers that the modern world had lost its soul.

God's Laws are become a Greatest-Happiness Principle, a Parliamentary Expediency: the Heavens overreach us only as an Astronomical Time-keeper. . . man has lost the soul out of him; and now, after the due period, - begins to find the want of it!31

With no soul society lacked foundation and the means of choosing wise leaders. For the traditional ruling class, the aristocrats, Carlyle had nothing but contempt. He scorned the aristocracy as useless parasites on a society that could no longer afford their privileged position. Once they had fulfilled a moral and social obligation by providing real guidance to their subordinates. In 1842, they were more concerned with protecting their own social position with unfair laws than with being true leaders.

The pursuit of wealth to the exclusion of all else was one of modern society's major problems. Carlyle described hell for Englishmen of his day as "the terror of not succeeding; of not making money, fame, or some other figure in the World; - chiefly of not making money!"32 No sense of mutual responsibility for one's neighbors remained, no moral obligations to care for the less fortunate. "To a deadened
soul, seared with the brute Idolatry of Sense, to whom going to Hell is equivalent to not making money, all 'promises' and moral duties, that cannot be pleaded for in Courts of Requests, address themselves in vain."

Carlyle continued his social critique with a discussion of the vital role work played in forming a man's moral character. In modern times, work had become an activity one performed for a material reward, but to Carlyle this was a travesty. "Labour is Life: from the inmost heart of the Worker rises his god-given Force, the sacred celestial Life-essence breathed into him by Almighty God. . ." Work could not simply support the body, it also had to nourish the spirit. Having meaningful work to do provided man with the greatest happiness. "The only happiness a brave man ever troubled himself with asking much about was, happiness enough to get his work done." Englishmen had a tradition of being hard workers, a tradition Carlyle admired. "With all its miserable shortcomings, with its wars, controversies, with its trades-unions, famine-insurrections, - it is her Practical Material Work alone that England has to show for herself!" The overproduction of material goods which had contributed to the economic depression of the time was not the fault of the working class. It could be laid at the feet of the do-nothing aristocracy. Instead of trying
to invent new ways to create more material goods, and thus increase their own wealth, the aristocracy needed to address the issue of justly distributing the goods that were available.

Carlyle also had hard comments to make concerning modern politics. Democracy did not bring true freedom to the majority of men, it simply brought them the freedom to starve.\textsuperscript{37} For Carlyle, the solution to this dilemma was for society to once again choose Heroes as her leaders. Industrialization had enslaved people, and the right to vote as one starved on the street or in the workhouse was of little comfort. "Man, little as he may suppose it, is necessitated to obey superiors."\textsuperscript{38} The landed aristocracy no longer served as true leaders, but there was a rising class of industrialists who could step into leadership positions. Carlyle believed the industrialists could try to lead society since they knew personally the value of hard work. But, knowing the value of hard work was insufficient by itself. Men had to stop isolating themselves from one another and interacting only on a material level. There had to be a return to moral responsibility before any permanent political or economic change could occur.

*Past and Present* also received a mixed reception from critics. Carlyle's style of writing had not changed and some critics were still alienated by the liberties he took.
with the English language. Ralph Waldo Emerson gave *Past and Present* a favorable review, but on its style he wrote: "...the habitual exaggeration of the tone wearies whilst it stimulates ... It is not serene sunshine, but everything is seen in lurid stormlights." Others saw the book as a call for reform which contained no practical suggestions for obtaining it. William Henry Smith reviewed the book for *Blackwoods* in 1843 and pointed out how little practical merit Carlyle's suggestions for reform had.

In fine, turn which way you will, you find Mr. Carlyle objecting, denouncing, scoffing, rending all to pieces in his bold, reckless, ironical, manner - but teaching nothing.

A call for moral heroes sounded worthwhile, but such a simple solution had no place in the complex political structure of the time. Liberals were especially put off by the call for a strong leader which Carlyle sounded. Carlyle's rhetoric appeared more and more out of touch with social realities. He was correct in pointing out the weaknesses within industrialized society and representative government, but he never presented a balanced picture. None of the good that came from mechanization ever seemed evident to Carlyle. Smith pointed out that Carlyle always had more respect for the past than the present. "Nothing but respect and indulgence when he revisits the monastery of St. Edmunds; nothing but censure and suspicion when he
His admonitions for his time became even more vitriolic in *Latter-day Pamphlets*. It was with their publication that Carlyle's reputation began to decline markedly.

*Latter-day Pamphlets* was a series of eight magazine articles published in 1850. Each article dealt with a different topic on the surface, but all served as Carlyle's vehicle for venting his frustration with modern society. One of the issues which Carlyle criticized most violently in the Pamphlets was democratic representative government. Carlyle told his readers that democracy was a fact that had to be faced in modern times, but it was wrong to think it wholly a positive development. "Everywhere immeasurable Democracy rose monstrous, loud, blatant, inarticulate as the voice of Chaos." In order to be governed well, man had to re-discover the moral and natural laws of the Universe and abide by them. The democratic solution to discovering these laws involved universal suffrage, or allowing all to have a voice. For Carlyle, this solution could never work. Natural law dictated certain gifted individuals made the rules and all other individuals followed them. "The Noble in the high place, the Ignoble in the low; that is, in all times and in all countries, the Almighty Maker's law." A few wise men had to take charge, and, as he had outlined in *Past and Present*, Carlyle thought those best suited to this
role were the new captains of industry. This idea, which had made readers uncomfortable in 1843, was vilified in 1850. Carlyle's ideas had not changed markedly since his earlier work was published, but society had changed. The 1840s had been a time of great social and political unrest in England, but by 1850 things had improved slightly. Foreign markets had opened up, increasing prosperity. The Corn Laws had been repealed which lowered the cost of food and consequently the overall cost of living. Welfare legislation, while ponderous, was addressing some of the worst ills caused by industrialization. The problems which had appeared nearly hopeless in the 1840s were slowly being overcome. It was a much more hopeful time. In such an improved atmosphere, Carlyle's calls for a strong hero and a return to morality seemed out-of-date.

Carlyle met some of the attempts to reform society's ills with violent sarcasm. In his pamphlet on model prisons, Carlyle scorned the philanthropic movement. The problem with philanthropism lay in its failure to recognize that some problems existed because society had lost its way morally. Caring for the physical needs of men did nothing when it was their spirituality and their morality which needed guidance. Philanthropism could actually make society's problems worse by creating a smokescreen of good intentions which hid the underlying sickness.
prisons exemplified this process of delusion. Carlyle pointed out the irony of having a modern, clean facility where the inmates were not expected to work too hard surrounded on the outside by the dingy hovels and grimy factories where the poor scratched out a bare living. Carlyle thought the reformers would do better to concentrate on helping the working class rather than spending their time and money on those behind bars. 46 Men had a moral obligation not to associate with those who chose to do evil.

Carlyle highlighted his recurring theme of hero worship in "Hudson's Statue". Hudson had been a railroad magnate who had been suggested as a proper subject for a public statue. Carlyle thought honoring a man for the amount of money he had made was patently ridiculous. That such a thing could even be seriously considered showed the depths to which society had fallen. Hudson obviously did not qualify in Carlyle's eyes as one of the captains of industry he had seen as possible leaders in Past and Present. Individuals like Hudson were nothing more than "paltry Adventurers for most part; worthy of no worship; and incapable forever of getting any, except from the soul consecrated to flunkyism." 47 Carlyle ended his pamphlets by sounding his old warning about society crumbling unless it returned to the path of moral righteousness and once again chose worthy
leaders.

This also is certain, Nations that do their Hero-worship well are blessed and victorious; Nations that do it ill are accursed, and in all fibres of their business grow daily more so, till their miserable afflictive and offensive situation becomes at last unendurable to Heaven and to Earth, and the so-called Nation, now an unhappy Populace of Misbelievers (miscreants was the old name), bursts into revolutionary tumult, and either reforms or else annihilates itself. 48

The reaction to the Pamphlets was overwhelmingly negative. Leslie Stephen wrote that:

The denunciations were too indiscriminate to be biting, and the only satisfactory reform suggested, the miraculous advent of a hero and conversion of the people, was hardly capable of application to facts. The pamphlets were neglected as stupendous growls from a misanthropic recluse. . . 49

Where Carlyle's views had once been seen as telling social commentary, in 1850 they appeared as reactionary. Liberals were goaded into responding to Carlyle's harsh criticisms. They especially took issue with his views on slavery, capital punishment and democracy. 50 William Aytoun wrote a sarcastic review of the Pamphlets, saying that Carlyle "... contents himself with abusing men and matters in a barbarous, conceited, uncouth and mystical dialect." 51 Aytoun scorned Carlyle's call for a Noble hero to save society. "This Noblest, it seems, is to have a select series or staff of Noblers, to whom shall be confided the
divine everlasting duty of directing and controlling the Ignoble. It was as the eloquent spokesman for hero-worship that Carlyle was, and is, remembered best.

David Masson wrote a kinder review of the Pamphlets. Masson, a friend of Carlyle's, pointed out that the Pamphlets were not much different from the rest of Carlyle's social critiques. He said that this work generated such intense criticism because it struck a nerve in segments of society where such criticism was unexpected.

... not only is there a blow in the face all around for Democracy, Aristocracy, Monarchy, Political Economy, Protectionism, Mammon-worship, and such other recognized interests and social entities as have already been more or less accustomed to be girded at; but other interests and entities that thought themselves safe and consecrated from attack by the high guardianship of universal opinion, have found themselves ridiculed and made a mock of.

On Carlyle's style, Masson wrote that it served a particular purpose. Carlyle wanted his words to have a moral, not just intellectual, impact. Masson pointed out that "... one is none the worse for being belaboured with an important truth through many more sentences, and in much more ponderous language than might suffice for its mere intellectual conveyance.

For his social criticisms Carlyle used history as a primary source for buttressing and defending his views. In 1837 The French Revolution had been considered as a
serious, albeit unusual, historical work. In the beginning of his career, it was possible for a man to be considered a serious historian and a literary man at the same time. Working in more than one area of expertise was accepted practice. Carlyle could write essays and social criticisms without being considered any less a good historian. Later in the century this open attitude would change dramatically. The application of scientific methodology to the field of history would remove literary men of letters from the ranks of serious historians.

2. Ibid. p. 84.


5. Ibid. p. 87.

6. Ibid. p. 88.

7. Ibid. p. 90.


10. Ibid. p. 158.

11. Ibid. p. 159.

12. Ibid. p. 169.

13. Ibid.


15. Ibid. p. 187.

16. Ibid. p. 185.

17. Ibid. p. 188.

18. Ibid. p. 191.

19. Ibid. p. 197.

20. Ibid. p. 199.
21. Ibid. p. 220
22. Ibid. p. 222.
23. Ibid. p. 225.
24. Ibid. p. 238.
25. Ibid. p. 240.
29. Ibid. p. 30.
30. Ibid. p. 80.
31. Ibid. p. 139.
32. Ibid. p. 148.
33. Ibid. p. 149.
34. Ibid. p. 197.
35. Ibid. p. 159.
36. Ibid. p. 169.
37. Ibid. p. 212.
38. Ibid. p. 241.
39. Seigel, 222.
41. Ibid. 215.
43. Ibid. p. 19.

46. Ibid. p. 52.

47. Ibid. p. 223.

48. Ibid. p. 237.


51. Siegel, 324.

52. Ibid. 328.

53. Ibid. 339.

54. Ibid. 342.
Chapter 3

Scientific Methodology in Historical Writing: The Influence of Leopold von Ranke

After the publication of *Latter-Day Pamphlets* in 1850, Carlyle's reputation declined with some readers. His idea about hero-worship and his scathing social criticism fell out of fashion among the upper classes, but his work remained popular with the working classes. Carlyle lived until 1881, and he continued to be a popular figure within London society until his death, even though his work never regained the popularity it had enjoyed in that society during the 1830s.

One factor in the decline of Carlyle's reputation was the ascent of a new method for studying history which first developed in Germany. This method applied scientific methodology to historical studies. Taking physical science as a model, historians began to apply stringent standards of impartiality and primary source verification to their work. Leopold von Ranke became the man most closely associated with this revolution in approach to history. Zealous
attention on the part of his followers to what they believed were Ranke's axioms about impartiality led to his reputation as the father of modern historiography. However, the perception of Ranke as an impartial scientific historian never reflected the reality of the man and his work.

Ranke did not believe that he had arrived at any magic formula for writing objective history. Yet in the latter part of the nineteenth century, his methodology was honored and taught as practically a magic formula in the history departments of the universities. Ranke's method became separated from its Romantic and religious context which in fact had been the same broad mental framework of Carlyle's work. Ranke's legacy was much more complicated than the survival of his method indicated. For someone who has gone down in history as the modern antithesis of the old-fashioned Carlyle, Ranke in many ways had more in common with the Scottish historian than with us.

Ranke began his career as a historian when called to the University of Berlin in 1824 as a professor of modern history, a post he held the rest of his life. His background included a classical education from the University of Leipzig, where he participated in the seminars in philology conducted by Gottfried Hermann. The seminar method used by Niebuhr was also familiar to Ranke. At the University of Berlin, Ranke conducted his own seminar in
modern history and taught his students using the philological method of verifying and analyzing primary sources. Ranke did not invent the system with which his name became synonymous, rather he combined elements which already existed within the universities and applied them systematically to the study of modern history.¹

Ranke's writings over his lifetime filled fifty-four volumes. He always believed historians had to work toward writing universal history - hardly a characteristic of contemporary historiography - but his own work concentrated on political history. Ranke never formally wrote down any theory of history but in his copious lecture notes and the prefaces to his major works he revealed his thinking on historiographical theory. These observations on theory were combined and published as Theory and Practice of History. This work more than any other gave a clear picture of Ranke's own ideas on what made history important and how it should be practiced.

Ranke believed history had to be studied as a field separate from philosophy. Although the two fields were related, they had to be approached from different directions. Philosophy concentrated on a single idea or concept and interpreted action in terms of this central idea. The idea held center stage which other elements either illuminated or obscured. History differed from
philosophy in that it concentrated on concrete events and individuals. Using philosophical models for historical study would sterilize such study by reducing it to being an illustration on an underlying metaphysical idea. Ranke saw merit in the philosophical approach, but he did not believe this approach worked for history. He observed: "There are two ways of acquiring knowledge about human affairs - through the perception of the particular and through abstraction. The one is the way of philosophy, the other that of history."2 History's primary concern was with the particular, but that did not mean its underlying ideas could be ignored. For Ranke, history always contained a vital spiritual element. Every historic act was rooted in a spiritual idea. It was this underlying spirituality which the historian worked to reveal through careful analysis of historical documentation. For Ranke, these spiritual forces were not simple abstractions, but observable in action.

They unfold, capture the world, appear in manifold expressions, dispute with and check and overpower one another. In their interaction and succession, in their life, in their decline or rejuvenation, which there encompasses an ever greater fullness, higher importance, and wider extent, lies the secret of world history.3

Spiritual elements in history could only be revealed through meticulous study of historical documents. The historian had to examine documents carefully enough to make
an accurate assessment of unrecorded underlying motives for the actions recorded. This assessment involved educated guesswork, but such conjecture had to rest on the facts. Ranke believed careful observation provided the only real basis for the conjecture needed to complete the historical picture. He wrote that "... the more documentary, the more exact, and the more fruitful the research is, the more freely can our art unfold, which only flourishes in the element of immediate, undeniable truth." 4

Ranke wrote that the ultimate goal for the historian was to write universal history - history which captured both the telling detail of an event and its underlying spiritual meaning. Historical events had to be viewed within a broad perspective. Ranke believed historians had to examine all factors within a society - artistic, political and economic - when studying history. 5 His remark that "every epoch is immediate to God" 6 was interpreted to mean that all things had historical importance and should be studied for their own sake. But, in his preface to his work on the history of France, Ranke himself stated that he did not devote much space to less significant events and rather concentrated on "those of world-historical importance." 7

Ranke presented conflicting views on the idea of progress in history. In his lecture "On Progress in
History"(1854) he explained how the concept of progress seemed inapplicable to history. Progress was not a steady phenomenon, it affected different societies in different ways. Ranke believed there were places where culture had once existed but had died out, like Asia. Progressive development did not encompass all human endeavors at the same time. Art and poetry could flourish in one era and not in another. In light of this unsteady progressive development, it was unfair to judge an era in terms of its place on the historical continuum. Each era had inherent worth and had to be studied as an individual entity. In the preface to Ranke's Universal History, written in 1880, he contradicted his earlier view on progress. It his later work Ranke declared:

The nations can be regarded in no other connection than in that of the mutual action and reaction involved by their successive appearance on the stage of history and their combination into one progressive community. 

Universal history had to be more than just a collection of national histories. It had to show the connections that existed between the different nations, to "trace the sequence of those great events which link all nations together and control their destinies." These connections were most evident in international conflicts over land and political superiority.
Ranke and Carlyle shared many common traits in their approach to history. They were contemporaries who both lived long lives during a time of extreme cultural and political change in Europe. Both men had different explanations for what they observed around them and these differences were reflected in their writing. Carlyle wrote as a social critic using history as his subject and called for moral reform. Ranke wrote as a political historian, seeing in the ebb and flow of political power the underlying ebb and flow of man's spirituality. Nevertheless, both men were convinced there existed a spiritual dimension to history which needed to be revealed if man were to really understand his past. It was this spirituality which both men worked to reveal, each in his own fashion.

For both men, documented facts were not the desired end product of historical study. Instead, accurate historical facts provided a jumping-off point from which the historian could make reasonable guesses in an attempt to recreate the past. This recreation included non-verifiable elements of the past like spiritual and moral attitudes. Dealing with intangible elements required the historian to use subjective judgment based on the facts available. Subjective recreation would inevitably be colored by the historian's personality. Ranke recognized this subjectivity within his own work but he always held total objectivity as his
ultimate goal. He never believed he had reached that goal. Some subjective and personal judgment was inevitable if history were to be more than a dry rendition of fact. Ranke never wanted his work to deteriorate into a mere recitation of provable facts. The danger with making subjective choices for the historian lay in believing his personal view was the only correct and accurate one. One interpretation of available data did not rule out all other interpretations. The historian had to recognize the validity of other viewpoints. Ranke believed historical truth was objective, but this truth had many sides. The individual historian illuminated the side of it most appropriate to his own nature. Doing so did not invalidate other interpretations of the same data.

Carlyle believed the historian had to immerse himself in his chosen subject, to develop an intuitive sense of the time period and individuals he presented to his readers. Carlyle always did this with the intention of instructing his readers. He firmly believed the past could be used to provide useful moral lessons for the present. Ranke, too, believed the historian had to immerse himself intuitively in the object of his study, but his goal was not to use history as a didactic tool. He believed one had to have intimate knowledge of historical facts in order to present the most objective and accurate portrayal of those facts to an
audience. Accuracy demanded the historian try to present the moral and spiritual elements that had existed in a specific time and place as well as the physical elements.

Carlyle judged every era in history on its moral fiber. For him, some eras were not worthy of interest because nothing had happened in them to further man along his obligatory moral continuum. Progress was made in fits and starts, and Carlyle ignored eras which he believed presented no moral advancement. His lessons to his readers compared ages of moral progress and those of stagnation. These comparisons were usually between past periods of sound moral development and Carlyle's own time which he viewed as spiritually bankrupt. Ranke believed drawing parallels between different time periods was not possible because each period contained so many unknowable variations. He stated that each time period had to be viewed in its own context. Judging eras good or bad reflected the historian's prejudices, not the truth. Each era had to be approached as an individual development, and it was wrong to use one time period to draw conclusions about another.

Carlyle and Ranke had similar views on the need for historians to take a universal view of history. Neither of them approved of over-specialization within the field. In his essay "On History", Carlyle wrote about how misleading specialized history could be if it was mistaken for the
entire historical picture.

He who reads the inscrutable Book of Nature as if it were a Merchant's Ledger, is justly suspected of having never seen that book, but only some school Synopsis thereof; from which, if taken for the real Book, more error than insight is to be derived."\(^{13}\)

For Carlyle, the "inscrutable Book of Nature" presented an infinite variety of spiritual and social elements for the historian to reconstruct. Choosing too narrow a focus distorted the historical picture.

For Ranke, specific facts in history were important as the building blocks needed to create a larger picture of the past. But, historians could not lose sight of the overall picture in their zeal to uncover the details. Details had to be placed within a broader framework in order to have any real meaning. Of those who practiced over-specialization Ranke said, "This colossal race works all the harder at a subject the more insignificant it is."\(^{14}\) Overgeneralization was as bad as over-specialization. Both the specific and the universal were needed to provide an accurate and balanced picture of the past. "Without a general view, research would become sterile; without exact research, the general view would deteriorate into fantasy."\(^{15}\) Ranke always worked to maintain the balance between the specific and the general in history, believing this balance would eventually lead to universal history. He wrote:
To look at the world, past and present, to absorb it into my being as far as my powers will enable me: to draw out and appropriate all that is beautiful and great, to see with unbiased eyes the progress of universal history and in this spirit to produce beautiful and noble works: imagine what happiness it would be for me if I could realize this ideal, even in a small degree.\textsuperscript{16}

Carlyle and Ranke were both deeply religious men. For them, religion was not a narrow, dogmatic set of beliefs. They saw true religion in a broader mystical sense as the opening of the mind and spirit to their fullest potential. Universal history provided one means of revealing the religious spirit within mankind. Ranke noted, "...mankind harbors within itself an infinite multiplicity of developments which manifest themselves gradually according to laws which are unknown to us and are more mysterious and greater than one thinks."\textsuperscript{17} A God-centered universe served as the context for all of Ranke's and Carlyle's historical works.

Carlyle's belief in great men as the primary moral force in society was evident in all his works. Carlyle used biographies as moral examples. Ranke also used the biographies of great men in his work. For Ranke, great men personified the spirit of their age. Prominent individuals reflected the internal attitudes of the times in which they lived. They served as gateways for the historian into the \textit{zeitgeist} of an age. Carlyle had a completely different
view of great men. Carlyle's great men were heroes to be honored and emulated. They were remarkable individuals who, although influenced by their surroundings, were never simply products of it. The "times" could never be the deciding factor in producing a great man.

Show our critics a great man, a Luther for example, they begin to what they call 'account' for him: not to worship him, but take the dimensions of him, - and bring him out to be a little kind of man! He was the 'creature of the Time', they say; the Time called him forth, the Time did everything, he nothing - but what we the little critic could have done too!  

The role great men played in a society - prophet, priest or king - was dictated by the environment into which they were born, but a true hero was always more than a reflection of his time. True heroes had absolute moral integrity. This integrity remained the hallmark of a true hero in any environment.

Ranke viewed individual states in much the same way he viewed great men. The state was the outer manifestation of a society's inner spirit. The historian's task was to illuminate this inner life as clearly as possible. This could be accomplished best by studying the political records of a time period. For Ranke, historical work always had be have written documents as a foundation on which to build. The best written documentation available was political in nature. Use of such archival material naturally led the
historian to write politically based history. Such material had to be handled carefully. The historian had to go behind the facade of written fact to determine the real significance of what had occurred. It was never enough to simply verify the facts. Carlyle, too, noted that written records did not illustrate the most important developments within a society. Historians had to go beyond the written words of the documents and develop an emotional and mental context for those words.

Ranke and Carlyle shared some common stylistic traits. Both wanted to write lively, readable histories for a general audience. While Carlyle's style was more flamboyant, Ranke's writing had its own grace. His biographical sketches, like Carlyle's, created strong mental images of his subjects. In *History of the Popes*, Ranke described Paul IV:

Paul IV had already completed his seventy-ninth year, but his deep-set eyes still retained all the fire of youth: he was extremely tall and thin, walked with rapid steps, and seemed all nerve and muscle. . . He seemed to acknowledge no other duty, no other occupation, than the restoration of the Catholic faith to all its primitive authority.

Carlyle created the same type of mental picture of Martin Luther in *On Heroes*.

A rude plebian face; with its huge crag-like brows and bones, the emblem of rugged energy, at first, almost a repulsive face. Yet in the eyes especially there is a wild silent sorrow, an
unnamable melancholy, the element of all gentle and fine affections; giving to the rest the true stamp of nobleness... he considers that God alone can and will regulate the course things are taking, and that perhaps the Day of Judgment is not far.20

Both passages described the physical characteristics of their subjects and, more importantly, revealed something of their personalities as well. They reveal fundamental elements of style in nineteenth-century narrative historiography - elements which Ranke's twentieth-century admirers have tended to ignore.

If Carlyle and Ranke shared so many common traits, why was Ranke honored as a great historian and Carlyle nearly forgotten? The difference in posthumous reputation between the two men rested on the perception of Ranke as a "scientific" historian and Carlyle as a literary man and social critic.

Ranke loved to work with primary documents. For his History of the Popes he used the archives of Vienna, Venice and Rome. He expressed his enthusiasm for his sources in the preface of his book.

The reader examines the catalogues with feelings of pleasure and hope, perceiving the many unexplored sources of knowledge that will enable him to supply the deficiencies manifest in almost all printed works of modern history. A whole futurity of study!21

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Ranke found his life's work in the archives. The study of history through those documents became almost a religion for him.

To him, the study of history was thus not analysis, but contemplation, beholding, a source of 'unspeakable sweetness and vitality.' Knowing and worshiping were one and the same experience.\(^{22}\)

Ranke sincerely believed that using primary sources as subject matter would allow him to write objective history. In his *History of the Popes* he expressed the belief that as a North German Protestant, he would write a more objective history of the papacy than an Italian Catholic. Ranke felt that he "... regards the papal power with feelings of more indifference; and must, from the first, renounce such warmth of expression as arises from partiality or hostility. .. \(^{23}\)

Ranke may have believed he was impartial when it came to the papacy, but his critics pointed out that his work did reflect his own prejudices. What he believed to be impartiality his critics saw as political conservatism. Ranke viewed the state in its broadest sense - as an organization designed to regulate human behavior. He treated each state as an individual, metaphysical unit. On that level, he saw criticism of the state as inappropriate since to be critical would violate his belief that the historian must not judge what he studied. This conception of the state as a metaphysical unit clashed with the growing
nationalist sensibilities of the time.

Ranke was criticized for focusing too narrowly on political documents and ignoring social and economic elements entirely. Charles Beard wrote of Ranke in 1935:

Persistently neglecting social and economic interests in history, successfully avoiding any historical writing that offended the most conservative interests in the Europe of his own time, Ranke may be correctly characterized as one of the most 'partial' historians produced by the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{24}

Beard criticized Ranke's treatment of the papacy in his History. In the work, Ranke never addressed the basic question of whether or not the papacy was a political organization run by men for men or whether it was a divine institution, representing a direct link between God and man.\textsuperscript{25}

Carlyle was aware of the growing importance of science in the late nineteenth century. He had a deep appreciation for scientific work. Carlyle had taught mathematics prior to beginning his literary career and once considered applying for a position as an astronomer in Edinburgh.\textsuperscript{26} Carlyle did not view science as the antithesis of the spirit. For him, they were not antagonistic. Science contained many of the same transcendental elements found in religion. It presented yet another route for discovering the inner workings of the universe. Carlyle's work served
as a bridge between the spiritual and moral world and the scientific one. He acknowledged the universe as God's creation and at the same time recognized parts of that universe operated according to scientific, discoverable principles. Science and its offshoot, mechanization, were not in themselves evil. They only became problems when they replaced spiritual and moral considerations as the emotional and intellectual focal point for man's energies. Man erred when he put all of his energy into making money or increasing production of goods without thinking about the moral implications of his actions. Carlyle's work had special appeal for those who were struggling over the seemingly inevitable choice between spiritual and scientific belief. His work offered a middle road. It

... appealed to those who had parted with dogma but who still longed to satisfy the religious impulse, just as he appealed to those who had respect for science but who still felt that life was something more than a phase of mechanics.  

The middle road Carlyle offered came under increased attack as science and its empirical methods moved to the forefront as the model for serious study in all fields. This movement represented an extension of scientific assumptions and methods from the physical world to man's whole life. Scientific emphasis on exact, minute clarification of data set the standard for professionalism
in fields extending well beyond the physical sciences.

The professionalization process gained momentum as major changes occurred in the place history occupied in the schools. As the middle class became more politically involved, the need for civic education increased. In a program designed to promote civic responsibility, history was a cornerstone. At the universities, history became a field of study in its own right rather than being appended to other areas of the curriculum. Honors and graduate programs in history were established. History as a field of study had to adjust to a formal examination format.

Accompanying the growth of history as a university subject, historical documents became more readily available and better cataloged for easier access. More and more, emphasis shifted from history as a subject for general literary interest to history as a field for scholarship and research. The link between teaching in the university and research was forged.

It was in this atmosphere that Ranke's methodology made such an impression. His seminar method seemed to provide the right set of instructions for writing clear and precise history. Just as the physical scientist could impartially examine data and report his results, so, too, the historian could use Ranke's technique and report scientifically on the past. In his seminar, Ranke taught many of the men who
would go on to fill the history positions in the universities, especially in Germany. His students included Georg Waitz who worked in medieval studies at the University of Goettingen, Wilhelm von Giesebrecht who wrote a history of the German Imperial era and Jacob Burckhardt, who set the standard for modern cultural history with his *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*.32

Ranke's influence spread far beyond his immediate seminar students. In the United States at Johns Hopkins University in 1880, Herbert Baxter Adams designed and redesigned what he considered the 'perfect' seminar room.33 Ranke was also the first and only individual ever given an honorary lifetime membership in the American Historical Association. Herbert Baxter Adams illustrated how Ranke's disciples divorced his method from its transcendental roots. History as taught in the universities had a much different goal than Ranke's spiritual universal history. It became more closely tied to national politics than ever before. Politicians believed promoting a common national history would bind classes together, promote unity and deflect revolutionary impulses. Research could be used to justify claims and policies advocated by the centralized administration.34 Such an approach to history differed greatly from that taken by men like Carlyle.

One of the major differences between history as
practiced by literary men and history as taught in the universities was their anticipated audience. Men of letters, like Carlyle, who used history as a subject wanted to reach a general audience. They filled a specific function within their society by acting as moral guides. In order to maintain their audience, they presented their moral lessons in an entertaining fashion. It was the dual nature of their works - as education and entertainment - that made Victorian writers so popular.\textsuperscript{35} Victorian men of letters used the public forum offered by their writing to work out for themselves answers to major philosophical questions. In the process, they helped society find answers, too.\textsuperscript{36} Men of letters deliberately worked to create a specific effect with their writing. They wanted their readers to enter into the story being told and draw from it a specific moral conclusion. This desire for literary effect diminished as history became professionalized.

With the romantic historians the choice of subject, of plan, of the proofs, of the style, is dominated by an engrossing desire to produce an effect - a literary, not a scientific ambition.\textsuperscript{37}

The universities targeted a much more specific audience. History was no longer considered a useful moral guide. Instead, its aim had become

\ldots not to please, nor to give practical maxims of conduct, nor to arouse the emotions, but
knowledge pure and simple.\textsuperscript{38}

The best historians would avoid preaching to their audience and instead report dispassionately what had actually - and verifiably - happened.

History would no longer be a suitable province for amateurs, men of letters, and moralists; professional historians newly established in the universities and guided by high-minded principles would now determine who spoke with authority. Polemical, flamboyant history, like Carlyle's, was ruled old-fashioned, romantic; instead history had to be precise, accurate and impartial.\textsuperscript{39}

Since history had to be written by specialists, it could only be judged by specialists. Literary men and the general public were no longer considered capable of determining what was good history.

The literary critic, in fact, is beginning to find out that he reads a history as he might read a treatise on mathematics or linguistics, at his peril, and that he is no judge of its value or lack of value. Only the expert can judge that.\textsuperscript{40}

Public acclaim often meant that a historical work fell short of professional qualifications. "In order to escape enslavement to the popular taste the historian was told to seek the protection and approval of fellow specialists exclusively."\textsuperscript{41} Historians who wrote excellent monographs for their fellow specialists often slipped into partiality when attempting more general works. When writing for a general audience these historians would "abandon themselves
These inclinations included falling into nationalistic and romantic patterns.

Professional historians of the late nineteenth century had little respect for the romantic historians who had preceded them. "Many of the new scholars, aggressively opposed the men of letters, whom they branded as shallow, dillettantish, amateurish and out of date." But it soon became apparent that history would not neatly fit into the empirical scientific mold. The academic historian found out just how difficult it was to simply report what had actually happened. Old patterns for historical study had not disappeared when scientific methodology appeared. The merit in those old patterns soon became clear. Storytelling represented the oldest form of history and its narrative format required subjective judgment on the part of the storyteller. Modern historians had to work with the subjective narrative format even though they based their work on verifiable facts more than intuition or moral fervor.

The study of history was by its nature the study of humanity. It was not possible to separate the humanness of the past from the documents left behind. Subjectivity always had a place in historical work. Professionalization did set useful standards for research. This process went
too far when historians attempted to factor out the human dimension of the past in the name of impartiality.


3. Ibid. 100.

4. Ibid. 44.

5. Ibid. 40.

6. Ibid. 53.

7. Ibid. 150.

8. Ibid. 52.

9. Ibid. 162.

10. Ibid. 162.

11. Ibid. 163.


15. Ranke, 59.


17. Ranke, 55.


21. Leopold von Ranke, The History of the Popes (London:

23. Ibid. xii.


25. Ibid. 77.


34. Ibid. 160.

35. Jann, 222.

36. Ibid. 227.

38. Ibid. 303.


40. Langlois, v.

41. Jann, 249.

42. Langlois, viii.


Conclusion

Carlyle's posthumous reputation was shaped by several factors. One major factor involved his lack of academic connections. The universities were becoming important centers for political and social change in the late nineteenth century. Academic connections were one of Ranke's greatest assets. He held a position at the University of Berlin his entire life. This position gave Ranke the financial security and opportunity to devote himself singlemindedly to his scholarly work. Ranke could afford to go in person to the great archival centers to pursue his work without risking financial or professional ruin. The academy supported him and gave him the chance to instruct the rising new professionals in his field. Carlyle never enjoyed the luxury of such an academic support system. Carlyle did not deliberately eschew the universities. Averse to being dependent solely on publishing for financial security, Carlyle tried several times to gain academic positions. He saw the universities as a means of escaping this precarious dependency, especially the Weimar system in Germany.

From the number of universities, libraries, collections of art, museums and other literary or scientific institutions of a public or private nature, we question whether the chance which a
meritorious man of letters has before him, of obtaining some permanent appointment, some independent civic existence, is not a hundred to one in favor of the German, as compared to the Englishman. This is a weighty item, and indeed the weightiest of all; for it will be granted, that, for a votary of literature the relation of entire dependence on the merchants of literature is, at best, and however liberal the terms, a highly questionable one.¹

Carlyle applied for a position at the newly formed University of London in 1826 as chair of moral philosophy, physics or metaphysics. The University was being established by supporters of Benthamite philosophy and Carlyle's interest in German metaphysics did not impress them favorably.² Carlyle made another attempt to enter the university world when a professorship in moral philosophy opened up at the University of St. Andrews. The post had always been reserved only for a clergyman of the Church of Scotland, but the University had announced that this would no longer be the case and opened the position to all candidates regardless of religious affiliation. Carlyle received many strong recommendations for the position, but the University never intended to live up to their promise of an open candidacy and gave the position to a clergyman once again.³ Carlyle's lack of orthodox religious views kept him from serious consideration.

Carlyle's last attempt at gaining an academic position occurred in 1834 when he applied for a position as professor
of astronomy at the University of Edinburgh. This position also went to someone else.\(^4\) Carlyle's lack of orthodox religious views barred him from academic positions in the older conservative universities and his metaphysical interests closed the door to places like the University of London with its Benthamite philosophy. Carlyle's unorthodox views kept him out of the system which provided lifelong support for Ranke.

Another factor contributing to the decline of Carlyle's reputation involved unproven allegations about his personal life which surfaced after his death. These allegations centered on Carlyle's long marriage. Rumors about his supposed impotence and cruelty to his wife overshadowed any discussion of his work. For many years, Carlyle's personal life received more attention than his writing.

The change in social atmosphere also affected Carlyle's reputation. In the 1830s and 1840s the barbs Carlyle aimed at society about its lack of true leadership, its spiritual decay, the rise of self-interest above all else, the horrors of mechanization, found their mark. Much of what Carlyle deplored about his society was all too true. Mechanization had created the horrors of the sweatshop factories. The growing middle class did appear self-absorbed and more interested in making money and joining the social ranks of the aristocracy than in being socially responsible for those
less fortunate. Democratic notions like universal suffrage were untried in the political arena. Carlyle's view on democracy presented an interesting paradox. While he saw no hope for democratic institutions in politics, his writings exemplify true democratic ideals.

Few have denied with equal vigour all sanctity in caste, or have insisted with equal force upon every man's worth as determined by personal ability or personal character, and as determined not at all by birth, by descent, by tradition, by the prestige of a name or the homage paid to unearned wealth. No writer has crystallised into more telling phrase our human protest against the usurpations of mere rank.  

Despite Carlyle's scepticism, it was evident by the latter part of the nineteenth century that political democracy was more resilient and workable than he had imagined. While it was true that industrialization brought great hardship, it also brought great strides in transportation, agriculture and medicine. The worst offenses of the sweatshops and the horrible plight of the destitute did not disappear overnight, but slowly reform movements took hold and began to make a difference. Laws were passed setting 10-hour work days in the factories and putting limitations on the use of child labor. Living standards crept up as mechanization brought the price of consumer goods down. The criticisms Carlyle had leveled at society in Past and Present and Latter-day Pamphlets seemed exaggerated years later. Society had not fallen apart

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completely without a hero, as Carlyle had predicted. While his criticisms about moral decay and alienation caused by industrialization were still valid, they did not seem as urgent as they had earlier. Carlyle lived a long life and the world he knew as a young man in 1830 had gone through tremendous changes by 1881. Carlyle's writing never reflected any of the benefits industrialized society finally realized.

Carlyle never stopped writing and never lost his position within London society as the Sage of Chelsea. His old age saw an accumulation of degrees and honors from the academic system which never had a place for him. In 1866, Carlyle was elected to the honorary position of Lord Rector at Edinburgh University. He received the Prussian Order of Merit in 1874 for his last multi-volume work, *The History of Frederick II of Prussia* which began publication in 1858. Carlyle received accolades as an outstanding man of letters, but the universities did not view his works as serious histories.

Carlyle's intense love for Germany helped cause his reputation to plummet. Critics did not separate the literary, Romantic Germany Carlyle admired in the early nineteenth century from the militaristic state which emerged later. That Carlyle had admired German thought and societal order was enough to condemn him. Carlyle was responsible
for bringing the great German writers like Goethe to the attention of English audiences. Englishmen were willing to accept exposure to German ideas when they involved philosophy or literature, but Germany's growing influence as a nationalist political state threatened to upset the delicate balance of power Europe enjoyed after the Napoleonic era. Suddenly it was not philosophy and literature coming from Germany but political alliances and military maneuvers. Carlyle never backed away from his stance on Germany, despite the political situation. During the Franco-Prussian War Carlyle wrote a letter to The Times in defense of German actions against France.

Carlyle's attitude about Germany brought intense vilification upon his memory in the early part of the twentieth century. Suddenly his ideas on the need for heroes as leaders were not merely distasteful, they were treasonous. His complex spiritual notion of heroism was inaccurately oversimplified into a straightforward might-makes-right philosophy. Such intellectual butchery of Carlyle's ideas made his work appear custom-made for a defense of dictatorship. What was forgotten or ignored was that Carlyle never advocated the use of force without morality. His was never a might-makes-right philosophy. For Carlyle, force only triumphed if it were used on the side of spiritual and moral good. False heroes could
triumph temporarily, but without the support of moral good their victories would be short-lived. G.B. Tennyson wrote that Carlyle asked his readers to do something much more difficult than follow a leader - he asked them to look within themselves and evaluate that leader in terms of moral judgment. What Carlyle never foresaw was that military technology would advance so rapidly that there would be no time for reflective moral judgment. The twentieth century with its capacity for total destruction at the push of a button cannot afford to let a false leader triumph even temporarily.

Historiography in the nineteenth century was characterized by strong divergences. Romantic and scientific attitudes co-existed, but not on equal terms. The growing use of scientific empirical models created an atmosphere in which Romantic history lacked prestige. By the last third of the nineteenth century, many still admired Carlyle's work for its literary quality, but it did not meet the standards for impartiality and accuracy the new methodology required. However, we should remember that Carlyle's histories did meet the criteria set for such work in his own time. He did use the sources available to him to verify his facts and he did not invent for literary effect. Facts were more compelling than fiction in presenting the moral lessons Carlyle saw as central to any study of
history. Carlyle was not alone in his belief that history had moral implications. Such an attitude shaped the entire Victorian era and was reflected in painting and other arts as well as in literature. This belief also fit within the larger continuum of historiography. Carlyle dealt with universal and timeless themes in his histories. Thucydides wrote on the same themes - justice, self-interest and its consequences for society, moral decline - in The Peloponnesian War in 430 B. C. The language and style of presentation changed, but the questions did not. These questions are still prominent today. They are addressed in yet another style with the advent of Freudian language, but the questions of alienation, human behavior, and the role of an individual within a larger society still persist. It is because he is part of this pattern of questioning that Carlyle deserves to be read today. One of his critics wrote:

It is not by teaching this or that dogma, political, philosophical, or religious, that Mr. Carlyle is doing his work . . . It is by producing a certain moral tone of thought, of a stern, manly, energetic, self-denying character that his best influence consists.  

Carlyle's solutions to the moral problems of his day have little to recommend them in retrospect, but the intense questioning of values and their importance to a society should not be dismissed. Carlyle never separated his moral
questions from his historical subject matter. To him, the two were inextricably intertwined. His histories can still make the modern reader think about universal questions. Studying the past cannot prepare us completely for an unknown future, but such study can keep questions regarding values and individual integrity alive. Carlyle's work does just that. He sought to "instruct in gratifying", making the hard lessons history offers palatable and entertaining without diminishing their dignity or importance. Historiography can attain no more modern or admirable goal.

2. Ibid. 95.

3. Ibid.


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