Things Fall Apart:
Integrity and Visibility in Democratic Liberal Education

David Thiele
(University of Mount Union, Ohio, USA)

Abstract:
This essay employs Charles Dickens, John Ruskin, and other proponents of Victorian knowledge diffusion to argue that much of the concern among twenty-first century elites regarding the decline of liberal education should be understood as an expression of a long-standing and legitimate anxiety, an anxiety occasioned by the disintegrative pressure liberal-democratic expansion exerts on traditional ideals of holism. An analysis of metaphorical language in Charles Dickens's and John Ruskin's speeches and writings shows them to be exemplary of a larger historical pattern, in which hopes and fears surrounding democratic liberal education organise themselves around a concern for *integrity* as integration and virtue, and *visibility* as assessability and recognition. The essay concludes that although the discourse of democratic liberal education has shifted somewhat in order to reflect the anxieties of the digital age, the most important factor in the alteration of this discourse is the declining power of liberal education advocates to command the public's attention or direct its discourse. In at least one important respect, these modern advocates are victims of the Victorians' success. The power base of their cause has shifted from its Victorian roots in the liberal professions to the more isolated realm of academia and an increasingly de-professionalised professoriate.

Keywords: assessment, democratic education, Charles Dickens, integrity, integrative learning, knowledge diffusion, liberal education, John Ruskin, transparency, Victorian.

*****

As important as the Reform Acts of 1832 and 1867 undeniably were, it is arguable that democratisation affected most Victorians more profoundly as a cultural rather than as a strictly political phenomenon. Further, Victorian efforts to spread the capacity for responsible citizenship continue to affect us in profound ways, and we may point to the legacy of what I will term Victorian knowledge democracy as the best example of this. What would liberal modernity look like today if the Age of Revolution, Capital and Empire had not also been the Age of Education? What would our liberal

Neo-Victorian Studies
10:1 (2017)
pp. 15-41

democracies look like if our Victorian predecessors had not made an education – indeed a higher education and a liberal one at that – accessible to the masses? These are the rhetorical questions we might ask in order to highlight the importance of this plotline in the crowded story of the Victorians.

On the other hand, we may also ask such questions in order to assert the relevance of our field as we sit between a Great Recession that has gutted Humanities budgets and a Trumpocalypse of anti-intellectual populism that has cast the failures of democratic liberal education into sharp relief. Over the past decade it has become easy to imagine the alternative-history dystopia of a world unredeemed by Victorian knowledge democracy. Dinah Birch's assertion that "[t]he Victorians believed in the power of education with a passion that makes our own commitment look timorous and lukewarm" in *Our Victorian Education* (Birch 2008: 123-124), her contribution to the Blackwell Manifestos series, begins to sound like an understatement. In fact, in the early twenty-first century, even the most progressive of Victorian scholars might yearn for that lost era when Disraeli could speak of the progress of education as the "noble and ennobling characteristic of the age in which we live" (Disraeli 1844: 17); when Henry Brougham, founder of both the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge and the University of London, could declare the "progress of education among the mass of mankind" so powerful that "any attempt to check its progress would only bring about the sudden destruction of him who should be insane enough to make it" (Brougham 1825: 32); when literary figures were celebrities and Charles Dickens, the most popular of them all, could throw his support behind "comprehensive liberal education" to the sound of cheering throngs, and proclaim "[t]he many-headed monster will soon become the many-thoughted monster!" (Dickens 1988: 64, 4).

And yet the intensity of this Victorian rhetoric in part reflects the reality that Victorians had their own anxieties about the state and fate of liberal education for the people. Their triumphalism was in part a form of propaganda, an argument and a marketing technique pursued so skilfully that its echoes are still heard in our twenty-first-century rhetoric on behalf of liberal education. This essay goes beyond the question of where we would be without the Victorians in order to ask how the wider Victorian rhetoric of

knowledge democracy, including its dark side, might shed light on our current challenges.

I will approach this task primarily through examples from Dickens and John Ruskin, two heroes of Birch's 2008 manifesto. While Birch celebrates both men as powerful voices on the value of educating for individuality, imagination, and sympathy as opposed to the competitive conformism of exam-based systems (Birch 2008: 30-41, 130-34), I will discuss them as figures who also retain a special relevance because of the conceptual patterns that emerge in their work as they strive to imagine an alternative method for assessing democratised education. Despite the marked individuality of their intellects and clear differences in their backgrounds, sympathies, and literary milieus, Dickens and Ruskin have something in common not only with each other but also with many of their twenty-first-century readers. In a 2016 essay on the relationship between education and the "digital revolution", the higher-education analyst Randall Bass calls our historical moment one "at which a counter-force paradigm for learning – the disintegrative or disaggretive – is rising and dominating" (Bass 2016: 295). In fact, he concludes that the "tension […] between an integrative and a disintegrative vision of learning" is "the central tension of our time" (Bass 2016: 295). I will argue that various incarnations of this tension constitute the central theme of a much longer story, and that a closer look at seemingly idiosyncratic Victorians like Dickens and Ruskin can reveal the deeper conceptual structures that underpin our hopes and fears for democratic education today. More specifically, I will argue that Dickens and Ruskin are complex exemplars of a larger historical pattern in which the hopes and fears surrounding democratic liberal education organise themselves around a concern for *integrity* as integration and virtue, and *visibility* as assessability and recognition. Metaphors for knowledge consumption that express the conceptual underpinnings of discourse on democratic liberal education have shifted in order to reflect the anxieties of the digital revolution, and yet it is the continuity of this discourse that, with some exceptions, stands out. The exceptions to this continuity are tied to the declining power of liberal-education advocates to command the public's attention or direct its discourse.

1. The Poisoned Chalice

Running from roughly the 1830s through the 1870s, the boom years of the British knowledge diffusion movement overlapped with Dickens's career as a novelist and, despite his own patchy education and a reputation for emphatically non-intellectual genius, he became its most prominent celebrity supporter. In the U.K. alone, he spoke at institutions for the diffusion of knowledge in fourteen cities and was elected President of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, the Chatham Mechanics' Institute, and the Reading Literary and Mechanics' Institute. The first of the public readings that were to become so central to the Dickens legend was delivered in order to raise money for the Birmingham and Midland Institute, and almost all his charity readings in the following years were given for similar establishments. Each of the institutions at which Dickens spoke in the fourteen of cities I have mentioned was founded with an emphasis on liberal studies or adopted a liberal curriculum in accordance with Thorstein Veblen's observation that even institutions "founded for the instruction of the lower classes in the immediately useful branches of knowledge" often tend toward "the higher, classical plane of learning", preparing learners "for the consumption of goods, material and immaterial, according to a conventionally accepted, reputable scope and method" (Veblen 1979: 370). In other words, even within the context of his life as "an inveterate visitor of institutions" (Collins 1963: 27), the relationship between Dickens and the movement to democratise liberal education was special.

Despite his declaration that, "Ladies and gentlemen, I have long been, in my sphere, a zealous advocate of the diffusion of knowledge among all classes and conditions of men" (Dickens 1988: 153), Dickens positioned himself more or less exclusively at the diffusing rather than the receiving end of the equation, and his patronage focused on institutions that, while they often targeted the working classes, became flooded with young men of the lower middle class. These young men hungrily sought that social mobility the curricular turn toward liberal education seemed to promise and yet Dickens, sharing the dais with professionals and clerics almost always better educated and more refined than himself, never mentioned his own lower-middle-class origins or lack of formal education and habitually repeated the orthodox message of middle-class knowledge diffusers. Proper consumption of liberal education produces contentment, reverence, and responsibility, this message went; to pursue such education in a spirit of

socio-economic ambition or political insurrection is to misapprehend and fatally corrupt the process.

His speeches were not simply boilerplate, however. He was a zealot among enthusiasts, fond of sweeping statements such as his declaration that

> [i]n any case, and in every case, if you would give encouragement to good, if you would stimulate the idle, eradicate evil, or correct what is bad, education – comprehensive liberal education – is the one thing needful and the one effective end. (Dickens 1988: 64)

More specifically, Dickens relished a certain subset of the rhetoric common to movement leaders and speakers. That subset centred on the proposition that the riches to be gained through liberal education were not material, external, or invidious but rather internal, immaterial, and integrative, doing their work in the hidden interior spaces of mind and soul where liberal knowledge, once consumed, nourishes from within. The great self-culture advocate William Ellery Channing encapsulates this theme eloquently, not only in denouncing that which "exalts the outward above the inward, the material above the spiritual; because it springs from contemptible pride in superficial distinctions; because it breeds jealousy" (Channing 1838: 7), but also in shedding light on a related problem. When "most men happen to cast a glance inward, they see there only dark, vague chaos", Channing laments: "They distinguish perhaps some violent passion, which has driven them to injurious excess; but their higher powers attract hardly a thought" (Channing 1838: 7). Advocates of liberal knowledge diffusion poetically described these invisible higher powers roused by self-culture as triumphing over that chaos from which jealousy and resentment spring. The very opaqueness of the knowledge consumer's interior life was their greatest rhetorical ally because, as Channing makes clear, it invited interpretive latitude as well as poetic license, perhaps the two invitations Dickens was best qualified to accept in an educational setting. In his early knowledge-diffusion speeches, Dickens imagines lessons being "imbibed" by the culture consumer before this knowledge becomes "the first unpurchaseable blessing: self-respect", an "inward dignity of character", a "property of soul which upholds struggling men" (Dickens 1988: 56; 48).

Increasingly, Dickens's tendency to convey the movement's anti-materialist doctrine through plays on the material and physical found expression in the imagery of bodily consumption, continence, and integrity. The conceptual seed Dickens cultivates here is Hellenic in origin, and Victorian advocates of liberal education had adopted it enthusiastically. It is the idea that a genuine liberal education is about more than the distinction between knowledge befitting a free person with citizenship duties and knowledge befitting one confined to servile mechanical tasks (a definition still familiar). Most importantly, a genuine liberal education is about achieving self-mastery by developing and integrating the different facets of the individual citizen – body, mind, and soul – in harmonious balance, thus avoiding the dangerous personal and social maladies that arise from unbalanced, unreflective, non-self-regulating personhood. The "parallel of bodily health" that John Henry Newman draws between a liberal education and general physical fitness in *The Idea of a University* (1858) is among the most influential expressions of this line of thought (Newman 1996: 117). "The parallel is exact", Newman insists:

> As the body may be sacrificed to some manual or other toil […] so may the intellect be devoted to some specific profession; and I do not call *this* the culture of the intellect. […] On the other hand, as the body may be tended, cherished, and exercised with a simple view to its general health, so may the intellect also be generally exercised in order to [approach] its perfect state; and this *is* its cultivation. (Newman 1996: 117-18)

This Hellenic-Victorian ideal not only goes beyond the acquisition of knowledge and skills, it even goes beyond 'character', the virtue cited most frequently by Victorians as an intangible goal of liberal education. Although the term 'integrity' does not encompass all the virtues Victorians attached to terms such as 'character' or 'nobility' or 'gentleman', it is embedded in all these and has the merit of simultaneously signifying a material/physical/structural state and a moral/mental/intellectual state. "When it is applied to objects", the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* notes, "integrity refers to the wholeness, intactness or purity of a thing – meanings that are sometimes carried over when it is applied to people",

which makes sense whether the term is used to denote "integration of the self" or "maintenance of identity" or "moral purpose" (Cox et al. 2016: n.p.). After all, people tend to see these formal qualities of wholeness, intactness, purity, and self-integration as virtues. In Dickens's imagination, the physical integrity and the mental/moral integrity of the knowledge consumer become more than just analogous states, constituting two sides of the same coin. They become sympathetic elements of the same living system, and the holistic integrity or self-integration of the knowledge consumer becomes a biological imperative. As he remarks in one speech, "[k]nowledge […] has a very limited power indeed when it informs the head alone, but when it informs the head and heart too, it has a power over life and death, the body and the soul, and dominates the universe" (Dickens 1988: 285).

This life-and-death vision of knowledge consumption also exploits conceptual resonances that 'culture' itself carried for Dickens's audience. As Patrick Joyce observes in *Democratic Subjects: The Self and the Social in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, the concept of culture signifies "a story sequence of inaugural, sequential, and terminal elements organized around metaphors chiefly drawn from nature" (Joyce 1994: 172). Metaphors of bodily consumption, of lessons being imbibed, integrated and integrative, thrived in this rhetorical environment where self-culture was imagined as an organic process of life and growth. Linked to this, Dickens's fascination with death and decay also thrived, allowing him to navigate in his fiction the kinds of misgivings that subsisted alongside knowledge diffusion.

Perhaps the most famously harsh and seemingly antidemocratic examples of this vision can be found in Dickens's depictions of the would-be lawyer Uriah Heep in *David Copperfield* (1849-50) and, even more mercilessly, the schoolteacher Bradley Headstone in *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-65). Heep is studying for the profession of the law via the backdoor route of articled apprenticeship in the provinces, and rejects with mock humility David's offer to help him learn Latin, consuming the requisite knowledge in private through red-rimmed eyes, working his mouth silently, "his lank forefinger […] mak[ing] clammy tracks upon the page […] like a snail" (Dickens 1958: 184). Headstone has completed his formal education at one of James Kay-Shuttleworth's teacher training colleges, institutions that offered a broader and higher course designed to make school teaching a quasi-liberal profession before Robert Lowe's 'three Rs', payment-by-

results Revised Code of 1862 de-professionalised the job, degrading it to an exercise in mechanical cramming. Both characters call to mind the sociologist Ralph Turner's distinction between "sponsored mobility" and "contest mobility", and his observation that the nineteenth century was a period of contested transition between the two models (Turner 1960: 858-859). The mid-Victorian rise of open examinations represents a significant shift toward the latter, a model that favours objectively assessable demonstrations of merit and forestalls the awarding of elite positions in the interest of competition. However, "[u]nder sponsored mobility" – the type of mobility operative in the traditional apparatus of ruling-class education and incipient in middle-class knowledge diffusion – "the objective is to train in elite culture only those for whom the presumption is that they will enter the elite, lest there be a dangerous number of 'angry young men' who have elite skills without elite station" (Turner 1960: 863). The stridency of the ruling-class knowledge diffuser's ostensible faith in the harmonising power of liberal education was spurred by the realisation that for most Britons democratic liberal education inevitably meant a desultory and incomplete form of self-culture patched together as limited time and money allowed. Even in the absence of any desire to pursue such knowledge independent from patronage – a desire which animated many working-class mutual improvement societies – the more pressing requirements of daily life below the ruling classes dictated that such self-culture must be largely, if not entirely, unsupervised by elites and therefore lack any reliable means of safeguarding the integrity of the process.[1] To put it bluntly, the knowledge diffusers with whom Dickens allied himself feared that the failure of this process, failure to absorb the elements of liberal education completely and holistically, would not only fail to produce the desired citizen but would instead produce Dickens's "many-thoughted monster[s]" (Dickens 1988: 4) – threats to the integrity of a society that was based on what the sociologist A.H. Halsey has called "integrated inequality", i.e. the Victorians' broad acceptance of a "status hierarchy [which] lent legitimacy to class inequality" (Halsey 1986: 53).

Uriah Heep and Bradley Headstone legitimise this fear of social instability in unmistakably Dickensian style. In terms of plotting, Heep eventually blackmails his kindly employer, takes over his practice, and plans to marry Agnes Wickfield, the girl David Copperfield has been destined to marry since beginning his gentleman's education. When his rival

from an established liberal profession, the solicitor Eugene Wrayburn, chooses to marry Lizzie Hexam, Headstone attempts to murder him. When their criminality finally comes to a head, Heep and Headstone are punished with imprisonment and death respectively but Dickens has written monstrosity on their bodies from the start with uncontrollable nosebleeds, sweating, salivation, spasms, and fits. It is a symptomatic rejection of the learning their minds are unfit to absorb, testifying to their unworthiness to move into the middle classes, as if, by analogy, the natural order is defending the social order. Heep's lack of integrity becomes increasingly visible with each "writhe of his ungainly person", each "jerk, like a convulsive fish", and even when he is motionless, he "sit[s] all awry as if his mean soul griped his body" (Dickens 1958: 470; 294; 295). As Headstone disintegrates, "[h]e could not have said how many [fits he had] or when; but he saw in the faces of his pupils that they had seen him in that state" (Dickens 1985b: 345). "Oh, what a misfortune is mine'", he blurts, "breaking off to wipe the starting perspiration from his face as he shook from head to foot, 'that I cannot so control myself as to appear a stronger creature than this'" (Dickens 1985b: 345). He cannot even contain the lifeblood within his degenerating body. At the recollection of having seen Lizzie and Eugene together, "a great spurt of blood burst from his nose"; "I can't keep it back", he laments, "It has happened twice – three times – four times – I don't know how many times since last night" (Dickens 1985b: 704). He struggles to maintain the "warehouse" of his mind and, "obliged habitually to keep it down. To keep it down", he makes "effort[s] at self-repression that forc[e] him to wipe his face" (Dickens 1985b: 400; 699). Headstone thus joins Heep as a legible failure. He is a monstrous version of Pierre Bourdieu's petit-bourgeois autodidact, one whose "stockpiling avidity" is made "too visible", who "thinks that the cultivated man is one who possesses an immense fund of knowledge", but who rejects the belief that, "brought down to its simplest and most sublime expression", knowledge "amounts to a *relation* to culture ('Culture is what remains when you've forgotten everything')" (Bourdieu 1984: 330-331, original emphasis).[2]

Finally, Headstone must take stock of the personal qualities that signal an integrated and elevated self – in other words, the qualities that give evidence of a successful liberal education when one has "forgotten everything" or, in this case, has been drained of everything. "I have no

resources in myself", he tells Lizzie, "I have no confidence in myself, I have no government of myself when you are in my thoughts" (Dickens 1985b: 452). And what of that quality Dickens referred to as "the first unpurchaseable blessing" of self-culture, namely "self-respect" (Dickens 1988: 458)? "You may imagine how low my self-respect lies now" (Dickens 1985b: 458). Headstone has followed the model provided by men like William Unsworth, the author of *Self-Culture* (1861), who advises that "[p]roperly to train and cultivate the mind implies a good degree of self-control, self-restraint, and self-repression" (Unsworth 1861: 13), yet he falls short. As Unsworth and any number of liberal-education advocates have warned, "[a]ll education is incomplete and imperfect which does not rightly train the whole man, body, soul, and spirit"; moreover, and fatally for Headstone, "[t]here must be a peculiar fitness furnished by nature" (Unsworth 1861: 13; 10). Even after many years of aggressive knowledge consumption, he finds during his decline that when he "cast[s] a glance inward", alas, he sees what Channing imagined a man unvisited by culture would see: "dark, vague chaos", and "perhaps some violent passion, which has driven [him] to injurious excess" (Channing 1838: 7). And all of Dickens's readers could see it, too.

It is tempting to connect these depictions of knowledge consumption, (dis-)integration, and visual assessability with the vivid satire in *Hard Times* (1854). Thomas Gradgrind imagines his young students as "little pitchers […] who were to be filled so full of facts", and he is ready himself to expel information like "a kind of cannon loaded to the muzzle with facts" (Dickens 1985a: 48). The government officer who accompanies Gradgrind to the classroom "has a system to force down the general throat like a bolus", and Mr. M'Choakumchild is eagerly "looking into all the vessels ranged before him […] to see what they contained" (Dickens 1985a: 53). Yet the satire of fact-based elementary education in *Hard Times* is relevant to Dickens's concern for liberal adult education largely as a source of contrast. Rather than presenting a caricature of utilitarian educational theory – the Gradgrindian notion that students exist to be filled with facts – *David Copperfield* and *Our Mutual Friend* express anxieties about democratic education by elaborating on the premise that people are organisms, creatures whose wellbeing (or biological integrity) depends upon their fitness to integrate as nourishment that which they consume. More specifically, Dickens plays on the rhetoric of liberal knowledge diffusion to

suggest that while the liberal education on democratic offer is undoubtedly the profoundest means of nourishment for the worthy, it is a poisoned chalice for the unfit. In fact, one might call Dickens's vision a holistic, biologising twist on the utilitarian idea of meritocracy that Jeremy Bentham's panoptic schools exemplified: the idea that education properly conducted will eradicate prejudice in the granting of rewards, because all achievement will be externally visible and assessable by all.

2. The Most Fatal of Discerners

One might also call Dickens's depiction of Heep and Headstone a bourgeoisified variation on the traditional belief that noble blood equals inherent fitness for higher learning. They embody a democratic fantasy of how personal worth (integrity) can be distinguished from superficial merit (memorisation, gaming the system, imposture) without the system of personal vetting by liberally educated elites that is the hallmark of sponsored mobility. In all of these ways, except the last, Dickens's negotiations with democracy overlap those of another, seemingly very different actor in the knowledge diffusion movement. Though not the object of public affection that Dickens was, Ruskin too inspired those who sought the benefits of knowledge diffusion. His essay 'The Nature of Gothic' (1853), distributed with the author's permission at the launch of the London Working Men's College, eloquently advocates the cultivation of the workingman's faculties and the expression of his inner life. Ruskin did not merely *speak* well of self-culture, either. Having achieved fame as an artist, art critic, and essayist on subjects including education, he volunteered to teach elementary drawing three of four yearly terms from the opening of the Working Men's College in 1854 until the spring of 1858, and again in the spring of 1860. While at the W.M.C., he showed his faith and trust in the students in various ways. He took them on outings followed by tea at his home, he lent out his beloved Turners and natural specimens for close study, and he recruited Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Edward Burne-Jones, and Ford Maddox Brown to teach painting in what must rank as the most star-studded adult education experience of all time. After 1850, Ruskin continued to fulfil W.M.C. speaking engagements for another five years, and for the rest of his productive life he executed projects and publications largely through former W.M.C. students, including the printer/publisher George Allen. The collection of mineralogical, biological, and fine arts artefacts he used to

establish a museum for the edification of workingmen is still on display in Sheffield. And in 1899 Oxford's Ruskin College was founded. Originally dedicated to working men, it continues to offer education to adults who may be "excluded or disadvantaged" (Ruskin College n.d: n.p.).

Nonetheless, I doubt they'll be quoting 'Of Vulgarity' (1860) at Ruskin College in the twenty-first century. Published at the end of his period at the W.M.C., the essay marries active meritocracy to breeding in a biologised version of the gradualism that prefigures Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital as well as appropriations of Victorian evolutionary theory. While Ruskin recommends "pureness of moral habit for many generations" (Ruskin 1903-12: VII, 345), as a sound method for progressing from the physical, spiritual deadness of vulgarity towards the state of sensitive reception and perception that is necessary to natural gentility, it is not a certain method. For Ruskin, as for Dickens, the laws of nature limit the power of liberal education to ennoble the unfit consumer,[3] and the problem of assessment is at the forefront of his thinking. For Ruskin, as for Dickens, standardised exams are superficial and invidious, entirely inimical to the holistic nature of true liberal education. For Ruskin, however, the alternative form of assessment, 'reading' the knowledge consumer, becomes a much more strictly circumscribed activity.

In 'Of Vulgarity', Ruskin asserts that "[i]n a great many respects it is impossible that [a gentleman] should be open except to men of his own kind", because

> [t]o them he can open himself, by a word, or syllable, or a glance; but to men not of his kind he cannot open himself, though he tried it through an eternity of clear grammatical speech. […] Whatever [a gentleman] said […] a vulgar man would misinterpret: no words that he could use would bear the same sense to the vulgar man that they do to him. (Ruskin 1903-12: VII, 347-348).

The passage recalls Ruskin's experience at the Working Men's College, incorporating a veiled reference to his friend Frederick Furnivall's extremely popular W.M.C. course in English grammar. The latter also informs Ruskin's assertion that "You shall know a man not to be a gentleman by the perfect and neat pronunciation of his words […] [which]

he *does* pronounce accurately […] the vulgarity [being] in the real (not assumed) scrupulousness" (Ruskin 1903-12: VII 353-354). These may seem like strange assertions coming from a "Luther of the arts", a man whose fame and efficacy as a teacher was based largely on his ability to make his audiences believe that with a little guidance and a sustained gaze, they too could "see things as they are" (Arnold 1994: 56), to borrow Matthew Arnold's phrase from *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), and could thereby read the laws of the universe. But of course Ruskin also believed that one could diagnose the moral health of an entire society by reading its art and architecture, and his writings on knowledge diffusion follow this same line of thought. Here he increasingly conveys a message about legibility and literacy that relates more strongly to the hegemonic properties of 'the Gaze' than to democratic gazing. Borrowing from the quotation cited above, I would modify the term for Ruskin's method of educational assessment. 'The Glance' seems more fitting than the Gaze, given his connotations of instantaneous, instinctual recognition. Generations of virtuous conduct and voracious consumption of the classics may eliminate all traces of vulgarity that an aspirant knowledge consumer can detect in herself or himself, and yet that aspirant may remain outside the circle of the Glance and at its mercy nonetheless, legible and illiterate in the most important sense.

As Ruskin's body of writing about knowledge diffusion grows over the years, his references to the Glance focus more intently on the basic building block of self-culture: reading. Ruling-class knowledge diffusers often promulgated the idea that aspirants to culture must assume a reverent sympathy for the cultured in order to extract the promised "riches of the soul" from their reading in the higher literature. In *Time and Tide* (1867) and other works, however, Ruskin's promotion of "Reverence and Compassion" diverges from that of his peers when he asserts that these are "not […] in a literal sense to be 'taught', for they are innate in every well-born human creature" (Ruskin 1903-12: XVII, 398). This reference to breeding is more explicitly linked to social hierarchy when the Glance is applied to reading in *Sesame and Lilies* (1865). There, even a "well-born human creature" must become "learned in the *peerage* of words", must "[know] the words of true descent and ancient blood, at a glance, from words of modern canaille", because one "may know, by memory, many languages, and talk them all, and yet truly not know a word of any,—not a word even of [one's] own" (Ruskin 1903-12: XVIII, 65). Such

reconceptualisations of literacy arise again and again, reprising the Byzantine relationship between acquired culture and physical instinct that Ruskin had proposed in 'Of Vulgarity'. "[Y]our literary institutes must everywhere fail", he warns a working man in *Fors Clavigera* (1871-84), "as long as you think that merely to buy a book and to know your letters, will enable you to read the book" (Ruskin 1903-12: XXVII, 459). "Not one word of any book is readable by you", he reasons, "except so far as your mind is one with its author's, and not merely his words like your words, but his thoughts like your thoughts" (Ruskin 1903-12: XXVII, 459). As he had warned in *Sesame and Lilies*, the "great and pure society of the Dead", those authors one must read to become truly liberally educated, "would allow 'no vain or vulgar person to enter there'" (Ruskin 1903-12: XVIII, 79). To be a gentleman was to be a living agent of integrity for this "great and pure society", united with one's fellow citizens by "sympathy [and] quick understanding" (Ruskin 1903-12: XVIII, 80) and responsible both for detecting impostors and for helping impostors detect themselves.

In this rhetoric, the liberal education available to Ruskin's workingmen is less a matter of liberation than of subjection to a vetting of one's interiority which, like that envisioned by Dickens, is a harsh elaboration of typical knowledge diffusion rhetoric. Recalling Dickens's Heep and Headstone, Ruskin suggests that liberal education can be consumed mechanically by the unfit but not absorbed in the sense of being integrated or integrative. When the unfit believe they are reading, they are actually opening themselves to being read. When they believe they are empowering themselves to judge, they are exposing themselves to judgment and rejection. Those who believe that access to a ruling-class education will infallibly raise them up, make them whole, and erase the distinction between themselves and their betters "will be mightily astonished, when they really get it", he tells his workingman in *Time and Tide* (Ruskin 1903-12: XVII, 442). They will "find that it is, on the contrary, the fatallest of all discerners and enforcers of distinctions; piercing, even to the divisions of the joints and marrow" (Ruskin 1903-12: XVII, 442). "False education […] warms you, and makes you every day think more of yourself", whereas "true education is a deadly cold thing, with a Gorgon's head on her shield, and makes you every day think worse of yourself" (Ruskin 1903-12: XVII, 442). As with Heep and Headstone, "the fatallest of all discerners and enforcers of

distinctions" – i.e., the primary means of rendering the knowledge consumer assessable – is the process of liberal education itself.

3. The New Visibility

One reason for this Victorian interest in keeping an assessing Gaze or Glance turned upon knowledge consumers was that many middle-class elites were at some level uncomfortable with the gaze of the masses that was now fixed – at their invitation – upon elite culture. Even if the object of this gaze was really only an incomplete selection of the raw materials of a 'gentleman's education', that education represented the most important single status marker in a middle-class-ascendant society. Working-class scholars bettering themselves after a day at the mill, such as Elizabeth Gaskell's Job Leigh in *Mary Barton* (1848), were acceptable in a way that politically or socially ambitious strivers were not. The former could be imagined as respectful guests in the vestibule of the ancestral home of culture, while the latter were apt to seem like uncouth gawkers pushing past the footmen or, still worse, as consciously subversive intruders. Even in the pages of Douglas Jerrold's assertively democratic, anti-establishment *Shilling Magazine*, there is an uncomfortable sense of exposure as "[a]ll that has for so long been enshrouded in the learned twilight of academic bowers is brought *naked*" before the "new Barbarians" – naked "within the bare walls and glaring gas-light of the Mechanics' Institute" (Jewsbury 1847: 363, original emphasis). The author here is Geraldine Jewsbury and her metaphor, over-the-top though it is, resonated with a wide swathe of Victorian society, from the *Shilling Magazine*'s core readership in the less-than-affluent middle classes, where Dickens cut his teeth, to the higher reaches of Ruskin's solidly bourgeois milieu. The link between virtue, purity, and exclusivity is never far from the surface of knowledge diffusion rhetoric. In the mind of most Victorians, it applied to the body of elite knowledge that Jewsbury personifies as a damsel in distress almost as strongly as it applied to the bodies of actual ladies. One could sympathise with democratic ideas and still abhor the storming of Marie-Antoinette's chambers, as Jewsbury's damsel image reminds her readers.

Of course, such concerns are likely to seem extremely distant from our attitudes and dilemmas today. As Britain and the English-speaking world have moved from elite to mass to nearly universal systems of higher education, the experience of higher learning has evolved from 'the privilege

of the few' to 'the right of the many' to the economic and social *obligation* of the many. Sceptics have wondered for decades whether the image of higher education that we inherited from the Victorians "was only a platonic fabrication, an idealized guardian of Fair Maiden Culture perpetually threatened with rape and torture by savage masses", as Sheldon Rothblatt puts it (Rothblatt 1995: 31). Indeed, nowadays the paradigm of the knowledge consumer as cultural aspirant seems almost completely superseded by the paradigm of the knowledge consumer as customer. Nonetheless, some Victorian anxieties about the integrity and visibility of democratic liberal education live on, altered yet still recognisable.

Few current proponents of liberal education will have difficulty relating to concerns about the debasement and disintegration of liberal arts curricula. Now, however, the gaze of the masses plays a very different role in that concern. For example, in the United States, the nation that has made a liberal education available to a greater proportion of its population than perhaps any other,[4] the masses neither understand nor value it, while the '1%' has done more to perpetuate this state of affairs than to dispel it. Carol Geary Schneider, the President of the American Association of Colleges and Universities from 1998 to 2016, has traced the problem succinctly: "there is little public understanding or even awareness of liberal education despite its continuing influence on both established and innovative curricula" (Schneider 2003: v). University administrators, beset by short-term financial pressures, avoid using the terms "liberal" or "liberal arts" in descriptive and promotional material, because "studies routinely show that the [American] public does not value [them]" (Schneider 2003: v). In turn, this code of silence facilitates another form of disintegration. "As engagement with the tradition recedes, the practices associated with liberal education have themselves become fragmented", bereft of context and continuity; even innovative updates of these practices are "frequently either spliced jaggedly onto an earlier curricular architecture or remain elective rather than integral" (Schneider 2003: v). Thus, while mass accessibility has created what Geary Schneider hails as a "new majority of Americans [that] could, in principle, now achieve the kind of capacious liberal education once reserved for a tiny elite" (Schneider 2003: v-vi), it is a Pyrrhic victory, a triumph of knowledge democracy predicated on the invisibility, fragmentation, and dis-integration of the liberal arts tradition.

Meanwhile, liberal arts offerings in Britain have been progressively degraded by funding and enrollment attrition since Thatcher. Ruskin can still make the news, but now the headline is that "Oxford's Ruskin College 'abandons founding ideals'", a reference to the cutting of programs including English Studies and History with Social Sciences (BBC 2015: n.p.). Despite many eloquent defenses of liberal education as the best bet for flexible competence in an age of rapid technical obsolescence and the best defense against a 'post-truth' public discourse, liberal education is not thriving anywhere in the English-speaking world. The relentless expansion of markets and opportunities characteristic of liberal democracy has given way to neoliberal perspectives on the marketplace of ideas, a process of opening out that looks a lot like emptying out when it comes to liberal education.

This impression is bolstered by quantifiable declines in student learning. Empirical research finds that today's students spend far less time reading – the private act of knowledge consumption that excited and worried Victorian knowledge diffusers most – and they place less value on the inherent worth of intellectual inquiry than on the exchange value of certification in the marketplace.[5] In other words, their experience of a higher liberal education epitomises what the Victorians most deplored and feared in democratic self-culture: it is a desultory, fragmentary experience, undertaken for worldly reasons, which results in a mockery of the holistic integrity that is a defining goal of liberal learning. The process is insufficient and incomplete; the knowledge is not fully absorbed, integrated, or integrating. One might justly say that the current upsurge in efforts to promote 'integrative learning' is just the most recent response to forces of disintegration that are inseparable from the centrifugal force of modern education's 'Big Bang', the revolutions of the Enlightenment. As educational opportunity continually expands to meet the needs and preferences of the many, the pressure to depart from an integrated ideal of liberal education in the interest of democratic access becomes as characteristic of liberal modernity as our expectation of mass access to that same ideal.

Even Victorian concerns about the inherent fitness of modern knowledge consumers to absorb liberal education have their echoes in our time. While rises in the cost of a higher education and/or the lingering effects of the Great Recession largely account for students' focus on the

initial market value of their degrees, there is also evidence of diminished student interest in grappling with the enduring questions posed by a liberal education, at least in the U.S., where the vast majority of colleges and universities mandate some form of liberal education regardless of the degree sought (Zacharia 2015: 162). As journalist and essayist Fareed Zacharia has observed, commentators have been quick to ascribe this to an inherent shallowness among millennials (Zacharia 2015: 151). Mark Bauerline's *The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future* (2009), Nicholas Carr's *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains* (2011) and *The Glass Cage: How Our Computers Are Changing Us* (2015), among others, substantiate the alarm with research. The image of the modern knowledge consumer as incapable of integrating the deep learning of a liberal education now goes beyond character flaws and psychological pathology, harkening back to Victorian biologising by delving into the neurological limitations of brains shaped by the vast, unregulated, immediate, radically decentralised shallowness of the internet. The basis of Carr's bestselling books, the first of which was a Pulitzer Prize finalist described by one critic as "a *Silent Spring* for the literary mind" (Agger 2010: n.p.), arose from Carr's 2008 cover article in *The Atlantic Monthly* entitled 'Is Google Making Us Stupid? What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains'. It struck a chord, to say the least. Where Victorians imagined the interiority of those unvisited by liberal culture, or unable to absorb it, as a dark and chaotic space characterised by disintegration, Carr sees a dark and disintegrating chaos of hyperlinks. Citing Maryanne Wolf, a developmental psychologist and neuroscientist, and the communications theorist Marshall McLuhan, Carr observes that the way people consume knowledge, or information, is as important as the quality of that knowledge and information. In Wolf's words, "We are *how* we read" (Wolf qtd. in Carr 2008: 91). Carr agrees: "Our ability to interpret text, to make the rich mental connections that form when we read deeply and without distraction, remains largely disengaged" when we read screens (Carr 2008: 91). We are not absorbing knowledge from the Net so much as we are being absorbed by the Net, and "[w]hen the Net absorbs a medium, that medium is re-created in the Net's image. […] The result is to scatter our attention and diffuse our concentration" (Carr 2008: 92). The danger is that, "[i]f we lose those quiet spaces" that deep reading and deep thinking create within us, "or fill them up with 'content', we will sacrifice something

important not only in ourselves but in our culture" (Carr 2008: 94). At stake is "the ideal […] of [the] complex, dense and 'cathedral-like' structure of the highly educated and articulate personality – a man or woman who carried inside themselves a personally constructed and unique version of the West", as the distinguished playwright Richard Foreman describes it (Foreman qtd. in Carr 2008: 94). Although the term 'knowledge diffusion' is no longer current, the idea that knowledge democracy has led to a 'diffusion' of intellectual experience, in the negative sense of that word, certainly is current. For Carr and many of those he quotes, this diffusion heralds a process of mental disintegration that they first became aware of in themselves, like some form of environmentally contracted dementia. For millennials, however, it is the neurological status quo. They are ill prepared to absorb the inner nourishment of a liberal education fully, because the digital environments that dominate their lives from infancy work to foreclose the "quiet spaces" and inner cathedrals created by deep reading. Filled up with shallow "content" that is often less wholesome than Gradgrind's bolus of facts, their interiority can only be developed by liberal education if that education can negotiate successfully with an entrenched, rival occupant.

Given these alarming reports and the rising expense of higher education for student and state alike, it is not surprising that those paying the bills are demanding transparency and accountability. In fact, for the liberal arts, transparency has become the new visibility. As John Strassberger put it in 2010, during his tenure as president of Pennsylvania's Ursinus College, "[t]houghtful commentators agree that the nation needs the liberal arts, but […] colleges must make visible at all times what they are and how they contribute to the lives of students" (Strassberger 2010: n.p.). Strassburger's solution: adopt a quality control concept from Japanese manufacturing, "'mieruka – making all things visible" (Strassberger 2010: n.p.). Taking its cue from the EU's Bologna Process, Paul Gaston's 2010 book *The Challenge of Bologna* makes a similar point, reporting that more effectively "telling [the] story" of higher education, and liberal education in particular, has become "[a] persistent motif in discussions among college presidents" (Gaston 2010: 295). Gaston argues that "telling [the] story more effectively" means "[d]eveloping a standard nomenclature and clearly articulated learning outcomes" with "accountability" and "further effort to document in detail the tangible benefits of a comprehensive liberal

education" (Gaston 2010: 192). Clearly this is not the essentialist romantic rhetoric of liberal education promulgated by the Victorians. For some, it is the instrumentalist rhetoric of the neoliberal state. For others, it is the corporate cant of the administrative Borg. For still others, it is just common sense. Surely it is a common-sense response to consumers, legislators, and other sources of funding whose worldview has been shaped by neoliberal or managerialist values and what might be called a 'trickle-down' effect of these values, the anxiously reductive brand of pragmatism that many students bring to campus and subsequently struggle with, even if a remnant of liberal education remains there. However, it is also another example of McLuhan's maxim that "the medium is the message" (McLuhan 1994: 7), since Gaston and others encourage us to tell the story of liberal education through a rhetoric designed to foreground democratic transparency while being more commensurate with the accountability regimes of neoliberalism and managerialism. In this sense, it is a rhetoric that seeks the survival of liberal education at the cost of passively validating the worldviews denoted by these '–isms'. To borrow from Williams Zinsser's still-relevant 1979 essay 'College Pressures', "there are no villains; only victims" of such sensible accommodations (Zinsser 1992: 177). One tangible result of the push for tangible, measurable benefits has been a "shift away from holism and character formation" and "towards an exclusive emphasis on cognitive traits", as Rothblatt observes – part of a larger process in which "liberal education has been forced to abandon [or defer] several of its deepest aspirations" in "an attempt to conform to the requirements of contemporary democratic society" (Rothblatt 2003: 60).

4. Conclusion: What Remains?

For the Victorians, the most effective way to 'tell the story of liberal education' was literally to tell stories – always vivid, often fictional, sometimes frightening stories that brought all the tools of the storyteller's art to bear on the sympathies of their various audiences. The best 'tools of transparency' were the assessing eyes and inspired imaginations of those who felt worthy to judge, usually the middle-class elites who had benefited from a liberal education and favoured sponsored mobility although, as Dickens demonstrates, others were eager to claim a place on these strategic heights as long as "integrated inequality" reigned (Halsey 1986: 53). To view a liberally educated person as an aggregation of cognitive skills was,

pace Ruskin, to vulgarise that education or to detect vulgarity in the form of dis-integration and therefore imposture. Despite the parallels that I have discussed, the Victorian writers' chosen imagery was not identical to our imagery of the neurological mind of a millennial, recreated in the endlessly shallow and fragmented image of the Internet. Rather, their imagery was a set of variations on the Hellenic ideal of holistic integrity as the cultivated wellbeing of body, mind, and soul. And yet these Victorians essentially struggled with the same questions that continue to dog us today: How can we help students achieve a deeply internalised and integrated mental culture that can nevertheless be made visible and assessable by the standards of a modern democracy? More fundamentally, how can we reconcile the expansiveness of liberal democracy with the ideal of integrity that is the *sine qua non* of liberal education?

The challenge is certainly a daunting one. Rothblatt may be correct in concluding that, for a mass society,

> it is not possible to devise a test or even design a social survey that will tell us whether we have firmly implanted in the minds and characters of educated people something recognizable as a liberal education, especially since the historical test was not a grasp of information or even knowing but how the life was actually lived in the world. (Rothblatt 1993: 70)

On the other hand, the regime of transparency and cognitive measurement may yet vindicate advocates of liberal education in the realm of marketable skills, slowing and possibly even arresting our decline. For example, the United States Collegiate Learning Assessment, which measures learning as the "value added" in higher education, has found that "students majoring in traditional liberal-arts fields […] demonstrate significantly higher gains in critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing skills than students in other fields of study" (Arum and Roksa qtd. in Lindsay 2013: 241). As a former Chief Operating Officer of the National Endowment for the Humanities puts it,

> [g]iven that nearly every university mission statement cites critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing skills as

> essential goals […] a required core curriculum in the sciences and liberal arts – dispensed with in the name of relevance and openness roughly a half-century ago – appears more relevant to true openness than ever. (Lindsay 2013: 241)

One might question whether "true openness" is the actual coin of the managerial realm, but any opportunity to 'speak truth to power' in a language that power seems less likely to dismiss as Quixotic is tempting.

So we are faced with a seemingly intractable dilemma. Should we disavow the traditional emphasis on holistic liberal education as a type of cultural commodity fetishism that has lost market value, declaring our allegiance to the cognitive turn as a strategic imperative within the regimes of transparency that we must accommodate? As inheritors of the mission to democratise liberal education, our neoliberal moment places us in a weaker position than the Victorian knowledge diffusers with whom Dickens and Ruskin shared the stage. This coalition of Victorians, dominated by liberally educated members of the liberal professions, was well placed to guide the narrative of cultural value in a middle-class ascendant society that still embraced an "integrated inequality" based on fairly traditional forms of cultural capital, including a liberal education. Their success in encouraging the institutionalisation of knowledge diffusion has ultimately resulted in the establishment of a mass professoriate vulnerable to de-professionalisation through managerial schemes of efficiency. As the anthropologist Marilyn Strathern has noted, "the tyranny of transparency" has been turned on this professoriate for reasons of accountability and customer satisfaction (Strathern 2000: 309), and, in the words of Tony Harland, Head of the Higher Education Development Centre at the University of Otago, many of us have felt "a shift from being professional to being closely managed and even mistrusted" (Harland 2009: 309; 519). Perhaps the adage cited by Bourdieu, that "Culture is what remains when you've forgotten everything", once knowledge has been "brought down to its simplest and most sublime expression", is now obsolete (Bourdieu 1984: 331). Perhaps, instead, we ought to say that 'brought down to its simplest and most sublime expression, it is critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing skills that remain when you have forgotten everything'.

Still, we should remember that the 'tools of transparency' can only see what is measurable, and these tools must inevitably be put in the service

of one story or another. Bass warns that "[m]ost narratives about the future of higher education are being written and articulated by commercial interests rooted in the educational technology industry" – interests which have promoted an *à la carte* or "unbundled" approach to education – and he encourages the academy to find "the intrinsic synergies between the holistic roots of liberal education and the connective and relational aspects of the digital ecosystem" (Bass 2016: 296; 297). If Carr is correct, the new consumer of liberal education will only have the appetite and the capacity for a hyperlinked matrix of micro-insights. In either case, negotiating the disintegrative forces bound up with modern democracy still requires command of the popular imagination. Like our Victorian precursors, we must tell convincing stories.

Notes

1. In *Historical Sketches*, Newman remarks that even an Oxbridge education would lack the requisite integrity if it did not have close-knit colleges and tutors to supplement the lectures and professors. In his words, "[t]he Professorial system fulfils the strict idea of a University, and is sufficient for its *being*, but it is not sufficient for its *well-being*. Colleges constitute the *integrity* of a University" (Newman 1909: 182, Newman's emphasis).
2. According to Bourdieu's translator, the adage is attributed to the French Radical politician Edouard Herriot (1872-1957).
3. In her essay 'Breeding, Education, and Vulgarity: George Gissing and the Lower Middle Classes', Rosemary Jann specifically links this gradualism and biologising of taste with the ideas of the Victorian eugenicist Francis Galton as well as Galton's cousin Charles Darwin, citing Ruskin's concept of gentility (and Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*) as typical of ways in which contemporaries worked with the "conceptual ambiguities of breeding" that elide nurture with nature (Jann 2009: 87). The early Victorian phrenologist George Combe's influential theory of devolution resonates with Ruskin and Dickens's biologising imaginations in a slightly different way: a person "who has received from nature a large and tolerably active brain, but who […] takes no interest in moral or intellectual pursuits for their own sake is in general a victim to the infringement of natural laws" (Combe qtd. in Rauch 2001: 141). All of these ideas contribute to what Lauren Goodlad has called the "mid-Victorian drift toward a *descriptive* language of character", a language which

"implied a comparatively limited view of individual improvement and, thus, a naturalization of relatively fixed sociopolitical hierarchies" (Goodlad 2003: 25).

4. An extremely high percentage of Americans attend college (between 65% and 70%), and beyond the many liberal arts colleges, the several thousand other US colleges/universities have almost universally required liberal education in the form of general education courses for all students in the first two years or more, rather than allowing students to specialise in one or two fields upon arrival. Secondary education in the US also tends to avoid specialisation and technical versus college-prep tracking. The US education system has numerous quality problems and class inequality, but it also has an enormous number of colleges/universities, and college/university attendance is a fairly pervasive expectation. Publications in *Higher Education Studies* refer to this history of liberal education in the US, and its decline, fairly frequently.
5. See especially Arum and Roksa's 2011 study *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses* for statistics on declining study time and learning. Arum and Roksa combine rigorous research into student behaviour and curricula with a relatively holistic test (the CLA), comparing first-year performance to later performance and demonstrating consistent 'value added' results across socioeconomic indicators. As the authors note, "[g]rowing numbers of students are sent to college at increasingly higher costs, but for a large proportion of them the gains in critical thinking, complex reasoning and written communication are either exceedingly small or empirically nonexistent. At least 45 percent of students in our sample did not demonstrate any statistically significant improvement in CLA performance during the first two years of college" (Arum and Roksa 2011: 121). So while "[n]eoliberal policy makers who have advocated for increased privatization and market-based educational reforms have produced a system that has expanded opportunity for all", these "market-based educational reforms that elevate the role of students as 'consumers' do not necessarily yield improved outcomes in terms of student learning", and even with greater transparency, "[t]here is no reason to expect that students and parents as consumers will prioritize undergraduate learning as an outcome" (Arum and Roksa 2011: 137).

Bibliography

Agger, Michael. 2010. 'The Internet Diet: Nicholas Carr is a sane guide to how it's changing us' [Review]. Slate.com. 7 June,

http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/books/2010/06/the_internet_diet.html (accessed 15 May 2016).
Arnold, Matthew. 1994. *Culture and Anarchy* [1869]. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Arum, Richard and Josipa Roksa. 2011. *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Bass, Randall. 2016. 'Well-Being, Disintegration, and the Rebundling of Higher Education', in Harward, Donald W. (ed.), *Well-Being and Higher Education*. Washington, D.C.: Bringing Theory to Practice.
Bauerline, Mark. 2009. *The Dumbest Generation*. New York: Penguin.
BBC. 2015. 'Oxford's Ruskin College "abandons founding ideals"', BBC News, 2 June, http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-32963257 (accessed 15 May 2016).
Birch, Dinah. 2008. *Our Victorian Education*. Oxford: Blackwell.
Bok, Derek. 2006. *Our Underachieving Colleges*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (trans. Richard Nice). Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press and Routledge & Kegan Paul.
Brougham, Henry. 1825. *Practical Observations Upon the Education of the People, Addressed to the Working Classes and Their Employers*. 11th ed. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green.
Carr, Nicholas. 2008. 'Is Google Making Us Stupid? What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains', *The Atlantic Monthly*, July/August, n.p., https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/07/is-google-making-us-stupid/306868/ (accessed 15 May, 2016).
——. 2011. *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*. New York: Norton.
Channing, William Ellery. 1838. *Self-Culture. An Address Delivered at Boston, America, September, 1838*. London: William Strange.
Collins, Philip. 1963. *Dickens and Education*. London: MacMillan.
Cox, et al. 2016. 'Integrity', in Zalta, Edward N. (ed.). *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Winter, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/integrity/ (accessed 15 May, 2016).
Dickens, Charles. 1958. *David Copperfield* [1849-50]. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
——. 1985a. *Hard Times* [1854]. New York: Penguin.
——. 1985b. *Our Mutual Friend* [1864-65]. New York: Penguin.

——. 1988. *The Speeches of Charles Dickens: A Complete Edition* (ed. K.J. Fielding). New Jersey: Humanities Press International.

Disraeli, Benjamin. 1888. Untitled speech at the 1844 soiree of the Manchester Athenaeum [Manchester Athenaeum], in Directors of the Manchester Athenaeum (eds.), *Addresses, 1835-1885, Also Report of the Proceedings of the Meeting of the Members in Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Institution, October 28th, 1885*. Manchester: Directors of the Manchester Athenaeum, 9-23.

Geary Schneider, Carol. 2003. 'Note', in Rothblatt, Sheldon, *The Living Arts: Comparative and Historical Reflections on Liberal Education*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Colleges and Universities, iv-vii.

Gaston, Paul. 2010. *The Challenge of Bologna*. Sterling, Virginia: Stylus.

Goodlad, Lauren. 2003. *Victorian Literature and the Victorian State: Character and Governance in a Liberal Society*. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Halsey, A. H. 1986. *Change in British Society*, 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Harland, Tony. 2009. 'The University, Neoliberal Reform and the Liberal Educational Ideal', in Tight, Malcolm et al. (eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Higher Education*. New York: Routledge, 511-521.

Jann, Rosemary. 2009. 'Breeding, Education, and Vulgarity: George Gissing and the Lower Middle Classes', in Bernstein, Susan David and Elsie Michie (eds.), *Victorian Vulgarity: Taste in Visual and Verbal Culture*. Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 85-100.

Jewsbury, Geraldine. 1847. 'The Lower Orders', *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine* 5: 362-367.

Joyce, Patrick. 1994. *Democratic Subjects: The Self and the Social in Nineteenth-Century England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

——. 1991. *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1848-1914*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Lindsay, Thomas K. 2013. 'The Likelihood of Higher-Education Reform', *Society* 50:3 (June): 236-244.

McLuhan, Marshall. 1994. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* [1964]. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Newman, John Henry. 1909. *Historical Sketches* (vol. 3). London: Longmans, Green, and Co.

——. 1996. *The Idea of a University* [1852, 1873]. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Rauch, Alan. 2001. *Useful Knowledge: The Victorians, Morality, and the March of Intellect*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Rothblatt, Sheldon. 1993. 'The Limbs of Osiris: Liberal Education in the English-Speaking World', in Rothblatt, Sheldon and Bjorn Wittrock (eds.), *The European and American University Since 1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 19-73.

——. 1995. 'An Historical Perspective on the University's Role in Social Development', in Dill, David D. and Barbara Sporn (eds.), *Emerging Patterns of Social Demand and University Reform: Through a Glass Darkly*. Oxford: Pergamon Press for IAU, 20-53.

——. 2003. *The Living Arts: Comparative and Historical Reflections on Liberal Education*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Colleges and Universities.

Ruskin College. N.d. 'Our Vision', https://www.ruskin.ac.uk/about/our-vision (accessed May, 2016).

Ruskin, John. 1903-12. *The Works of John Ruskin, Library Edition* (eds. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn). London: George Allen.

Strassburger, John. 2010. 'For the Liberal Arts, Rhetoric is Not Enough', *The Chronicle of Higher Education.* 28 February, http://www.chronicle.com/article/For-the-Liberal-Arts-Rhetoric/64356/ (accessed 15 May, 2016).

Strathern, Marilyn. 2000. 'The Tyranny of Transparency', *British Educational Research Journal* 26: 309-321.

Turner, Ralph H. 1960. 'Sponsored and Contest Mobility and the School System', *American Sociological Review* 25:6 (December), 855-867.

Unsworth, William. 1861. *Self-Culture & Self-Reliance: or, The Poor Man's Help to Elevation on Earth and in Heaven*. Alford: T.A. Bellamy.

Veblen, Thorstein. 1979. *The Theory of the Leisure Class* [1899]. New York: Penguin.

Zacharia, Fareed. 2015. *In Defense of a Liberal Education*. New York: Norton.

Zinsser, William. 1992. 'College Pressures' [1979], in Eastman, Arthur M. (ed.), *The Norton Reader*. New York: Norton, 176-183.